



ACAT – Burundi

**Report on the monitoring of human rights violations and abuses committed in
Burundi.**

Period: October 2025.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The political and security crisis that Burundi has been experiencing since April 2015, which remains unresolved, continues to fuel human rights violations to the detriment of the Burundian people, who are paying a heavy price while aspiring, as elsewhere, to the rule of law. The pattern of human rights violations documented since the beginning of the political crisis in April 2015 remains largely unchanged.

These mainly include summary executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment, which continue to be observed.

At the 60th session of the Human Rights Council, held on 19 August 2025, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights presented his report on the state of human rights.

Between November 2023 and March 2025, numerous civil society organisations documented persistent cases of torture and ill-treatment, attributed mainly to the National Intelligence Service (SNR), the police and the Imbonerakure. These abuses often target members of the opposition, particularly the National Congress for Liberty (CNL) and the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU), and take the form of physical and psychological abuse inflicted outside any legal framework, without access to a lawyer, a doctor or a fair trial. Despite the commitments made to the Committee against Torture in 2023, no concrete measures have been taken, and the follow-up report expected in 2024 has not been submitted.

Between August 2023 and June 2025, a total of 89 cases were recorded, often accompanied by illegal detention in secret locations, while 11 extrajudicial executions and 137 arbitrary arrests were reported.

Arbitrary arrests have increased: 86 cases were recorded, nearly half of which involved opponents from ten different parties. The authorities frequently extend preventive detention beyond the legal time limits and sometimes refuse to release individuals who have served their sentences. These practices lead to chronic overcrowding in the prison system, marked by degrading conditions of detention (overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, lack of healthcare, internal violence).

The Special Rapporteur noted a growing restriction of civic space, marked by limitations on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Human rights defenders and civil society organisations continue to face intimidation and obstacles to their activities. The report calls on the authorities to guarantee a safe and inclusive environment that promotes citizen participation.

The Special Rapporteur urges the Government to put an end to these practices, to respect freedom of movement, and to unconditionally release all persons detained for the peaceful exercise of their civil and political rights.

Through its publications, ACAT-Burundi remains committed to actively advocating against these serious violations, notably by collaborating with regional and international human rights protection mechanisms in the hope that victims or their families will be able to exercise their right to file complaints with judicial bodies that guarantee a fair trial.

During the period covered by this report, sixteen (16) cases of murder, two (2) cases of abduction and two (2) cases of arbitrary arrest were recorded.

In most cases, the alleged perpetrators have not been brought to justice: dead bodies, most of them unidentified, have been found in various locations throughout Burundi.

II. MURDERS.

Assassinations and abductions continue in Burundi more than five years after President Évariste Ndayishimiye came to power. Repression has become recurrent, despite Article 24 of ***the Burundian Constitution, which guarantees everyone the right to life. Furthermore, Articles 210 to 220 of the Penal Code criminalise and severely punish anyone who violates this fundamental right.***

In October 2025, ACAT-Burundi recorded 16 cases of assassinations in different regions of the country, in circumstances reflecting flagrant violations of human rights, perpetrated in a climate of total impunity.

1. On 3 October 2025, at around 4 a.m., Mr Christophe Nimbona, a native of Mutambu in the province of Bujumbura, was shot dead at his home in the Gisyo neighbourhood of Kanyosha, in the commune of Mugere, province of Bujumbura. According to initial witness statements, the alleged shooter was police colonel Stany Niyizonkiza. Alerted by local residents, police officers, accompanied by the Gisyo neighbourhood chief, went to the scene of the shooting. There they discovered the body of Christophe Nimbona lying on the ground in a pool of blood. According to local sources, Colonel Stany Niyizonkiza claimed that the victim was trying to steal his chickens, taking advantage of the darkness caused by a power cut at the time of the incident. ACAT-Burundi strongly condemns this act and calls for the perpetrator of this crime to be prosecuted and punished in accordance with the law.

