

BURUNDI HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE 'ITEKA'

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revising Order No. 550/029 of February 6, 1991

REPORT OF THE BURUNDIAN LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA" ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BURUNDI FOR THE PERIOD FROM APRIL TO JUNE 2026



Anyone should be respected

In memory of Madame Marie Claudette Kwizera, treasurer of the Iteka League, who has been missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to June 30, 2026, at least 874 victims of enforced disappearance have been documented by the Iteka League, at least 87 victims have reappeared, and 787 victims are still missing. The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) has already communicated to the Government of Burundi about at least 252 victims.

The Iteka League:

- ♦ "Is a member of the Inter-African Union for Human and Peoples' Rights (UIDH), is an affiliated member of the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH),
- ♦ has observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights under reference number OBS.236 and is a member of ECOSOC.
- ♦ Is decentralized into 17 federations and 32 sections."

THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF BURUNDI

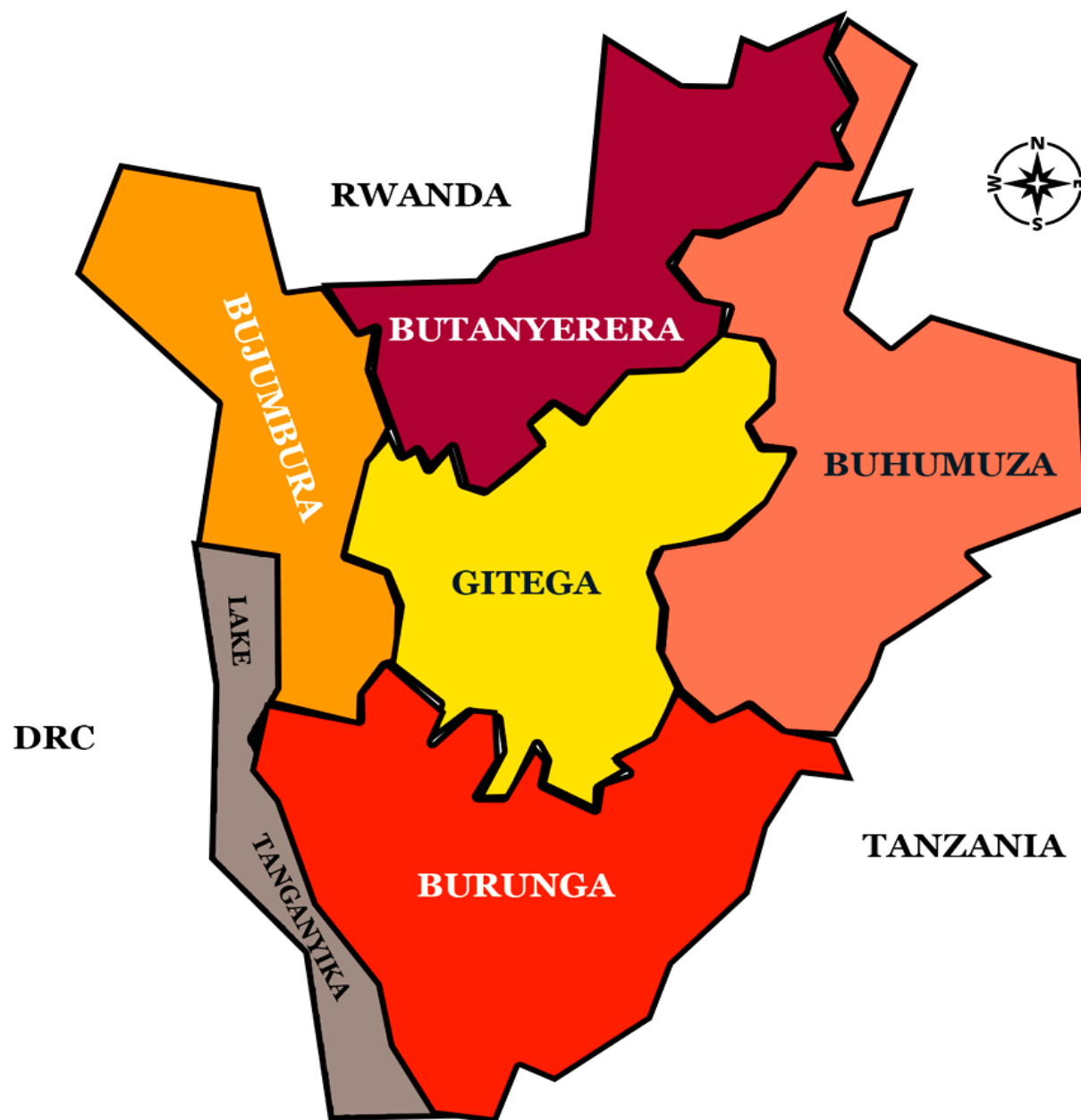


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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

UNGA	: United Nations General Assembly
CDP	: Council of Patriots
CNDD-FDD	: National Council for the Defense of Democracy—Defense Forces
CNL	: National Congress for Freedom
UPRONA	: Union for National Progress
ESCR	: Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
FRODEBU	: Front for Democracy in Burundi
PNB	: Burundi National Police
SNR	: National Intelligence Service
TGI	: High Court
DRC	: Democratic Republic of the Congo
M23	: March 23 Movement
FDLR	: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Rwanda
GBVs	: Gender-Based Violence
CENI	: Independent National Electoral Commission
CEPI	: Independent Provincial Electoral Commission
CECI	: Independent Communal Electoral Commission
VB	: Polling Station
ECOFO	: Elementary School
OPJ	: Judicial Police Officer

I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT

This report on the human rights situation in Burundi from April to June 2026 also examines civil and political rights, as well as social, economic, and cultural rights. The report concludes with a summary and recommendations.

