

BURUNDI HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE " ITEKA "

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REPORT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BURUNDI ON THE EVE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

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

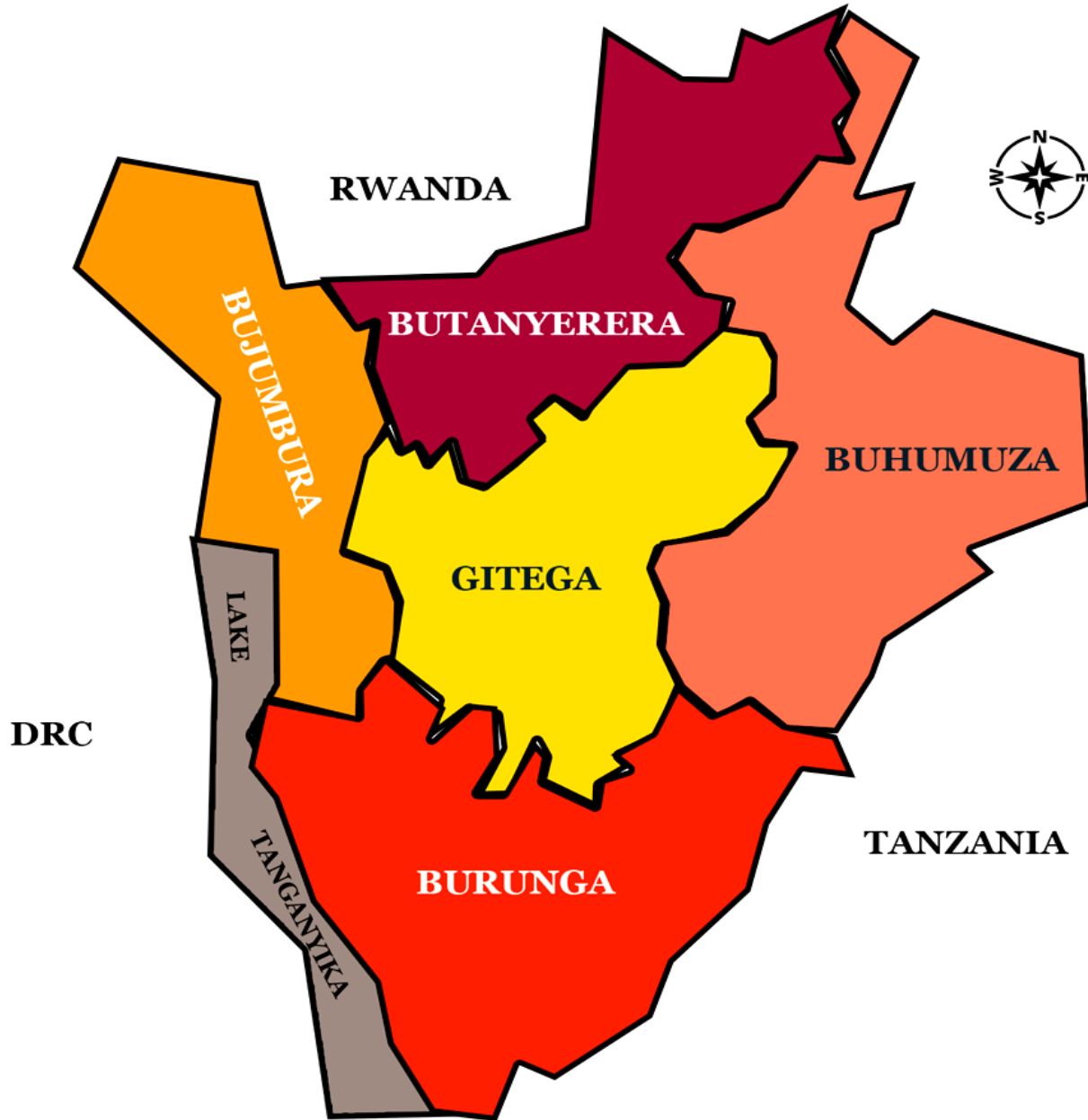


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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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

I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT

I.1. POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE:

In the months following the June elections, Burundi found itself in a state of political turmoil marked by intrigue and manipulation. From the CNDD-FDD's sweep of all seats from local to parliamentary elections the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) announced that 96.51% of the vote went to the CNDD-FDD, despite persistent challenges from the opposition.

Although an apparent truce had taken hold, the threats facing the opposition remained a cause for concern. The population lived in fear amid incessant rumors of agricultural land confiscation by the CNDD-FDD. From July to September, the situation deteriorated with the reelection of Daniel Gélase Ndabirabe, leading to an escalation of events. Political violence became increasingly prevalent, and the irregularities observed during the local elections further deepened the sense of disappointment with the electoral process.

In September, the expulsion of Davis Leyssens, country director of the Belgian development agency Enabel, highlighted the growing restrictions on freedom of expression. The year 2025 ended amid palpable political tensions, and a summit in Washington sought to promote dialogue between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, though it offered no concrete solutions for Burundi. Despite some stabilization within the CNDD-FDD, democratic space was shrinking, leaving citizens to face a multitude of socioeconomic challenges, ranging from inflation to food shortages.

Furthermore, all dissenting voices within the presidential party were silenced. This is evident in the continued imprisonment of the former prime minister, who, according to sources within the party, was reportedly released as a result of internal compromises among the generals in power within the CNDD-FDD. There is also the imprisonment of General Bertin Gahungu, former head of domestic intelligence and the judicial police, who was most recently in charge of military affairs at the Burundian Embassy in the United States of America.

Although the country may appear stable within its borders, it was nonetheless affected by regional crises, resulting in a “peace without openness.”

At the same time, the territorial reorganization intended to bring services closer to citizens faced complex challenges. Many Burundians had to travel long distances to obtain administrative documents, while access to essential services remained limited. Delays in project implementation were frequent, mainly due to management challenges, including the reduction of provinces from eighteen (18) to five (5) and of communes from one hundred and nineteen (119) to forty-two (42), in favor of an increase in the number of zones, which rose from three hundred thirty-nine (339) and four hundred fifty-one (451), and the number of hills or neighborhoods, which rose from two thousand nine hundred ten (2,910) to three thousand forty-four (3,044). The zonal administration still lacked the capacity to provide all services to the population, who found themselves forced to travel long distances at great cost in both time and money to reach the municipality. The autonomy of the municipalities remained limited, raising the risk that priorities imposed from above would benefit only a small group. The authorities, aware of disparities in natural resources and infrastructure, needed to intensify their efforts to ensure the inclusion of all Burundians and promote balanced development.

1.2. SECURITY SITUATION

From a security perspective, during the period covered by this report, Burundi was marked by a series of notable events following the municipal and legislative elections held in June 2025. The CNDD-FDD party succeeded in winning all the seats in the National Assembly and the Senate in this election. This result led to a consolidation of control over the state apparatus, with significant implications for the country's political future.

Although a limited number of major election-related incidents have been documented, the security situation remains worrying, as it is "managed" through various local structures, notably the Imbonerakure, who act as law enforcement and security forces. In previous reports, the Iteka League has consistently highlighted the paramilitary exercises of these youth members of the ruling party and their role in the fighting in the DRC. They are frequently involved in incidents of violence and physical assaults within the Burundian community, and they act with blatant impunity. Lifeless bodies are discovered daily throughout the country, yet no concrete measures are being taken to eradicate this problem. Common crimes continue to proliferate, and murder is becoming increasingly commonplace.

The security of private and public property is no longer guaranteed. During this year, fires in various markets have been reported in several parts of the country, particularly in the economic capital and other centers, further complicating the socio-economic lives of the already vulnerable population.

On the night of March 31, 2026, explosions at a warehouse in an armed forces base camp located in Musaga, Mugere commune, Bujumbura province, caused numerous casualties and material losses. To this day, the victims remain without assistance, and no precise information has been released regarding the cause of the fire; only conflicting statements from the country's authorities have been made.

Furthermore, beyond its borders, Burundi is also conducting military operations in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, raising serious human rights concerns and potentially exacerbating regional tensions. Furthermore, relations between Burundi and Rwanda remain strained, with Burundi accusing Rwanda of planning hostile attacks from its territory, further complicating the existing security and diplomatic climate in the region. At the end of 2025, attempts to improve relations between the two countries took place with US facilitation, and security force meetings were held in Butanyere province, in the Kirundo commune.



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1.3. SOCIOECONOMIC AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

⇒1. ECONOMIC SITUATION

Burundi's economic situation remains extremely tense one year after the election: More than 70% of the population lives below the poverty line, with very limited access to essential services and employment opportunities, according to World Bank reports. This situation is exacerbated by rampant inflation and persistent shortages, notably a prolonged fuel shortage that is paralyzing transportation, affecting the health sector, and seriously disrupting food supply chains, as well as a lack of foreign currency, which is exacerbating the scarcity of imported goods and products made from imported goods.

The consequences of this situation are manifold: there has been a sharp rise in the prices of basic necessities, leading to a significant increase in the cost of living for households, and civil servants' salaries have remained unchanged, making it difficult for the general population and especially for government employees who rely on their salaries to make ends meet, and leading some to make sudden decisions to quit their jobs and leave the country for the Gulf states in search of a slightly better life. In recent days, this phenomenon has affected the education and health care sectors and even the security sector where teachers, doctors, nurses, and military personnel have abandoned their posts. This brain drain and loss of human resources is exacerbating social and political tensions, fueling resentment and hostility between groups.

Faced with this destabilization, the authorities may be tempted to adopt repressive measures or, conversely, to promise economic and democratic reforms in order to reassure the population and restore order. However, without inclusive governance and clear economic prospects, political intolerance risks persisting and taking root, leading to sporadic conflicts and further fragmentation of institutions. Furthermore, the challenges associated with Burundi's exchange rate particularly the gap between the official exchange rate and the black-market rate exacerbate this already precarious situation. The black-market rate is considered the de facto exchange rate for commercial transactions. This reality contributes to the fragility of public services, which are reluctant to eliminate this disparity because it benefits certain high-ranking officials who acquire foreign currency from the central bank to resell it on the black market, thereby enabling them to make substantial profits. Consequently, the complications associated with importing foreign goods and services which require payments in foreign currency significantly hinder economic activity.

The massive influx of refugees from eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, due to ongoing conflicts, is one of the factors exacerbating this alarming situation. This influx places enormous pressure on available resources as well as on host communities.

In short, a subsistence economy predominates in this country, while the regional crisis in the DRC absorbs a considerable portion of the Burundian government's capacity to meet the needs of its own population. Added to this is the mass repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania, despite the country being ill-prepared to receive such a large number in a short period of time. This became acutely apparent when organizations in the field including UNHCR began to warn of a glaring lack of sufficient resources to meet the basic needs of Congolese refugees and Burundian returnees. This situation endangers the lives of already vulnerable communities especially children, women, and the elderly and jeopardizes the future of children who lack access to essential services such as education and health care.

I.3. SOCIOECONOMIC AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATION (the following of page 7)

⇒2. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

1°. Congolese refugees due to the crisis in eastern DRC

During the period covered by this report, Burundi hosted an impressive number of more than 100,000 refugees fleeing the fighting in the DRC. Of these refugees, 66,137 were currently residing at the camp set up in BUSUMA, located in the Ruyigi commune and Buhumuza province. According to statements by UNHCR officials themselves, the living conditions of these people are extremely deplorable and require urgent attention. Since late April 2026, following various strikes organized by refugees who were actively demanding their right to voluntary return, the Burundian government, in collaboration with UNHCR, finally agreed to take action, leading to the departure of 4,463 people who have already been assisted in their return. Among the most urgent needs of these refugees in the Busuma camp are food, drinking water, and adequate health services, as many tragic deaths have unfortunately been reported.

2°. The repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania.

From January 2026 through the end of March 2026, the Nyabitare transit center alone had already registered 27,275 returnees. With the decision to close the Nduta camp and force refugees to return, some are not being counted because they are using unofficial routes, and the movement continues. At the moment, the same pressure is expected at the Nyarugusu site, and Burundian refugees are the targets.

In addition to the inhumane treatment they face in Tanzania, their ordeal begins as soon as they arrive at the transit center, as even basic services are not guaranteed a fact lamented even by humanitarian NGOs and the UNHCR. Some even report that they have not had access to the return package provided for everyone.

3°. Asylum Seekers in Europe Being Deported

For some time now, threats of deportation have loomed over asylum seekers in Europe, and on April 21, 2026, Switzerland deported 11 people, including a family consisting of a man, his wife, and three children (two girls and a boy), two girls, and four men. According to the asylum seekers, who continue to appeal to human rights organizations to speak out on their behalf, other deportations are reportedly underway in Switzerland and other European countries such as Belgium. In Asia, the Iteka League's documentation covers 83 people deported from the Philippines, but our detailed information focuses on 17 people 15 of whom were in Terminals 1 and 2 out of the 68 who were in Terminal 3 at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila.

I.4. HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

During 2025, in the run-up to the June elections, a wave of exiles among the leadership of national commissions was observed, including members of the Independent National Human Rights Commission (CNIDH) such as its president—as well as the Bureau of the Burundian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR), notably featuring two prominent figures: its secretary general, Aloys Batungwanayo and its vice-chair, Clément Noé Ninziza. This development had significant repercussions on the day-to-day operations of these two commissions and undermined their independence. The hasty replacement in May 2025 of all CNIDH commissioners before the end of their terms had negative repercussions on the commission's operations and is believed to be the

I.4. HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE *(the following of page 8)*

reason why the CNIDH's annual report for 2025 has not yet been released. Furthermore, this situation has undermined the internal cohesion of the teams, making it more difficult to coordinate monitoring, investigative, and reporting activities.

Furthermore, coordination with other international organizations and local partners had to adapt to this new environment, often resulting in longer delays and requiring temporary relay or delegation strategies. Ultimately, this dynamic eroded the perception both nationally and internationally of the independence and effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms, thereby impacting public trust and institutional credibility.

With regard to press freedoms, the Iteka League welcomes the release of journalist Sandra Muhoza on March 4, 2026, after nearly two years in detention. It should be noted that during this period, several cases of human rights violations were documented, including killings, the assassination of the Minister of Communications, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances, acts of torture, as well as arbitrary arrests and detentions of prisoners who had received a presidential pardon but had not yet been released.