2. On the morning of 7 October 2025, the lifeless body of a man named Roti was discovered on Ndava hill, in the commune of Bukinanyana, Bujumbura province. According to local sources, shortly before his death, Roti had sold a goat for four hundred and fifty thousand Burundian francs (450,000 FBu). After this transaction, he reportedly went to a cabaret with some young Imbonerakure from the area to have a few drinks.
According to these sources, the youths violently beat him with sticks, mainly on the head, before robbing him of his money. In critical condition, they then transported him to the local police station. However, the station chief refused to admit him, ordering instead that he be taken to hospital.
Ignoring this order, the attackers allegedly abandoned Roti in the Kagunuzi River, whose current carried his body to the Rusizi River, where it was found the next morning.
The same sources specify that the body was transferred to the morgue on the instructions of the administrative authorities, pending the results of the ongoing investigation.
ACAT-Burundi strongly condemns this act and calls for the perpetrator of this crime to be prosecuted and punished in accordance with the law.
3. On 7 October 2025, the lifeless body of an unidentified man was discovered on the banks of the Muhira River, at the foot of Ruhagarika Hill, in the province of Bujumbura. The victim's arms were tied with his own shirt. According to local sources, the body was buried at the site where it was found, without waiting for the victim or the alleged perpetrators of the crime to be identified.
ACAT-Burundi calls for credible and independent investigations to be opened to shed light on the circumstances of this death.
4. On 8 October 2025, the lifeless body of Albert Bucumi, aged 43 and originally from Kabuye hill, was discovered in the Gitenge river, located on Ndava hill, in the commune of Cibitoke, Bujumbura province.
According to local sources, the victim had disappeared on the night of 5 October 2025. His body was found a few days later, showing signs of strangulation. ACAT-Burundi calls for credible and independent investigations to be opened to shed light on the circumstances surrounding this death .
5. On 9 October 2025, the lifeless body of an unidentified young man was discovered in the Dama River valley, on Mwange hill, in the Kizuka area, Rumonge commune, Burunga province. The victim, whose arms were tied with a rope, was found by farmers on their way to their oil palm fields. According to local sources, the alleged perpetrators killed the young man in the Dama River valley before abandoning his body in a ditch on the side of National Road No. 3. After the usual observations were made by a judicial police officer, the body was transported to the morgue at Rumonge Hospital. ACAT-Burundi calls for credible

and independent investigations to be opened to clarify the circumstances of this death.

6. On 11 October 2025, the lifeless body of a man named Gabriel Sinzumunsi was found hanging from a rope attached to the frame of his house, located on Mungwa hill in the commune and province of Gitega.
According to local sources, several residents of the hill suspect that the victim was killed elsewhere and then brought back to his home in order to conceal the true circumstances of his death.
In light of these suspicions, ACAT-Burundi is calling for a credible and independent investigation to shed light on the circumstances surrounding this death.
7. On 14 October 2025, the lifeless body of 88-year-old Véronique Mundanikure was discovered about twenty metres from her home on Rushanga hill in the commune of Bugendana, Gitega province.
According to local sources, the victim was brutally stabbed by individuals who have not yet been identified.
The body of the deceased was buried the same day, following a decision by the administrative authorities and the findings of the judicial police officer (OPJ) in charge of the criminal investigation.
In light of these facts and the suspicions surrounding this death, ACAT-Burundi calls for a credible, impartial and independent investigation to be opened in order to shed light on the circumstances of this tragedy.
8. On 15 October 2025, a lifeless body was discovered on the banks of the Mucece River, on Kivyeyi Hill, in the commune of Kiganda, in the province of Gitega. The macabre discovery was made by pupils on their way to Kivyeyi Primary School.
According to witnesses at the scene, the victim's arms were tied with a rope and the body had wounds to the neck and head. On the orders of the Kivyeyi hill chief, the body was buried the same day. ACAT-Burundi calls for credible and independent investigations to be carried out to clarify the circumstances of this death.
9. On 18 October 2025, Faustin Nishimwe, a resident of Gasozo hill, Mageyo area, Mubimbi commune, in the province of Bujumbura, was the victim of a tragic incident. According to local sources, Faustin Nishimwe, accompanied by his brother, was on his way down to Bujumbura to sell a goat. When they arrived near the presidential palace, they were intercepted by a drunken police officer, who demanded a receipt for the goat. Nishimwe explained that he was the owner, but the police officer confiscated the animal anyway and headed for a small bush not far from the palace. Faustin Nishimwe and his brother followed him, asking where he was taking the goat. The police officer then opened fire, shooting several times. Faustin Nishimwe was hit by four bullets in the head and

died instantly. ACAT-Burundi has called for this criminal to be convicted and serve his sentence in accordance with the law.

10. On the morning of 20 October 2025, the lifeless body of Denise Bigirimana was discovered in a small bush on Nyamagana hill, in the commune of Bugendana, Gitega province.

According to local sources, the victim was killed elsewhere before her body was abandoned at the site where it was found, in order to cover up any traces for a possible investigation. ACAT-Burundi calls for credible and independent investigations to be conducted in order to shed light on the circumstances surrounding this death.

