



Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture

MONTHLY REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

AUGUST 2026

“Violations of the right to life, enforced disappearances, and inadequate investigations in the face of persistent impunity.”



Ending Violence and Injustice: A Call from 2015 That Remains Relevant

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Institutions and National Legal Framework

- **ACAT-Burundi:** Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture in Burundi
- **CPP:** Code of Criminal Procedure (Burundian)
- **OPJ:** Judicial Police Officer
- **PNB:** Burundi National Police
- **SNR:** National Intelligence Service
- **CECI:** Independent Communal Electoral Commission

Political and Civil Organizations

- **CNDD-FDD:** National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy (ruling party)
- **MSD:** Movement for Solidarity and Democracy
- **RED-Tabara:** Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi

International Organizations and Treaties

- **UDHR:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- **ICCPR:** International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- **ACHPR:** African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights
- **CRC:** Convention on the Rights of the Child
- **UN :** United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report by ACAT-Burundi for the month of August 2026 assesses the security situation and the response of the judicial system throughout the country.

1. Statistics on Violations

- **Total number:** 16 documented cases directly affecting 23 people.
- **Violations of the right to life:** 15 cases resulting in the deaths of 17 people, all male (16 adult men and 1 infant). ACAT-Burundi did not document any women killed this month.
- **Seriously injured:** 4 women, survivors and collateral victims of two separate grenade attacks carried out at their homes (3 in Case No. 1 in Karusi and 1 in Case No. 6 in Busoni).
- **Abductions and enforced disappearances:** 1 case involving the simultaneous disappearance of 2 merchants.

2. Major Trends and Modus Operandi

- **Gitega, the epicenter of insecurity:** Under the new division into five provinces, Gitega Province alone accounts for 53.3% of crimes (8 out of 15 cases).
- **Involvement of State Agents and the Imbonerakure:** Law enforcement officers (police, SNR) or members of the *Imbonerakure* militia are the alleged direct perpetrators in 26.7% of homicide cases, as well as in the double abduction that occurred near the Ntare Rushatsi Presidential Palace.
- **Homicides Disguised as Suicides:** In 46.7% of cases (7 out of 15), the bodies were staged to simulate suicides by hanging or natural deaths.

3. Assessment of Police and Judicial Action

- **Recurring practices of omission (46.7% of cases):** Nearly half of the documented cases of violations of the right to life were not subject to any official investigation or arrest.
- **Arrests based on flagrant offenses and public outcry (40.0% of cases):** Actual arrests resulted solely from situations of flagrant offenses or immediate pressure from an angry local population.
- **The phenomenon of bodies discovered and buried without investigation (13.3% of cases):** Although a minority, this rate reveals exceptionally serious failures on the part of the authorities, notably the hasty burials of bodies without any mandatory legal report by a Judicial Police Officer (OPJ) for the purpose of identifying the victim.

4. Priority Recommendations

ACAT-Burundi calls on the Government of Burundi to ensure compliance with the Constitution of Burundi and the international conventions it has ratified for the protection and promotion of human rights (Article 19 of the Constitution) and urgently requests:

- **The Minister of Justice:** To order the opening of independent judicial investigations into the 16 cases and to guarantee fair trials for the public officials implicated.
- **To the Attorney General of the Republic:** To formally prohibit any burial of the bodies of victims of homicides committed by unknown perpetrators, including the mandatory performance of a forensic autopsy by experts.
- **To the Minister of Public Security:** To strictly comply with the 1990 UN standards on the use of firearms by the police by prohibiting the use of live ammunition against passive resistance.

I. INTRODUCTION

I. 1. Security and Institutional Context

The right to life and personal liberty are absolute rights, protected by Articles 19, 22, and 24 of the Constitution of Burundi and by international treaties ratified by the State (ICCPR and ACHPR). Under the principle of due diligence, the government has an obligation to protect its citizens, investigate every crime, and punish the perpetrators.

However, ACAT-Burundi's observations for the month **of August 2026** reveal a serious disconnect between these legal instruments and the reality on the ground. This month was marked by persistent insecurity and, above all, the inaction of the judicial system, which has reinforced impunity at the local level.

I. 2. Patterns of Targeting and Case Handling

This month's documentation reveals three major criminal trends:

- **Abuses by law enforcement:** Security forces (police and intelligence services) are implicated in lethal violence (police brutality), lynchings in custody, or torture in bars.
- **Homicides Disguised as Suicides:** Nearly half of all homicides are staged (simulated suicides by hanging or deaths made to appear natural) to mislead the justice system, a phenomenon exacerbated by the acceptance of purely administrative accounts.

- **The vulnerability of economic actors:** Border areas and cross-border traders are specifically targeted, as illustrated this month by an unsolved double kidnapping in a heavily militarized zone.

Geographically, Gitega Province has become the epicenter of this violence, accounting for more than half of the country's cases.

I.3 Methodological Approach

Investigating human rights violations in Burundi requires overcoming significant challenges, such as: the isolation of the hills, difficult access to the sites of the violations, witnesses' fear of reprisals, a lack of cooperation from public officials, and the hasty burial of bodies discovered by local leaders without prior identification. This flagrant violation of the Code of Criminal Procedure destroys essential evidence and perpetuates impunity.

To ensure the credibility of this report in the face of these obstacles, our network of anonymous local observers follows a strict protocol: each incident must be corroborated by at least two independent and reliable sources to be validated. It is thanks to this methodological rigor that ACAT-Burundi was able to document, for the month of August 2026, 16 cases of human rights violations involving a total of 23 victims.

II. OVERVIEW OF CASES DOCUMENTED DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2026

II. 1. General Overview and Summary Table of Violations

During the month of August 2026, ACAT-Burundi continued to closely monitor the human rights situation on the ground. The facts recorded and verified highlight the ineffectiveness of public security and judicial institutions. Indeed, crimes and violations continue to occur, while security and judicial authorities fail to conduct investigations to identify and prosecute the alleged perpetrators.

Because of this inaction on the part of the authorities, the alleged perpetrators are never punished, and impunity is on the rise throughout the country.

To provide a clear overview before detailing each case, the table below summarizes the violence that occurred this month. It clearly illustrates the discrepancy between the number of reported violations and the actual number of victims.