Thus, during this period, the Iteka League reported a troubling tally, recording a total of 663 incidents within the country. These incidents fall into five main categories: 351 cases of killings, 160 cases of gender-based violence, 42 cases of torture, 51 cases of abductions, and 49 cases of arbitrary arrests. Among the 663 incidents recorded, 796 victims were affected, with 407 people killed, representing 51.13% of the victims; 176 victims of gender-based violence, or 22.11%; 44 people tortured, or 5.52%; 57 people were abducted, or 7.16%; and 102 victims of arbitrary arrests, or 12.81%. The provinces of Bujumbura and Gitega were the hardest hit, with 244 victims, or 30.65%, and 200 victims, or 25.12%, respectively. It should be noted that of the 407 people killed, 269 bodies were found in various locations across the country 66% and this leads the Iteka League to believe that it is a carefully planned strategy by the ruling regime to make people disappear without exposing the responsibility of state agencies, as was the case in previous years. Of these 407 victims, 97 are women. Regarding the 176 victims of gender-based violence, 155 are women, 119 of whom were raped, including underage girls.

ILLUSTRATIVE CHARTS

Illustrative Charts: Figure 1: Illustrative chart of alleged violations and their locations

Place of incident/ Province	Number of victims						Total
	Arrest	Other categories	Kidnapping	Torture	Killing	GBV	
Buhumuza	4	0	6	3	52	5	70
Bujumbura	36	1	40	7	115	45	244
Burunga	36	3	4	15	66	42	166
Butanyerera	15	3	4	7	54	33	116
Gitega	11	3	3	12	120	51	200
Total	102	10	57	44	407	176	796

I.4. HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE (the following of page 9)

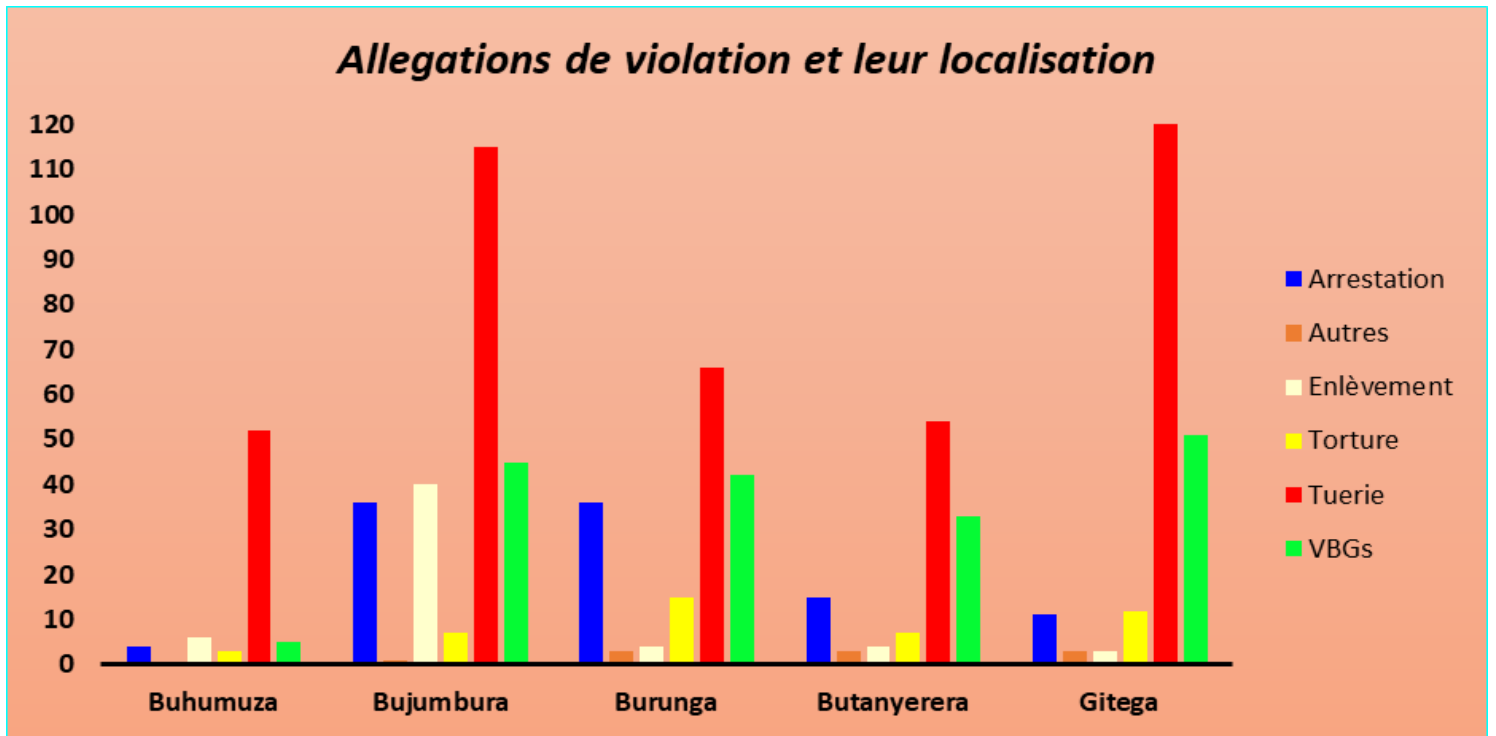


Figure 2: Illustrative chart of the perpetrators of these violations and their locations:

The chart shows a total of 663 incident cases spread across 12 categories of perpetrators recorded during the period considered. The majority of cases involve unidentified people and other categories. Bujumbura and Gitega are the most affected provinces. It's worth noting that the circumstances surrounding these acts are hardly different from those carried out by other agents within these government institutions.

Alleged perpetrators	Buhumuza	Bujumbura	Burunga	Butanyerera	Gitega	Total
Police officer	2	22	23	11	10	68
Administrative agents	3	2	5	4	3	17
SNR agents	1	13	3	5	1	23
Other categories	4	45	29	18	39	135
Unidentified people	31	64	41	27	83	246
Poisoning	0	1	0	0	2	3
Imbonerakure	11	33	18	19	28	109
Infanticides	0	6	7	3	8	24
Popular justice	2	0	0	0	0	2
Military	1	5	1	0	2	9
Drowning	0	0	0	0	1	1
Account Settling	11	18	23	16	20	88
Total	66	209	150	103	197	725

I.4. HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE (the following of page 10)

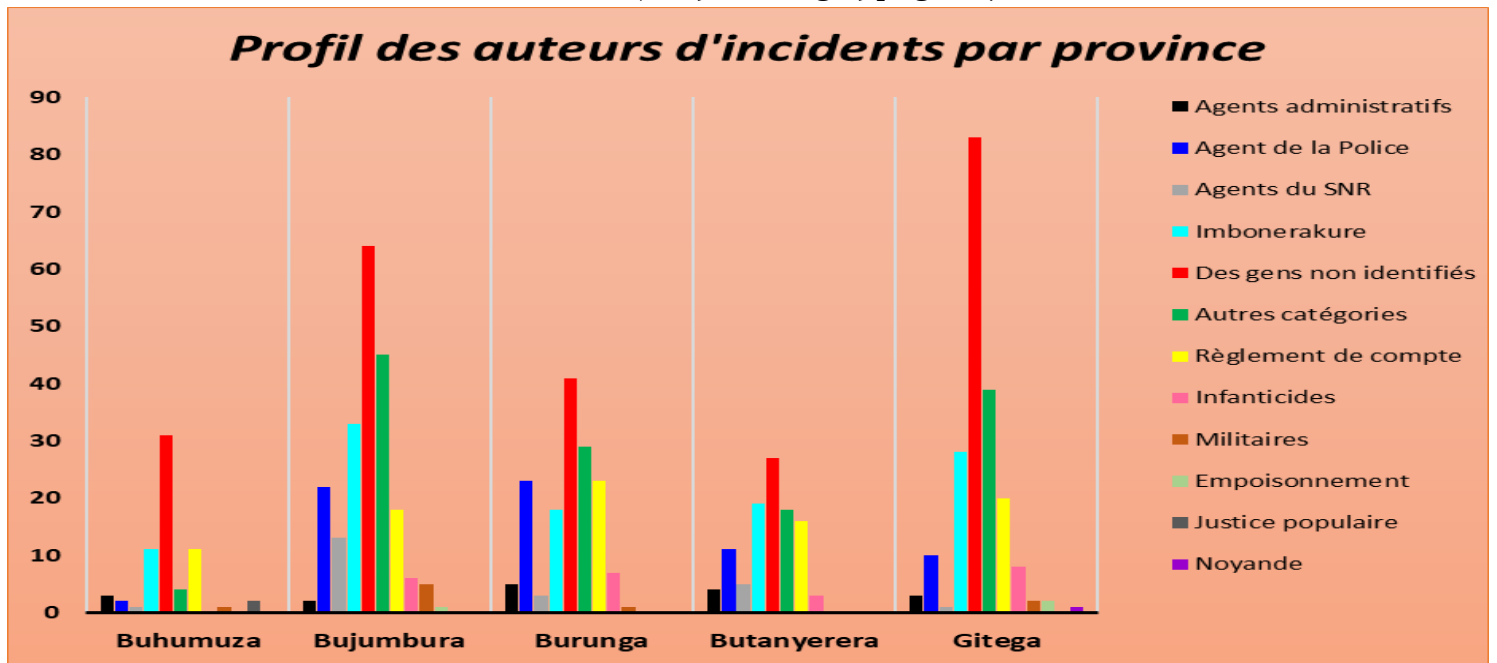
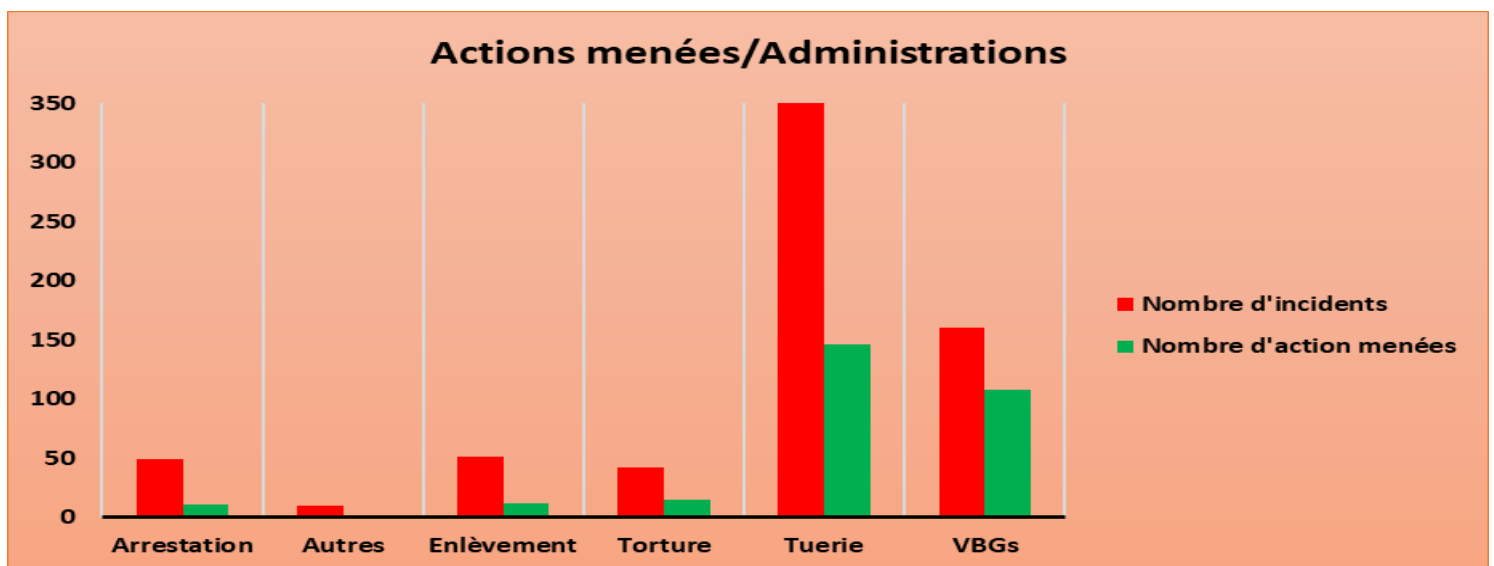


Figure 3: Illustrative chart of actions taken by the authorities for the victims

For this period, the Iteka League noticed a change in the country's authority's behavior regarding reported incidents, where actions are initiated by various services in the country. This table shows the actions taken in relation to the category of alleged human rights violations or crimes.

Types of incident	Number of incidents	Number of actions taken	No action
Arrest	49	11	38
Other types	10	1	9
Kidnapping	51	12	39
Torture	42	15	28
Killing	351	146	204
GBV	160	108	52
General Total	663	293	370



I.4. HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE *(the following of page 11)*

Out of the 663 reported incidents during the period in question, 293 actions were taken, divided into four main groups, to address them. Some incidents were resolved, while others are still being handled, with investigations underway to identify the most appropriate solutions. We still regret the fact that some allegations were not followed up at all by government officials, even though they had been informed. The table below shows the types of actions taken by category of human rights violation allegation.

Types of incidents	Internal investigation	Judicial investigation opened	Disciplinary measures	Statement	No action
Arrest	1	8	2	0	38
Other types	0	1	0	0	9
Kidnapping	6	4	0	2	39
Torture	4	7	2	2	28
Killing	14	115	3	14	204
GBV	11	90	2	5	52
General Total	36	225	9	23	370

The Iteka League encourages an increase in actions against human rights violations, which continue to rise, as this is the only way to promote human rights and justice for all.