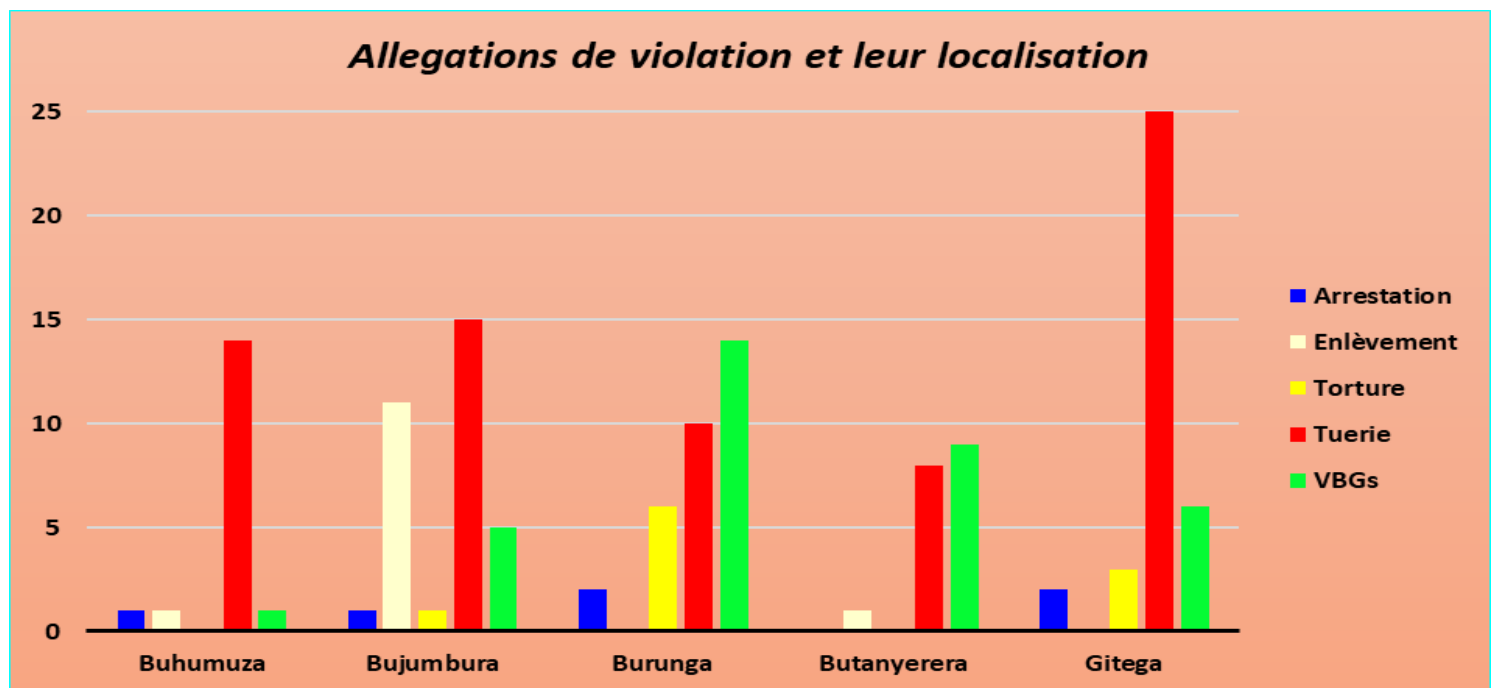
Thus, the human rights situation has deteriorated alarmingly: at least 72 people were killed, of whom 40 bodies were recovered; among those killed, 51 were men and 21 were women. Among the victims, 35 suffered gender-based violence, including 24 cases of sexual violence. Of those affected by gender-based violence, 28 were women and 7 were men. Other statistics include 10 victims of torture, 3 of whom were women; 13 people who were abducted or reported missing, 2 of whom were women; and 6 who were arbitrarily arrested.

Although the political affiliation of the majority of the victims is unknown, it should be noted that members of political parties were not spared, including 12 victims from the ruling CNDD-FDD party, 1 victim from the CNL, and 1 from FRODEBU.

Accusations have also been leveled against members of the Imbonerakure militia, administrative officials, members of the SNR, and police officers, who are considered the main perpetrators of the reported human rights violations and murders.

Figure 1: Graph showing the main cases of human rights violations observed in Burundi from April to June 2026

Place of the incident /Province	Number of victims					Total
	Arrest	Kidnapping	Torture	Killing	GBV	
Buhumuza	1	1	0	14	1	17
Bujumbura	1	11	1	15	5	33
Burunga	2	0	6	10	14	32
Butanyerera	0	1	0	8	9	18
Gitega	2	0	3	25	6	36
Total	6	13	10	72	35	136



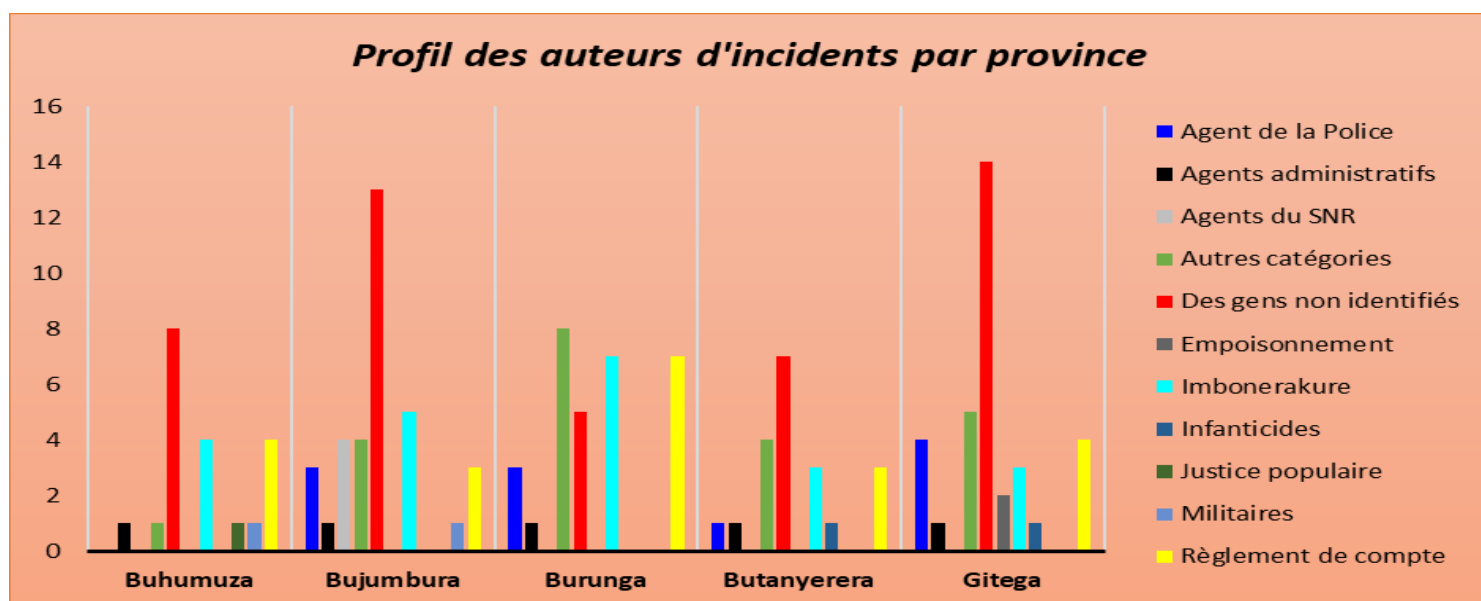
I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT (the following of page 5)

During the second quarter of 2026, a total of 132 victims of documented violation allegations were recorded. Among them, 72 individuals were killed, 35 suffered gender-based violence, including 30 victims of sexual violence, 10 were tortured, 13 were kidnapped, and 6 were arrested.

The Gitega province stands out, ranking first with 36 victims, including 25 killed, 6 victims of gender-based violence, 3 tortured individuals, and 2 people arrested. Next is Bujumbura, with 33 victims, including 15 killed, 5 victims of gender-based violence, 11 abducted, and 1 person arbitrarily arrested. In third place, the Burunga province has 32 victims, divided into 10 killed, 14 victims of gender-based violence, 6 tortured individuals, and 2 arrested. Finally, Butanyerera and Buhumuza round off this report with 18 and 17 victims respectively.

