

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

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Burundi: Ties between the Imbonerakure and the provincial police commissioner in Bubanza (2010-August 2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Ties between the Imbonerakure and the Burundian Authorities

In September 2011, the president of the Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons (Association pour la protection des droits humains et des personnes détenues, APRODH), a Burundian NGO (APRODH 25 Apr. 2013), informed International Crisis Group of the existence of a [translation] "plan to wipe out the political opposition," also called "*safisha*" [which means "to cleanse" (OAG Dec. 2011, 30)], sponsored by the security services and in which members of the Imbonerakure were sometimes called to take part (International Crisis Group 25 Oct. 2012, 6). The Observatory of Government Action (Observatoire de l'action gouvernementale, OAG), a coalition of Burundian NGOs whose mission is to monitor government actions (OAG n.d.), publishes semi-annual reports on governance in Burundi (ibid. Dec. 2011, 7). In its December 2011 report, the OAG also notes the existence of a "*safisha*" plan that uses the Imbonerakure to [translation] "eliminate opponents" (ibid., 30). The report also states that [translation] "in some communities," the Imbonerakure "are made up of auxiliaries of the national police" (ibid.).

In a May 2012 report on political violence in Burundi, Human Rights Watch observed that [Human Rights Watch English version] "the Imbonerakure and the intelligence services appeared to cooperate in intimidation and attacks" (May 2012, 1, 20). Similarly, Agence France-Presse (AFP) stated on 27 June 2012 that the Imbonerakure [translation] "are increasingly involved in matters of security, participating especially in night rounds and police operations, despite protests by the authorities." In a 20 July 2012 article, Radio France internationale (RFI) pointed out that the Imbonerakure committed [translation] "abuses" and operates "with the security forces" (RFI 20 July 2012). Similarly, a UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) article states that the Imbonerakure [UN English version] "has been implicated in attacks on and intimidation of opposition party supporters. It has also been accused of working as an unconstitutional extension of state security forces" (UN 5 Nov. 2012). The president of a coalition of several opposition groups, the Democratic Alliance for Change (Alliance des démocrates pour le changement, ADC-Ikibiri), told the IRIN that the Imbonerakure has [UN English version] "the support of the government, the ruling party, [and] the police" (ibid.). Rejecting the allegations of the president of the ADC-Ikibiri, the president of the Imbonerakure stated the following: [UN English version] "We are the first to commit to peace and security (working with) the security forces, the courts, the people and the administration" (ibid.).

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (Commission nationale indépendante des droits de l'homme, CNIDH), a government organization that works to promote and protect human rights and acts as a consultant to state institutions in Burundi (CNIDH May 2013, 6), states in its 2012 annual report that the

Imbonerakure have been accused of [translation] "acting like security agents in several areas of the country, under the approving eye of certain administrative and political authorities" (ibid., 49).

For further information on the Imbonerakure, consult Response to Information Request BDI104343.

1.1 Province of Bubanza

In a December 2012 report, the OAG states that, [translation] "in the province of Bubanza, some cases of young Imbonerakure assuming the role of police were reported in Buringa and in the very heart of Bubanza. Some were arrested although they were released soon after" (OAG Dec. 2012, 102).

According to Radio publique africaine (RPA), on 9 July 2012, some members of the Imbonerakure stated that they killed about 15 people in the commune of Rugazi, in Bubanza, on the orders of Rémégie (also called Rémégie and Réméggie) Nzeyimana, the provincial commissioner in Bubanza. Rémégie Nzeyimana apparently denied ordering the killings (RPA 9 July 2012). Similarly, a 10 July 2012 article on the tutsi.org Internet site, a Burundian website that broadcasts information on the Burundian community and on [translation] "the permanent risks of a majority community excluding a minority community" (SurvIT-Banguka n.d.), states that some members of the Imbonerakure stated that they [translation] "lynched" about 20 "rebels" in Rugazi on the orders of Nzeyimana Rémégie, the provincial police commissioner in Bubanza (SurvIT-Banguka 10 July 2012). The article also states that the testimony of the Imbonerakure is [translation] "corroborated by other residents of the locality" (ibid.). Another article on that same subject dated 18 July 2012 states that [translation] "Commissioner Réméggie Nzeyimana is in the process of tracking down" and "threatening to ... kill" certain young Imbonerakure who have spoken about this matter (SurvIT-Banguka 18 July 2012). According to RPA, some residents of Rugazi, accused of giving the media information on the role of the police in this matter, had fled their home and stated that they were being [translation] "hunted down by the provincial police commissioner in Bubanza" (17 July 2012).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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