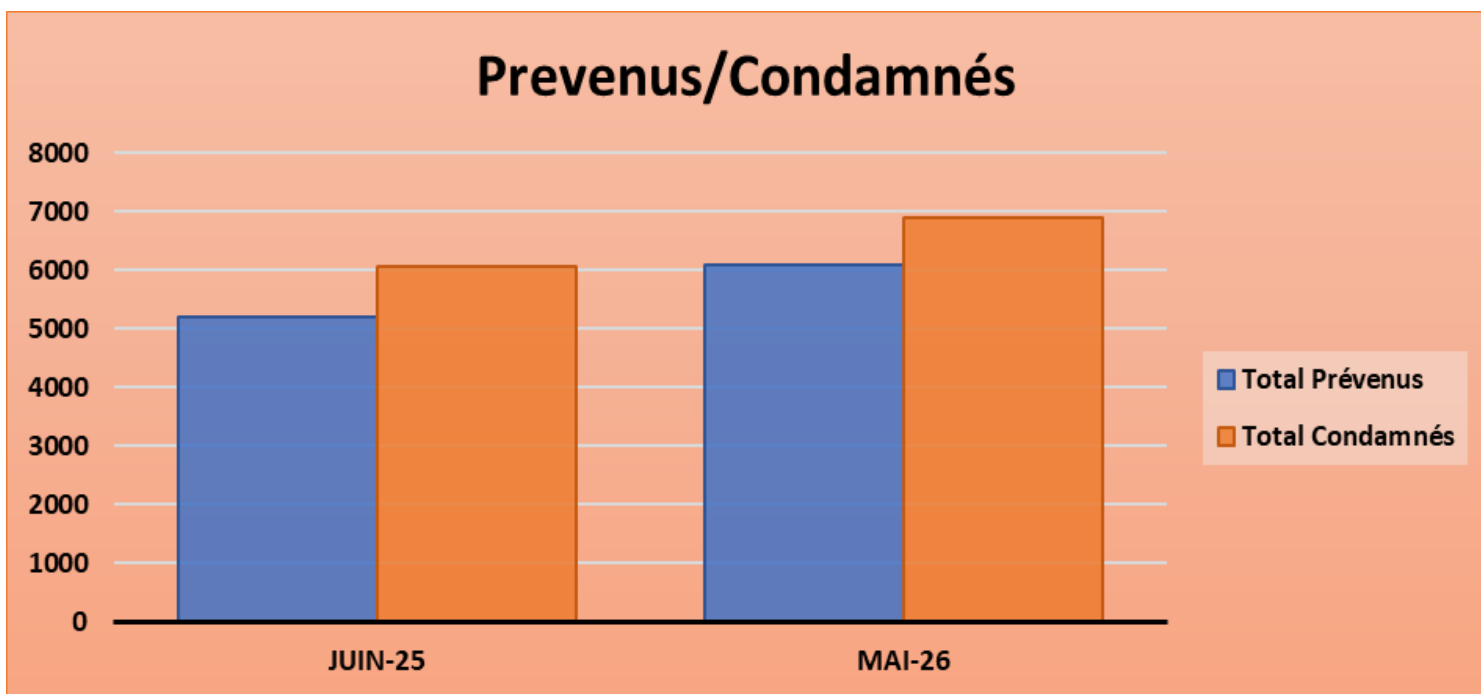
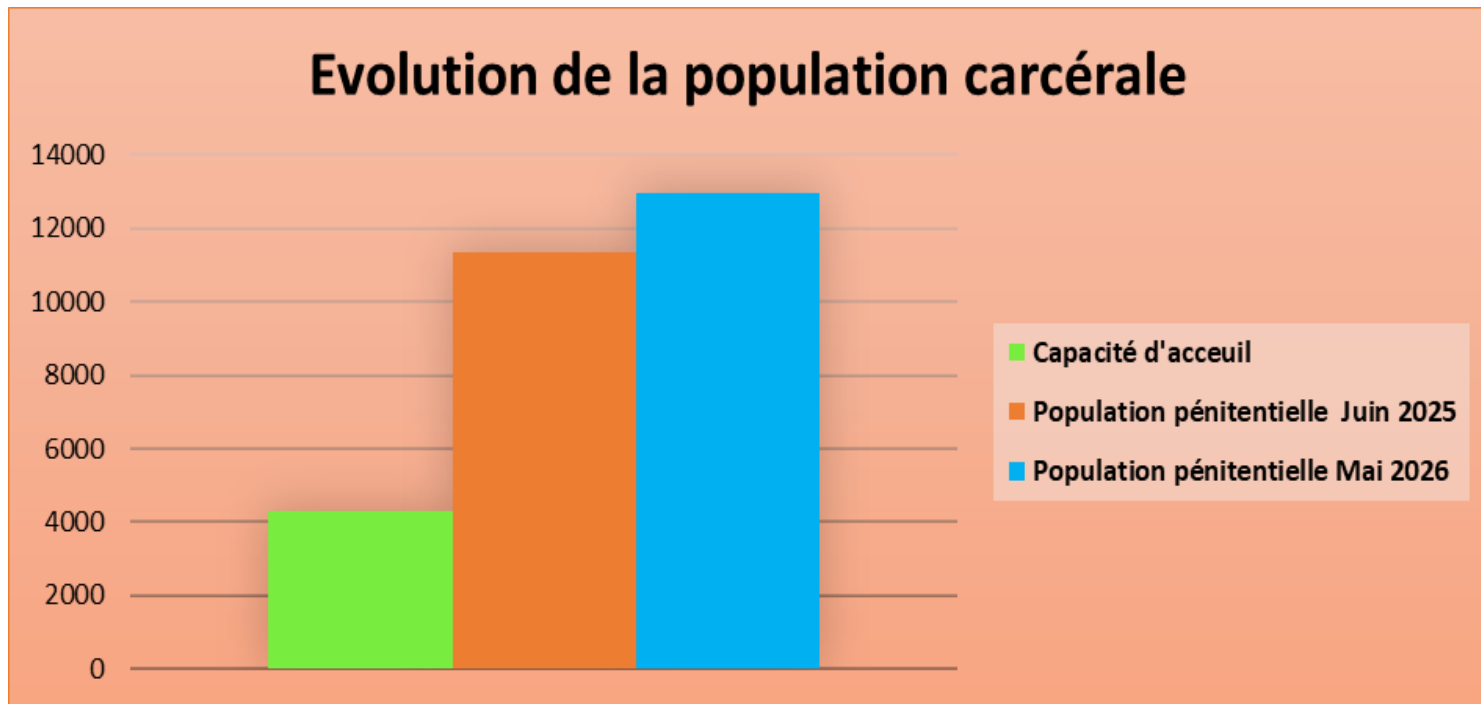
Despite this step forward in terms of actions initiated by the government, the destabilization of the CNIDH through the unilateral and illegal replacement of all its commissioners has had a negative impact on the handling of prisoners' cases, especially since it was the only body that regularly conducted visits to detention centers and was able to make credible recommendations. The Iteka League refers to the initiatives undertaken by the President of the Republic in recent years to reduce prison overcrowding in response to recommendations from partners and the CNIDH, which used to conduct regular visits to these detention facilities. Unfortunately, according to multiple sources, the new team of CNIDH commissioners no longer conducts regular visits to detention centers and prisons, except in rare cases.

The Iteka League notes with regret that prison conditions have continued to deteriorate. During the 12-month period covered by this report, the prison population has increased significantly, rising from 11,437 (11,368 inmates and 69 infants) representing an average occupancy rate of 264.74% (as of June 2025) to 13,063 (12,980 inmates and 83 infants), representing an average occupancy rate of 302.28% (as of May 2026), despite calls from various partners urging the government to step up initiatives aimed at reducing prison overcrowding. The average prison population rate relative to capacity rose from 264.74% to 302.28%, representing an alarming increase of 37.54% over a period of just 12 months.

It should be noted that as of May 30, 2026, all prisons in Burundi held 520 women awaiting trial and 525 convicted women for a total of 1,045 women in detention as well as 32 minors awaiting trial (including 2 girls) and 134 convicted minors (including 17 girls), for a total of 166 minors in detention. These minors are distributed across three prisons: 19 in the women's prison in Ngozi; 50 in the Ruyigi Rehabilitation Center for Minors in Conflict with the Law (CRMCL Ruyigi); and 97 in the Rumonge Rehabilitation Center for Minors in Conflict with the Law (CRMCL Rumonge). It should be noted that 83 infants are with their mothers in these prisons 47 boys and 36 girls.

I.4. HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE *(the following of page 12)*

Figure 4: Graph illustrating changes in the prison population over a 12-month period (June 2025–June 2026).



The graph shows a significant increase in the number of defendants and convicted individuals between June 2025 and May 2026, with convicted individuals consistently outnumbering defendants. In June 2025, there were **5,215 defendants** compared to **6,053 convicted individuals**, and in May 2026, the number of defendants increased from **5,215 to 6,093**, while the number of convicted individuals rose from **6,053 to 6,887**.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Iteka League analyzes the major events that have influenced the following areas over the course of the year: the political, judicial, and governance landscapes, as well as the security, environmental, and humanitarian contexts. The Iteka League expresses its outrage at the impunity surrounding the criminal acts observed and the lack of concrete action, and presents the following recommendations:

⇒ **To the President of Burundi:**

1. Guarantee democratic governance by ensuring respect for citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms.
2. Demonstrate democratic leadership by incorporating democratic principles into decision-making and governance.
3. Ensure respect for human rights, including the right to life, physical integrity, and liberty,
4. Continue its successful initiatives aimed at reducing prison overcrowding through presidential pardons, which have already proven effective

⇒ **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 members of the presidential party;
3. Guarantee access to basic services—including water, health care, education, and justice—for all citizens, especially vulnerable populations such as refugees and returnees;

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

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

⇒ **Minister of Finance, Budget, and the Digital Economy, and Minister of the Environment, Agriculture, and Livestock:**

1. Ensure that farmers have timely access to agricultural inputs, particularly fertilizer, and that organizations involved in the collection and purchase of agricultural produce honor their commitments to the government;

⇒ **To the Attorney General of the Republic and the Director of the General Directorate of Prison Administration (DGAP):**

II. RECOMMENDATIONS *(the following of page 14)*

1. Strictly enforce laws guaranteeing the right to a fair trial and punish violations of prisoners' rights;
2. Ensure respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, put an end to arbitrary arrests, and release those who are being unlawfully detained;

⇒ **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 to respect fundamental rights and demand structural reforms to prevent further violations;
2. Support the protection of human rights defenders and journalists, whose role is essential in exposing abuses;
3. Conduct rigorous monitoring in accordance with the agreements concluded with the Burundian government and hold it accountable for ensuring respect for human rights;
4. Enforce international standards regarding human rights and good governance, and ensure that aid provided to Burundi reaches the population, which benefits from the achievements of international cooperation;
5. Closely monitor totalitarian tendencies and hate speech in Burundi and take immediate action, particularly through diplomatic channels;
6. Provide financial and logistical support to civil society organizations defending human rights and to humanitarian organizations working with returnees and refugees in Burundi;
7. Use their influence to compel the Burundian government to honor its commitments to protect human rights.

⇒ **To countries that have refugee resettlement policies:**

1. Make it easier to resettle Burundian refugees who face many challenges due to insufficient humanitarian aid for their survival, health, and education, the insecurity they face, and the obstacles to their socio-economic integration in some countries;

⇒ **To countries hosting Burundian asylum seekers, especially Western countries like Switzerland and Norway, EAC countries like Tanzania, and Asian countries like the Philippines:**

1. Reconsider their policy of expelling Burundian asylum seekers given the uncertain security situation in the country they fled;

II. RECOMMENDATIONS *(the following of page 15)*

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

1. Conduct independent investigations into human rights violations and publish regular reports, particularly on dead bodies, sexual violence against minors, torture, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detentions.
2. Break its inaction and denounce prison overcrowding.
3. Conduct regular visits to all detention centers and prisons, as required by the law establishing the commission, with a view, in particular, to gathering all information on torture occurring there and to making appropriate recommendations to the government aimed at effectively prohibiting these crimes against humanity and reducing prison overcrowding;
4. Produce annual reports, as required by the law establishing the Commission, to raise awareness of the situation and improve respect for human rights;
5. Collaborate with human rights organizations rather than opposing them.

⇒ **To the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the United Nations Committee Against Torture:**

1. Visit prisons in Burundi and continue to closely monitor developments regarding the situation of detainees in that country, with a view to making recommendations for their release or for their treatment in accordance with international standards.

⇒ **To the Human Rights Council, GANRHI, and the Accreditation Subcommittee:**

1. Reassess the status of Burundi's Independent National Human Rights Commission (CNIDH).

⇒ **To human rights organizations:**

1. Continue monitoring 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 guarantee their access to justice.



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III. OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

The Iteka League has produced this report a one-year review following the municipal and legislative elections on the human rights situation in Burundi with the following objectives:

- a. Raise awareness among the Burundian government regarding respect for human rights and the fight against impunity for crimes;
- b. Enable other stakeholders to monitor human rights developments in Burundi over a specific period, by identifying trends, challenges, and progress made;
- c. To inform policymakers, human rights organizations, and international actors in their decision-making and actions regarding Burundi;
- d. To raise awareness among the national and international public about critical issues related to human rights and security in Burundi, and to advocate for specific reforms or actions

IV. THE USED METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH:

The Iteka League regularly publishes weekly bulletins titled *Iteka n'Ijambo*, as well as monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, annual, thematic, and summary reports on the human rights and security situation. These documents are shared with various partners, in particular with the Government of Burundi and its various institutions, as well as its technical and financial partners.

This report is based on ongoing monitoring conducted by Iteka League volunteers and observers, who work to promote human rights throughout the country. The members of this organization are guided by ethical and humanitarian principles, committed to preventing human rights violations while continuing to monitor and document abuses and acts of violence committed by the ruling authorities against the population.

The research methodology adopted to analyze the human rights situation in Burundi under the regime of Evariste Ndayishimiye is based on several complementary and rigorous approaches. A qualitative approach was prioritized, which includes gathering information and conducting interviews with key stakeholders, such as human rights defenders, members of civil society, and certain government officials. This method allows for the collection of diverse perspectives on the human rights situation in Burundi, thereby providing a nuanced view of the challenges faced and the progress made since Ndayishimiye took office in June 2020. In addition, interviews were conducted with victims of human rights violations to gather firsthand accounts, thereby enriching the analysis by grounding the data in lived experience.

However, through its weekly bulletin *Iteka n' Ijambo*, this report compiles data covering a one-year period from June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026. The organization's database, in which all data is entered, was used to generate the charts and illustrative examples.

V. OVERVIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION DOCUMENTED FOR THIS REPORTING PERIOD.

V. 1. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Burundi is among the countries that acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1965) and its Optional Protocol (1976) without any reservations on May 9, 1990. In the context of its implementation, Burundi has adopted measures in its domestic legislation, notably in its Constitution of June 7, 2018 (the “Main Law”) Article 19 of which guarantees that all rights proclaimed and guaranteed by duly ratified international instruments form an integral part of this Constitution. Implementing legislation has been enacted, notably the Criminal Code of December 29, 2017, and the Code of Criminal Procedure of May 11, 2018, and other institutions for the protection of human rights in Burundi have been established.

