



Burundi Watch Update

1 – 14 April 2018



SUMMARY

During the two first weeks of April 2018, crimes related to the upcoming constitutional referendum were reported in several locations. These include killings, abductions, arbitrary arrest and continued forced contribution of funds for the referendum .

Constitutional referendum dates set

On 12 April 2018, the spokesperson of the National Electoral Commission (known by its French acronym, CENI), Prosper Ntahorwamiye, held a press conference to announce that 26 political parties, three independents and one political coalition registered to campaign for the 17 May 2018 constitutional referendum. The vote will be preceded by a 14-day campaign to begin on 1 May 2018. Surprisingly, the opposition Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi (FRODEBU) party and the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition formed of L'Union pour le progrès national (UPRONA) and Forces nationales de libération (FNL) Rwanda wing registered to campaign, contending that they are participating to the constitutional referendum to save their members from death¹.

While the CENI speeds up the constitutional referendum process, several indicators of threat and intimidation against opponents of the referendum were reported, particularly in the North of Burundi. For example, on 3 April 2018, several residents of the Kiyovu, Mariza and Mugendo hills in the District of Ntega found signs on their doors reading "Oya" ("no" in Kirundi). Targets are members of the opposition FNL pro-Rwasa party and FRODEBU Nyakuri leader Dr. Jean

Minani. Houses of supporters and members of the ruling Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD) were marked with "Ego" ("Yes" in Kirundi). In the same vein, in the early morning of 12 April 2018, the populations of Bugabira found their doors marked by either "Ego" or "Oya". People believe the graffiti is left by Imbonerakure who patrol the area at night with the aim



explained several times on Radio Inzamba and Humura um to save his members from death

*A door marked Tora Ego (vote yes) in Bugabira.
Credit: Ndongozi on twitter*

of monitoring the populations and intimidating and threatening opponents.

Also, several school children have complained that administrative and school authorities involve them in political activities without regard for their rights and freedoms. For example, on 12 April 2018, pupils of Buringa 1 and 2 in the District of Gihanga were obliged to attend a constitutional referendum meeting from 10 to 12pm. Pupils of Karunyinya 1 and 2 in the District of Muruta were also obliged to attend a constitutional referendum meeting on 10 April 2018. The headmaster of Lycée Gashikanwa also collected the proof of registration of the pupils, leading to speculation as to his motivation.

Imbonerakure activities have proven to be a real threat to the safety of the population to the extent that the governor of the southern Bururi Province, Mr Christian Nkurunziza, prohibited Imbonerakure youth sports activities in a letter addressed to all Chiefs of the Districts in Bururi on 2 April 2018. These youth sports activities were mainly visible in the District of Matana, in Muhweza in the District of Rutovu, in Bamba and Gasanda in the District of Bururi and in the Gitsiro zone of the District of Vyanda.

On 10 April 2018, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Burundi (CECAB) released a statement expressing concern at the fundraising done as the government prepares for 2020 elections. Bishops denounced the manner in which fundraising is done as much of the poor population is obliged to contribute repeatedly. The church also clarified that the contribution any contributions from the Catholic Church should be requested via dioceses.

Security for refugees in Tanzania

Over the three last months the situation in Burundian refugee camps in Tanzania deteriorated as insecurity grew within and around the Nyarugusu and Nduta refugee camps. Signs of insecurity were reported as firearms were found in Nduta on 7 February 2018. A representative of the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs asserted the camp might be attacked and ordered that Burundians patrol at night to prevent from infiltrations and attacks.

Some refugees also complain that people are registered to repatriate against their will. This was reported, for example, in zone 7 of Nduta Refugee Camp. Some refugees suspect the complicity of staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Danish Refugee Council.

In Uganda, refugees have reported complications in registering. Obtaining a refugee ID in Uganda used to take two to three weeks but has become more complicated since 1 June 2017. A new refugee who registers now has to be checked by an *ad hoc* commission of the OPM and wait for approximately a year before they get biometric ID. Refugees also complain sexual harassment and corruption by some officials at Old Kampala Police Station.