Table1 : Number of Recorded Violations and Victims / August 2026

Categories of Documented Violations and Incidents	Number of CASES	Number of Direct Victims	Number of Collateral Victims	Details and Classification of Incidents	Affected Provinces
Violations of the Right to Life	15	17 dead	4 seriously injured	- 9 Intentional homicides / Targeted killings (including vigilante justice and police brutality) - 7 Bodies discovered (suspicious deaths / suspected staged incidents) - 1 death in clandestine detention (SNR) following an enforced disappearance	Gitega, Butanyerera (Kayanza, Kirundo), Burunga, Bubanza, Bujumbura City Hall
Abductions and forced disappearances	1	2 missing persons	0	- 1 Suspected abduction of two businesspeople in a high-security zone (Ntare Rushatsi Presidential Palace)	Bujumbura City Hall
GRAND TOTAL	16	19 victims (17 dead + 2 missing)	4 victims	Total: 23 people directly affected this month	5 affected provinces

Overall Analysis of This Month's Figures

A review of this table shows that insecurity has severely impacted citizens' fundamental rights this month. In total, we recorded **16 cases** resulting in **19 direct victims** (17 people killed and 2 missing) as well as **4 seriously injured**. Although violations of the right to life and physical integrity account for the overwhelming majority of incidents, the double kidnapping of merchants near the Presidential Palace shows that structural insecurity remains an alarming reality.

Geographically, the majority of incidents are concentrated in **Gitega** Province (8 cases in Bugendana, Gishubi, Rukoba, Giheta, Gaterama, and the commune of Gitega) and **Butanyerera** Province (4 cases in Kayanza, Kirundo, and Busoni). The City of Bujumbura (3 cases in Kibenga and at the SNR), **Burunga** Province (1 case in Musongati), and **Bubanza** Province (1 case in Mpanda) account for the remaining violations. This distribution shows that these criminal incidents affect the entire country.

II. 2. Violations of the Right to Life (Murders and Suspicious Deaths)

The right to life is an absolute right inherent to the human person. Pursuant to Article 19 of the Burundian Constitution, international human rights treaties ratified by Burundi form an integral part of national law and are binding on all public authorities. Among these instruments, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) oblige the State to protect every citizen from violence. When crimes occur, the justice system must conduct thorough investigations to arrest and punish the perpetrators. Failure to act amounts to condoning impunity.

II.2.1. Overview of the Cases

In August 2026, ACAT-Burundi documented **15 cases of violations of the right to life**, resulting in the deaths of **17 people** and **4 seriously injured** across the country.

The table below summarizes the facts and legal issues for each case. The full accounts and testimonies for each case are available in Appendix 1 (Case Studies) of this report.

Table2 : Analytical Table of Violations of the Right to Life (August 2026)

Appendix Ref.	Location (Hill, Municipality, Province)	Victim(s) and Age	Profile / Status	Perpetrators / Suspected Perpetrators	Key Facts and Modus Operandi	Legal Analysis and State Failures
Case No. 1	Nyagoba Hill, Karusi Commune, Gitega Province	Blaise Riyazimana (age unspecified) and Noël Gakizakimana (son)	Civilians (Father and son)	Unidentified assailants	Killed at their home during a grenade attack while they were eating. The wife and two daughters were seriously injured.	Failure of the State to fulfill its duty of <i>due</i> diligence. No arrests have been made to date.
Case No. 2	Kirema Hill (Urban Center), Kayanza Municipality, Butanyerera Province	1 unidentified man	Resident of the Bwandimari neighborhood	Unidentified individuals	Body found in a marsh near the CNDD-FDD party headquarters, throat slit with a sharp object.	Legal obligation for the judicial police officer (OPJ) and the prosecutor to immediately refer all suspicious deaths (Code of Criminal Procedure).
Case No. 3	Mugendo Hill, Kirundo Municipality, Butanyerera Province	2 unidentified young men	Rwandan nationals	Members of <i>the Imbonerakure</i> (on the orders of Félix, head of the communal league)	Arrested by militiamen, then summarily executed in the Kanyaru marshes.	Direct state responsibility established (acts committed by a group affiliated with the government). Violation of Article 6 of the ICCPR and Article 4 of the ACHPR.
Case No. 4	Gatongati Hill, Gishubi Commune, Gitega Province	Alexis Nduwimana (age 37)	Agronomist, father of three children	Unidentified individuals	Found hanging from the roof trusses of his house. The community rejects the idea of suicide and suspects a murder disguised as a suicide.	The Public Prosecutor's Office is required to open a preliminary investigation and order an autopsy to scientifically determine the cause of death.
Case No. 5	Rukoba, Gitega Municipality, Gitega Province	Ephrem Tuyizeye (age 39)	Civilian	Unidentified individuals	His body was found. The village chief suggested it was an epileptic seizure, but the community is demanding an official investigation.	A statement from an administrative authority cannot close a criminal case. The public prosecutor's office has a legal obligation to investigate.

Case No. 6	Mugingo Hill, Busoni Commune, Butanyerera Province	Anicet Misago (67 years old)	Civilian (in his sixties)	11 suspects arrested by law enforcement	Killed at his home during a grenade attack linked to allegations of witchcraft. His wife was seriously injured.	An independent and thorough investigation is needed to formally identify both the perpetrators and the masterminds (masterminds).
Case No. 7	Colline Butezi, Musongati Commune, Burunga Province	Emmanuel Bukuru (46 years old)	Migrant worker	Unidentified individuals	A decomposing body was found in the bushes with a rope around its neck near the Tanzanian border. The family claims it was a murder disguised as a suicide.	A forensic autopsy is required due to the condition of the body in order to scientifically determine whether strangulation occurred <i>ante mortem</i> or <i>post mortem</i> .
Case No. 8	Carire Hill, Bugendana Municipality, Gitega Province	Login Nahimana (age 56)	CNDD-FDD member, former hill chief (2010–2025)	Three local <i>Imbonerakure</i> leaders (Salvator, Cyriaque, Mupfyiri) arrested	Found with his throat slit near his home after receiving threats from these suspects, whose abuses he had denounced.	It is imperative that they remain in pretrial detention without political interference and that an emergency protocol be put in place to protect his wife (a key witness).
Case No. 9	Avenue du Large (Kibenga), Muha Commune, Bujumbura Municipality	Raphaël Hakizimana (Age unspecified)	Employee of the Burundian Bureau of Standardization (BBN)	Unknown	Body found on a public road with no external signs of violence. The family suspects a secret strangulation.	The prosecutor must appoint an expert. Strangulation with a flexible cord sometimes leaves only internal injuries (fractured hyoid bone, subcutaneous bruising).
Case No. 10	SNR cells, Mukaza District, Bujumbura City Hall	Emile Nsavyimana (Age unspecified)	Activist with the opposition party MSD	Agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR)	Died in his cell after more than a year of secret detention without a trial. Forcibly returned from the hospital to his cell while he was seriously ill.	Allegations of enforced disappearance followed by a suspicious death. Violation of the obligation to protect prisoners and failure to assist a person in danger.
Case No. 11	Gitongo Police Station, Bugendana	Isaac Habonimana (age 39)	Civilian	Raphaël Nduwimana (Police Station Chief) arrested	Fatally beaten by the police station chief in a bar under the pretext of disruptive behavior.	Fatal police violence and abuse of authority. The state must conduct a prompt and impartial investigation to