V.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE

During the period covered by this report, the Iteka League documented a total of 407 murders, accounting for 51.13% of all victims of other recorded violations. It should be noted that among these 407 victims, 269 were found dead, often with signs of torture. Furthermore, it should be noted that 57 individuals were abducted and reported missing, accounting for 7.16% of the cases. It should also be noted that among those killed were 35 children, 18 of whom were found dead. The majority of incidents occurred under unexplained circumstances, and the perpetrators have not been identified, as mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, some people were killed by the Imbonerakure, with a documented total of 18 cases; others were killed by police officers, with 11 reported cases, as well as by military personnel, with 5 cases.

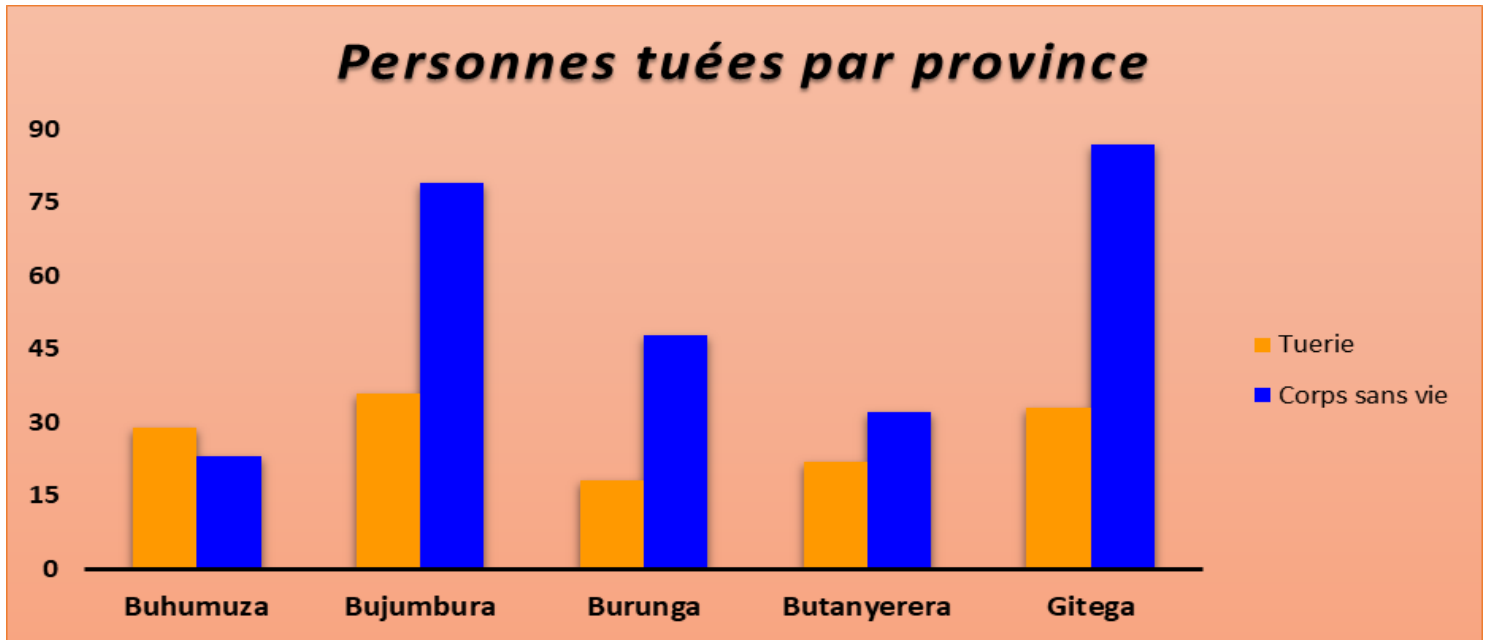
V.1.1.1. INTENTIONAL HOMICIDES

As guaranteed by law, human dignity must be respected and protected by the State, and in the event of a violation, sanctions should be imposed on the alleged perpetrators, pursuant to Article 21 of the country’s Constitutional Law.

During the period covered by this report, the Iteka League documented a total of 351 incidents of killings across the country. Of these 351 cases, 407 people lost their lives, and 269 bodies were recovered. Among the victims were 350 adults and 57 children. It is important to note that, of the 407 people killed, 310 were men and 97 were women. Gitega and Bujumbura were the hardest-hit provinces, with 120 and 115 victims, respectively.

Figure 5: Chart illustrating the number of people killed during the period from June 2025 to May 31, 2026

Province	Cases of killings	Number of victims		Men	Women
		killings	Lifeless bodies		
Buhumuza	44	29	23	36	16
Bujumbura	84	36	79	98	17
Burunga	58	18	48	45	21
Butanyerera	45	22	32	44	10
Gitega	120	33	87	87	33
Grand Total	351	138	269	310	97



Cases of illustrations

⇒ **Killed by police officers :**

Ex. 1: On September 2, 2025, around 5:00 p.m., on Nyabisaka Hill, Ntobwe Hill, in the commune and province of Gitega, Rémégie MUREKAMBANZE, a native of Rweza Hill in the Mungwa area, a motorcycle driver, and an activist for the CNL party supporting Agathon Rwasa, was shot 22 times and killed by Butoyi Elie, a police officer who had just arrested him. According to local witnesses, the victim was with his friend Irakoze Salatiel at a bar owned by Nzayumaze Pascal, a merchant who also owns a shop. The merchant demanded 87,000 FBU from Rémégie and his friend, but they objected, asking instead for a bill for what they had consumed. The shop owner then contacted police officer Butoyi Elie, reporting that a member of the CNL was causing a disturbance. The officer, accompanied by a colleague, arrived and ordered the two young men to get on two motorcycles so they could be taken to the police station in the Mungwa area for questioning. Rémégie Murekambanze was arrested by the police without prior explanation and was taken away on a motorcycle; he then asked the police officer transporting him to stop briefly so he could buy phone credit to let his family know he had been detained. According to the same witnesses, the police officer refused this request, and after a brief argument, the officer pushed Rémégie Murekambanze and shot him 22 times, killing him instantly. The victim’s body was retrieved by the vehicle of the administrator of the commune of Gitega, Dr. Jacques NDUWIMANA, to be taken to the morgue at Gitega Hospital, and the police officer had already fled the scene.

Investigating Officer Manirakiza Dismas wrote in his report that the police officer had fired because the victim tried to wrestle the weapon from him, but this account is disputed by all witnesses present, who assert, on the contrary, that it was a premeditated murder.

Ex 2: During the night of Saturday, April 4, 2026, to Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026, a police officer named Irankunda Osias 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

II.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 19)

thirst. He started drinking from their bottles.

But Nestor Nininahazwe, the bar owner, refused to let the police officer drink from his bottle. In a fit of anger, 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, hitting 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 asking the relevant authorities to ban the carrying of firearms in bars.

⇒ Killed by the Imbonerakure:

Ex3: *As of July 23, 2025, the Iteka League was informed of the death of Mr. Ntamahungiro Cyprien, 27 years old, farmer and member of the CNDD-FDD party. According to the evidence collected, he was first arrested by a group of Imbonerakure and accused of destroying a cassava field belonging to his neighbor, Mrs. Immaculée, a widow. Subsequently, a man named Rukundo Claude alias Nyangoma allegedly inflicted blows on him with a stick as a punishment. Weakened by the abuse, Mr. Ntamahungiro died after being taken into custody at the Kiri police station. Mr. Rukundo Claude alias Nyangoma was arrested by the police and detained in the dungeon of the former Bugabira commune, where his case is reportedly being processed. The other people involved in the facts are said to have fled. This case illustrates, according to our source, a recurrent practice of recourse to violence by some security agents at the local level.*

Ex4: *On the night of Friday, January 23, 2026, a group of Imbonerakure carried out a grenade attack against the family of Ntadugira Isaac and Macumi Anne Marie and their children, who are from Bihogo Hill in the Gasorwe area of the Musinga commune. According to information gathered at the scene, they were seriously injured, and one of their children had a leg amputated. Other victims were rushed to Rusimbuko Hospital but were later transferred urgently to Ngozi, where their mother, Anne Marie, succumbed to her injuries. The others are still receiving treatment there. Our sources reveal that two of these Imbonerakure, namely Harongintore Salathiel and Ndaruzaniye both accused of these crimes are being held in the Gasorwe Zone detention cells and have pleaded guilty, while the other, named Toto Arnaud, managed to escape. Finally, it is important to note that some sources report that this family was accused of acts of witchcraft by two local merchants. These merchants had recently lost their mother and claimed that this family was responsible for her death. Others claim that the Imbonerakure were paid by the two merchants to commit these despicable acts..*

⇒ Killed by military personnel:

Ex5: *On January 17, 2026, at around 11:00 p.m., a law enforcement officer shot and killed a civilian on Gakungwe Hill, in the Ramba area, within the municipality of Mugere, Bujumbura Province. The officer in question was assigned to guard the DIFO microfinance office, located on that hill, along National Highway RN3. At that time, a resident of the hill named Eric was walking home after having a drink in Ruziba. When he reached the officer's position, the officer stopped him. A confrontation ensued, as both individuals were under the influence of alcohol. The officer then opened fire on Eric, who died from his injuries. The victim's funeral is scheduled for January 19, 2026. The victim's family demands that the officer responsible for the shooting be identified, held accountable for his actions before the courts, and punished in accordance with applicable law. Committed by Imbonerakure youths.*

II.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 20)

⇒ **Lifeless Bodies found:**

Ex6: A body found in Mugina commune, Bujumbura province The nineteenth day of February 2026 proved fatal for Ciza, a man in his forties originally from Nyempundu, Nyamakarabo area, Mugina commune. Under circumstances that neither the authorities nor the police have clarified through an investigation, the victim, Ciza, was tortured before being killed. This murder is believed to have been planned a few days earlier and carried out on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, as the victim was returning from Gikomero, a town on Nyempundu Hill. Our sources specify that regarding this latest murder in the border area, delinquent Imbonerakure members who are often involved in hunting down passersby who cross the river to travel to or from Rwanda are being singled out by the local population as the perpetrators of this murder. They feared that the victim, who used to work in the fields near the Ruhwa River, might expose them to the army or the police. The authorities had been investigating for several days people involved in thefts and the smuggling of gold and coffee into Rwanda, and on this hill, only the Imbonerakure are known to be involved in such crimes, and the victim knew some of them. Against the backdrop of strained relations following security conflicts in the region where both Burundi and Rwanda are involved, the population of Mugina particularly in the areas bordering Rwanda is calling on the President of the Republic, recently appointed Chairperson-in-Office of the African Union, to take action to reopen the borders in order to jointly safeguard security between the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi, as the movement of rebel groups—notably the Interahamwe of the FDLR, and the presence of smugglers and traffickers have consistently spread fear and caused casualties in these areas.

Ex7: On May 24, 2026, around 6 a.m., in the administrative center of the Mugeru Zone, Gisagara Commune, Buhumuza Province, the lifeless body of Jean Claude, a retired member of the former FAB in his fifties, was discovered by passersby who were on their way to the first Mass. According to local witnesses, the deceased's clothes were torn, suggesting that they were ripped as he tried to defend himself against the criminals, and he had a severe wound to his face. According to the same witnesses, political motives are believed to be behind this murder, as the deceased was a member of the CNL party, a faction led by the Honorable Agathon RWASA. The deceased's body was taken to the morgue at Mishiha District Hospital pending burial.

The administrator of Gisagara District, NZIRUBUSA Japhet, said he was not aware of the incident but that he would look into the situation, as he is currently on a work mission in the People's Republic of China.



Anyone should be respected

V.1.1.2. KIDNAPPINGS AND/OR MISSING PERSONS

Article 38 of Burundi's Constitution guarantees every individual the right to a fair trial and to have their case heard and decided within a reasonable time. Nevertheless, on the ground, alarming irregularities in this area are evident.

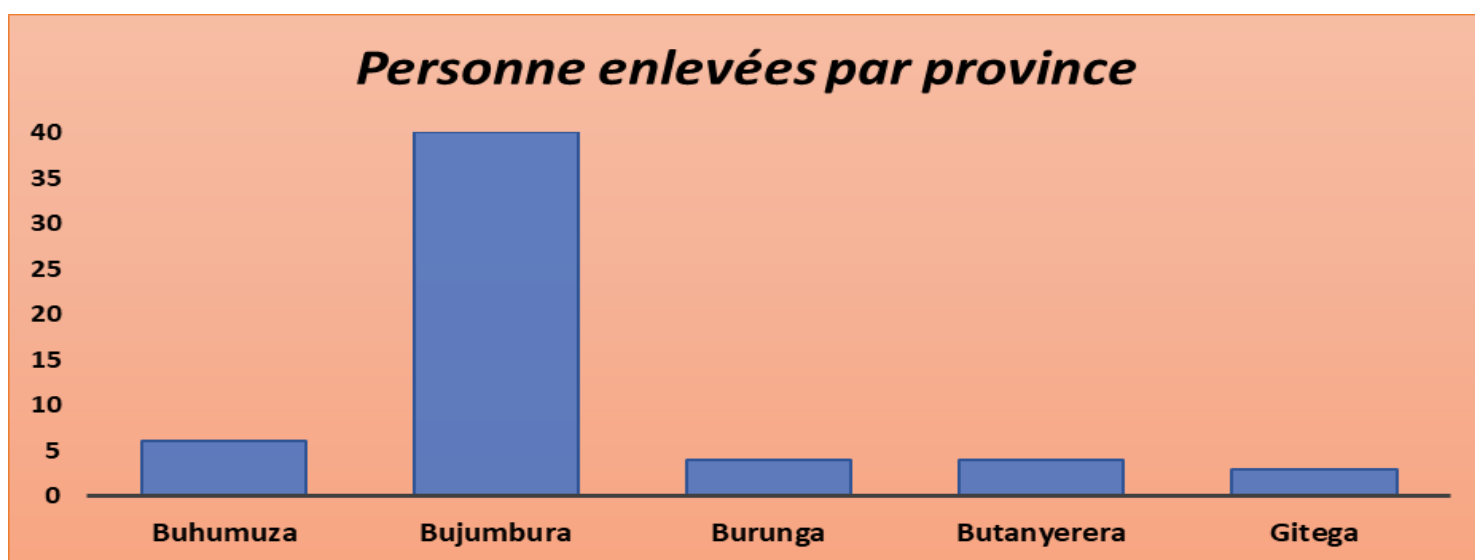
During the period covered by this report, cases of abductions and/or enforced disappearances in Burundi have revealed a major problem in the country's security and political practices. Several documented cases illustrate situations in which individuals, perceived as opponents or simply suspects, were abducted by security forces or their allies "youth from the ruling party."

