



Burundi Watch Update

July 2018



Summary

During the reporting period, several cases of assassinations, murders, arbitrary arrests and abductions were reported across the country. In most of the cases Imbonerakure militia were identified by victims as the perpetrators and reported to authorities or security forces. However, impunity has remained since the Imbonerakure are rarely prosecuted for the committal of crimes. During the same period, the situation of Burundian refugees in the region deteriorated significantly. There were reports of forcing them to return to Burundi from Tanzania and the DRC.

EU wants more Burundi attention

On 5 July 2018, the European parliament adopted a joint resolution on Burundi.¹ The European parliament expressed its deep concern about endemic impunity and human rights violations, including summary executions, torture, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention; and reminded Burundi of its obligation, as a member of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), to resume and fully cooperate with the UN Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Burundi and the team of three UN experts, and to grant country access to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

The European parliament is worried that the ongoing political crisis may turn into an ethnic conflict through the use of propaganda, statements inciting hatred or calls for violence. Such rhetoric equates opponents, members of civil society, journalists and Tutsis with “enemies of the regime” who must be eliminated. The parliament urged all sides in Burundi are urged to refrain from use of language that may further aggravate violence or deepen the crisis or affect regional stability.

¹ See joint motion for a resolution,
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P8-RC-2018-0333&language=EN>

On the promulgation of the new constitution, the European parliament remains deeply concerned that the new constitution adopted by referendum on 17 May 2018 could dismantle the carefully negotiated provisions defined in the Arusha Agreement that helped to put an end to Burundi's civil war.

The European Union also demands an end be put to any further payment to the Burundian troops and various contingents from Burundi engaged in UN and AU peacekeeping missions.

In contrast to the European parliament's strong statement on the alarming situation in Burundi, the situation in the country was totally absent² from the agenda of the 31st Assembly of the African Union held in Nouakchott in Mauritania from 25 June to 2 July 2018.

On their sides, African human rights mechanisms and NGOs remain actively engaged on the situation in Burundi. During its 62nd session in May 2018, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) demanded³ that the government of Burundi fully cooperate with regional and international mechanisms mandated to investigate human rights violations in Burundi and extend an invitation to the Commission to undertake a general human rights promotion mission to Burundi, in collaboration with the government authorities.

The ACHPR also demanded that the East African Community and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union take appropriate measures to ensure that all stakeholders, including the Burundian government, participate actively and unconditionally in an all-inclusive inter-Burundian peace dialogue based on the respect of the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution of Burundi to end the current crisis as soon as possible.

In the same vein, on 3 July 2018, the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights



Participants at the 5th focal point of the East and Horn of Africa Human rights defenders network in Kampala on 2-3 July 2018. Credit: Mohamed A Farah on twitter

² See Summary of the key decisions and declarations of the 31st African Union Summit, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20180706/summary-key-decisions-and-declarations-31st-african-union-summit>

³ See 396: Draft Resolution: Burundi - ACHPR/Res. 396 (LXII) 2018, http://www.achpr.org/sessions/62nd_os/resolutions/396/

Defenders Network 5th focal points meeting adopted a resolution⁴ urging, among other things, the government of Burundi to re-establish its cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) by urgently signing a Memorandum of Understanding providing for the presence of an OHCHR country office with a mandate including monitoring, public reporting, and technical assistance and capacity-building, as well as to cooperate with the UN HRC and the Col as per HRC resolutions 36/2 and 36/19, adopted in September 2017.

Hate speech Sycophant released

Melchiade Nzopfabarusha gave a speech addressing ruling CNDD-FDD activists at Migera Hill in the District of Kabezi on 15 April 2018 in which he threatened to kill opponents of the Constitution revision and throw them into Lake Tanganyika to feed the fish.

He was arrested on 29 April 2018, tried the next morning and sentenced the same day to three years' imprisonment for attempting to disrupt internal security, death threats and hate speech. However, Nzopfabarusha was released by a judgment of the Court of Appeal of Bujumbura on 20 June 2018.

Many point to this pardon, and the unusual speed of the trial as an attempt by the ruling party CNDD-FDD to “show” that they are not meddling in the judiciary.

Pregnant girls victimized

Girls who get pregnant before marriage and the boys who make them pregnant will be excluded from all formal education system. They have no other option than to turn to vocational training.

This is according to a note circulated by the Minister of Education,⁵ Janvière Ndirahisha, some time before the end of the 2017-2018 school year in June, "Any girl studying in primary or secondary school, who would get pregnant during the school year and before they have completed their education and the boy who made her pregnant will not be allowed to resume the public or private formal education system."