Figure 2: Chart showing the main authors of human rights violation allegations observed in Burundi between April and June 2026

Alleged perpetrators	Buhumuza	Bujumbura	Burunga	Butanyerera	Gitega	Total
Police officer	0	3	3	1	4	11
Administrative agent	1	1	1	1	1	5
SNR Agents	0	4	0	0	0	4
Other categories	1	4	8	4	5	22
Unidentified persons	8	13	5	7	14	47
Poisoning	0	0	0	0	2	2
Imbonerakure	4	5	7	3	3	22
Infanticides	0	0	0	1	1	2popular
Popular Justice	1	0	0	0	0	1
Military	1	1	0	0	0	2
Revenge killing	4	3	7	3	4	21
General total	20	34	31	20	34	139



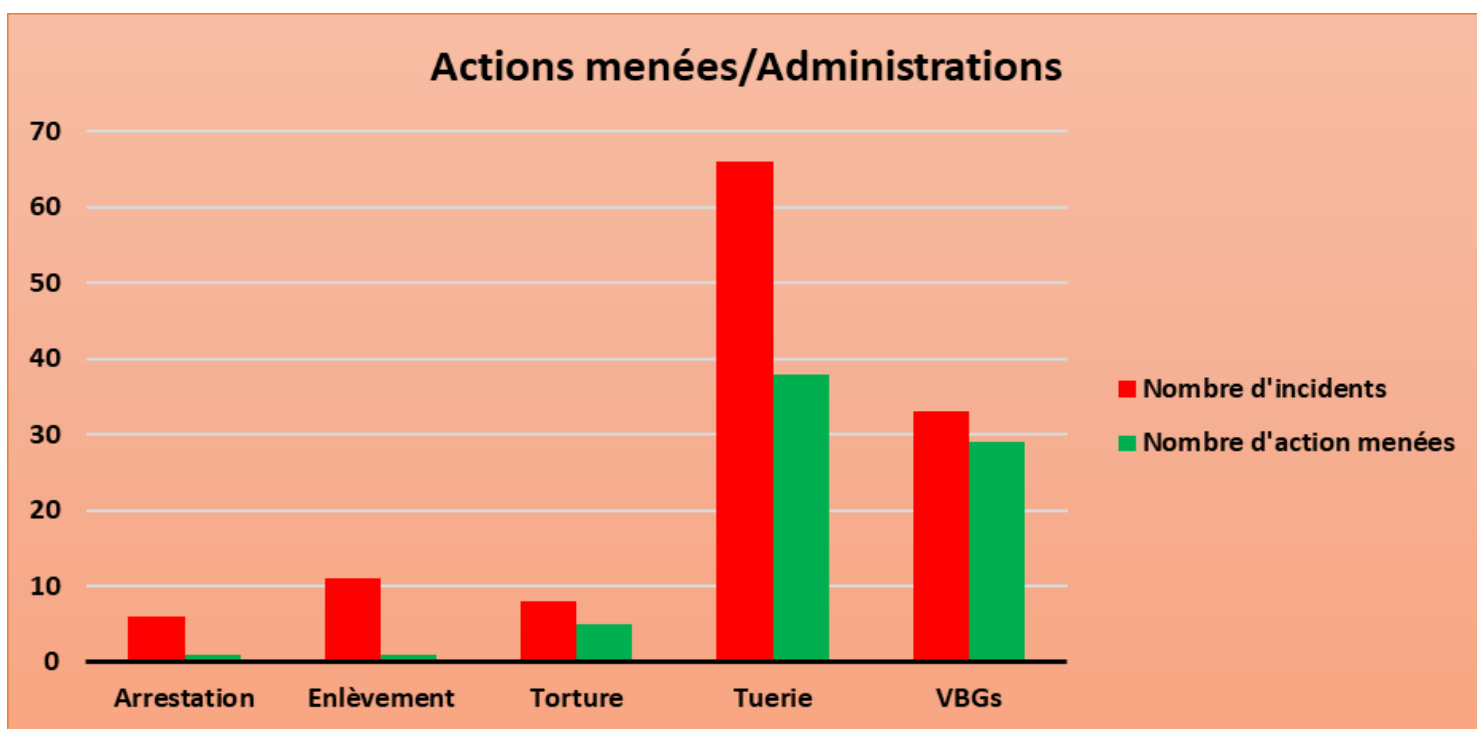
The table above shows a total of 124 cases that have been classified into 11 different types of incident perpetrators during the period studied. The vast majority of the cases observed involve unidentified people as well as other categories of individuals. The provinces most affected by these incidents are Bujumbura and Gitega, which record a significant number of events.

I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT (the following of page 6)

Figure 3: Chart showing the main actions taken by administrative agents as solutions to the violations committed

During the period in question, a total of 124 incidents were recorded, leading to the initiation of 74 actions classified into four main categories in order to provide the most effective solutions. Among these incidents, some had favorable outcomes, with the arrests of suspected perpetrators by the police, while others, more complicated, are still under review. Careful investigations are currently underway to determine the most appropriate responses to these complex situations, especially since cases involving discovered bodies often remain unresolved. Systematic examination of each case allows for thinking about corrective measures that would be suitable and relevant.

Types of incident	Number of incidents	Number of actions taken	No action
Arrest	6	1	5
Kidnapping	11	1	10
Torture	8	5	3
Killing	66	38	28
GBV	33	29	4
General total	124	74	50



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II. ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

II.1. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Burundi is one of the countries that adhered to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1965) and its optional protocol (1976) without any reservations on May 9, 1990. As part of implementing this, Burundi has taken measures in its domestic legislation, notably in its Constitution of June 7, 2018 (main law), in Article 19, which guarantees that all rights proclaimed and guaranteed by regularly ratified international texts are an integral part of this constitution. Implementation texts have been established, including the Penal Code of December 29, 2017, and the Code of Criminal Procedure of May 11, 2018, and other institutions to protect human rights in Burundi have also been created.

II.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE

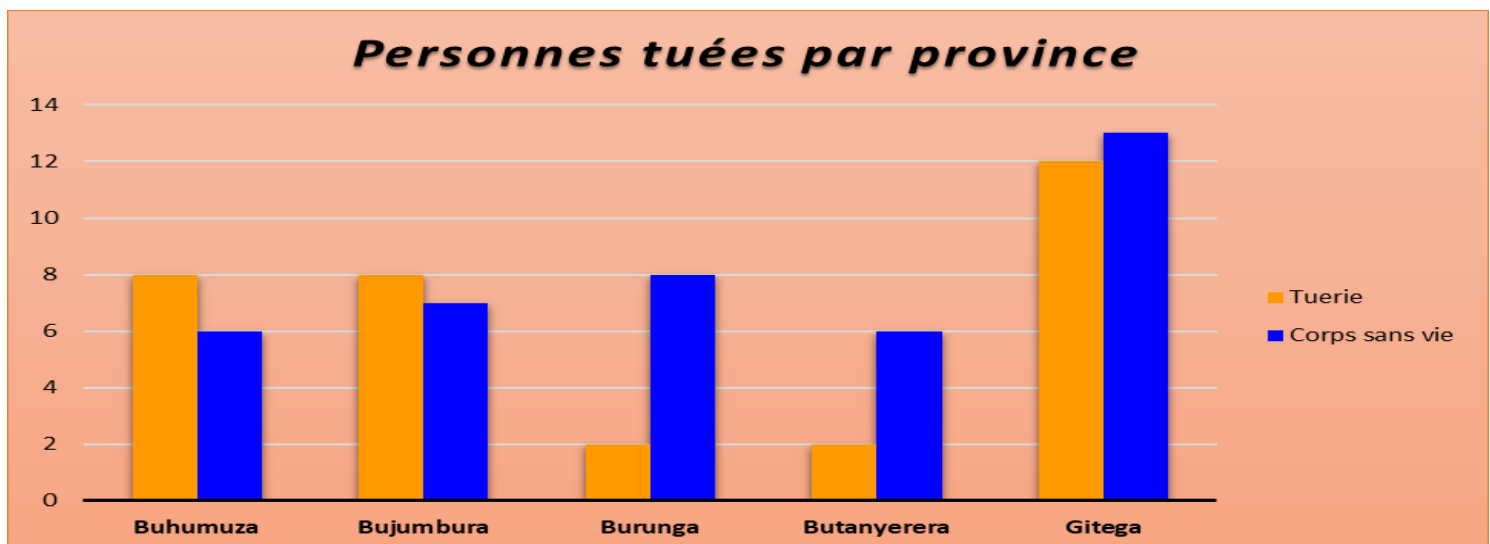
II.1.1.1. INTENTIONAL HOMICIDES

The law guarantees it; human dignity must be respected and protected by the State, and in case of violations, sanctions should be applied to the alleged perpetrators, according to Article 21 of the country's constitutional law.