These victims often disappeared to unknown locations, leaving their families in a state of total uncertainty regarding their fate or place of detention.

In total, 51 cases of abduction were recorded by the Iteka League during the period covered by this report. Of the 51 recorded cases, 57 victims were targeted, including 45 men and 12 women

Figure 6 : Chart illustrating the number of people abducted during the period from June 2025 to May 31, 2026

Province	Kidnapping cases	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	6	6	3	3
Bujumbura	34	40	34	6
Burunga	4	4	2	2
Butanyerera	4	4	3	1
Gitega	3	3	3	0
Grand Total	51	57	45	12



Cases of illustrations

⇒ **Abducted by SNR agents:**

Example 1: On the morning of December 14, 2025, on Kariba Hill, Kanka area, Mwaro commune, Gitega province. Tharcisse Ndirekuramba, a teacher in his forties, a known active member of the

V.1.1.2. KIDNAPPINGS AND/OR MISSING PERSONS (the following of page 22)

CNL party and close associate of Agathon Rwasa, was forcibly taken from his home by individuals who, according to local reports, were from the SNR.

The perpetrators of the abduction were traveling in a double-cab pickup truck with tinted windows. They were accompanied by two young local Imbonerakure members, Augustin, Director of ECOFO Rubamuyi, and Ndayizeye Sostène, a very zealous Imbonerakure who serves as an advisor to the municipal administrator in charge of legal affairs.

The destination to which Tharcisse Ndirekuramba was taken is unknown, and his relatives fear for his safety.

EX2: A report received by the Iteka League on November 5, 2025 indicates that on October 30, 2025, two former CNL party activists, Nishimwe Egide, chief of Nyarusebeye hill, and his neighbor Ndikumana—both of whom had switched allegiance to the CNDD-FDD party—were abducted. The victims are from the same Buhoro area. Initially, the victims were arrested by unidentified SNR agents in Mugina, accompanied by Imbonerakure members, including their commune-level leader, Théogène Bivahagumye. They were on their way to see someone on Mayuki Hill when they were arrested around 2:00 p.m. and then taken to the municipal seat of Mugina, where they were detained in the dungeons of the Mabayi Brigade. The next day, the victims' families went to see them but, to their surprise, their loved ones were not there. According to local witnesses, a police officer guarding the detention cell informed them that the victims had been transferred at 9:00 p.m. on the same day of their arrest, which caused great concern among the victims' relatives. The Buhoro area appears to be a prime target of the SNR and the CNDD-FDD's Imbonerakure due to strong opposition and the presence of two former opposition parliamentarians, including Phénias NIYIGABA of FRODEBU and Simon BIIZIMUNGU of the CNL. It is home to several opposition members who have defected to the CNDD-FDD for their safety, but this defection does not guarantee their safety, as they continue to be subjected to harassment and threats. The two most recent victims are accused of collaborating with RED TABARA because they did not distance themselves from CNL members. This abduction is all the more concerning given that it is not the first. In 2024, between February and June, five victims were abducted and never returned to their families.

EX3: On October 3, 2025, in the commune of Mukaza, Bujumbura Province, Pascal Nshimirimana, 43, a former FAB soldier (master corporal) originally from Ndava Hill, Mahwa area, Matana commune, Burunga province, was abducted from his workplace (as a doorman at the Roi David Polyclinic) located across from the BCCI bank by agents of the Burundian intelligence service. According to sources close to him, people in a Toyota Probox with tinted windows pounced on him, and Pascal Nshimirimana tried to resist, demanding to know the reason for his arrest. According to the same accounts, other officers in police uniform who were in a pickup truck parked not far from the clinic's gate quickly got out to help the first group apprehend Pascal Nshimirimana. The victim was forced into the first vehicle (the Probox), which sped off toward the road running close to the offices of the former Bujumbura City Hall. Since that day, Pascal Nshimirimana has remained missing.

⇒ **Abducted by unknown individuals:**

EX4: Since February 25, 2026, on Musinga Avenue, Rohero area, Mukaza commune, Bujumbura province, very close to the CNIDH offices, Chadia Mukaremera, a cleaning staff member at the National Independent Commission (CNIDH), residing in the Nyakabiga I neighborhood on 13th

V.1.1.2. KIDNAPPINGS AND/OR MISSING PERSONS (the following of page 22)

Avenue, Mukaza commune, Bujumbura province, has been reported missing. According to His Excellency Martin Blaise Nyaboho, President of the CNIDH, Chadia spoke with her colleague on the phone before going missing. Her family and colleagues have searched several locations, but without success. They express deep concern for her safety and are calling for independent investigations into her disappearance. The president of the CNIDH also notes that they have had no word from her, as her phone has been turned off since that day, and the police say that investigations are underway to locate this CNIDH employee. The Iteka League sought to determine who had called her that morning and whether it was the first time or not; it also continued to investigate whether the victim had any disputes with her colleagues. The information received indicates that she was a pleasant woman at work, and her absence is particularly noticeable, which is why her colleagues would contact her every morning to carpool. On that day, it was Ms. Chantal Bakamiriza, the secretary-general, who had called her; she did so regularly, as did other colleagues in the department. The victim's phone was last located in the Nyabugete district, and what is strange is that the SNR had already decided to conduct a search there but later abandoned the plan. The Iteka League is concerned about the reasons behind this.

V.1.2 RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

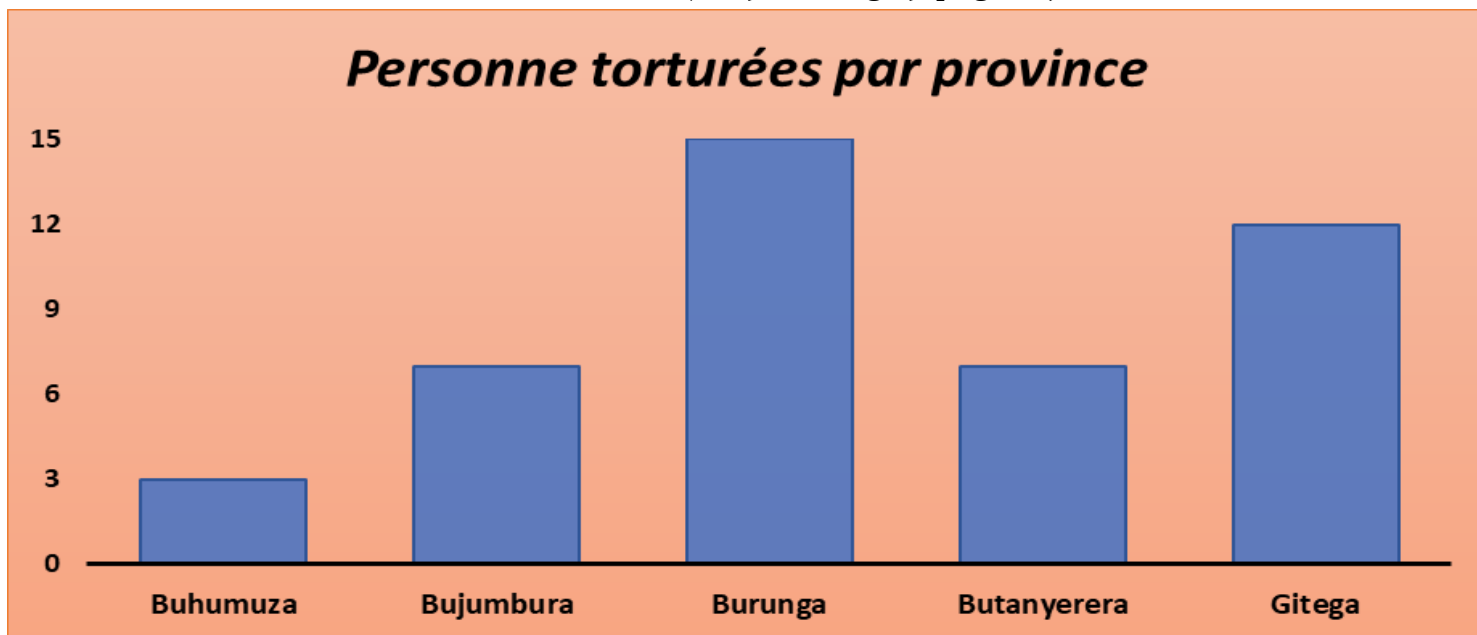
The right to physical integrity is protected in Burundi by several constitutional and legislative provisions, as well as by international commitments. The Constitution of Burundi guarantees the right to life, liberty, and personal security. It prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.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

V.1.2.1. ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT.

A total of 42 cases were documented by the Iteka League throughout the country during the period covered by this report. Of the 42 cases recorded, 44 people were tortured, including 39 men and 5 women.

Figure7 : Chart illustrating the number of people tortured during the period from June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026

Province	Cases of torture	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	3	3	3	0
Bujumbura	7	7	6	1
Burunga	14	15	13	2
Butanyerera	7	7	7	0
Gitega	11	12	10	2
Overall Total	42	44	39	5



Illustrative Examples

⇒ *Torture and or inhuman treatment by police officers*

Ex. 1: On September 4, 2025, on the hill and in the Gakungu area, Musongati commune, Burunga, 17-year-old Olivier Twigumanire was beaten by police officers, J. Baptiste Niyongabire and Jonas, son of Maheshwa, members of the Imbonerakure from the same Gakungu Hill, using sticks and whips.

According to local sources, Olivier Twigumanire whose mother is the zonal leader of the UPRONA party was tortured on the accusation that he had stolen gasoline from Ruwaya, who is the dealer of that product on Gakungu Hill as well as on the surrounding hills. However, the act was actually committed by a suspected thief well-known on that hill named Franck, who fled as soon as he heard that the boy, Olivier, had already been captured. According to the same sources, after this torture, the police officers on that hill, along with the hill chief, civil registrar Barahekenywa J. Claude, and the Gakungu zone chief Gakungu, Login who was recently appointed as the Gakungu zone chief for the Musongati commune in Burunga province forced him to pay the sum of four hundred sixty thousand Burundian francs (460,000 FBU) to the gasoline vendor.

Consequently, in order for Olivier to be released from the case, he sold the plot of land given to him by his father. His older brothers, Sylvain Nkunzimana and Donatien Manirakiza, who tried to intervene by seeking help here and there, were arrested by police officers from the Gakungu hill outpost and imprisoned in the Gakungu outpost's detention cell, located in the administrative center of the Gakungu zone, Musongati commune, Burunga province.

Ex2: On Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at Rwamura Hill, a motorcycle driver named Pierre Bizimana, who was coming from the Shinge market, ran into a group of men in police uniforms. One of the police officers raised his hand to signal him to stop, but he did not obey because the area is located within Ruvubu National Park, and he believed they were bandits, as many people had already been robbed of their belongings in that area. After realizing that the motorcyclist had refused to stop, the officer threw a large stick at him; he lost his balance on his motorcycle and fell into a ditch. The two other officers who had been hiding near the road began beating the

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motorcyclist until he lost consciousness, accusing him of disobeying an order. The motorcyclist was taken to the Kigamba municipal hospital, but since he was in critical condition, he was transferred to Cankuzo Hospital, where he is currently hospitalized in the intensive care unit.

In this area, police officers routinely stop motorcyclists and drivers coming from the Shinge market, and sometimes they force them to pay money. The Shinge Market is a market for large and small livestock and is held every Tuesday. The police officers who committed this act are Alfred Murengerantwari, Jean Bosco Rivuzumwami, and Thaddée Buhigi, all from the Kigamba municipal police station. The general public and motorcycle and car drivers in particular are calling on police officials in this commune to restore discipline among their officers, as they have a habit of demanding money from drivers without valid reason and without providing a receipt.

⇒ **Torture and/or Inhumane Treatment by the Imbonerakure**

Ex3: The Iteka League was informed of a case of torture that took place on Saturday, June 7, 2025, around 7:00 p.m. at a bar 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 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.

Ex4: 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, was assaulted and injured on the head 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 the fight in the store and attempted to beat 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 communal CDS center and then to the Rumonge referral hospital for medical treatment.

V.1.2.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/ RAPE

The Law on Gender-Based Violence adopted in Burundi in 2016 was a major step forward. It ensured better protection, notably by providing a definition of rape that takes consent into account and by banning harmful traditional practices.

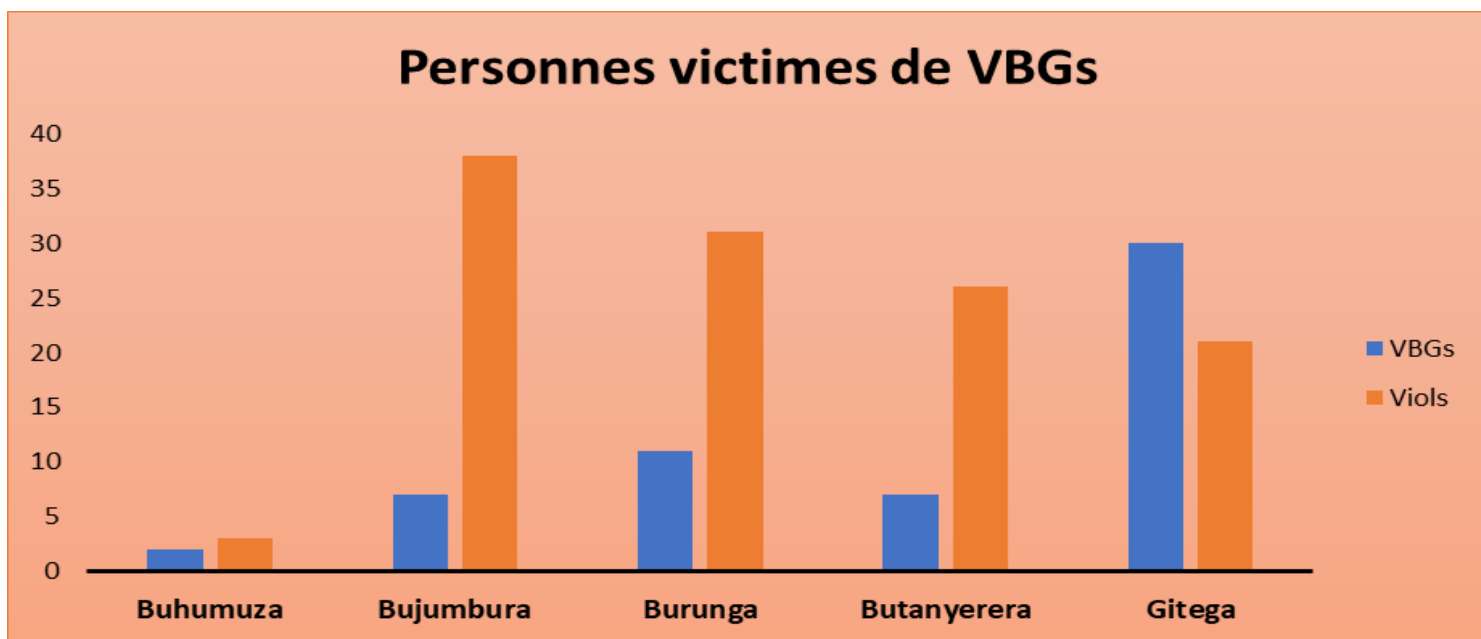
During the period covered by this report, cases of GBV were observed at an alarming rate. The Iteka League recorded at least 176 people as victims of gender-based violence, including 21 men and 155 women. Among the victims, 119 experienced sexual violence.