	Commune, Gitega Province					prosecute the perpetrator and provide redress for the harm caused.
Case No. 12	Colline Nyamabere, Mpanda Municipality, Bujumbura Province	1 unidentified man	Unknown	Unidentified individuals	A lifeless body was discovered on the hill in the morning. As he had no identification documents, residents were unable to identify him.	Anonymity does not absolve the State of its responsibility. There is an international obligation (Art. 6 of the ICCPR) to conduct a thorough official investigation into any suspicious death.
Case No. 13	Kiruhura Valley, Kiremera Hill, Giheta Commune, Gitega Province	Népomucène Ntakarutimana	Civilian (Alleged thief)	3 individuals arrested (Anitha Nshimirimana, Arsène Ciza, Jacqueline Ndayishimiye)	Victim lynched and beaten with clubs by an angry mob after being suspected of stealing rabbits.	Vigilante justice is prohibited. Theft does not justify summary execution. Only the courts have the exclusive authority to impose criminal penalties.
Case No. 14	Karonga Valley (Yoba/Rukoba), Gitega Municipality, Gitega Province	1 male infant	Newborn	Unidentified individuals	Body discovered in the valley. The remains were immediately buried at the scene without any legal documentation or prior investigation.	Clandestine burial in violation of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Obstruction of justice preventing a medical examination and the search for the mother.
Case No. 15	Gaterama Hill, Gitega Municipality, Gitega Province	Désiré Nshimirimana (age 25)	Civilian	An officer of the Burundi National Police (PNB)	Killed by a bullet to the heart during a police operation related to a land dispute contested by the community. Six civilians were arbitrarily arrested.	Disproportionate use of firearms. UN standards prohibit the use of live ammunition against passive resistance. A procedure for arresting someone in the act is required.

II. 2. 2. Data Analysis and Key Findings

An analysis of our data reveals alarming figures regarding the Burundian government's failure to protect the lives of its citizens:

- **Geographic Distribution of Incidents:** With the implementation of Burundi's new territorial division into five provinces, Gitega Province has emerged as the epicenter of the incidents documented this month. It alone accounts for 53.3% of the crimes (8 out of 15 cases). The remaining violations are divided between Butanyerera Province (26.7%, or 4 cases) and Bujumbura Province (20%, or 3 cases).
- **Victim Profile:** Analysis of this month's data shows that lethal violence targeted exclusively the male population. In fact, 100% of those who died were male. This percentage also includes a particularly vulnerable victim: a male infant, whose suspicious death in Gitega constitutes a serious violation of children's rights. Men are often targeted primarily for political or professional reasons, or due to land disputes.
- **Identification and status of the alleged perpetrators:** The police, the National Intelligence Service (SNR), or *Imbonerakure* militiamen are the direct alleged perpetrators in 26.7% of cases (4 out of 15). This finding is alarming because it implicates the very institutions responsible for protecting citizens. In the remaining 73.3% of cases (11 out of 15), the acts are committed by unidentified private actors or by the population itself during instances of mob justice (lynchings for suspected cattle theft or accusations of witchcraft).
- **Level of State Response and Involvement in Investigations:** An assessment of police and judicial actions reveals significant shortcomings regarding the duty of due diligence. In 46.7% of cases, there was no official investigation or arrest, and no suspects have been identified to date. Actual arrests account for 40.0% of the cases (6 cases); however, these actions did not result from planned investigations but occurred under immediate pressure from local communities or in cases of flagrante delicto. Furthermore, an imbalance persists in prosecutions, with arrests quickly targeting civilians while certain implicated state officials evade legal proceedings. Finally, in 13.3% of cases, obstacles to uncovering the truth were identified, notably through hasty burials or the absence of mandatory legal documentation.

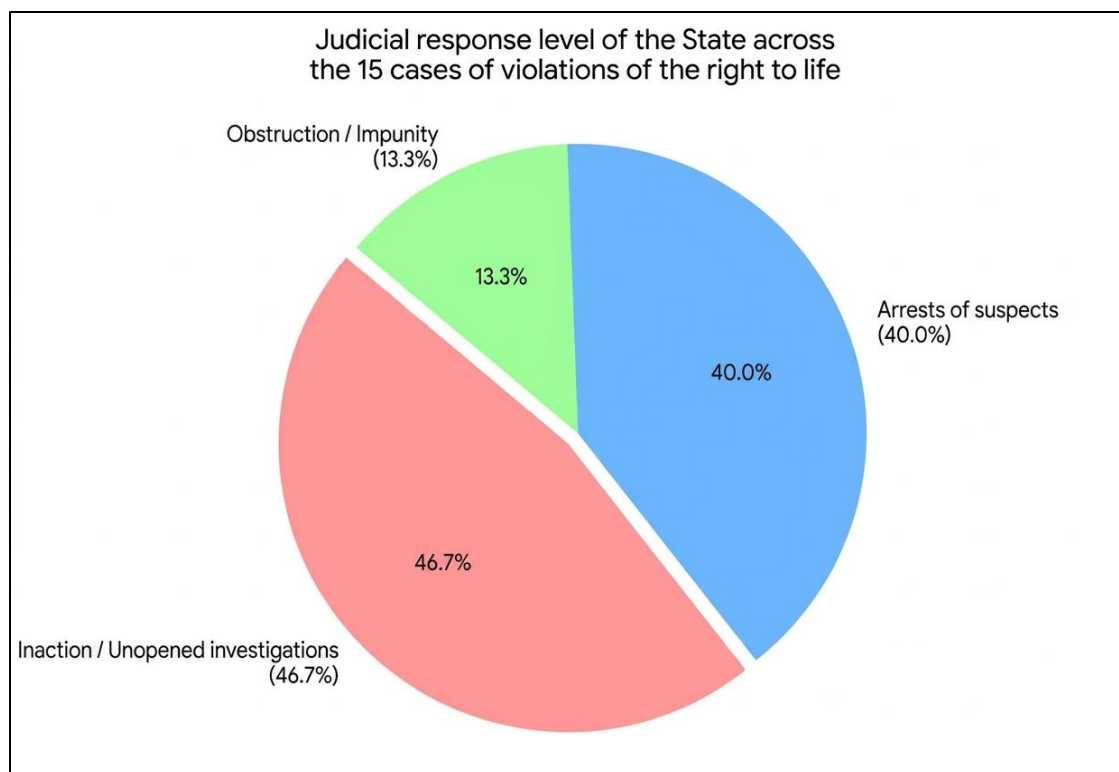


Figure 1: Response rate for the 15 cases of killings

II. 3. Abductions and Enforced Disappearances

The right to liberty and security of person is a fundamental principle protected by Article 22 of the Constitution of Burundi. Furthermore, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which the country has ratified, expressly prohibits this practice at all times and in all places. The State has a strict obligation to investigate immediately upon receiving a report of a suspicious disappearance. The lack of diligence or inaction on the part of the security services in response to these events constitutes a serious breach of Burundi's international obligations.