In total, 66 cases of murder were recorded across the country during the period covered by this report, involving 72 victims, including 61 adults and 11 children. The most affected provinces are Gitega and Bujumbura, with 25 and 15 victims respectively. Next are Buhumuza with 14 victims and Burunga with 10 victims. Finally, the province of Butanyerera reported 8 victims.

Figure 4: Chart of people killed by unidentified individuals, killed by state agents, killed in revenge killings, killed by vigilante justice, killed in infanticides, and other child murders.

Province	Case of killings	Number of victims		Men	Women
		Killing	Lifeless bodies		
Buhumuza	13	8	6	8	6
Bujumbura	15	8	7	10	5
Burunga	8	2	8	9	1
Butanyerera	8	2	6	8	0
Gitega	22	12	13	16	9
Overall Total	66	32	40	51	21



II.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 8)

Illustration case:

Committed by the Police

Ex1: On April 20, 2026, on Murago Hill in the Gihogazi area, a man named Habimana, over 30 years old, a motorcyclist, was killed by Daniel NITUNGA, a police officer from the former commune of GIHOGAZI, over 35 years old.

According to local witnesses, the police officer had arrested a suspected thief and had stopped the motorcyclist to take the thief to the Gihogazi detention center. According to the same witnesses, while en route, the thief shouted that his money had just fallen to the ground; the motorcyclist stopped, and the thief escaped while still handcuffed. The police officer did not hesitate and opened fire on the motorcyclist, accusing him of being an accomplice in the escape.

The police officer was arrested and taken to the KARUSI police station holding cell around 4:00 p.m. that same day. Additionally, sources on the scene say that the thief turned himself in to the police two days later but without handcuffs and was transferred to the KARUSI police station on April 23, 2026.

Ex2: During the night of Saturday, April 4, 2026, to Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026, a police officer named Irankunda Osiyas shot and killed Nininahazwe Nestor, a 30-year-old man who owned a bar called “Kwihuriro,” on KIBUNGERE Hill, in Nyabihanga Commune, Gitega Province. The deceased was married and had two children.

Sources on the scene say that this police officer, assigned to the Kibungere Parish in that commune, arrived at the bar that night and began provoking the customers who were there quenching their thirst. He began drinking from their bottles.

But Nestor Nininahazwe, the bar’s owner, refused to let the police officer drink from his bottle. In a fit of rage, he went to the area where the police officers assigned to the parish sleep and returned with his rifle. He immediately fired several shots at Nestor, striking him in the chest. He died on the spot. The police officer went to hide within the grounds of the Kibungere parish. That is where the local residents apprehended him before handing him over to law enforcement to be taken to the Nyabihanga municipal jail for questioning.

The residents of this town want this police officer to be punished according to the law. They are also calling on the relevant authorities to ban the carrying of firearms in bars.

Committed by Imbonerakure youths

Example 1: On May 28, 2026, on 4th Avenue in the Muyinga neighborhood, Kinama area, Ntawangwa commune, Bujumbura province, Didier Nkurunziza, a 21-year-old apprentice mechanic, was stabbed to death in the evening by an Imbonerakure named Yamuremye in a restaurant. According to local witnesses, the victim was at the restaurant and was a regular there.

According to the same witnesses, when he went to pay his bill, he was short by 1,000 francs, and the alleged perpetrator jumped on him and stabbed him in the side; he died instantly. His body was taken to the morgue at the Kamenge Military Hospital.

The same sources add that the alleged perpetrator was arrested by the police and taken to the detention center in the Kinama area.

II.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 9)

Ex3: A report received by the Iteka League on June 23, 2026, indicates that on May 31, 2026, a citizen named Seif Ntakirutimana died from his injuries after being beaten by youths from the ruling party on May 27, 2026, in the Buterere area of Ntahangwa commune, in Bujumbura province. Around 11:00 p.m., as he was preparing to return home, Seif was intercepted by Imbonerakure members who were conducting a night patrol.

They demanded to see his ID card. Since he did not have it on him at the time, the victim offered to take them to his nearby home to retrieve it.

The patrol members refused and forcibly took him to the sewage collection site, commonly known as “muma bassins.” There, they violently beat him until he lost consciousness, then left him there. After regaining consciousness, Seif managed to stagger back to his home. Severely weakened and ill since the attack, he succumbed to his injuries a few days later, on May 31, 2026.

The day after his death, he was buried at the Mpanda cemetery. Following this tragedy, the leader of the Imbonerakure group involved, identified as Élie, was arrested by the authorities and is currently being held at the Mpimba detention center.

II.1.1.2. ABDUCTIONS AND/OR MISSING PERSONS

The constitutional law of Burundi guarantees in its Article 38 that every individual has the right to a fair trial and that their case be heard and judged within a reasonable time. However, on the ground, alarming irregularities in this area can be observed.

During the second quarter of 2026, spanning from April to June, the Iteka League recorded a grim picture of disappearances. The data, shown in the table and graph below, report at least 13 people who were kidnapped or went missing. The Bujumbura province was particularly affected, with 11 victims recorded, followed by Burunga and Buhumuza, with 1 victim each. Among the victims of this tragedy were 2 women and 11 men.

Figure 5: People kidnapped and/or missing in Burundi from April to June 2026

Province	Cases of kidnapping	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	1	1	1	0
Bujumbura	9	11	9	2
Burunga	0	0	0	0
Butanyerera	1	1	1	0
Gitega	0	0	0	0
Overall Total	11	13	11	2



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II.1.1.2. ABDUCTIONS AND/OR MISSING PERSONS (the following of page 10)

