

STATEMENT

1. One year after the creation of SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI, the initiative team would like to make public the following:
2. It was exactly on 11th December 2015 when an armed group attacked military camps in Bujumbura City Hall and Mujejuru in the neighboring province of rural Bujumbura. The attack was unlawfully suppressed by law enforcement officials who have been guilty of numerous violations of human rights. The victims were mainly civilians from quarters which participated in demonstrations against the 3rd term of President Pierre Nkurunziza
3. This tragic event marked the aggravation of the crisis following the forcing of President Nkurunziza to present his controversial candidature to the elections in April 2015. It is in this context that awareness was born within the promoters of SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI to systematically document and denounces violations of human rights and abuses committed. Among other things, it was necessary to draw the attention of the governmental authorities, national and international opinion on serious breaches of human rights in Burundi and to ask all those who can bring the Government of Burundi to make an end to these violations
4. One year later, SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI is already pleased to have been well supported by Burundian people through broad citizen participation. The information collected and published through the 52 weekly reports published up to 11th December 2016 comes regularly from the victims or their relatives. Other sources include witnesses, including human rights defenders, the media, international NGOs, police, military, public administration officials, parliamentarians, members of political parties...¹
5. With this citizen contribution, SOS-TORTURE/ BURUNDI registered, from 11th December 2015 to 31st October 2016, a total of 236 persons, including cases of extrajudicial executions, 35 cases of forced disappearances, 1097 cases of Torture and other cruel and degrading treatment or punishment 3621 arrests linked to the crisis and mainly arbitrary or illegal, sometimes carried out by

¹ All reports published by SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI are available on its website (http://sostortureburundi.org/?page_id=63&lang=en)

unqualified military and Imbonerakure militiamen of the CNDD-FDD political Party. These figures fall short of reality because SOS-TORUTRE / BURUNDI are trying to publish verifiable information because the majority of victims' names are recorded in the campaign archives. These data complement those of other organizations or institutions involved in the protection of human rights and could be made available to United Nations and International Criminal Court (ICC) investigators.

6. SOS-TORTURE is pleased that its efforts to document and report serious human rights violations in conjunction with other human rights organizations beginning to have an impact in the fight against impunity on Crimes.

7. This is the case of Human Rights Council resolution 33/24 of 30th September 2016, which establishes a commission to, inter alia, conduct an in-depth investigation into human rights violations and attacks on these rights committed in Burundi to assess their scale and qualify them in order to combat impunity in Burundi.

8. On 22th November 2016, the President of the Human Rights Council appointed eminent persons of high reputation in the defense of human rights, Mr. Fatsah Ouguergouz (Algeria), Ms. Reina Alapini Gansu (Benin) and Mr Françoise Hampson (United Kingdom) as members of the Commission of Inquiry into Burundi under the aforementioned resolution of the Human Rights Council.

9. Despite these significant advances, there are still many challenges. The Government is aware of the consequences of non-compliance with its commitments to the protection of human rights and has unfortunately taken inappropriate measures to avoid international observation by suspending its cooperation with the Office of Human Rights High Commissioner in Burundi in October 2016.

10. During the same month of October the Government of Burundi withdrew from the International Criminal Court, believing it to escape from international criminal justice, and expressed its refusal to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council in November 2016.

11. The recent position of the Tanzanian Facilitator W.B Mkapa in the Burundi conflict, expressed on 9th December 2016 after his visit to Burundi, not to consider certain opponents of the Bujumbura regime as part of the inclusive dialogue likely to revive Political tensions and exacerbating the already precarious human rights situation

For all these reasons, SOS-TORTURE / Burundi recommends:

To the Government of Burundi:

- To make every effort to put an end to impunity for crimes and human rights violations by cooperating, inter alia, with the mechanisms for the protection of human rights at both national and international levels.
- To review its decision to suspend cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi and not to collaborate with the members of the Commission of Inquiry appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council In November 2016
- To engage in a truly inclusive dialogue for a lasting solution to the crisis, since it is illusory to claim that peace reigns when more than 300,000 people have taken refuge abroad in a context of continuing violation of human rights whose victims number count by thousands.

To political opponents:

- To make every effort to give priority to dialogue, despite the hostile stance taken by the former Tanzanian Facilitator Benjamin Mkapa.
- To demonstrate wisdom and political tact in the search for mediation that can effectively drive inclusive external dialogue and respect for all parties to the conflict for a lasting solution.

To the international community:

- To continue to use its influence to convince the Government of Burundi to respect its commitments to the protection of human rights by, inter alia, cooperating with the Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court.
- To note that the EAC's mediation is in total impasse with the partisan position of the Facilitator W.B. Mkapa and to do everything possible to prevent the escalation of violence that could result from the break in inclusive dialogue.

Done at Bujumbura, on 12th December 2016

For SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI
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