II. 3. 1. Overview of the Documented Case

In August 2026, ACAT-Burundi documented and verified one case of a suspected abduction involving the simultaneous disappearance of two individuals (businesspeople) in the Bujumbura municipal district.

The table below summarizes the key details of this case, the victims' identities, and the context of their disappearance. The complete chronological account and testimonies from family members can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

Table3 : Table on the Case of Abduction and Enforced Disappearance

Ref. Appendix	Location (Road, Neighborhood, Province)	Victim(s) and Profile	Vehicle Involved	Last Known Location / Modus Operandi	Legal Analysis and State Failures
Case No. 16	National Highway 1 (RN1), Gasenyi Hill, Bujumbura Municipality	Jean Bosco Nshimirimana and Hermès Rukerandanga (Cross-border traders)	Blue Toyota Ractis, license plate G5753A	Disappeared in broad daylight on August 12, 2026. Simultaneous loss of cell phone signal in the immediate vicinity of the Ntare Rushatsi Presidential Palace.	Legal obligation for the Judicial Police (OPJ) and the District Attorney's Office to immediately open a preliminary investigation. Risk of complicity by omission in the area

II. 3. 2. Thematic Analysis and Key Findings

A review of this case highlights two particularly alarming elements:

- **A disappearance in a highly secure zone:** The most striking fact is that the cell phone signals cut out in the immediate vicinity of **the Ntare Rushatsi Presidential Palace**. The sudden disappearance of two citizens and their vehicle, in the middle of the afternoon and within an area under maximum military control, strongly suggests a planned operation and raises serious suspicions.
- **The authorities' silence:** Despite the families' reports and the victims' profiles (cross-border traders with a valuable vehicle), no search efforts had been brought to the attention of ACAT-Burundi at the time this report was written. This total lack of action in the face of a case resembling an enforced disappearance constitutes a serious failure by the State to fulfill its obligation to protect its citizens.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ACAT-BURUNDI

In light of the gravity of the violations of the right to life and the cases of disappearance documented during the month of August 2026, ACAT-Burundi makes the following recommendations:

1. To the Minister of Justice

- **Order, without delay**, the opening of independent, transparent, and thorough judicial investigations into all 15 cases of violations of the right to life and the case of double abduction documented in this report.
- **Ensure that fair trials are held** for the implicated state officials, notably the head of the Gitongo police station (Case No. 11) and the officer who fired the shots on Gaterama Hill (Case No. 15), so that they may be tried in accordance with the law.
- **Severely punish** those guilty of mob justice and lynchings, as well as local administrative authorities who obstruct justice by tolerating the concealment of evidence (Cases No. 5 and No. 14).

2. To the Attorney General of the Republic

- **Strictly enforce the procedure set forth in the Code of Criminal Procedure¹, which mandates that an investigation be opened and an autopsy be performed** by forensic experts on any body discovered under suspicious circumstances before authorizing its burial, in order to prevent the cover-up of targeted killings.
- Shed light on the death of Emile Nsavyimana while in secret detention at the premises of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) and prosecute the agents for failure to provide medical assistance.
- **Establish an emergency protocol** to ensure the physical and psychological protection of the victims' families and key prosecution witnesses, particularly the victim's wife in Case No. 8.

3. To the Minister of the Interior, Community Development, and Public Security

- **Strictly enforce** the UN Principles on the Use of Firearms by officers of the Burundi National Police (PNB), prohibiting the use of live ammunition against passive resistance by the population (Case No. 15).

¹ Article 109 of Law No. 1/09 of May 11, 2018, Amending the
OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

- **Require law enforcement to provide** a complete and immediate report on the search efforts conducted to locate the merchants Jean Bosco Nshimirimana and Hermès Rukerandanga, who went missing near the Ntare Rushatsi Presidential Palace (Case No. 16).
- **Strongly remind hill** and zone **chiefs** that they do not have the authority to authorize the burial of bodies without a prior legal and written report from a Judicial Police Officer (OPJ) (Case No. 14).

IV. GENERAL CONCLUSION

This ACAT-Burundi report for the month of August 2026 highlights a particularly alarming security and judicial situation throughout the country. It documents 16 cases of violations affecting 23 people, which reveal serious breaches of the right to life and liberty, with Gitega Province becoming the epicenter of this violence, accounting for more than half of the documented cases. This overall tally includes 17 deaths (all males, including an infant), 2 people missing following a double abduction, and 4 women seriously injured, who survived as collateral victims of two separate grenade attacks committed within their homes (3 women in Case No. 1 in Karusi and 1 woman in Case No. 6 in Busoni).

A thorough analysis of the facts highlights two major trends. On the one hand, members of security forces and entities affiliated with public authorities are implicated in 26.7% of cases involving loss of life, as well as in the suspicious double kidnapping that occurred in the immediate vicinity of a militarized zone. On the other hand, for the remaining 73.3% of crimes attributed to private actors, the judicial system faces significant procedural shortcomings. The absence of official investigations in nearly half of the cases (46.7%) and the practice of hasty burials without a report from a judicial police officer permanently hinder the establishment of the truth and reinforce the sense of impunity.

In light of this situation, ACAT-Burundi reiterates that compliance with the international commitments ratified by Burundi and enshrined in Article 19 of its Constitution is not optional. It is urgent that political and judicial authorities implement the recommendations set forth in this document to ensure the duty of due diligence and guarantee every Burundian citizen the effective protection of their fundamental rights.

APPENDICES: CASE STUDIES ON THE VARIOUS CASES IDENTIFIED

Appendix 1: Cases of Violations of the Right to Life

Case Study No. 1: Double Murder by Grenade and Failure to Prosecute in Karusi

- **Date of events:** Monday, August 3, 2026, around 9:00 p.m.
- **Administrative location:** Nyagoba Hill, Karusi commune, Gitega province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:**
 - **Blaise Riyazimana** (father, deceased).
 - **Noël Gakizakimana** (son, deceased).
 - **Aline Murekerisoni** (wife, seriously injured).
 - **Jeanine Yihamashi** (daughter, seriously injured).
 - **Bénigne Niyonkuru** (daughter, seriously injured).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified assailants.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On the evening of August 3, 2026, a family was the target of an attack with military-grade weapons at their home while they were gathered for dinner. Unidentified individuals threw a grenade into the house. The explosion caused the immediate death of the father, Blaise Riyazimana, and his son, Noël Gakizakimana. The wife and their two daughters survived the blast but suffered severe physical injuries. After receiving initial treatment at the Kiranda health center, the three injured women were transferred to the intensive care unit at the Cinquantenaire Natwe Turashoboye Hospital in Karusi. At the time of this report's writing, no suspects had been apprehended by local security forces, and the motive for the attack remains unknown.