11. On 23 October 2025, the body of a young woman aged between 20 and 25 was discovered on Mugoboka Sororezo hill, located in the Nyakabiga area of Bujumbura. According to local sources, the body was found under some bushes below a school known as Collège and had severe head injuries, while the lower part of the body was completely naked. The same sources report that the victim was raped and then murdered elsewhere before being dumped at the site where she was found in order to mislead investigators. In light of this situation, ACAT-Burundi is calling for credible and independent investigations to be carried out in order to shed light on the circumstances surrounding this tragedy.

12. On 24 October 2025, the lifeless body of a woman named Nadine Irakoze was found at her home on Zege Hill in the commune and province of Gitega. According to information gathered at the scene, Nadine Irakoze was allegedly murdered by asphyxiation by individuals who have not yet been identified. In light of this situation, ACAT-Burundi is calling for a credible and independent investigation to be launched in order to shed light on the circumstances surrounding this tragedy.

13. On 24 October 2024, the lifeless body of an unidentified man, completely naked, was discovered under the bridge under construction at the foot of Kaburantwa hill, on Transversal Road No. 6, in the Buganda area, Bukinanyana commune, Bujumbura province. The macabre discovery was made in the morning by workers from a Chinese company responsible for building the bridge over the Rusizi River. According to the information gathered, the body was taken to the morgue of the Ubuntu Clinic, located on Gasenyi hill, on Transversal Road No. 4, following a decision by the administrative authorities. In light of this situation, ACAT-Burundi is calling for a credible and independent investigation to be launched in order to shed light on the circumstances surrounding this tragedy.

14. On 25 October 2025, two unidentified male bodies in an advanced state of decomposition were discovered in a cassava field on Gasenyi hill, at crossroads 3, in the Buganda area, Bukinanyana commune, Bujumbura province. This macabre discovery was made by farmers. According to local sources, the bodies were buried on site, at the very place where they were found, following a decision by the Buganda area chief. This burial took place without any prior investigation. In light of this situation, ACAT-Burundi is calling for a credible and independent investigation to be launched in order to shed light on the circumstances surrounding this tragedy.

15. On 25 October 2025, the body of Ms Jeanine Ndereyimana, originally from Kirempera hill, Giheta area, Gitega province, was discovered in the Magarama neighbourhood, Second Avenue, in the commune and province of Gitega. According to local sources, the victim was murdered by individuals who have not yet been identified. The body had injuries to the neck. ACAT-Burundi calls for credible, independent and thorough investigations to be carried out in order to shed light on the circumstances of this murder and identify those responsible.

In this report covering the month of October 2025, ACAT-Burundi notes with concern an increase in the number of burials of bodies found in various parts of the country without prior identification of the victims or the opening of a judicial investigation, in clear violation of Article 109 of Law No. 1/09 of 11 May 2018 on the Code of Criminal Procedure of Burundi.

This article clearly stipulates that:

"In the event of the discovery of a corpse, whether or not it is a violent death, but if the cause is unknown or suspicious, the Judicial Police Officer (OPJ) shall, if possible, inform the Public Prosecutor before going to the scene and making the initial findings. The OPJ must go to the scene and make observations when it has been impossible to contact the Public Prosecutor. The report of observations must be communicated to the latter without delay."

The same article provides that the Public Prosecutor shall go to the scene if he or she deems it necessary, accompanied by any doctor, expert or technician competent to assess the nature, cause and circumstances of the death. He or she may also delegate this task to a Judicial Police Officer of his or her choice. In the event of a death whose

circumstances remain unknown, whether or not an offence has been committed, the Public Prosecutor is required to open an investigation to determine the cause of death.

In light of the above, ACAT-Burundi recommends that:

- Administrators to systematically inform the judicial police when a dead body is discovered, so that a report can be made and an investigation opened immediately.
- That the judicial police and the public prosecutor's office fulfil their legal obligations and ensure that no body is buried without a credible investigation having been carried out beforehand.

III. KIDNAPPINGS

1. On 11 October 2025, at around 5 a.m., Bosco Ntakirutimana, nicknamed Rubabwa, a native of the hill and commune of Kigabo (in the former province of Makamba), a former demobilised soldier of the Burundian Armed Forces (FAB) and head of the CDP (Council of Patriots) party in charge of political mobilisation and recruitment, was abducted by police officers from the Kibago municipal police station in the commune of Makamba, Burunga province, before being taken to an unknown destination.

