



Burundi Watch Update August 2018



Summary

The ongoing crisis has forced hundreds of thousands of Burundians to flee the country, many have sought asylum in neighboring countries. Despite the alarming situation of violation of human rights, including continuing reports of killings, arbitrary arrests and abductions, and the continuing political crisis Tanzanian authorities are threatening to forcibly repatriate Burundian refugees. In other countries, infiltration of Imbonerakure is frequently reported.

Tanzania to forcibly repatriate Burundian refugees

Since 2017, the treatment of Burundian refugees has gradually deteriorated. The situation worsened after the visit of the president of Burundi to Ngara on 20 July 2017. He affirmed that security has been restored in Burundi and Tanzanian authorities appear eager to believe this narrative even though the dialogue facilitated by former President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, is still in a deadlock and ongoing crimes have prompted the opening of an investigation by the International Criminal Court. Nonetheless, Tanzanian authorities are putting pressure on Burundian refugees to return to their country, as illustrated below:

Azam TV reported that two brothers, Nimpagaritse Juma Saidi and Nimpagaritse Moise, were killed during a police operation and had been participating to armed groups. Saidi had previously been arrested on 16 June and released without charge a week later. Witness A.K., however, claims to have seen them being arrested at the market on 4 July 2018. All four people were then reportedly transferred to Kibondo police station on 5 July 2018. The brothers reportedly were summarily executed.

On 17 July 2018, an official in charge of refugee camps in Kigoma held a meeting with village leaders where he confessed that Imbonerakure and Burundian intelligence agents are in Tanzania to track down political opponents. He pointed out that these criminals use motorcycles from Burundi. For this reason, authorities prohibited motorcyclists from leaving the camp and bringing passengers into the camp in an effort to avoid future criminal infiltration. However, pharmacies were also closed, suggesting that the real



Nduta refugee camp. Credit: Invisible monitor

motivation is to pressure refugees to leave.

On 24 July 2018, while in Nduta camp, the new Minister of the Interior, Kangi Lugola, made a speech to heads of zones calling on all Burundian refugees to register for repatriation and stating that peace prevails everywhere in Burundi. He also added that return is all the more urgent because Tanzania needs the site for other projects.

On 26 July 2018, in Mutendeli camp, the head of the province of Kigoma, Brigadier General Emmanuel Maganga gathered all Burundian refugees and made a speech in which he tried to intimidate them into registering for repatriation without delay by threatening to detain those who were unwilling to return. Maganga stated that he was reinforcing the decision of the Minister of the Interior. In his speech, Maganga said: "Following the meeting made by his Excellency the President of the United Republic of Tanzania with his counterpart the President of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza during their meeting in Ngara on 20 July 2017, our government has decided to repatriate you. No Burundian will be granted the nationality of Tanzania or be resettled to a third country for only Congolese are eligible; and those unwilling to return will be caught and detained in Nyamusivya so that they may reflect about repatriation."

On 27 July 2018, the head of Mutendeli camp posted a statement prohibiting activities in the camp: closing shops, prohibiting circulation of motorcycles and taxis and the suspending all small businesses. According to a representative of the refugees, these repressive measures were taken to make life impossible in the camp and consequently to push the refugees to register for repatriation.



A post announcing the closure of small business in Mtendeli.
Credit: Invisible monitor

Infiltration by Imboberkure Militia

Alongside the alarming situation of Burundian refugees in Tanzania, infiltration by Imbonerakure militiamen has been reported in Burundi refugee camps in the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. For example, on 21 July 2018, it was reported that about 20 Imborerakure were deployed in Kampala to monitor Burundian refugees. Similar reports circulated in Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda where security forces searched the camp on 18 July 2018 and eventually arrested dozens of persons who had no identification as refugees and are believed to be infiltrators from Burundian intelligence. In Lusenda in the DRC, two guns were found the on 30 June 2018. According to Burundian refugees, the guns were brought to the camp by Burundian intelligence agents with the complicity of Congolese security agents. Moreover, witnesses assert that on 25

and 26 June, some people were seen in possession of grenades in the camp. According to refugees, these disturbing security incidents are not refugees and just came inside for the mission.

Roadmap towards 2020 elections

On 3 August 2018, Burundian Minister of the Interior Pascal Barandagiye organized, in the Northern province of Kayanza, a session aimed at preparing for the 2020 general elections. While the ministry has attempted to impose the roadmap for 2020 elections, some opposition parties, including the *Coalition Amizero y'Abarundi*, that participated in the constitutional referendum in May 2018 boycotted the Kayanza session. The *Rassemblement National pour le Changement* (RANAC) and *Front pour la Démocratie du Burundi* (FRODEBU) participated in the meeting, which they criticized as designed to force parties to sign the document prepared by the government without consensus. They argue that other critical questions must be answered prior to any step towards the preparation of the elections. According to *Mouvement pour la Solidarité et la Démocratie* (MSD), it is premature to discuss 2020 elections while vital questions about the restoration of peace and security, the release of political prisoners and return of refugees and political leaders remain unresolved.



Participants in the Kayanza session,
Credit: Ikirih0 on twitter

Senior Police Commissioner incites violence

Over three years of crisis in Burundi, some police officers have been accused of involvement in human rights violations. Some have become infamous for their brutality. One example is police commissioner in the central region of Gitega, Thaddée Birutegusa. More recently, on 26 July 2018, during a meeting dedicated to the prevention of the crime and terror held in Nyamugari in the District of Gitega, Birutegusa openly stated that anyone caught with a weapon would no longer be handed over to judicial authorities but be killed on the spot.