2. Legal Analysis and State Failures

This incident constitutes a flagrant violation of the right to life, protected by Article 19 of the Constitution of Burundi and by international treaties ratified by the State, notably the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

In terms of institutional responsibility, this case highlights a failure by the State to uphold the international principle of *due diligence*. This legal obligation requires the authorities to deploy all necessary means to prevent violence, conduct thorough investigations, punish the perpetrators, and provide redress for harm, even when offenses are committed by private actors. The failure to make any arrests and the lack of visible progress in the police investigation constitute a failure to meet this obligation to protect citizens.

Case Study No. 2: Discovery of Bodies with Stab Wounds in Kayanza

- **Date of events:** Sunday, August 2, 2026, around 2:00 p.m.
- **Administrative location:** Kirema Hill Marshes, Kayanza urban center, Butanyerera Province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** 1 unidentified adult male (presumed resident of the Bwandimari neighborhood).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified individuals.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On August 2, 2026, the body of a man without identification documents was discovered in a marsh

located near the CNDD-FDD party headquarters on Kirema Hill. The discovery was reported by a woman returning from a religious service, allowing Red Cross first responders to intervene. External examinations of the body conducted that night revealed a fatal stab wound to the throat. The body was transferred to the morgue at Kayanza Hospital. According to information provided by local residents, the victim had lived in the Bwandimari neighborhood, but no official identification has yet been provided by the administrative authorities.

2. Legal Analysis and State Failures

The discovery of a body bearing visible signs of criminal violence constitutes a direct violation of the right to life, guaranteed by Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This fundamental right is absolute and permits no derogation.

With regard to national procedures, the Burundian Code of Criminal Procedure requires the Judicial Police Officer (OPJ) and the public prosecutor to immediately initiate an investigation on their own initiative in the event of any suspicious or violent death. Under international standards, the Burundian government has a duty of due diligence, which requires it to protect the population and conduct thorough investigations to solve homicides committed by third parties. The absence of a rigorous and prompt investigation to identify the victim and apprehend the perpetrators would constitute a failure by the State to fulfill its international obligations.

Case Study No. 3: Extrajudicial Executions of Foreign Nationals and Suspected Secret Burial in Kirundo

- **Date of events:** Sunday, August 2, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Mugendo locality, Kirundo commune, Butanyerera province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:**
 - **Two unidentified young men** (Rwandan nationals).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Members of the *Imbonerakure* youth league, acting on orders from the league's commune leader, named Félix.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On August 2, 2026, two young Rwandan citizens were apprehended in the Kirundo commune by members of the *Imbonerakure* militia. According to testimonies gathered from the local population, the arrest and the order to execute them were coordinated by the head of the commune's youth league, a man named Félix. The two victims were taken to the marshes along the Kanyaru River and summarily executed there.

Furthermore, field investigations indicate that this site in Mugendo may be the location of a clandestine burial linked to an earlier case of political assassination. Persistent local reports claim that Pascal Bizimana, a former member of the Independent Communal Electoral Commission (CECI) who has been missing since August 2020 following internal disagreements, was killed and buried at this location. Notably, a man named Félix was recently promoted to the position previously held by the 2020 victim—an appointment perceived by residents as a reward for his actions.

2. Legal Analysis and State Failures

The summary execution of persons deprived of their liberty constitutes a flagrant violation of Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Article 4 of the African Charter

on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). These legal instruments require States to guarantee the protection of the life of every individual present on their territory, regardless of nationality. Under international law, executions carried out by members of paramilitary groups or entities unofficially affiliated with the ruling party directly engage the responsibility of the Burundian State. The government has failed in its duty to protect these foreign nationals. Furthermore, the failure to prosecute the alleged instigator and the assignment of official duties to that individual constitute a serious breach of the obligation to investigate and punish, thereby fostering institutional impunity.

Case Study No. 4: Discovery of a Suspicious Body and Suspicion of a Cover-Up of a Homicide in Gishubi

- **Date of events:** Wednesday, August 5, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Gatongati Hill, Gishubi commune, Kibuye zone, Gitega province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** Alexis Nduwimana (37 years old, agronomist and father of three children).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified individuals.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On August 5, 2026, the lifeless body of Alexis Nduwimana was discovered inside his home on Gatongati Hill. The body of this agronomist was found hanging from the roof trusses of his house. Although the position of the body initially suggested suicide, local residents and the victim's family and friends categorically refute this hypothesis. Consistent local testimonies point to a strong suspicion of a targeted murder, followed by a cover-up orchestrated by the perpetrators to conceal the crime and mislead the justice system.

2. Legal Analysis and State Failures

The discovery of a body under circumstances that raise suspicion of a crime triggers the immediate application of the mandatory provisions of the Burundian Code of Criminal Procedure. In terms of legal obligations, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judicial authorities of Gitega Province have a duty of due diligence, which requires them to automatically open a preliminary investigation into assassination or murder as soon as the facts come to light. In light of the serious doubts expressed by the public, the public prosecutor has a criminal obligation to order a **forensic autopsy**. This scientific examination by forensic experts is the only way to verify local testimonies. It must determine whether death occurred before the hanging (as a result of manual strangulation, poisoning, or hidden physical trauma) or during it (by mechanical asphyxiation), in order to correctly classify the offense. The absence of these scientific procedures would constitute a serious failure in the search for the truth.

Case Study No. 5: Discovery of a Suspicious Body and Challenge to the Official Account in Rukoba

- **Date of events:** Wednesday, August 5, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Rukoba, Gitega commune and province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** Ephrem Tuyizeye (39 years old, civilian).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified individuals.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On August 5, 2026, the body of Ephrem Tuyizeye was discovered in the village of Rukoba. Given the suspicious nature of his death, the local population immediately rallied to insistently demand the opening of an official investigation to determine the exact causes of the tragedy. In parallel with these demands, the chief of Rukoba Hill, Georges Ishoboravyose, publicly stated that the victim had died from a seizure related to his epilepsy. This version of events put forward by the administrative authority has raised doubts among the victim's relatives and residents, who are calling for an independent investigation.

2. Legal Analysis and State Failures

Under Burundian criminal law, the discovery of a deceased body whose cause of death has not been medically certified requires strict application of the rules of the Code of Criminal Procedure. In terms of legal jurisdiction, the law explicitly stipulates that the Judicial Police Officer (OPJ) and the Public Prosecutor must immediately take up the case upon the discovery of a suspicious corpse. Statements or opinions from a local administrative authority, such as a village chief, have no legal standing to close a case involving a suspicious death. The judicial police and the Gitega Public Prosecutor's Office have a legal obligation to open a preliminary investigation and order medical examinations to determine whether a criminal act has been committed. The authorities' failure to act in response to legitimate requests from the public would constitute a serious breach of their professional obligations and a tolerance of impunity.