According to his family members, Bosco Ntakirutimana had already been arrested once on Monday, 6 October 2025, by the Imbonerakure, who accused him of making suspicious comments during a telephone conversation, including the word "Kirapanze" (meaning "things are in order"). The Imbonerakure then took him to the municipal commissioner of Kibago.

Bosco Ntakirutimana explained to the commissioner that he was simply talking to his brother-in-law about a plot of land in Jimbi, for which he had already found a buyer who had paid a deposit.

Despite these explanations, the Kibago police arrested him again on Friday 10 October 2025, while he was at the **Jimbi** market, and took him to the Kibago police station cell. The next morning, he was taken from his cell and taken to an unknown destination.

His worried family members went to the Kibago police station to find out what had happened to him. The police told them that Bosco Ntakirutimana had been transferred to the Makamba police station. However, when they arrived in Makamba, they searched the police station and all the other cells in the area, but were unable to find him.

2. On 22 October 2025, two people – a man who was a trader at the Ngozi market and a young woman who worked for Lumicash in a place commonly known as *Bata* – were abducted by individuals in plain clothes accompanied by police officers. The latter were travelling in a white double-cab vehicle with tinted windows, registration number EA 0517.

According to witnesses at the scene, the individuals in plain clothes got out of the vehicle, handcuffed the two people, then took them away before leaving the scene at high speed.

ACAT-Burundi reiterates its condemnation of arrests carried out in the form of abductions, as well as detentions in secret locations, by the National Intelligence Service. These practices constitute a violation of the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure relating to arrest and detention, the Burundian Constitution, and international conventions ratified by Burundi, which have constitutional status.

IV. ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND ILLEGAL DETENTIONS

1. On 17 October 2025, Clovis NIYONKURU, aged 41 and residing in neighbourhood 10, Ngagara zone, Ntahangwa commune, was abducted in the city centre by intelligence service agents. According to witnesses at the scene, Mr Niyonkuru answered a phone call and then got out of his car. He has been missing since that moment. On 22 October 2025, his family learned that he was being held at the intelligence service headquarters, located not far from Regina Mundi Cathedral.
2. On 20 October 2025, Muhigwa Théogène, a member of the CNL, Agathon Rwasa's wing, and a supervisor at Kanyinya High School, was arrested by the provincial police commissioner and placed in detention at the Kirundo PJ prison. He was accused of seducing high school students, allegations he strongly denied, demanding that the alleged victims be brought forward to accuse him, which was not done. After five days in detention, he was finally released.

V. CONCLUSION.

The month of October 2025, covered by this report, continues to be marked by serious human rights violations, in line with previous months. The recurring phenomenon of dead bodies being found in various locations, rivers, bushes, or other isolated places, followed by their hasty burial by the administrative authorities, raises serious suspicions of complicity between certain senior officials and the perpetrators of these crimes.

In a context where the judiciary and national human rights institutions, such as the Independent National Human Rights Commission (CNIDH) and the Ombudsman, appear to be under the control of the executive branch, investigations opened by the public prosecutor's office into violations of the right to life or cases of enforced disappearances are struggling to come to fruition, particularly when the victims are political opponents or human rights defenders.

Some local authorities, in collaboration with police officers and members of the Imbonerakure militia, are guilty of these abuses with complete impunity. This reflects a worrying tendency on the part of the authorities to renounce their duty to protect the population in favour of partisan or ideological interests.

Furthermore, the judiciary continues to condone these acts, which are in flagrant violation of the criminal procedures in force in Burundi. Many crimes committed within communities or households go unpunished, often due to corruption, widespread impunity or the status of the perpetrators, whether they are government officials or members of the Imbonerakure.

In view of this alarming situation, it is imperative that the Burundian authorities fully appreciate the seriousness of the ongoing violations and make a genuine commitment to putting an end to them.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

- *The Government of Burundi should:*

- ✓ Ensure the safety of the population and investigate the bodies that are regularly found in different parts of the country without the perpetrators of these murders being identified.
- ✓ Address the crimes committed by the Imbonerakure youth during night patrols, which are becoming commonplace as impunity plagues the judicial system; security must be provided solely by the defence and security forces.

- *National human rights institutions should:*

- ✓ Take action by using their legal powers to promote respect for human rights in Burundi in the face of numerous recurring cases of human rights violations.

➤ *To the international community:*

- ✓ Closely monitor the situation, taking into account the risk factors that could aggravate the human rights situation in Burundi.