Human rights violations

- On 1 April 2018, a grenade attack perpetrated by unknown people at Rugari-Gatamo in the District of Gitega resulted in two deaths and left seven wounded.
- On 2 April 2018, Marie Nshigikiwenimana was arrested in Gihogazi and detained at Gihogazi police station.
- On 2 April 2018, a group of armed people ambushed a car between 7th and 8th streets in the District of Gihanga. Intense gunfire was reported during the ambush.
- On 3 April 2018, a grenade attack in a pub in Carama II in the neighborhood of Kinama in Bujumbura left five persons wounded.
- On 4 April 2018, pupil Annick Irankunda of ECOFO Gishi was killed by unknown people who left her dead body on the shores of the Nyagashanga river located near Murunga hill in the District of Mugongo.
- On 4 April 2018, Richard Nkundimana and Fabien Nduwayo were arrested by the police at Ndora hill in the District of Bukinyana and taken to an unknown location.
- On 5 April 2018, the President of the FNL pro-Rwasa in Kimeza, Uwitonze Michel, and a local chief in Mukenke, Macumi Michel, were arrested by the Imborerakure and taken to Mukenke police station in the District of Bwambarangwe by the Chief of the District, Yusuf Nsengiyumva.
- On 5 April 2018, the body of a 50-year-old mentally disabled woman, Hagabimana, was found in a savannah on Kirama Hill in the zone of Mudende in the District of Buyengero.
- On 7 April 2018, the dead body of unidentified man was recovered at Runyinya Hill of the Muyama Zone in the District of Buyengero.
- On 7 April 2018, an unidentified person was killed and a 70-year-old man, Damien Niyontuka, was injured by unknown assailants at Rwandagaro Hill in the District of Bugenyuzi.
- On 8 April 2018, a 15-year-old girl was sexually assaulted at Kizina Hill in the District of Bubanza. The victim succeeded in identifying the perpetrator who is a soldier known as Innocent Nirera assigned to the 411th Battalion based in Randa, in the District of Bubanza.
- On 8 April 2018, Maurice Hatungimana was beaten to death at Rwibaga in the District of Mugongo-Manga by two Imborerakure, Manirakiza Thérance aka Fyiri and Manirakiza Liévin aka Togo, and a non-commissioned officer, Ndayisaba Théogène.
- On 9 April 2018, a 60-year-old man, Thaddée Nzokizwanimana, was beaten to death by Imborerakure militiamen and died as a result of torture in the Rugombo police station.
- On 9 April 2018, 21 persons including the President of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Burundi (CSB) and a teacher of the Institute of Applied Pedagogy of the University of Burundi, Gilbert Nyawakira, and Chrysostome Ndamanisha in Carama neighborhood in the District of Ntahangwa were arrested during a meeting the group belong to a tennis club. Many were released after a brief interrogation by the NIS in Bujumbura.
- On 10 April 2018, a 70-year-old woman Margueritte Habonimanapa was killed by unknown people. Her dead body was recovered in village five of Gihanga District.

- On 13 April 2018, a 50-year-old, Ndayishimiye, was killed by unknown people at Murambi Hill in the District of Kibago.
- On 11 April 2018, an estimated 30 persons were arrested by the police in the District of Musigati. Witnesses report that all these persons are followers of Euzébie Ngendakumana who recently returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo via Rwanda.
- On 11 April 2018, two persons, Jean Marie Barekebavuge and David Nkunzimana, were arrested at Gatabo hill in the District of Kayogoro as they returned from Nyarugusu refugee camp in Tanzania. The two were detained at Gatabo before being transferred to Kayogoro police station.
- On 12 April 2018, Ferdinand Kagi was arrested by the chief of Kayogoro District, Mr. Zachée Misago in Gatabo in the District of Kayogoro.
- On 12 April 2018, Singer and journalist Paul Bienvenu Niyonzima aka Monseigneur was abducted from downtown Bujumbura, taken to the NIS and released some time later.
- On 12 April 2018, an estimated 20 persons were arrested in Musaga at the 2nd and 3rd streets following a police search that commenced at 3 am as police searched firearms. Police commissioner Nicolas aka Sarkozy is pointed out as the commander of the operation while his jurisdiction is due to be Kanyosha zone on 12 April 2018, Rodrigue Nzeyimana, an official of Burundi Cement Company (BUCECO), was abducted from Mutanga Sud in the Mukaza District of Bujumbura. His car was found in a culvert on 28th November Street in Mutanga Sud
- On 13 April 2018, Member of Parliament Bernard Ndayisenga of the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition in Bujumbura was beaten up by four Imbonerakure including Kennedy, Masoro, Claver and Adronis in Kizingwe in the Kanyosha District. The Member of Parliament was beaten when he intervened in response to seeing the four Imbonerakure harassing four pro-Rwasa FNL members.

Atrocities Watch Africa

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info@atrocitieswatch.org

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