Case Study No. 6: Grenade Attack, Fatal Violence Linked to Accusations of Witchcraft, and Police Response in Busoni

Case Study No. 6: Grenade Attack, Fatal Violence Linked to Accusations of Witchcraft, and Police Response in Busoni

- **Date of incident:** Wednesday, August 5, 2026, around 7:30 p.m.
- **Administrative location:** Mugingo Hill, Kimeza area, Busoni commune, Butanyerera province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:**
 - **Anicet Misago** (67 years old, civilian in his sixties, deceased).
 - **His wife** (name not specified, seriously injured).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** 11 individuals apprehended by law enforcement.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On the evening of August 5, 2026, an attack involving military-grade weapons targeted a family home on Mugingo Hill. Assailants detonated a grenade at the home of Anicet Misago, aged 67. The explosion caused the immediate death of the 67-year-old man and inflicted serious physical injuries

on his wife. Testimonies gathered from the victims' relatives indicate that this targeted killing stemmed from local suspicions related to witchcraft practices. Following this incident, law enforcement intervened and arrested 11 suspects, who are currently being held in custody pending the investigation.

2. Legal Analysis and State Failures

This home invasion constitutes a flagrant violation of the right to life and to personal safety—principles guaranteed by the Constitution of Burundi and by international human rights instruments, notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

With regard to criminal proceedings, while the swift arrest of 11 suspects by the security services marks the beginning of legal proceedings, ACAT-Burundi emphasizes the importance of strict vigilance regarding the handling of the case. The organization has submitted an official request to the Public Prosecutor at the Butanyerera High Court demanding an immediate, independent, transparent, and thorough investigation. This investigation must make it possible to identify with certainty not only the perpetrators (those who carried out the attack) but also the masterminds (the intellectual authors) of this crime, in order to effectively counteract the abuses of vigilante justice in the hills.

Case Study No. 7: Discovery of the body of a migrant worker under suspicious circumstances and request for an autopsy in Musongati

- **Date of events:** Thursday, August 6, 2026 (Victim missing since July 30, 2026).
- **Administrative location:** Buissons de la colline Butezi, Musongati commune, Burunga province, border area with Tanzania (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victim:** Emmanuel Bukuru (46 years old, migrant worker).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified individuals.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On August 6, 2026, the lifeless body of Emmanuel Bukuru was discovered in the bushes on Butezi Hill, located near the Tanzanian border. The body was in an advanced state of decomposition, with a rope around the neck. The victim, who had been working in Tanzania, had not been heard from since July 30, 2026, the day he returned to Burundi. Given the circumstances of the discovery, his family members categorically reject the theory that this was an act of desperation. They allege a targeted assassination followed by a staged scene intended to conceal the crime and mislead law enforcement. His relatives are calling for a police investigation to shed light on this tragedy.

2. Legal Analysis and State Failures

The discovery of the body falls under the mandatory procedures of the judicial system for cases of suspicious deaths, in accordance with the Burundian Code of Criminal Procedure and international obligations regarding the right to life.

From a forensic perspective, the advanced state of decomposition of the remains makes it **mandatory to open an investigation and perform an autopsy before any decision to close the case can be made.**

This scientific examination is the only technical means of distinguishing between criminal strangulation (homicide) and voluntary hanging (suicide), particularly through a thorough analysis of the bony structures of the neck, the hyoid bone, and deep internal injuries. ACAT-Burundi has officially requested that the competent public prosecutor demand the immediate opening of a criminal investigation and the involvement of forensic experts. This step is essential to scientifically determine whether his injuries were caused while he was alive (*antemortem*) or after his death (*postmortem*), thereby allowing for verification of the hypothesis that the crime scene was tampered with.

Case Study No. 8: Murder of a Former Local Official and Threats Against Witnesses in Bugendana

- **Date of events:** Saturday, August 8, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Carire Hill, Bitare area, Bugendana commune, Gitega province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** Login Nahimana (56 years old, active member of the CNDD-FDD and former hill chief from 2010 to 2025).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Salvator, Cyriaque, and Mupfyiri (three local leaders of the *Imbonerakure* youth league), who were immediately arrested.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On the morning of August 8, 2026, passersby on their way to work discovered the lifeless body of Login Nahimana. The body of this former local administrative official was lying by the side of a road, a short distance from his home, and had a large stab wound to the throat.

According to his wife's formal testimony, the victim had recently received direct death threats from three local leaders of the *Imbonerakure* militia named Salvator, Cyriaque, and Mupfyiri. Login Nahimana had publicly opposed the extortion, theft, and intimidation that these individuals were perpetrating against residents of the hill who did not belong to the ruling party. Following the discovery of the body, a Judicial Police Officer (OPJ) arrived at the scene and immediately arrested the three suspects.

2. Legal Analysis and Procedural Requirements

This targeted assassination constitutes a violation of the right to life, which is protected by the Burundian Constitution and by Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The events that occurred highlight a context of internal violence linked to the denunciation of abuses committed by groups affiliated with the ruling party.

With regard to public and criminal proceedings, although the swift arrest of the three suspects is an appropriate measure, ACAT-Burundi emphasizes the high risk of political interference in this case. To ensure that the truth comes to light, the organization sets forth strict requirements:

- **Secure Detention:** Keep the suspects (Salvator, Cyriaque, and Mupfyiri) in strict pretrial detention, free from any possibility of political interference or pressure related to their influence within the CNDD-FDD.
- **Witness protection:** Immediately activate an emergency protocol for the physical and psychological protection of the victim's wife, who is the prosecution's key witness and is particularly vulnerable to reprisals.

Case Study No. 9: Discovery of the body of a government official under suspicious circumstances and the need for an internal investigation in Bujumbura

- **Date of events:** The night of Tuesday, August 18, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Avenue du Large, Kibenga neighborhood, Muha commune, City of Bujumbura (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** Raphaël Hakizimana (age unspecified, employee of the Burundian Bureau of Standardization—BBN).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified individuals.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

During the night of August 18, 2026, the lifeless body of Raphaël Hakizimana was discovered on the public roadway on Avenue du Large, in the Kibenga neighborhood. A resident of the Mugoboka neighborhood, this government employee had left his home a few hours earlier without telling his family or friends where he was going. An initial external examination of the body revealed no apparent injuries or signs of violence visible to the naked eye. However, given the sudden and unusual nature of the death, his family members reject the theory of a natural death. They suspect a murder by strangulation committed at a third location by unknown assailants, followed by the clandestine dumping of the body on the public street to conceal the crime.