⁴ See Resolution on the situation in Burundi, including detained human rights defenders, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Burundi-resolution-edited-FINAL.pdf>

⁵ See scanned document uploaded by Iwacu on twitter on 28 June 2018, <https://twitter.com/iwacuinfor/status/1012322307161972736>

Many girls who get pregnant have already been victims of rape or sexual harassment. These girls will now be victimized once again by being excluded from the educational system. And although the statement attempts to appear gender neutral by excluding both girls and boys, the reality is although it will be clear when a girl reaches a certain point in her pregnancy, the identity of the father is far less clear and so girls are likely to bear the brunt of this policy.

Burundian refugees fear forced return

After a shooting incident near Nduta refugee camp on 6 July 2018, Tanzanian police prohibited Burundian refugees from going outside the camp for at least two weeks. Ever since, a big police contingent was deployed in the areas surrounding the camp.

In the first half of 2018, a number of security alerts were launched. Refugees claimed that Imbonerakure militiamen had infiltrated in the camp, but little was done to protect them. Refugees believe Imbonerakure are assigned by the government to push them to return to Burundi by spreading biased information, threatening refugees.

In Nduta refugee camp, Imbonerakure infiltrated zones 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 explaining to Burundians that those who will not voluntarily return before 2020 will be made to account.

Not only are authorities not protecting refugees, they are allegedly subjecting them to arbitrary arrest and torture. According to a refugee, MJ,

On 8 June 2018, I was abducted along with my brother PN. The police took us to Kibondo. We were accused of possessing a gun. We were tortured and taken to Nyamusivya prison where we found hundreds of Burundian prisoners. We were 257 among whom 94 were sentenced. Among Burundian detainees, very few were not tortured. Life in the prison is extremely hard for prisoners. They don't get food and don't have the right to be visited by friends whereas healthcare is quasi inexistent.

After one week, JM and his brother were released. After the interrogation about possessing gun, they were not formally charged and were freed.

The same was noticed in Nyarugusu refugee camp where dozens of Burundian refugees are arrested and interrogated on a monthly basis, mainly about their ties to armed groups. Others are accused of collaborating and providing information

to media including Inzamba and Humura which operate in exile. No legal assistance is given to them.

In Lusenda refugee camp in the DRC dozens of people have been arrested and interrogated because they listened to Humura and Inzamba radio,

In Nakivale settlement in Uganda, refugees fear infiltration by Imbonerakure. But they are more concerned by their livelihoods as they don't access adequate healthcare. For example, P.N, a 30-year-old woman and mother of three children who was raped in Bujumbura in 2015 is suffering for lack of appropriate healthcare. After settling in Nakivale, she was only treated by a nurse whom she befriended until she was admitted to a hospital in Kampala in late May 2018 following the intervention of INTERAID-Uganda who offered to pay for her surgery..

Human rights violations

Some of the cases reported by our monitors during the report period include:

- On 13 June 2018, two women, 70-year-old Véronique Ntahonkiriye and her 27-year-old daughter, Francine Ndorimana, were assaulted by Imbonerakure in Kizuka in Rumonge District. They were accused of campaigning against the constitutional referendum and are members of the FNL. Aggressors were identified as Appolinaire Ndabambarire aka Kengu, an Imbonerakure known as Kitu and Protais, a war veterans' leader in Kizuka.
- On 15 June 2018, Zacharie Shweburi was arrested by Imbonerakure at Kigamba hill in Gisuru District as they believed he was not a resident. Shweburi was detained at Kigamba police station where he was tortured before being transferred to Gisuru police where he was detained for six days.
- On 16 June 2018, Caritas Gikumumpaye was killed by unidentified people at Taba hill in the District of Nyabikere.
- On 16 June 2018, a 60-year-old woman, Peressi Ndayishimiye was assaulted and wounded by Imbonerakure on Murambi hill, in the District of Makamba. Relatives report that these militiamen entered her house at night

and pulled her from her bed before she beating her naked body with sticks in front of her children.

- On 19 June 2018, a grenade attack by unidentified people at Higiyo Hill, in the District of Busoni resulted in a 60-year-old woman, Kankuyo, being killed.
- On 17 June 2018, Jean Luc Bukuru was arrested and beaten by Imbonerakure at Nyamugari in the District of Gitega apparently simply for refusing to join the ruling CNDD-FDD party.
- On 23 June 2018, Melance Bavumiragiye was attacked and seriously injured by unidentified gunmen at Nyamigina hill, in the District of Kinyinya. Relatives report that the victim was ambushed while traveling by motorcycle towards the market of their neighbouring District of Gisuru. Several cases of attacks happening have happened in the area and are attributed to Imbonerakure who patrol the area and ambush small merchants.
- On 23 June 2018, two Imbonerakure named Fabrice and Lolilo assaulted a small trader and his two sisters when they refused to pay protection money. The victims were gravely wounded and are being treated in hospitals in Bujumbura.
- On 24 June 2018, Nikiza Adelard, aka Bekere, living in the neighbourhood of Gisovu in the District of Bubanza, was arrested and detained at Bubanza police station because Justine Keza working with Lycee Bubanza accused him of throwing stones at her house roof. Nikiza was arrested and detained without a warrant.
- On 24 June 2018, unidentified individuals murdered Libérat Ntirandekura on Kabwira Hill in the District of Bugenyuzi.
- On 24 June 2018, a prisoner, Severin Bwahuro, who had escaped from the Ruyigi Prison during the day and was caught at Ruyigi market and executed by policemen who shot him five times after allegedly torturing him. According to witnesses, when he was caught, Bwahuro was beaten by policemen and Imbonerakure