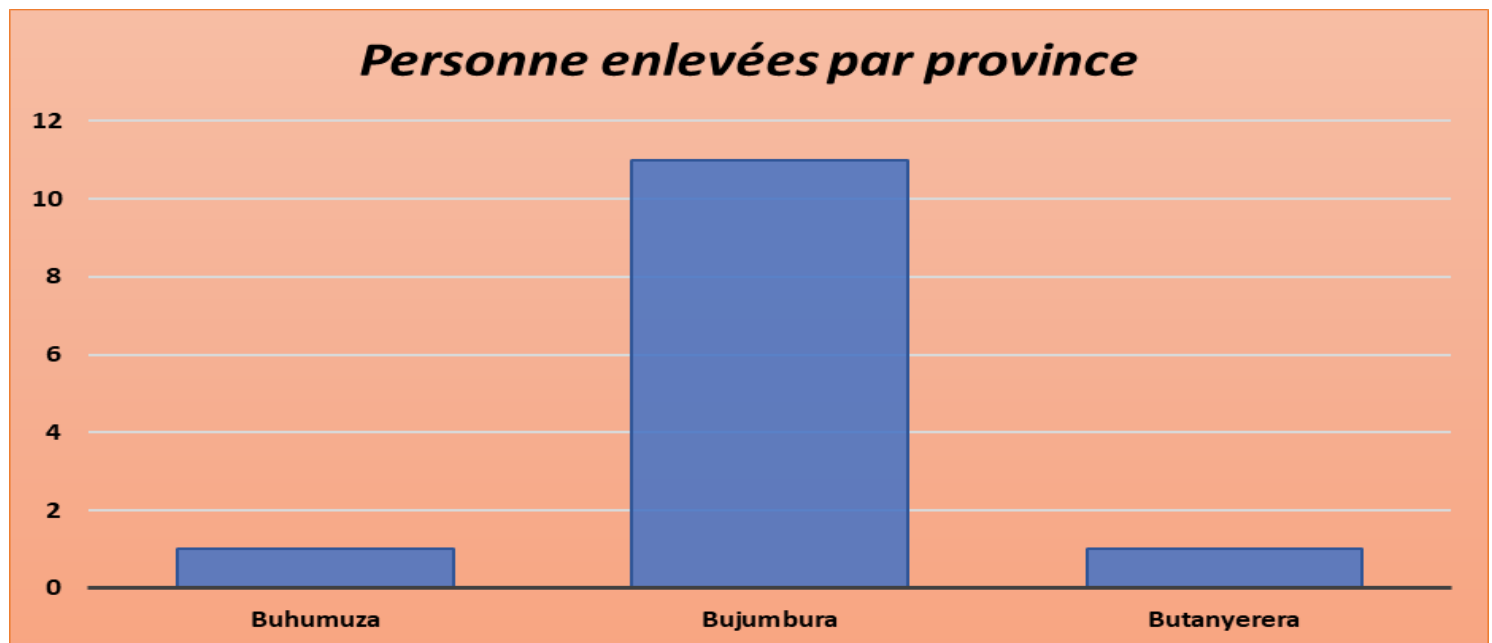


Illustration case:

Committed by the police.

Example 1: On April 6, 2026, in the Mubone neighborhood, Buterere area, Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura province, Julien MANIRAKIZA, a member of the ruling party and a resident of the same neighborhood, was arrested and then taken to an unknown location.

According to local witnesses, the victim was intercepted at his home by a police officer named Eric, who lives on 2nd Avenue in Mubone, along with a group of Imbonerakure, including Amuri BUKURU, the current chief of the Mubone neighborhood, a man named Sylvat, who runs a Russian-run center on 1st Avenue in the Mubone neighborhood; a man named Lionel from 1st Avenue; a man named Ernest, a brick supplier and resident of 5th Avenue in Mubone; a man named Madisi; and Eric, a records clerk residing on 12th Avenue.

According to the same witnesses, Julien Manirakiza had been elected head of the Mubone neighborhood in the recent elections but was dismissed without valid reason, even though he was well-liked by the population; he had filed an appeal and was awaiting the results. Unaccounted for since April 6, 2026, the friends and relatives of Julien Manirakiza are asking to be informed of his whereabouts and the charges against him.

Committed by military personnel

Ex. 2: On June 5, 2026, a soldier known as Bizimana Gérard was abducted in Musaga, Mugere commune, Bujumbura province.

According to an eyewitness, he was with a man named Cédric, and they were having a meal at a bar owned by former congressman Lewis. That is when a double-cab vehicle with tinted windows arrived at the scene. Individuals wearing military uniforms got out, seized Bizimana Gérard, and forced him into the vehicle, which then drove away.

Since that incident, no one knows where he is being held or what has become of him. His family is deeply concerned for his safety, especially since the perpetrators of this abduction are believed to be uniformed government agents.

II.1.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

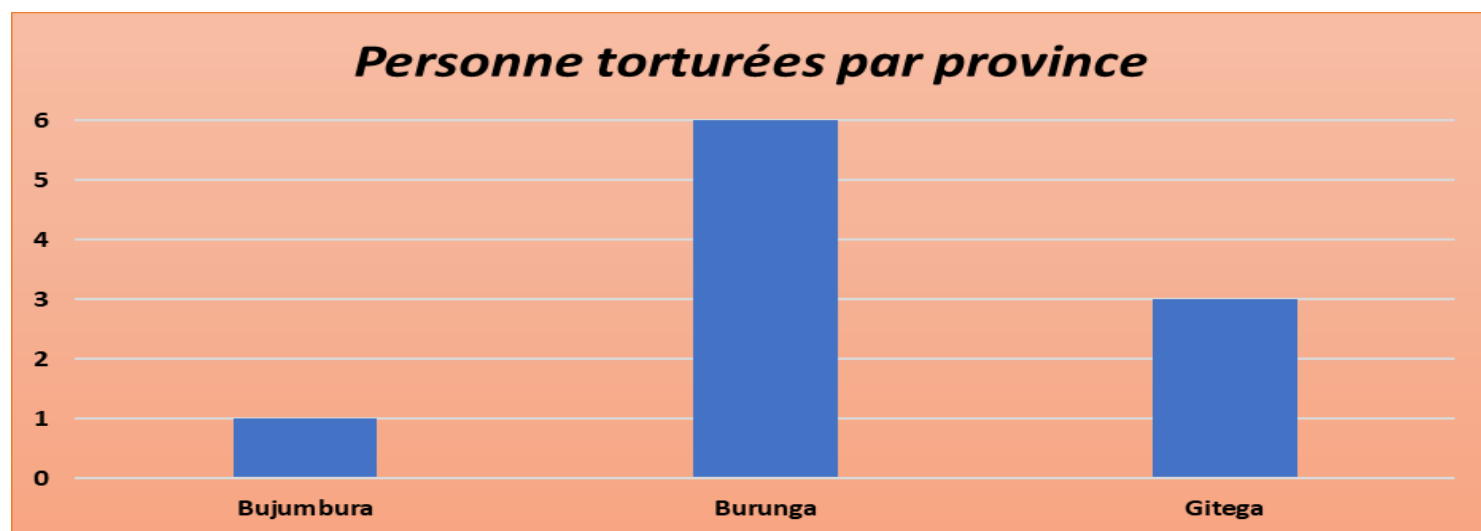
The right to physical integrity is protected in Burundi by several constitutional and legal provisions, as well as by international commitments. The Constitution of Burundi guarantees the right to life, liberty, and personal security. It prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The Burundian Penal Code punishes violations of physical integrity, including intentional violence, assault and battery, as well as sexual assault.

II.1.2.1. ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS OR TREATMENT

Figure 6: People tortured or subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishments or treatments during the period from April to June 2026 in Burundi

In total, eight individuals were subjected to torture across the territory during the period covered by this report. As shown in the chart and table below, the Iteka League recorded eight cases of people who suffered acts of torture during this quarter. The most affected provinces turned out to be Burunga and Gitega, with 6 and 3 victims respectively, followed by Bujumbura with 1 victim. Among the 10 victims, there are 7 men and 3 women.

Province	Cases of Killing	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	0	0	0	0
Bujumbura	1	1	1	0
Burunga	5	6	5	1
Butanyerera	0	0	0	0
Gitega	2	3	1	2
Overall Total	8	10	7	3



Illustrative examples:

Committed by the Police

Ex1: A report received by the Iteka League on April 17, 2026, indicates that on April 2, 2026, on Nyakuguma Hill, in the Kigwena area, Rumonge commune, Burunga province, a man named Irambona, a police officer stationed in the Kigwena area, suffered blows and injuries to his head

II.1.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY (the following of page 12)

and left shoulder caused by Irakoze Issa, an Imbonerakure member of the CNDD-FDD known to consume prohibited substances. According to information gathered, the perpetrator had started a fight in the store and attempted to assault the shopkeeper, who then cried out for help. The police officer intervened to help, then arrested the suspect, took him to the local detention center, and finally transferred him to the Rumonge police station. The victim was taken to the Cabara municipal CDS center and then to the Rumonge referral hospital for medical treatment.