2. Legal Analysis and Forensic Examination Requirements

This case falls within the scope of the mandatory investigative procedures governed by the Burundian Code of Criminal Procedure regarding deaths from uncertain or suspicious causes.

Legally, the laws governing forensic examinations require the Public Prosecutor to appoint a medical expert whenever there is legitimate doubt regarding the cause of death. In forensic medicine, the possibility of strangulation—particularly when carried out using a flexible ligature or specific restraint techniques—may well leave no visible skin marks or bruises on the body's exterior. However, this method of killing causes characteristic internal injuries, such as a fracture of the hyoid bone, subcutaneous hemorrhages, or signs of acute pulmonary asphyxia. Consequently, only a **complete internal autopsy** performed by a court-appointed medical examiner can scientifically confirm or rule out the suspicion of homicide. Failure to take such a measure would constitute a breach of the duty of care in the search for evidence.

Case Study No. 10: Enforced disappearance, prolonged clandestine detention, and death in police custody at the SNR

- **Date of events:** Tuesday, August 18, 2026 (Death following illegal detention since December 2024).
- **Administrative location:** Cells of the National Intelligence Service (SNR), Mukaza commune, City of Bujumbura.
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** Emile Nsavyimana (age unspecified, activist with the opposition party Movement for Solidarity and Democracy—MSD).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Agents and officials of the National Intelligence Service (SNR).

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On August 18, 2026, Emile Nsavyimana, an active member of the MSD party, died in a cell at the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in Bujumbura. Suspected by the authorities of collaborating with the armed group RED-Tabara, he had initially been apprehended in December 2024 on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by the Congolese army. Subsequently handed over to the Burundian military intelligence services (G2), he was transferred to the SNR.

For more than a year and a half, the victim was held incommunicado in secret. He was never brought before a judge, and his family was denied any information about his place of detention. Faced with a critical deterioration in his health, Emile Nsavyimana was rushed to the hospital on July 28, 2026. However, before he had recovered, he was forcibly returned to the SNR's cells, where he succumbed to his illnesses a few days later.

2. Legal Analysis and Criminal Charges

This case contains the factual elements of an enforced disappearance followed by a suspicious death in custody, in direct violation of Articles 22 and 24 of the Constitution of Burundi and international conventions prohibiting secret detention.

In terms of legal responsibility, the State has an absolute obligation to protect the physical integrity and health of persons in its custody. Forcibly returning a seriously ill detainee to an illegal detention center constitutes a gross failure to provide medical care. This decision directly engages the criminal liability of SNR agents for failure to assist a person in danger and violation of the constitutional right to life. Burundian judicial authorities are legally obligated to open an independent and transparent investigation to identify the exact medical cause of death and to bring criminal charges against those responsible for this extrajudicial detention.

Case Study No. 11: Fatal Police Violence, Abuse of Authority, and Call for an Investigation in Bugendana

- **Date of events:** The night of Sunday, August 23, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Gitongo Police Station, Bugendana commune, Gitega province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** Isaac Habonimana (39 years old, civilian).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Raphaël Nduwimana (police officer, head of the Gitongo police station), currently in custody.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On the night of August 23, 2026, a serious case of fatal police violence was reported in the Bugendana commune. The victim, Isaac Habonimana, was fatally beaten by the head of the Gitongo police station, Officer Raphaël Nduwimana. The officer arbitrarily accused him of disruptive behavior inside a local bar. As a result of the physical assault, the victim succumbed to his injuries. Thanks to the immediate and consistent statements of several eyewitnesses present at the scene, the officer in question was apprehended by his superiors and placed in custody at the Bugendana police station pending the proceedings.

2. Legal Analysis and Requirements for Redress

This specific case constitutes voluntary homicide and a flagrant abuse of power committed by a law enforcement officer, in direct violation of the right to life and personal safety guaranteed by the Constitution of Burundi and by international treaties, notably the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

With regard to criminal prosecution, while the arrest of the police officer constitutes a first step required by law, ACAT-Burundi emphasizes the absolute necessity of preventing any institutional interference aimed at shielding this officer from justice. The organization formally calls on the competent judicial authorities to conduct a prompt, fully independent, and impartial investigation. This process must lead to a fair trial in order to impose criminal penalties on the perpetrator that are proportionate to the severity of the act, and to ensure the provision of full financial and moral reparations for the harm suffered by the beneficiaries and the family of Isaac Habonimana.

Case Study No. 12: Discovery of the Body of an Unidentified Victim and International Obligations to Investigate in Mpanda

- **Date of events:** The morning of Monday, August 24, 2026.
- **Administrative location :** Nyamabere Hill, Mpanda commune, Bubanza province.
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** 1 unidentified adult male.
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified individuals.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On the morning of August 24, 2026, the discovery of a male body was reported on Nyamabere Hill. Initial findings at the scene and the first witness statements collected from neighbors indicate that the body was completely devoid of identification documents or personal belongings. At this stage of the investigation, no resident of the area has been able to recognize the victim's features or establish his identity, leaving the case classified as the suspicious death of an unknown person.

2. Legal Analysis and Investigative Obligations

The anonymity or lack of identification of a victim does not relieve public authorities of their legal responsibilities. The State of Burundi is subject to strict international obligations under **Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**, which enshrines the sanctity and non-derogable nature of the right to life.

International human rights law imperatively requires States to conduct an official, thorough, independent, and rigorous investigation whenever a suspicious or violent death occurs on their territory. This process must include actively seeking to identify the victim and determine the causes of death. Failing to investigate or failing to conduct a serious investigation into an individual's death, under the pretext of the victim's anonymity, constitutes a failure by the State to fulfill its duty of due diligence and amounts to a violation by omission of its obligation to protect the right to life.

Case Study No. 13: Fatal Recourse to Vigilante Justice for Alleged Theft and Arrests in Giheta

- **Date of events:** Monday, August 24, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Kiruhura Valley, Kiremera Hill, Giheta commune, Gitega province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** Népomucène Ntakarutimana (civilian, alleged cattle thief).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** An angry mob. Three suspects arrested: Anitha Nshimirimana, Arsène Ciza, and Jacqueline Ndayishimiye (currently detained at the Giheta jail).

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On August 24, 2026, the lifeless body of Népomucène Ntakarutimana was discovered in the Kiruhura Valley, on Kiremera Hill. Evidence gathered at the scene indicates that the victim was lynched by an angry mob. He was accused of attempting to steal small livestock (rabbits) belonging to a resident named Anitha Nshimirimana. After being struck several times in the head with clubs, the man succumbed to his severe physical injuries. As part of the initial investigation, police arrested three alleged participants: Anitha Nshimirimana, Arsène Ciza, and Jacqueline Ndayishimiye. All three are currently being held in the police jail in Giheta.