As shown in the graph below, Gitega province ranks first with 51 victims, followed by Bujumbura province with 45 victims, and third is Burunga with 42 victims.

V.1.2.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/ RAPE (the following of page 26)

Figure 8: Illustrative chart of people affected by GBV from June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026

Province	Cases of GBV	Number of victims		Men	Women
		GBV	Rape		
Buhumuza	4	2	3	1	4
Bujumbura	43	7	38	4	41
Burunga	42	11	31	2	40
Butanyerera	28	7	26	6	27
Gitega	43	30	21	8	43
Overall total	160	57	119	21	155



Some illustrative examples:

Ex1: A report received by the Iteka League on June 14, 2025, indicates that on June 4, 2025, on Buyenzi Hill in the commune of Muhuta, Bujumbura A.M. Province, a 5-year-old girl was raped by Kizosi Jean Marie, a 35-year-old member of the CNDD-FDD party. According to witnesses, the survivor was taken to Kaneza Hospital for medical treatment, and the alleged perpetrator was arrested by the local Joint Security Committee and taken to the Gitaza detention center on June 9, 2025, around 6:00 p.m.

Ex2: On the evening of October 5, 2025, on Mutambara Hill, in the Rumonge area and commune, Burunga Province, H. M., a 10-year-old girl from the same hill, was raped by Léonidas Minani, a 40-year-old member of the CNDD-FDD party. According to local sources, the alleged perpetrator reportedly took the girl to his house before committing the act, using severe intimidation. After the incident, he reportedly went outside to check the surroundings, leaving the girl inside the house. It was then that neighbors, suspecting something was amiss, hid to observe the situation. They then

V.1.2.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/ RAPE(the following of page 27)

saw the girl come out of the house. The neighbors then arrested the alleged perpetrator and took him to the nearest police station. He was subsequently transferred to the holding cell at the Rumonge police station.

As for the girl, she was taken to the Humura Center for holistic care. The preliminary hearing was scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, but it was postponed to October 15, 2025, as the defendant stated that he had a witness.

Ex3: *On May 18, 2026, a 17-year-old student, N. N., a 12th-grade student in the Languages track at L.C.O. Kabezi, located in the Mugere commune, Bujumbura province, was reportedly raped by a man who works at the civil registry office in the Mubone area. According to local sources, the incident occurred around 5:00 p.m. on Kimina Hill, at a hotel owned by the perpetrator, who is known as Alexandre BIRIKUNZIRA. He called the girl and asked her to come to the hotel to collect her school fees. The girl went there, and he welcomed her into a room. He began to touch her and asked her to have sex with him in exchange for the money. The girl tried to refuse, but he eventually overpowered her. The child was able to recount what had happened to her to the staff at the Kabezi municipal high school, who immediately took her to a doctor to ensure she was protected against disease. The alleged perpetrator fled after learning that the child had reported everything.*

Ex4: *A report received by the Iteka League on August 4, 2025, indicates that on July 27, 2025, on Busebwa Hill in the Gatete area of Rumonge commune, Burunga province, T. B., aged 16, was raped by Dusabimana Léonce, an Imbonerakure member affiliated with the ruling party. According to local witnesses, on the evening of July 27, 2025, around 7:00 p.m., the alleged perpetrator tricked the victim into following him to a friend's house, where the assault took place. The alleged perpetrator was arrested on August 2 and placed in pretrial detention at the Rumonge police station, pending further legal proceedings. As for the victim, she was taken to Mugara Hospital on July 29 to receive emergency medical care, before being referred to the Humura Center, which specializes in the holistic care of survivors of sexual violence. As of August 9, 2025, judicial authorities had not yet provided an update on the status of the investigation, but the Rumonge community continues to await justice for T. B.*



Anyone should be respected

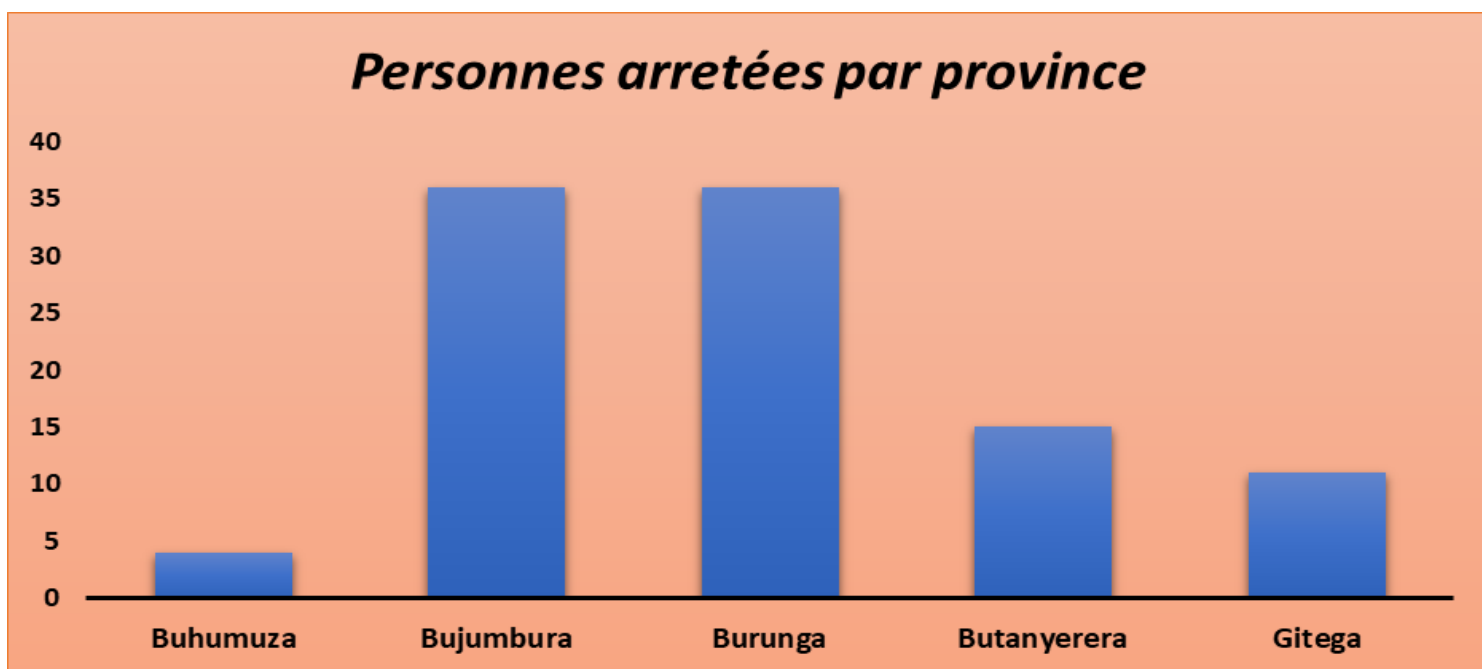
V.1.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM

V.1.3.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND ARBITRARY DETENTION

In total, 49 cases of arbitrary arrests were recorded across the entire territory during the period covered by this report. Out of the 49 cases recorded, 102 people were arrested, including 12 women and 90 men.

Figure 9: Illustrative chart of people who were victims of arbitrary arrests and detentions during the period from June 1, 2026, to May 31, 2026.

Province	Cases of arrests	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	3	4	4	0
Bujumbura	15	36	27	9
Burunga	17	36	33	3
Butanyerera	8	15	15	0
Gitega	6	11	11	0
Grand Total	49	102	90	12



Illustrative cases:

⇒ *Arrested by police officers*

Ex1: On June 5, 2025, in the Musaga area, Mugere commune, Bujumbura City, Eric NGABIRE, a member of the CDP party, was arrested and put in the Musaga zone detention cells. According to local witnesses, the victim is on the list of deputy candidates for the CDP party in Bujumbura province. The same witnesses add that the victim was apprehended while he was going around various voting centers to check if the CDP party's agents and observers had been allowed to enter the polling stations to monitor the elections.

Ex2: Since February 18, 2026, two journalists known as Olivier Manirambona and Aline Niyonizigiye a camerawoman and a nursing mother from Jimbere magazine have been detained in the dungeons of the Ngagara district in Bujumbura Province. According to local sources, these

V.1.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM (the following of page 29)

journalists were arrested by the Ntahangwa prosecutor's office while they were on their way to cover the resolution of a 21-year-old land dispute being heard by the Ntahangwa High Court, located north of the city of Bujumbura, Burundi's economic capital. The two journalists were detained along with one of the parties to the dispute, Siméon Ngenzebuhoro, a former member of parliament. On Thursday, February 19, 2026, the three detainees appeared at a summary hearing, which was postponed until Friday due to the absence of a lawyer for Ngenzebuhoro. The **Jimbere** magazine has written to the prosecutor in Ntahangwa requesting the release of its journalists, but has received no response to date. A Jimbere official and other media professionals in Burundi have condemned this arbitrary arrest, pointing out that the journalists did not violate any laws and were simply carrying out their role as independent reporters. The detention of Aline Niyonizigiye, who has been separated from her child, is considered particularly unacceptable and contrary to the fundamental rights of women and children. On the same day, three other journalists were arrested and detained for more than 8 hours by the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in Bujumbura while they were covering the visit of Hadja Lahbib, European Commissioner for Equality, Crisis Preparedness, and Crisis Management. Arrested on the grounds of the Burundian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they were taken to the SNR detention cells before being released around 9:00 p.m. These independent journalists are: Nitanga Tchandrou, Papy Amani, and their driver.

Ex3: On February 20, 2026, the two journalists from Jimbere magazine were also released on a provisional release order issued by Eraste Ndayiragije, the prosecutor at the Ntahangwa Court of Appeals; he noted that they had recorded audio before the judges arrived at the scene and that they would be summoned if necessary. Burundian journalists condemn this harassment of media professionals and demand that the law be respected to guarantee a free and independent press in Burundi. A camerawoman and nursing mother from Jimbere magazine were detained in the Ngagara detention center in Bujumbura Province. According to sources on the ground, these journalists were arrested by the Ntahangwa prosecutor's office while they were on their way to cover the resolution of a 21-year-old land dispute being heard by the Ntahangwa High Court, located north of the city of Bujumbura-Burundi's economic capital.

⇒ **SNR Agents Arrested**

Ex4: On September 3, 2025, in Nyakabiga, Mukaza commune, Bujumbura province, around 5:00 p.m., Norbert Rucabihari, a journalist for the online media outlet Buja 24, was arrested while he was in a bar. He was approached by individuals searching for him, who were carrying his photo, and then taken in a taxi to the headquarters of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in Rohero, near the Regina Mundi Cathedral. According to sources who have been following the case, he was questioned about information published by the newspaper Net Press regarding the war in eastern DRC. He was cleared after proving that he no longer worked for that media outlet and by showing his press card. Many are wondering whether Net Press journalists are being targeted by the SNR. This incident highlights a procedural flaw, as press offenses fall under the jurisdiction of the National Communications Council before being referred to the courts. This reflects a decline in freedom of expression and opinion in Burundi.

Ex5: Cyprien Sindayihebura has been held in a cell at the National Intelligence Service in Ngozi, Ngozi commune, Butanyerera province, since December 2, 2025. He worked as a phytosanitary inspector at the Burundi-Tanzania border in Kobero. According to his family members, he refused to allow phytosanitary products from abroad supplied by a merchant whose goods did not meet the

V.1.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM (the following of page 30)

standards of the Burundian Bureau of Standardization (BBN) to enter Burundi. This merchant, whose name remains unknown, is determined to get these products through at any cost, even going so far as to bribe the National Intelligence Service. Cyprien Sindayihebura refuses to comply. According to reports from Kobero, these products are still in Kobero. Before his arrest, according to his family members, he received a phone call from Marc Manirakiza, known as “Posheni,” a business operator from Ngozi who is also reportedly involved in smuggling in northern Burundi. It was this same individual who called journalist Sandra Muhoza, who has been incarcerated since April 18, 2024. Cyprien Sindayihebura’s family members fear for his safety and are asking the relevant authorities to do everything in their power to secure the release of their loved one, who has been unjustly imprisoned.

⇒ **Arrested by local government officials in collaboration with the police.**

Ex6: On the night of November 9–10, 2025, around midnight, on Kanyenkoko Hill in Rumonge commune, Burunga province, two people including Kabura Bonaventure, a retired military officer, and a civilian were arrested. According to sources on the ground, the arrest was carried out by the local administration the hill chief and the Imbonerakure chief in collaboration with the municipal commissioner and his police officers. The two men were imprisoned in the holding cell at the Rumonge police station.