Ex2: On the night of May 10, 2026, around 11:00 p.m., at the Kabezi displaced persons camp in Mugere commune, Bujumbura province, a 21-year-old man known by the nickname Kibaju was beaten by police officers assigned to guard the residence of the Mugere commune administrator. According to an eyewitness, Kibaju was drinking a local alcoholic beverage called ikibangara when another resident of the camp, named Claver, kicked him. Kibaju tried to defend himself and push his attacker away, but that was when the police officers guarding the residence of the Mugere commune administrator intervened. Instead of stepping in to calm the dispute, the police officers viciously attacked the young man. They beat him and left him for dead. Injured and unconscious, the victim was rushed to the hospital. According to the latest reports, Kibaju remains hospitalized in critical condition at Kabezi Hospital.

Committed by young Imbonerakure members

Ex3: On April 13, 2026, around 9:00 p.m., on Karinzi Hill, Rongero area, Rutana commune, Burunga province, Salvator Barashingwa and his wife Marcelline Itangishaka, both members of the CNDD-FDD party, were beaten with a stick by the Imbonerakure young members of the ruling CNDD-FDD party, including Elias, Éric, and Egide for housing a person without notifying the local chief of that hill.

The victims are experiencing pain throughout their bodies and are at Rutana Hospital receiving treatment, while the alleged perpetrators are being held in the detention cell at the Rutana municipal police station. That same night, the person seeking shelter was the one who drove the victims to the hospital.

Ex4: The Iteka League was informed of a case of torture that took place on Saturday, June 7, 2025, around 7:00 p.m. in a cabaret on Butamenwa Hill, in the Cirambo area (formerly Nyabikere commune), where a man named NDIHOKUBWAYO Thérence, of the BURUNDI BWA BOSE coalition, was tortured by Imbonerakure members under the command of the CNDD-FDD party leader on the hill, named Isaac.

He found him in the cabaret drinking beer and told him that even though he had not voted for the CNDD-FDD, the party had won. Upon hearing these words, Thérence chose to leave and go home; the Imbonerakure then beat him and stole 30,000 FBU from him after injuring him on the head and arms. His family took him to the CDS NYABIKERE the next day, and his attackers remain at large.



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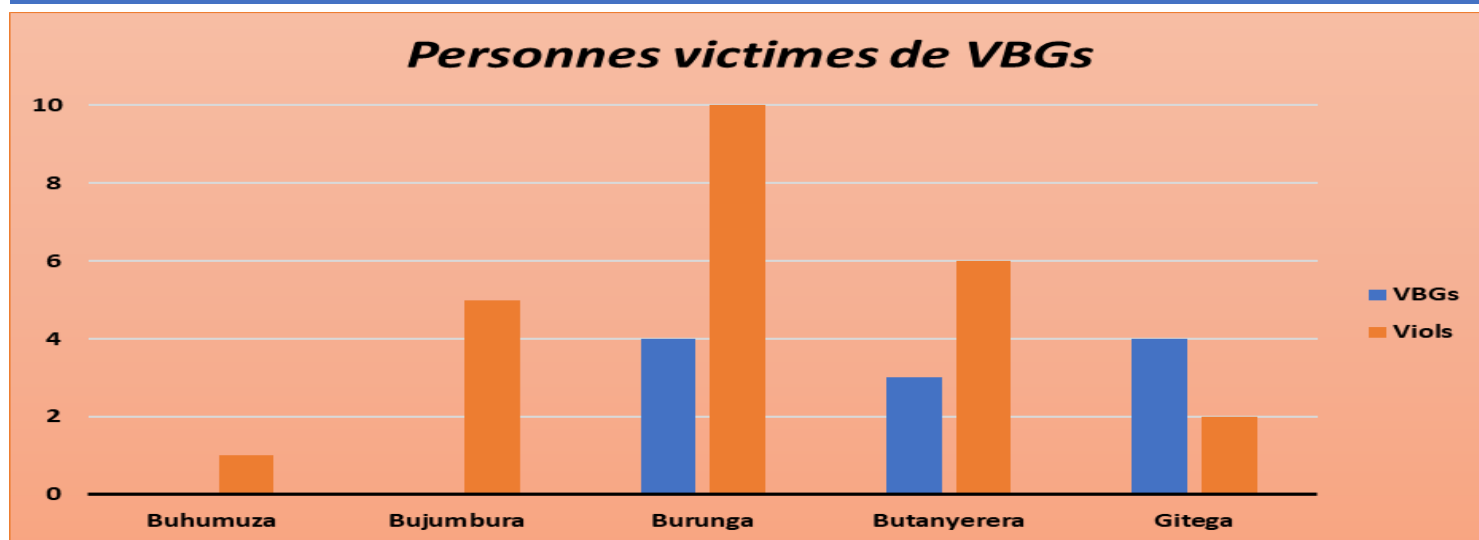
II.1.2.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/ RAPE

The Law on gender-based violence adopted in Burundi in 2016 was a major step forward. It provided better protection, especially by giving a definition of rape that considers consent and by banning harmful traditional practices.

During the period covered by this report, cases of gender-based violence (GBV) were observed at an alarming rate. The Iteka League recorded at least 33 cases of GBV, affecting 35 victims across the country. Among these 35 victims, 28 are women, including 24 victims of rape. As shown in the chart below, the provinces of Burunga and Butanyerera are the most affected, with 14 and 9 victims respectively, followed by Gitega with 8 victims. Among the victims, there are 28 women and 7 men.

Figure 7: Graph of people who are victims of gender-based violence

Province	Case of GBV	Number of victims		Men	Women
		GBV	Rape		
Buhumuza	1	0	1	0	1
Bujumbura	5	0	5	0	5
Burunga	14	4	10	2	12
Butanyerera	9	3	6	4	5
Gitega	4	4	2	1	5
Overall Total	33	11	24	7	28



Some illustrative examples:

Example 1: Nikundana Alice, a mother of five children living on RUHINGA Hill in the Matana commune, Burunga province, was scalded with boiling water by her husband, Ndikumwenayo Gabriel an Imbonerakure member of the CNDD-FDD on April 4, 2026.

Reports from the scene indicate that the man returned home around 8:00 p.m. and first spilled the water his wife had heated to prepare dough. Without delay, his wife put another pot of water on the stove. Her husband waited until it came to a boil and then poured it over her. Neighbors, alerted by the victim, were able to intervene, but the perpetrator had already fled. The neighbors confirm that there have been ongoing marital problems within this family. The alleged perpetrator remains at large, much to the dismay of the residents of this hamlet. The chief of this hamlet, Ninganza

II.1.2.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/SEXUAL ASSAULTS (the following of page 16)

Raphaël who explains that the man has been untraceable since the day of the offense is suspected of being complicit in preventing his arrest, according to sources who report that he is still at large.

Ex2: *On April 16, 2026, schoolgirl B. E, a second-year student at ÉCO FO Nyakerera in the Nyakerera neighborhood, Minyare zone, Cankuzo commune, Buhumuza province the 11-year-old daughter of B and R was raped by a soldier named Nkuriyingoma Abdoul, a corporal at the Mutukura Military Camp, located very close to the victim's family home. According to local sources, the alleged rapist went to the Bukuru residence in the afternoon.*

The girl was alone. Abdoul asked Emelyne to lend him a machete to look for medicine in the nearby bush and tricked her into accompanying him to retrieve the machete. It was at that moment that she was raped in exchange for 5,000 FBU. When she arrived home, her father's second wife saw the 5,000 FBU in Emelyne's hands and she told her everything. It should be noted that Emelyne's biological mother was Renathe, who died after having her throat slit and her body dumped in a stream following a rape by as-yet-unknown assailants five years ago.