- On 25 June 2018, a grenade attack by unidentified persons at Gasabira Pierre residence in Yaranda hill in the District of Kirundo resulted in the death of their 18-month-old. Pierre Gasabira and his wife Girukwishaka were gravely wounded.
- On 26 June 2018, an official of the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock (DPAE, French acronym) in Muyinga, Jean Pierre Mumputu, was killed near his residence in Muyinga by unidentified gunmen who shot him three times before they run away.
- On 27 June 2018, Imbonerakure militiamen violently assaulted and tortured Nzokira on Dunga Hill, Gatabo Zone, in the District of Kayogoro. Relatives report that the victim succumbed to injuries at the hospital \ on 2 July 2018. Perpetrators of such a crime were identified as Korimba who is the representative of Imbonerakure militiamen on Dunga hill and Wakera of the same group. However, no investigation was undertaken to further investigate and prosecute the perpetrators
- On 27 June 2018, Imbonerakure militiamen murdered Audace Nyobewumusi in Gatabo zone in the District of Kayogoro. Witnesses report that the victim was beaten to death. Perpetrators were identified as Havyarimana, aka Nkorabara, and Nyandwi, aka Warigara, both members of the Imbonerakure militia.
- On 28 June 2018, the head of the National Commission on Lands and other assets (CNTB, French acronym) in Rutana and deputy secretary general of the ruling CNDD-FDD party in Rutana Donatien Ntamwishimiro was found wounded on the roadside at Gakobe Hill in the District of Rutana. He died the next day at Rutana hospital.
- On 28 June 2018, a grenade attack by unidentified assailants at Ngarama Hill in the District of Mpinga Kayove resulted in Bukuru being gravely wounded. He was urgently admitted to Gitega Regional Hospital for treatment.
- On 28 June 2018, Police agents arrested Jean Bosco Nimpagaritse at Kigoma hill in the District of Buhiga and detained at Buhiga police station. Nimpagaritse is an internally displaced person who settled in Kigoma site. Whereas he was accused of rebelling against the administration, neighbours suggest he is only victim of his refusal to join the ruling CNDD-FDD party.

- On 28 June 2018, four teachers of the Ryansoro high school, namely Fulgence Bizimana, Jean Bosco Butoyi, Prosper Nshirimbere and Emile Niyomwungere were arbitrarily arrested by the police because they had exposed mismanagement of the school's property some time back.
- On 29 June 2018, a trade union leader at the Burundian Company for the Management of the Airport of Bujumbura (SOBGEA, French acronym) Amissi Hakizimana was abducted on 4th Street of Cibitoke in the District of Ntahangwa and taken to an unknown location. Witnesses report that Mr. Hakizimana was attacked by several policemen without warrant and taken to an unknown destination.
- On 29 June 2018, three dead bodies of unidentified persons were recovered at Nyagumba Hill in the District of Bukinanyana. Victims' hands were tied up, suggesting they were executed.
- On 1 July, the dead body of a four-year-old child was recovered in front of his parents' residence in Kanyosha in the District of Muha. The boy had been abducted by unknown people two days before.
- On 5 July 2018, unidentified armed individuals murdered Epimaque at Mbizi hill in the District of Kibago. Witnesses reported that the victim is a motorcycle taxi driver and was killed while transporting a client.
- On 2 July 2018, three students of the University of Burundi namely Eric Manirakiza, Mathieu Itangishaka and Jean Paul Kaburiyimbere were arrested at Mutanga campus in the District of Mukaza. Witnesses report that the campus security officer who was accompanied by Imbonerakure students led the operation. The three students arrested were accused of possessing weapons. Since their arrest, their whereabouts remain unknown.
- On 3 July 2018, police agents arrested a 17-year-old boy Olivier Ngabirano at Mugendo-Ndego hill, in the District Mugamba. Witnesses report that the police gave no explanation for the no-warrant arrest.