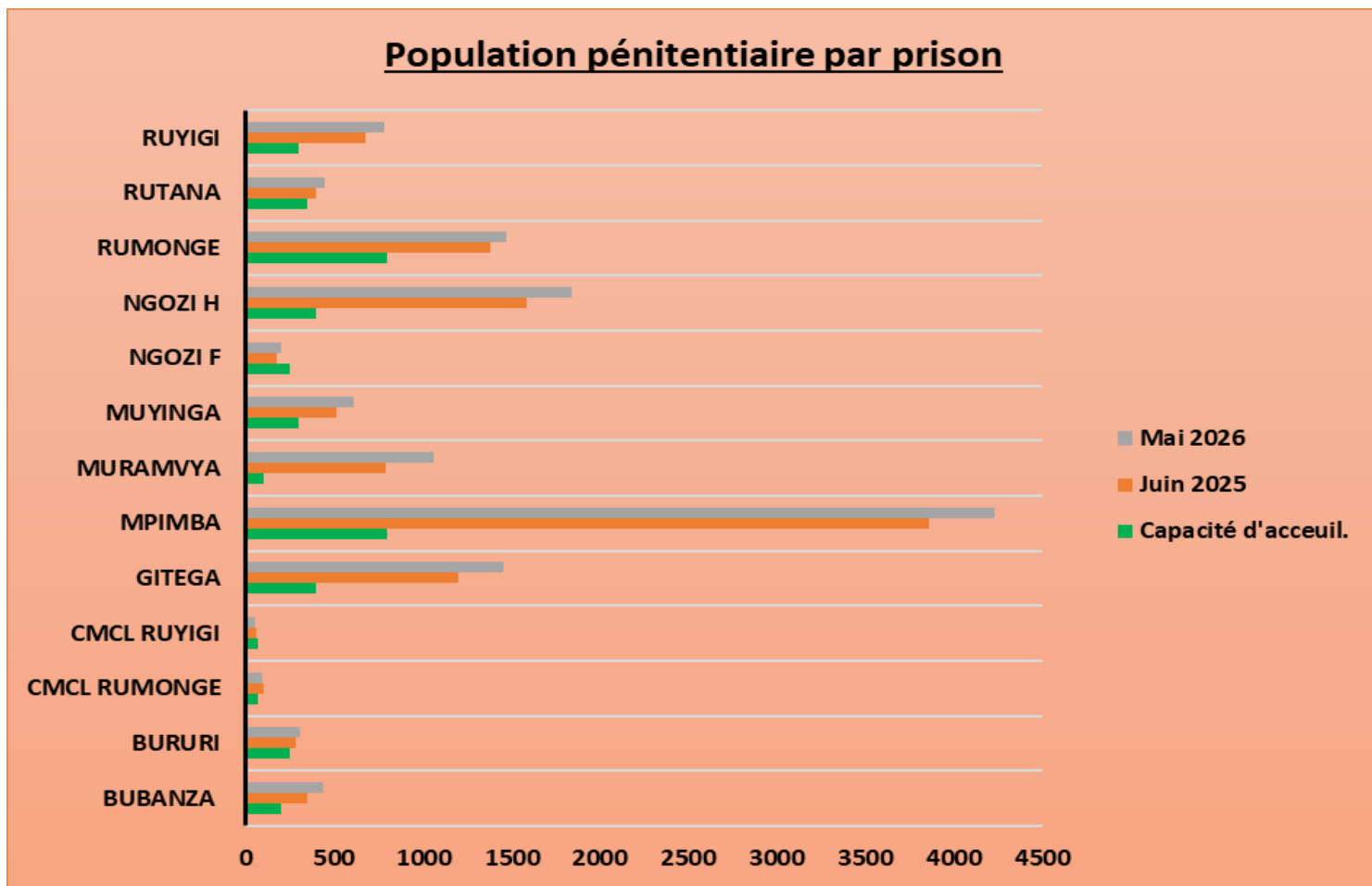
The former soldier faced conflicting accusations from several officials: the sector chief accused him of holding the stamp of the Head of State, the zone chief added that he supposedly belonged to the M23 armed movement, and a police officer from the local station said he recognized him from exchanging gunfire in Musaga in 2015.

V.1.3.2. THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRISON SITUATION IN DETENTION CENTERS FROM JUNE 30, 2025, TO MAY 30, 2026.

Figure 10: Comparative chart of the prison situation on June 30, 2025, and May 30, 2026

Prisons	Capacity	June 2025	May 2026
BUBANZA	200	350	434
BURURI	250	280	305
CMCL RUMONGE	72	100	97
CMCL RUYIGI	72	57	50
GITEGA	400	1200	1456
MPIMBA	800	3855	4230
MURAMVYA	100	791	1063
MUYINGA	300	512	606
NGOZI F	250	172	199
NGOZI H	400	1590	1841
RUMONGE	800	1384	1471
RUTANA	350	399	448
RUYIGI	300	678	780
General Total	4294	11368	12980

V.1.3. **RIGHT TO FREEDOM** (the following of page 31)



Between June 2025 and May 2026, the total prison population increased from **11,368 to 12,980 inmates**, an increase of **1,612 inmates** over 12 months. This averages out to about **135 new inmates** per month.

The largest increases in absolute numbers were observed in the prisons of:

- ◇ MPIMBA: +375 inmates;
- ◇ MURAMVYA: +272 inmates;
- ◇ GITEGA: +256 inmates;
- ◇ NGOZI H: +251 inmates.

Two facilities recorded a slight decrease in their populations:

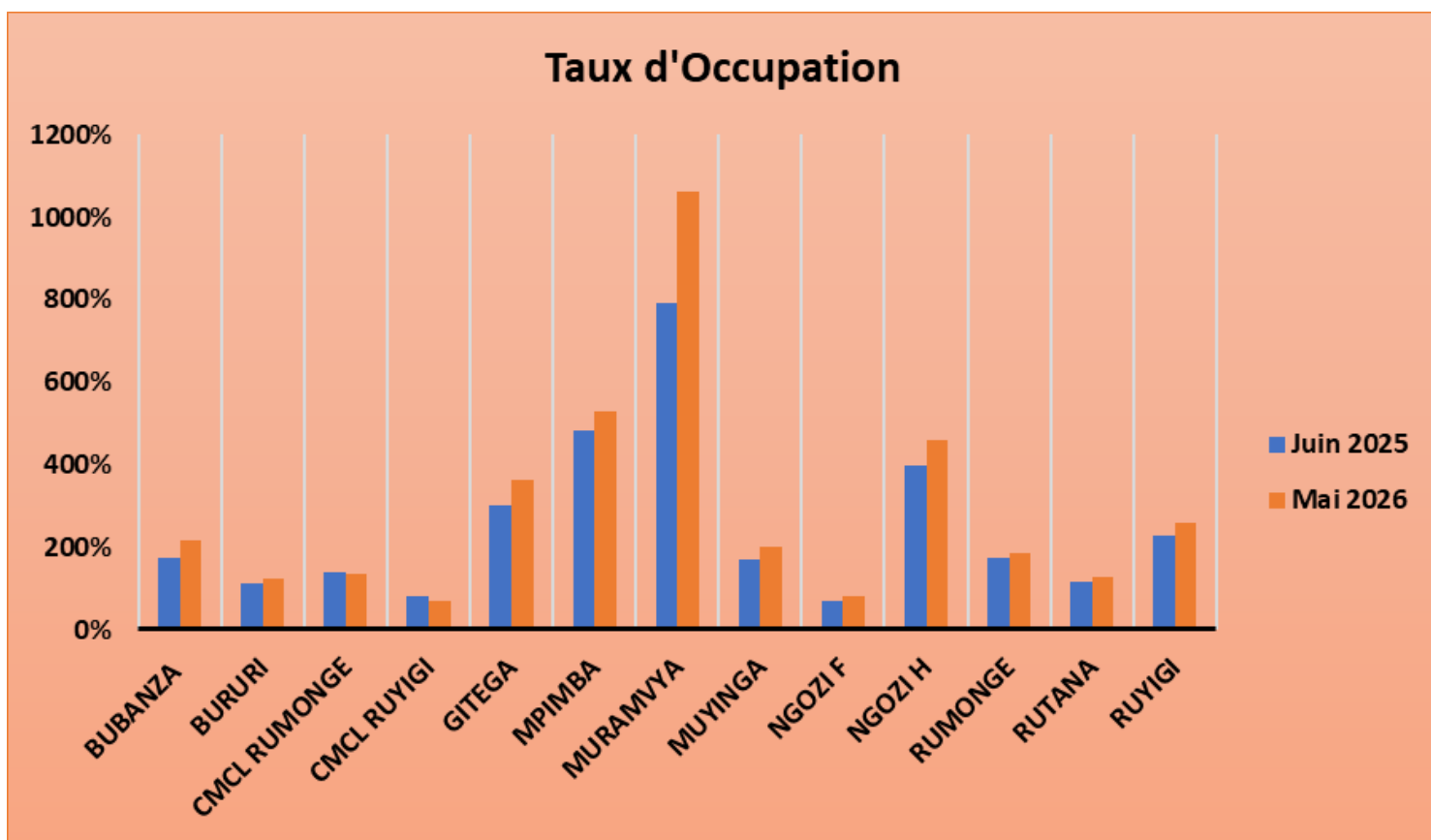
- ◇ CMCL RUMONGE: -3 inmates;
- ◇ CMCL RUYIGI: -7 inmates.

Figure 10: Occupancy rates in the different prisons for the months of June 2025 and May 2026

With an overall capacity of **4,294 places for 12,980 inmates** in May 2026, the average occupancy rate of the prison system reaches about **302%**, reflecting a particularly worrying overcrowding situation.

V.1.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM (the following of page 32)

Prisons	June 2025	May 2026
BUBANZA	175%	217%
BURURI	112%	122%
CMCL RUMONGE	139%	135%
CMCL RUYIGI	79%	69%
GITEGA	300%	364%
MPIMBA	482%	529%
MURAMVYA	791%	1063%
MUYINGA	171%	202%
NGOZI F	69%	80%
NGOZI H	398%	460%
RUMONGE	173%	184%
RUTANA	114%	128%
RUYIGI	226%	260%



Given this very concerning situation, the number of detainees may increase for the following reasons:

1. **The number of crimes has increased:** this argument does not hold up because in the past, the numbers rose due to clashes between the government and rebel groups. In the current situation, there have been no attacks by armed groups. Furthermore, no clashes were

V.1.3. DROIT A LA LIBERTE (Suite de la page 33)

observed during the recent elections. Consequently, there was also no possibility of imprisoning large numbers of opposition members during the post-election period, as had occurred in the past.

2. Failure of certain national institutions in this regard: The absence of regular monitoring of prisons and detention centers. This could be all the more true given that the new commissioners of the CNIDH reportedly lack experience in the field of human rights. They may therefore not understand strategies for defending and promoting human rights.

Furthermore, according to its well-informed sources, the Iteka League has noted that visits to detention centers by the CNIDH have decreased significantly from June 2025 to May 2026. Visits to police holding cells and the National Intelligence Service (SNR) the agencies responsible for transferring suspects to prisons have not been conducted regularly, yet it is at this stage that the CNIDH can play a crucial role in investigating suspects for whom no evidence has been provided. Furthermore, the Iteka League wonders whether the CNIDH has fulfilled its advisory role to the government in light of this alarming situation.

V.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.

V.2.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE

Since mid-2025, Burundi's economic landscape has undergone a significant and unprecedented upheaval. Several diverse and complex factors have contributed to this alarming downturn. First, the country is facing a severe fuel shortage, a catastrophic situation that is affecting many aspects of citizens' daily lives. At the same time, rising prices for basic necessities are taking a heavy toll on household budgets, making it increasingly difficult for the population to access essential goods. Farmers, for their part, are suffering from a severe and persistent shortage of chemical fertilizers, which is seriously jeopardizing their harvests, productivity, and livelihoods. To make matters worse, adding to these difficulties, the government has imposed severe restrictions on the sale and marketing of maize, thereby forcing producers to sell their harvest to the state represented by the ANAGESSA agency often at derisory prices and with late payments that fail to meet their needs. This series of socioeconomic factors has thus plunged the country into a deep and disastrous economic crisis, affecting the daily lives of thousands of Burundians and sowing despair in many families.

This high cost of living makes life difficult for all Burundians, including government employees, especially since salaries remain stagnant while the prices of essential goods and services are soaring. As a result, despair has set in within the community, and migration to other countries in search of a better life has become alarming. Many people are leaving government services.

V.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (THE FOLLOWING OF PAGE 34)

Gulfe countries, East African countries like Kenya and Uganda, and Western countries are already feeling this pressure, with the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Health being the most affected.

To make it easier to understand the everyday life of the 103,510 Burundian civil servants from various ministries and the State Secretariat, the Iteka League divided the employees into five groups based on the minimum budget for a family of eight, assuming a family where both parents are employed and able to meet their family's basic needs represents an average salary.

⇒ Minimum budget for a family of eight people¹

Products	UP	Number of times/Month	Total
Beans	5 500	25	137 500
Rice	10 000	25	250 000
Pease	13 000	5	65 000
Cassava flour	3 000	15	45 000
Sweet potato	1 500	20	30 000
Potato	2 300	10	23 000
Meat	35 000	8	280 000
Palm oil 5l	65 000	1	65 000
Coton oil 5l	90 000	1	90 000
NIDO powdered milk	80 000	1	80 000
Spaghetti a quarter of box	25 000	1	25 000
Sugar	8 000	2	16 000
Soap a half box	16 500	1	16 500
Salt	2 500	1	2 500
Thea	8 000	1	8 000
charcoal	95 000	2	190 000
House rent	150 000	1	150 000
Total per month			1 473 500

⇒ **Breakdown of salaries by different groups**

The first group has a lower monthly salary of 250,000 Fbu or less, which is between 1 euro and 35 euros; the second group has a relatively low monthly salary between 250,000 Fbu and 500,000 Fbu, which is between 35 euros and 70 euros; the third group has an average monthly salary between 500,000 Fbu and 750,000 Fbu, which is between 70 euros and 105 euros; the fourth group has a relatively high monthly salary between 750,000 Fbu and 1,000,000 Fbu, which is between 105 euros and 140 euros; and the fifth group has a high monthly salary over 1,000,000 Fbu, which is over 140 euros.

Note: The exchange rate applied is the black market rate.