The Bukuru family then alerted the authorities at the Mutukura camp. A Mutukura camp official named Adjutant Major Hakizimana Claude attempted to settle the matter out of court between the victim's father and the alleged perpetrator in exchange for money. The Bukuru family refused and instead demanded a medical examination. According to the family's neighbors, the child was injured and is currently receiving medical care.

As of today, Abdoul Nkuriyingoma has been hidden by the officer at an as-yet-unknown location.

II.1.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM

II.1.3.1 ARBITRARY ARRESTS

International and national texts in Burundi recognize the principle of innocence until proven guilty, and that detention should be an exception. During the period covered in this report, the Iteka League recorded a total of 6 arrest cases involving 6 men. The people involved in these arrests were police officers, responsible for 5 of these cases, and young members of the Imbonerakure league, involved in one other case. The table below illustrates the vulnerability by province.

Province	Case of Arrests	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	1	1	1	0
Bujumbura	1	1	1	0
Burunga	2	2	2	0
Butanyerera	0	0	0	0
Gitega	2	2	2	0
Overall Total	6	6	6	0



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II.1.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM (the following of page 15)

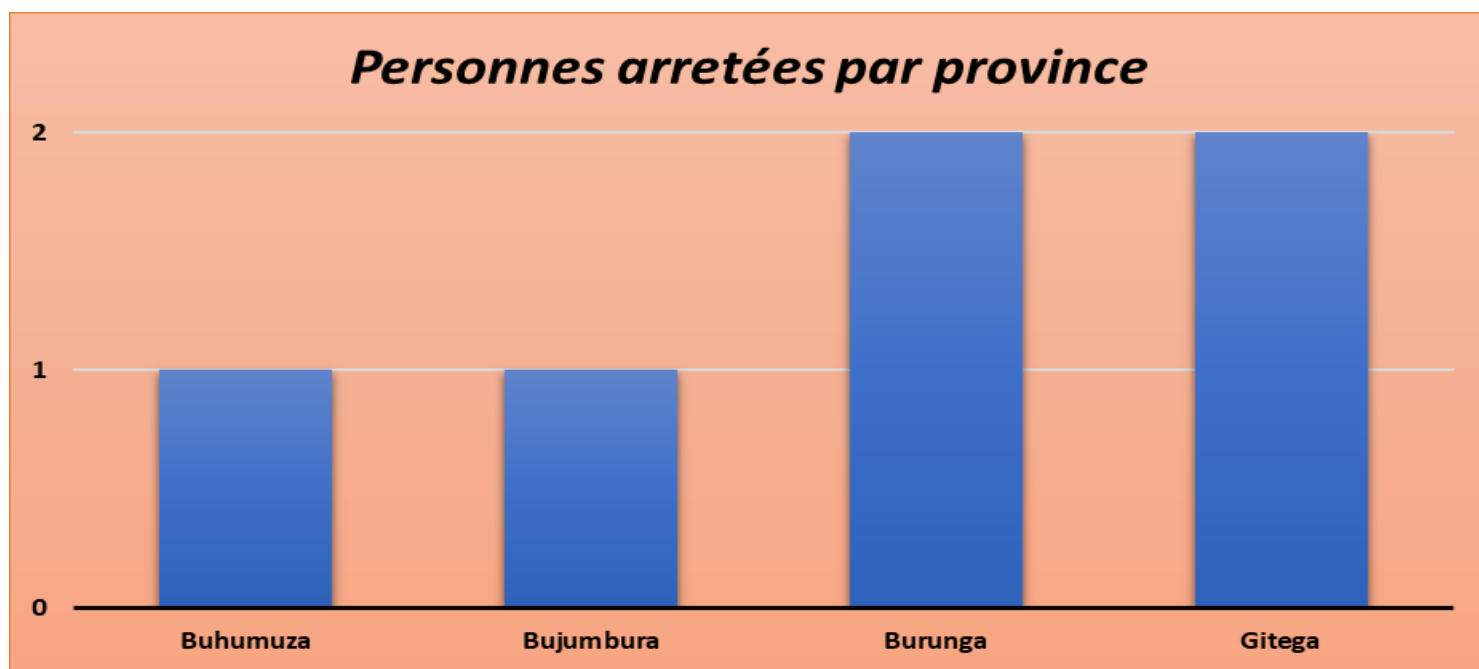


Illustration case:

Arrested by the Police:

Example 1: Since Monday, May 4, 2025, a man named Séverin Bigirimana, a teacher at the Nyabihunge Elementary School in the commune of Bururi, Burunga Province, has been held in the police jail in that commune.

According to information gathered from his family, this man a resident of the neighborhood and an influential member of the SAHWANYA FRODEBU party is accused of denigrating and insulting three members of the ruling CNDD-FDD party who were elected from this neighborhood, but he denies these accusations. These elected officials are demanding that he apologize, but he refuses to apologize for baseless accusations.

Some residents of this neighborhood say he is being illegally detained because of his political affiliation. They confirm that he is being held for refusing to join the CNDD-FDD party. His family and neighbors are demanding that he be released unconditionally so he can return to work.

Ex2: A man named Claude, an employee of the Bancobu Bank branch in Mwaro, has been incarcerated at the Mwaro Provincial Police Station, located in Gatari, for one week (as of the morning of Monday, June 15, 2026).

This detention follows an incident between him and Uwayezu Claude, a prominent member of the ruling party in Mwaro, while they were at a nightclub on Saturday, June 13, 2026. The confrontation stemmed from Claude's (a bank teller) refusal to congratulate Uwayezu Claude, who was recently appointed head of the ruling party's Imbonerakure Youth League in the Mwaro area.

Uwayezu also serves as head of the health department in the municipality of Mwaro, a position he has held since the country's administrative reorganization, which took place a year ago. Information gathered on the ground indicates that Uwayezu Claude filed a complaint with police authorities, accusing him of assaulting an official ("yakubise urwego"). Uwayezu has a habit of provoking others in entertainment venues, relying on his affiliation with the ruling party an attitude that constitutes an abuse of power and is carried out with total impunity.

II.1.2.1 ARBITRARY ARRESTS (the following of page 18)

Ex3: *The arrest of Benjamin Babunga Watuna, a Congolese national, international consultant, and renowned analyst of the history of the Great Lakes region, took place in Bujumbura on May 26, 2026.*

Highly active and widely followed on social media, Watuna is known for his regular publications of independent historical and political analyses on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the subregion.

In the absence of any official statement from Burundian or Congolese authorities at the time of the incident, information gathered by human rights organizations and the victim's relatives points to a case driven primarily by political motives.

According to corroborating sources, the stop began in a very innocuous manner under the pretext of a simple traffic violation, which the Iteka League now considers a deliberate ploy to carry out his arrest without attracting attention.

Approached by a police officer who accused him of parking his vehicle in a prohibited area, Watuna disputed the validity of this accusation.

Police reinforcements quickly arrived on the scene, and an officer forcibly entered his vehicle to compel him to follow them to the station.

This traffic stop immediately escalated into a state security operation, with the driver being handed directly over to the Burundian National Intelligence Service (SNR).

Once the analyst was in the SNR's custody, the case took on a serious political dimension, apparently at the instigation of the authorities in Kinshasa. The Congolese government accuses Watuna of collaborating with the M23 rebel movement, alleging that he acts as a financial intermediary to funnel funds intended for individuals linked to this Burundi-based rebellion.