Such a statement is a grave undermining of international human rights norms and could encourage the commission of extrajudicial executions.

Human rights violations

Some of the cases reported during the reporting period include:

On 6 July 2018, a 51-year-old man, Jean Berchmans Nzirumbanje, was killed by unidentified persons at Mwenya hill in the District of Kirundo.

On 7 July 2018, *Forces nationales de liberation* (FNL) member Pierre Ndinduruvugo was arrested at Rusengo hill in the District of Gashikanwa by Imbonerakure militiamen for allegedly insulting them. Ndinduruvugo was remitted to the police and detained without any warrant.

On 8 July 2018, a 70-year-old man Melchior Bayiremye was killed by unidentified people at Nyagaseke Hill in the District of Mabayi.

On 9 July 2018, a grenade attack at the residence of Jean Bizimana in Nyaminazi in the District of Kinyinya resulted in one child being killed and nine other occupants being wounded.

On 9 July 2018, Enock Hakizimana was killed by unidentified gunmen at Kayogoro center in the District of Kayogoro.

On 10 July 2018, a grenade attack near a pub in Iteba in the District of Rumonge resulted in one person being seriously wounded.

On 11 July 2018, two FNL activists, Tharcisse Cigezeho and Fabrice Ndungutse, were arrested by the chief of the national intelligence services (NIS) in Cibitoke, Venant Miburo, in complicity with Imbonerakure militiamen at Cunyu hill in the District of Buganda. The two young men were tied up and taken to the NIS cells in Cibitoke.

On 12 July 2018, Evariste Mbonihankuye was arrested, reportedly on the instructions of the Governor of Makamba, Gad Niyukuri in the District of Makamba. The arrest is suspected to have been motivated by a land conflict that Mbonihanyuke was having with a person known to be a friend of Niyukuri's.

On 12 July 2018, Léonard Niyonkuru was arrested and detained for a week at the NIS in Bujumbura where he was tortured before being transferred to Mpimba central prison.

On 13 July 2018, the dead body of an unidentified person who had been tied up was recovered by a group of fishermen near the fishing port of Busambi in the zone Gatete of the District of Rumonge.

On 15 July 2018, FNL activist Masharubu was arrested by Imbonerakure Thomas and Manebari in complicity with the chief of zone Bigina Paul Rwajekera in Bigina in the District of Makamba.

On 16 July 2018, Gelase Nzeyimana was murdered by unidentified persons who eventually threw his body in a bush in Nyakabiga in the District of Mukaza. Witnesses report that the body showed injuries to the head.

On 16 July 2018, 61 persons were arrested during a police raid in Birimba in the District of Rumonge. Some were released after identification, but a dozen remained in jail. According to an anonymous police source, the raid was prompted by police belief that the area had been infiltrated by armed groups.

On 17 July 2018, the dead body of 43-year-old Pierre Kazobavamwo was recovered in a bush in Vyuya in the District of Mugamba.

On 18 July 2018, a presumed thief Kwasa was shot dead by the police at Burarana in the District of Bururi.

On 18 July 2018, FNL activists Abdallah Nzovugankize, Juma Macumi and Abibu Simbayobewe were arrested by the police at Sigu Hill in the District of Busoni reportedly for advocating voting against the constitutional referendum.

On 20 July 2018, two young FNL activists, Jacques Ndikumana and Juvenal Harikuriyo, were arrested in the District of Buganda for allegedly attempting to join armed movements in the DRC.

On 21 July 2018, a dead body of a 7-year-old boy, Ntirampeba, was recovered at Maramvya hill in the District of Gitanga.

On 21 July 2018, a 60-year-old, Vital Muhitira, was killed by unidentified persons in Muyombwe hill in the District of Bukemba.

On 22 July 2018, armed confrontation was reported in Buringa in the District of Mpanda as army fought attackers belonging to armed group led by Nzabampema who claimed the attack.

On 23 July 2018, FNL activist Callixte Nduwimana was assaulted by Imbonerakure at Rugeregere hill in the District of Rugombo.

On 23 July 2018, the residence of Jean Marie Bariyanka in Nyamigina hill in the District of Kinyinya was attacked by Imbonerakure militiamen. Bariyanka was seriously beaten until he lost consciousness. His wife, Gertrude Hakizimana, was assaulted and obliged to pay a ransom of 300,000 Burundian francs (about 100 euros) to be released.

On 25 July 2018, a 26-year-old man, Dieudonné Niyonizeye, was killed by unidentified persons at Rugoma hill in the District of Bukirasazi.

On 25 July 2018, FNL activist Noé Ndayizeye was arrested on Murengeza hill in the District of Mpanda by Imbonerakure militiamen and handed to police at Mpanda police station.

On 2 August, two men, Budigoma and Nzoyisaba and two other unidentified persons were killed by unknown gunmen in Rutakara in the



Street children arrested in Rumonge on 2 August 2018. Credit: Invisible monitor

District of Mukike. Another person was wounded.

On 2 August 2018, twenty-five street children were arrested in Rumonge. Fifteen were received by an NGO known as FVS which offered to reeducate them whereas ten were detained at Rumonge police station.