



Burundi Watch Update 21-27 August 2017

Summary

Over the report period, the number of killings and deaths recovered increased remarkably. The number of arrests also increased.

Controversy over the repatriation of Burundian refugees rose as Tanzania gets ready to facilitate the operation.

MSD Party suspended

The Burundi Minister of home affairs Pascal Barandagiye in a letter addressed to the President of the Supreme Court demanded the dissolution of the main opposition party, Mouvement pour la Solidarité et le Développement (MSD). In the letter, the Minister argued that members of the MSD continuously participated in the spreading of hate and violence. He said the state has the duty to protect public order and public morals in accordance with the laws of the country.

UN experts want release of Germain Rukuki

A group of United Nations experts¹ has called on the government of Burundi to release a human rights defender who has been detained since 13 July 2017 and faces serious charges including rebellion.

The experts are concerned by the arbitrary detention of Germain Rukuki, which is linked to his work in defending human rights.

¹ For full story, see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21997&LangID=E>

Mr. Rukuki has been formally charged with attacking the internal security of the country, and with rebellion for having worked for the NGO Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT), where he was previous the treasurer. ACAT was banned in October 2016, along with four other Burundian organizations.

The experts expressed deep concern over the use of national security charges to target the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression and freedom of association. The charges in this case carry heavy prison sentences and have the effect of deterring the work of other human rights defenders in Burundi.

Killings, grenade attacks and gunshots

Some of the reported cases of killings and grenade attacks include:

- On 19 August 2017, a grenade attack in a pub known as “Butezi bar” located at the District of Gitega resulted in 6 persons being wounded
- On 20 August 2017, a grenade attack was reported in Kinyami in the District of Ngozi. No damage was reported
- On 20 August 2017, a grenade attack in the District of Rusaka resulted in two persons being wounded
- On 20 August 2017, a dead body of a person identified as Rogatien Gahungu was recovered at Gitongo hill in the District of Mutaho.
- On 21 August 2017, René Ntahompagaze was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants in Rubumba in the District of Kiganda
- On 23 August a 60 years old man Joseph Karikurubu was killed at Gabiro-Ruyagira in the District of Rugombo
- On 23 August 2017, a grenade owned in a household in Muriza in the District of Butaganzwa exploded while kids were playing. The explosion resulted in three kids being wounded
- On 24 August 2017, Pascasie Kabagema was attacked and wounded in Mparambo, in the District of Rugombo by a group of an estimated number of 5 assailants armed of machetes
- On 26 August 2017, a 25 year-old male, Bonheur Girukwishaka, was killed by a group of Imbonerakure in Rukana in the District of Rugombo

Arbitrary arrests and abductions

Some of the arrests and abductions that were reported during the period report:

- On 19 August 2017, a Belgian national Dju Manjy Mougly was arrested in Gitega and taken in the NIS in Bujumbura where he was detained for 3 days. He was released and expelled on 22 August 2017.
- On 21 August 2017, Thomas Harerimana, an anesthetist working with the hospital of Makamba was arrested by the Governor of Makamba Gad Niyukuri following the death of a female patient who died as her surgery failed
- On 21 August 2017, Donatien Bihumugani and Salvator Budigoma were arrested and detained in Rusaka
- On 25 August 2017, six eight (68) youths from Muramvya, Karusi, Cankuzo and Ngozi were arrested in a pub known as “Iwabo w’ingoma” situated in Nyabugogo in the District of Gitega. All were detained in Gitega police station
- On 25 August 2017, eight cattle keepers were arrested in Rukoko natural reserve and detained in Gihanga police station

Atrocities Watch Africa

Atrocities Watch Africa (AWA) is a non-partisan, civil society organization and institution that intends to provide continental leadership in matters pertaining to the prevention of mass atrocities within Africa and beyond, through multi-pronged approaches that infuse ownership, legitimacy, and sustainable interface. AWA’s strategic and approaches are grounded in the realization that atrocities can be prevented through various interventions, including, but not limited to, early warning mechanisms, diplomatic efforts, use of social media and new technologies, litigation, and advocacy campaigns.

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