Following his arrest, his phones and computers were seized for analysis by experts. However, according to our sources, no evidence was found on his devices to corroborate Kinshasa's allegations.

After ten days in SNR custody, Benjamin Babunga Watuna was transferred on June 5, 2026, to the central prison in Bujumbura (Mpimba), where he is currently incarcerated. This arrest occurred the day after an official meeting in Bujumbura between the Burundian Minister of Defense and the Congolese Deputy Prime Minister for Defense.

II.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Economic, social, and cultural rights, known as second-generation rights, are set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Burundi ratified this pact on March 14, 1990, and incorporated it into its 2018 Constitution, especially in Article 19. One thing about these rights is that they are often realized gradually, unlike civil and political rights. The signatory states, including Burundi, commit to ensuring the exercise of these rights based on the resources they have available.

II.2.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE.

In Burundi, during the second quarter of the year, economic rights were affected by the events of June 11 and 13, 2026. Agasaka Stadium hosted a prayer ceremony organized by the CNDD-FDD party for former President Nkurunziza, but significant incidents occurred. Members of the community, some of whom were not party members, were forced to make financial contributions.

II.2.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE (the following of page 17)

School principals, prefects, and teachers were required to make mandatory payments. Female vendors at the Ngozi Central Market expressed their discontent over the contributions demanded for the event. Although the public's reaction was subdued on the first day, the situation escalated the following day when young Imbonerakure members forced a halt to agricultural activities, leading to unrest. The police closed shops and markets until 6:00 p.m. and penalized violators. On the final day, protests broke out against these mandatory contributions.

In the commune of Muyinga, the CNDD-FDD commune secretary demanded contributions of 2,000 Burundian francs, in addition to monthly fees for office maintenance. These funds appear to be intended to pay the salaries of party officials. In Muramvya, the food situation was deteriorating, with food prices rising despite a decree to regulate prices. Farmers in Matana and Bururi lacked fertilizer, which hampered their harvests, and were concerned about the lack of supplies despite having made advance payments. Authorities stated that fertilizer stocks had been depleted for Season C, and farmers received no assistance. The Prime Minister confirmed difficulties related to the increase in requests for assistance and problems with foreign currency imports. Although proposals for liberalization had been discussed, no government action was evident, raising fears of a drop in agricultural production and a threat to food security.

II.2.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

By mid-2026, the situation regarding the right to education in Burundi had deteriorated, particularly in the commune of Muramvya, where the problem of school dropouts had reached alarming proportions, especially among elementary school children. An official from the municipal Department of Education highlighted various factors behind this troubling phenomenon, such as poverty, early pregnancies, and health issues. At the same time, students were forced to participate in labor projects for the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD a situation that raises serious concerns about its impact on their educational progress.

In June, the municipality of Rumonge recorded a total of 3,493 school dropouts, affecting approximately 1,513 girls. The main reasons for these dropouts include poverty and early pregnancies, although many are reluctant to report these circumstances. Despite new enrollments, a significant number of students decided to leave school, leading to a decline in exam results. Faced with this disheartening situation, the Burundian government has responded by announcing a reform of its education system for the 2026–2027 school year, with the aim of addressing the shortcomings identified in the field of education.

The Ministry of Education plans to implement training sessions for teachers, while introducing gradual changes for students in grades 7 through 10, following an assessment that revealed unnecessary grade repetition and an insufficient level of proficiency in French. Starting in the 2027–2028, 10th grade will be integrated into the curriculum, accompanied by the reopening of boarding schools for 7th-grade students at top-tier educational institutions. Teachers' unions welcomed these measures with some satisfaction, while emphasizing the need for adequate support to ensure their effective implementation.

II.2.3. RIGHT TO HEALTH

During the second quarter, public health in Burundi was shaken by unexpected events. It all started on April 28, 2026, when two cases of a mysterious illness were reported at Kigutu Hospital in Burunga Province. Although the patients showed symptoms of hemorrhagic fever, tests failed to confirm this theory. On May 8, Dr. Jérémie Niyonkuru, the district chief doctor, announced that the Ministry of Health was committed to investigating the origin of this puzzling disease.

At the same time, the Karuzi commune, located in Gitega Province, was facing a serious shortage of medicines, forcing patients to turn to private pharmacies for their treatments, making access to free healthcare nearly impossible, especially for pregnant women and young children.

Hospitals are facing an alarming drop in their supplies, and the medical staff, already underpaid, are in a tough spot. In Rumonge, fears of a possible Ebola outbreak are rising, fueled by the increase in cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Things were especially worrying at the port of Rumonge, a key entry point, which was badly lacking in isolation facilities, putting not just the workers but also the security staff at risk. Even though medical officials carried out an assessment, no official announcement had been made to calm the growing concerns. The administrator of Rumonge, Augustin Minani, had then called a local meeting to set up better controls at entry points and close some secondary ones. However, these measures weren't enough to reassure the workers, who were asking for a treatment center that meets WHO standards, to prevent any threatening outbreak in Burunga.



Anyone should be respected

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The human rights situation in Burundi during the second quarter of 2026 continues to reveal systematic violations, as in previous periods. The Iteka League and other organizations report the discovery of bodies, rapes, torture, and abductions and/or disappearances, illustrating the chronic instability that threatens fundamental freedoms. These events reveal a repressive policy aimed at crushing all political opposition. The rights of women and children are also subject to severe violations, including sexual violence against children at an alarming rate. The Iteka League calls on the government and its officials to recognize the need to respect human rights and to implement urgent reforms. This period is marked by ongoing violations and a deterioration in various sectors. It is crucial to initiate coordinated actions and an inclusive national dialogue to strengthen the protection of human rights.

However, the Iteka League commends the actions taken by the government particularly the legal proceedings and statements against the perpetrators of violations and strongly encourages this best practice, which it considers vital in the fight against impunity.

Furthermore, the Iteka League condemns the impunity surrounding certain observed crimes and recommends the following:

⇒ **To the President of Burundi:**

1. Guarantee democratic governance by ensuring respect for citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms.
2. Guarantee respect for human rights, particularly the right to life, physical integrity, and liberty,

⇒ **To the Minister of Justice, Human Rights, and Gender, and the Minister of the Interior, Community Development, and Public Security:**

1. Take concrete measures to end impunity for crimes and ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are held accountable for their actions;
2. Investigate and severely punish acts of violence against minors, which have become commonplace in Burundi at the hands of local administrative officials and other activists of the presidential party;

⇒ **To the Minister of National Education and Scientific Research and Minister of the Interior, Community Development, and Public Security:**

1. Put an end to political activities in schools to protect and promote the right to education for Burundian children;

⇒ **To the technical and financial partners of the Government of Burundi, including the UN, the EU, and diplomatic missions accredited to Burundi, etc.;**

1. Hold the Burundian government accountable for its commitments regarding respect for fundamental rights and demand structural reforms to prevent further violations;

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (the following of page 20)

2. Support the protection of human rights defenders and journalists, whose role is essential in exposing abuses;
3. Use their influence to compel the Burundian government to honor its commitments to protect human rights.

⇒ **To the Independent National Human Rights Commission of Burundi (CNIDH):**

1. Conduct independent investigations into human rights violations and publish regular reports, particularly on bodies found, sexual violence against minors, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detentions.

⇒ **To human rights organizations:**

1. Continue to monitor the human rights situation in Burundi and advocate for the protection of fundamental rights;
2. Prioritize collaborative efforts to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of their diverse interventions;
3. Provide support to victims of human rights violations and work to ensure their access to justice.



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