¹<https://api.insbu.bi/storage/documents/01KVZGV8AC776WC3A8A4DF2GJK.pdf>

V.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (the following of page 35)

Salary category		Number of employees	Salary range (in Burundian Francs)	Salary range (ineuros)
1	Low salary	6 849	1 to 250 000	1 to 35
2	Relatively low salary	80 154	250 000 to 500 000	35 to 70
3	Average salary	16 225	500 000 to 750 000	70 to 105
4	Relatively high salary	147	750 000 to 1 000 000	105 to 140
5	High dsalary	135	1 000 000 and more	More 140

V. 2.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

In Burundi, the right to education which should be a fundamental right for every individual has been severely affected by significant events, often orchestrated by the authorities themselves or by officials in the education sector. On the one hand, teachers' difficult living conditions pose a considerable obstacle. Faced with a high cost of living and unattractive salaries, teachers struggle to meet their basic needs. This precarious situation inevitably leads to a massive exodus of teachers and drives a significant number of them to seek better opportunities abroad, particularly in the Gulf countries. This mass exodus has triggered an alarming crisis, marked by a growing shortage of human resources in the field of education. Furthermore, teachers are sometimes assigned to administrative positions without any adequate replacement measures being put in place, thus creating a teaching shortage that persists for long periods of time. At the same time, activists from the president's party frequently organize meetings within schools, sometimes involving children in political activities, which raises serious concerns about the neutrality and integrity of the country's education system.

The redistribution of administrative responsibilities has often led to a reorganization of schools, sometimes resulting in the closure or merger of certain schools, which has reduced the availability of educational programs in some regions. Furthermore, these changes have disrupted the day-to-day management of schools, affecting educational continuity, particularly due to overlapping responsibilities and the reorganization of educational staff. The training of administrative and teaching staff has also been compromised, as the transition to new administrative entities has required adjustments that have delayed the implementation of programs and continuing education.

V.2.3. RIGHT TO LIFE

In Burundi's healthcare landscape, a series of tragic events has unfolded, with profound repercussions for the health of the population. Under the presidency of Évariste Ndayishimiye, the country has had to contend with multiple, simultaneous health crises. The emergence of infectious disease outbreaks has severely strained surveillance and rapid response systems, exposing the fragility of the health infrastructure. These weaknesses often make it difficult to combat the spread of infectious diseases. Malnutrition, meanwhile, has emerged as a major challenge, affecting children and vulnerable populations in particular. In this context, poverty and food insecurity continue to exacerbate existing problems, while limited access to nutritious food complicates efforts to combat deficiencies.

V.2.3. RIGHT TO LIFE *(the following of page 36)*

The vulnerability of groups with special needs such as pregnant women, the elderly, and people with disabilities underscores the importance of adopting inclusive strategies aimed at strengthening communities' resilience in the face of these crises. However, the growing number of health challenges also highlights the inadequacy of prevention and awareness-raising efforts. Furthermore, many doctors have left the country in search of better living conditions in Europe, Rwanda, and elsewhere, leading to a brain drain. This situation, coupled with an alarming shortage of medicines on the market, reflects a difficult reality marked by a lack of foreign currency to import necessary resources, disruptions in the supply chain, and delays in government payments to suppliers.

Furthermore, water shortages in various localities have exacerbated an already critical situation, leading to the outbreak of a cholera epidemic in the communes of Bujumbura Province in the west and in other regions. Tragically, lives have also been lost in the transit camps for Congolese refugees in Rugombo, Rumonge, and at the Busuma site in Ruyigi commune, illustrating the scale of the challenges facing Burundi.

VI. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

VI.1. BURUNDIAN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

VI.1.1. THE FORCED REPATRIATION OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES IN TANZANIA

The Nyabitare transit center recorded the return of 27,275 returnees from January to March 2026. Following the closure of the Nduta camp, Burundian refugees were forced to return to their country, often via unofficial routes, and this trend continues. Since January 2026, Burundi has received more than 50,000 returnees, despite warnings from the president of the Independent National Human Rights Commission (CNIDH), Bishop Nyaboho Blaise Martin, regarding the country's inability to manage such an influx. Living conditions at the transit center are precarious, with a lack of basic services, and NGOs, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have denounced the lack of access to the planned return program. For its part, Tanzania, disregarding its international obligations, has proceeded to deport Burundian refugees under degrading living conditions, often accompanied by police violence.

At the Nyabitare transit camp, the refugees, scarred by traumatic experiences, are in an alarming state of distress. The screening process carried out by the Tanzanian police who mistreated those refusing to return has exacerbated the chaos surrounding their repatriation. The returnees, often unregistered and awaiting information from UNHCR, are struggling to survive, dependent on aid from local communities. Those who have already received a ticket are also facing complications. Many people are heading toward Gisagara and Mishiha, hoping to farm the land. In Gisagara, they are settling near the border, while in Mishiha, they are occupying hills vacated by Rwandan refugees. Other groups, seeking safety, are heading to Gisuru.

Few support measures have been put in place for these returnees, who are coming back empty-handed, their belongings having been confiscated by the Tanzanian police and local groups. The returnees' testimonies highlight a human tragedy marked by suffering and uncertainty about their future.

The Iteka League is deeply concerned by the testimonies of Burundian refugees expelled by the United Republic of Tanzania, especially the inhuman conditions under which they were coerced

VI. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION*(the following of page 37)*

whether willingly or by force into accepting their expulsion. Among the testimonies, the Iteka League noted, among other things, ***“Go home! Even if you return tomorrow, we will welcome you with open arms!”*** Consequently, the Iteka League wonders why Tanzania felt the need to emphasize this to a community that had been continuously crying out for help both to the Tanzanian government and to the international community. It should be noted that in September 2023, during the 54th session of the Human Rights Council, given the living conditions of Burundian refugees in camps throughout the subregion and the slow progress in addressing the causes of their exile, the Iteka League launched an advocacy campaign titled **“THE RESETTLEMENT OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES: A VITAL HUMANITARIAN NEED².”**

The document was shared with various representatives of countries particularly those with policies to accept refugees for resettlement as well as key organizations in this field. Counting on Tanzania as a key player in this advocacy effort, the Iteka League, along with its sister organizations, visited the Tanzanian ambassador in Switzerland to discuss issues related to Burundian refugees as part of this advocacy campaign. A year later, this potential ally had turned into a fierce opponent of the advocacy effort and its collaboration with the Burundian government which is composed largely of former refugees who are well-versed in refugee rights and durable solutions, one of which is resettlement in a third country. This collaboration reinforces the Burundian government’s undeniable support for destabilizing the opposition in exile to prevent it from reorganizing into a political force for which, for some, resettlement in a third country offers a prospect of stability.

VI.1.2. DEPORTATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS TO ASIA AND EUROPE

VI.1.2.1. THE EXPELLED FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Out of 83 people who had been detained at Manila’s Ninoy Aquino International Airport in the Philippines at Terminal 1 and Terminal 3, some for months on end and later deported, the Iteka League was able to document the situation of seventeen people: ten men, three women, two teenage girls, and two minor children. And out of the seventeen deported, only seven people, including two minor children, stayed in Burundi. All of these individuals were asylum seekers looking to obtain international protection after leaving Burundi due to fears for their safety and precarious living conditions.

VI.1.2.2. PROLONGED DETENTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

According to the information gathered, 15 asylum seekers were held for nearly eighteen months for some in particularly harsh detention conditions in the transit area of Manila’s Ninoy Aquino International Airport, more precisely at Terminal 1, in the Transit Lounge. During this period, they were deprived of normal living conditions, freedom of movement, and adequate access to basic services. Their physical and psychological health gradually deteriorated due to constant uncertainty about their future. Facing pressure to be deported and the lack of durable solutions in the Philippines, they decided to try to reach Uganda to apply for international protection there, but in vain. Another significant group of 68 people was at Terminal 3, and the Iteka League doesn’t have much information about this group, except for 2 people from it.

² <https://ligue-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Advocacy-for-Burundian-refugees-resettlement.pdf>

VI.1.2.3. ATTEMPT TO ACCESS ASYLUM IN UGANDA FOR THE TEAM OF EIGHT PEOPLE

According to the testimonies collected, a travel itinerary was arranged through Philippine Airlines and Ethiopian Airlines, with a planned stopover at Entebbe International Airport in Uganda, without the travelers being informed of this situation. Upon their arrival in Entebbe, the eight Burundians were declared inadmissible by the airport authorities.

For several days, various organizations and institutions were called upon to intervene on their behalf, including: the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Uganda, the Ugandan refugee authorities, human rights organizations, the Iteka League, as well as other protection actors. Despite these interventions, the competent authorities did not allow them entry into Ugandan territory.

VI.1.2.4. FORCED EXPULSION FROM UGANDA

After about a week of being held at Entebbe airport, the eight asylum seekers were forced to board a flight to Addis Ababa. According to testimonies collected by the Iteka League, this operation took place around two in the morning. The victims say they tried to resist their deportation by pointing out the dangers they would face if they were sent back to Burundi. They report having shouted, cried, and asked for help, but without getting any positive response. Witnesses indicated that police officers and security agents escorted them to the plane. The victims said they were placed at the back of the aircraft under close surveillance, like dangerous individuals, despite their status as asylum seekers and the presence of women, children, and sick people. This situation caused deep psychological trauma for several of them.

VI.1.2.4. FAILURE OF THE LATEST PROTECTION ATTEMPTS IN ETHIOPIA

When they arrived in Addis Ababa, UNHCR Uganda reportedly alerted UNHCR Ethiopia about the imminent deportation to Burundi. According to the available information, steps were taken to try to prevent the permanent expulsion. However, partly due to the holiday season and the imminent nature of the flight, these efforts did not stop them from being boarded to Bujumbura. The eight asylum seekers were ultimately sent back to Burundi against their will.

VI.1.2.5. ESCAPE TO THE EAC COUNTRIES AND ILS OF PACIFIAQUE OCEAN

In the days following their return to Burundi, many victims said they noticed suspicious behavior around their homes. Individuals known to be part of the Imbonerakure were reportedly seen near certain residences. Concerned for their safety, two men and a woman from the group quickly left Burundi to go to an EAC country by land. Their hasty evacuation shows the high level of fear and insecurity they felt after being forcibly repatriated.



Anyone should be respected

VI. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION (the following of page 39)

A summary table of the arrival dates at Ndadaye Melchior airport, departure date for exile, and the country:

The people who were evicted	Forced return to Burundi	From	New escape abroad	Destination
X1, Men	01 Jan 2026	Philippines	04 Jan 2026	EAC
X2, Woman	01 Jan 2026	Philippines	09 Jan 2026	EAC
X3, Men	01 Jan 2026	Philippines	09 Jan 2026	EAC
X4, Men	Mid Jan 2025	Philippines	Beginning of Dec 2025	Île of Pacifique Ocean
X5, Men	-	Philippines	Beginning of Dec 2025	Île of Pacifique Ocean
X6,X7,X8, Men	N/A	N/A	N/A	EAC
X9, Men	N/A	N/A	N/A	EAC
X10, Woman	-	-	-	EAC

Among the 15 people expelled from Terminal 1, X6, X7, X8, and X9, all men, managed to get off the plane in the EAC countries before arriving in Bujumbura, and X10, a woman, fled from Bujumbura with all her children to an EAC country. X4 and X5, who were at Terminal 3, are currently believed to be on an island in the South Pacific Ocean.

VI.1.3. THE ELEVEN EXPULSIONS FROM SWITZERLAND

The Iteka League was alerted on April 20, 2026, about the expulsion by Switzerland of eleven people, including a family made up of a man, a woman, and three children, one of whom was a girl. The other six were four men and two girls. According to sources on the ground, upon arrival at Ndadaye Melchior International Airport, in addition to the usual check-ins like all passengers, they underwent an interrogation recorded by an officer from the Ministry of Interior, Community Development, and Public Security, which covered their identities, their parents' identities, their place of residence before going to Europe, the reason for going to Europe, and the address of their destination neighborhood.

As with the deportees from the Philippines, the Iteka League preferred to keep certain details confidential for the safety of those expelled from Switzerland.

VI.2. CONGOLESE REFUGEES IN BURUNDI

Burundi is facing a massive influx of Congolese refugees, despite its limited capacity. More than 101,000 arrivals were recorded between December 5 and 31, 2025, as people fled the hostilities between the M23 and the FARDC. More than 101,000 asylum seekers were also documented during the reporting year, while approximately 67,000 refugees are concentrated in the overcrowded Busuma/Ruyigi camp.

Overcrowding is straining infrastructure, and the lack of shelter, clothing, and drinking water exposes refugees to risks of hypothermia and infections. Food insecurity is worsening, with rising rates of malnutrition, especially among children and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Access to basic necessities is extremely limited.

Regarding security, in the official camps, UNHCR describes a “deteriorating security situation.” Along the informal routes, refugees report theft and violence, attributed to the Imbonerakure and certain members of the military. Those transferred to Busuma face a humanitarian crisis combining famine, cold, and violence in unmonitored areas. This situation persists, even as

VI.2. CONGOLESE REFUGEES IN BURUNDI (the following of page 40)

refugees express their desire to return home, leading to protests and attempts to leave the camp; however, security forces and their Imbonerakure allies have blocked their path. It was only after warnings and pressure from partners and civil society that the Burundian government and UN agencies organized meetings to facilitate their voluntary return with UNHCR, even as the camps remain overcrowded and the assistance system is stretched to its limits. As of May 28, 2026, 4,463 Congolese refugees had been repatriated, but health and security conditions remain alarming, according to the UNHCR and UNICEF.

VII. CONCLUSION

Despite some progress observed since the June 2025 legislative elections, the human rights situation in Burundi remains complex and marked by several challenges. Institutional efforts aimed at strengthening the legal framework and increasing transparency have not led to any significant improvement in civic space, particularly due to the lack of dialogue with civil society. Furthermore, the diversity of opinions remains limited by restrictions on freedom of expression and by persecution targeting activists and critical journalists. Citizen security, while improving overall in certain areas, is not fully guaranteed, with reports of persistent violations as illustrated above, particularly against vulnerable groups (opposition members or those suspected of being so, members of civil society, and refugees returning to the country). Progress on economic, social, and cultural rights has been piecemeal, but much remains to be achieved, particularly regarding access to education, healthcare, and effective social protection. The protection of women, girls, and minorities remains a major challenge, given the violence against women and girls including children as evidenced by the figures cited above, which highlight the issue amid total impunity. The national response, although strengthened by significant reforms, still faces limitations in the implementation of inclusive policies and the establishment of independent oversight mechanisms. At the international level, cooperation and vigilance on the part of external partners help to encourage progress, but their influence remains fragile in the face of internal obstacles.



Anyone should be respected