2. Legal Analysis and Prohibition of Lynching

This incident constitutes a flagrant violation of the right to life. This fundamental right is sacred and is absolutely protected by the Constitution of Burundi as well as by international instruments ratified by the country, notably the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

From a legal standpoint, while recognizing citizens' right to protect their property and private possessions, ACAT-Burundi firmly reiterates that a property offense, such as the theft of livestock, can under no circumstances justify the summary execution of a human being. The practice of vigilante justice is expressly prohibited by Burundian law and amounts to murder. The monopoly on the legitimate use of force, judgment, and criminal punishment belongs exclusively to legally established courts and tribunals. The passivity of institutions in the face of these violent excesses would encourage a climate of anarchy in the hills.

Case Study No. 14: Suspected Infanticide, Obstruction of Justice, and Premature Burial in Gitega

- **Date of events:** Monday, August 24, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Karonga Valley (bordering the Yoba and Rukoba neighborhoods), Gitega commune and province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:** 1 male infant (unidentified newborn).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified individuals.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On August 24, 2026, the lifeless body of a male infant was discovered in the Karonga Valley, an area separating the Yoba and Rukoba neighborhoods in the municipality of Gitega. The exact causes and circumstances of this suspicious death, which exhibits the physical characteristics of infanticide, remain unknown. The organization was alerted by local sources to a particularly troubling fact: the child's remains were immediately buried at the site of discovery by residents or local authorities, without any prior legal documentation or judicial investigation having been conducted.

2. Legal Analysis and Procedural Irregularities

This case highlights a serious and deliberate disregard for the mandatory rules governing the handling of crime scenes under Burundian criminal law.

Legally speaking, the Burundian Code of Criminal Procedure requires that any discovery of a corpse of unknown origin, suspicious circumstances, or violent death must be the subject of a physical examination by a Judicial Police Officer (OPI), accompanied by a medical expert's report. The act of hastily burying the body of a newborn without authorization from the prosecutor's office constitutes an obstruction of justice. This clandestine burial destroys essential forensic evidence, prevents the identification of the mother, hinders the search for the perpetrators of the crime, and ensures the impunity of the guilty parties.

Case Study No. 15: Disproportionate Use of Armed Force, Fatal Police Brutality, and Arbitrary Detentions in Gaterama

- **Date of events:** The morning of Tuesday, August 25, 2026.
- **Administrative location:** Gaterama Hill, Gitega commune and province (according to the new territorial division).
- **Identity and profile of the victims:**
 - **Désiré Nshimirimana** (25 years old, civilian, deceased).
 - **D. Nahimana, V. Ndayisenga, O. Nkurunziza, R. Bigirimana, É. Bigirimana, and R. Nimbona** (six civilians arrested and held in custody).
- **Alleged perpetrators:** An unidentified officer of the Burundi National Police (PNB), who remains at large.

1. Chronological Summary of Events

On the morning of August 25, 2026, a law enforcement operation related to a land dispute led to deadly violence on Gaterama Hill. National Police officers attempted to carry out arrests at the home of Joseph Bandora, encountering resistance from local residents who denounced the procedure as illegal. During the ensuing tensions, a police officer fired his service weapon, fatally striking 25-year-old Désiré Nshimirimana in the heart. Following this death, law enforcement authorities arrested six local residents, a move described as arbitrary by the victims' families and friends. The police officer who fired the fatal shot was not arrested, prompting the local community to demand an end to his impunity by initiating proceedings for a crime caught in the act.

2. Legal Analysis and Standards for the Use of Force

This specific case constitutes a clear violation of the right to life and personal safety by an official acting in a position of public authority.

From a legal standpoint, the internal regulations of the Burundi National Police (PNB) as well as international standards—notably the *UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990)*—strictly govern the use of firearms. These standards stipulate that the use of live ammunition is an exceptional measure, limited solely to cases of imminent danger of death or serious injury. Verbal opposition or passive resistance by the public in response to a contested administrative procedure cannot under any circumstances justify a fatal shot to the heart.

Furthermore, the disproportionate judicial response—which keeps six civilians in detention while leaving the officer who fired the shot free—constitutes a flagrant lack of impartiality on the part of the state apparatus.

Appendix 2: Cases of Abductions and Enforced Disappearances

Case Study No. 16: Suspicious Double Disappearance of Businesspeople in the Presidential Security Zone

- **Date of events:** Wednesday, August 12, 2026, in the afternoon.
- **Administrative location:** National Highway 1 (RN1), near the Ntare Rushatsi Presidential Palace, Gasenyi Hill, Bujumbura Municipality.
- **Identity and profile of the victims:**
 - **Jean Bosco Nshimirimana** (Burundian cross-border trader).
 - **Hermès Rukerandanga** (Burundian merchant and vehicle transporter).
- **Vehicle involved:** Blue Toyota Ractis, license plate **G5753A**.
- **Alleged perpetrators:** Unidentified individuals.

1. Chronological summary of events

On August 12, 2026, Jean Bosco Nshimirimana and Hermès Rukerandanga disappeared simultaneously while traveling on National Highway 1 (RN1). Two days earlier, on August 10, Jean Bosco Nshimirimana had left the country on a business trip to Rwanda. On Wednesday morning, he met Hermès Rukerandanga at the Kobero border crossing (on the border with Tanzania), where Rukerandanga was transporting vehicles for sale from Dar es Salaam. The two men decided to travel together to Bujumbura in a blue Toyota Ractis, license plate G5753A.

Here is a timeline of their final day:

- **1:00 p.m.:** The vehicle was officially reported in Gitega; the trip was proceeding normally.
- **En route:** The first anomaly occurred near Mubimbi, an area where Jean Bosco Nshimirimana's phone suddenly stopped transmitting.

- **Approaching the capital:** Hermès Rukerandanga made a final phone call to a relative to indicate that they were arriving near the Ntare Rushatsi Presidential Palace on Gasenyi Hill. In the seconds that followed, his phone line went dead. Since that incident, there have been no reports of life or any trace of the vehicle.

2. Legal Analysis and Investigative Obligations

This suspicious double abduction constitutes a serious violation of the right to liberty, personal safety, and life—principles that are bindingly protected by Articles 19, 22, and 24 of the Constitution of Burundi and by Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

From the perspective of national criminal procedures, the simultaneous loss of signal from two cell phones within an area under maximum military and security control (the immediate vicinity of the presidential palace) lends this case an exceptionally suspicious nature. The Burundian Code of Criminal Procedure imposes a legal obligation on the Judicial Police Officer (OPJ) and the Public Prosecutor to immediately open a preliminary investigation upon notification of the disappearance.

Under international law, the government is subject to a duty of due diligence. The failure to launch an official search to locate the vehicle and identify the kidnappers along a strategic road would render the Burundian state liable for breaching its obligation to protect its citizens, raising suspicions of complicity by omission or institutional passivity.