



FDU-INKINGI

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COMITE DIRECTEUR – STEERING COMMITTEE

"Pour un Etat de Droit, la Démocratie et l'Egalité de chances" ; "For the rule of law, democracy and equal opportunity"

PRESS RELEASE

RWANDA: SHOCKING AS TRIGGER-HAPPY RWANDAN POLICE MOW DOWN PRISONERS.

FDU-Inkingi condemns in the strongest terms possible the murder of 5 prisoners in Huye prison in the night of the 23rd January 2019, allegedly for their attempt to escape. It calls on the government to end this barbarism that has become common in detention at Police stations and government prisons.

According to Police spokesperson three prisoners were shot dead while trying to escape Huye prison, while the local newspapers give a number of 5 people dead and their names. There is no mention of any survivors among those who were allegedly trying to escape which clearly indicates that the mission was not to restrain but shoot to kill. According to the local media, most of them were petty thieves, with sentences as low as one and half years. This prison has been notorious for its harsh conditions. There is a record of demonstrations this year against unhuman and degrading treatment, and refusal to receive food from relatives. One local resident is heard telling a reporter that they probably preferred death by the bullet than by starvation.

We would like to call to mind some of the prominent cases where the trigger-happy Rwandan police has killed people in cold blood.

1. Mr. Eric Hakizimana was shot by the police on 15 June 2014 while in police custody and handcuffed alleging that he attempted to escape the prison. Nevertheless, the other prisoners testified that when he was brought to prison, he had already been assaulted. The police reportedly took him out during the night to shoot him just behind the prison.
2. Dr Emmanuel Gasakure long term President Paul Kagame's former personal doctor was shot dead by a police officer on duty on February 25, 2015. The police had no shame to allege that he was shot in a scuffle while he was trying to snatch a gun from the police.
3. Mr. Nsengiyumva Francois from the Eastern province detained at Kibungo Police station for the crime of minimising genocide, was shot dead on April 19, 2018 allegedly trying to escape. It is also alleged that he pushed aside an armed policeman on duty in order to run away from prison.
4. Me Donat Mutunzi, a prominent lawyer disappeared on the 13th April 2018 on his way to work. He was found dead in Ndera Police Station of Gasabo District. The deceased's wife, Valentine Ugirimpuhwe, was called by Ndera Police on the 23rd of April 2018, to pick his body. The family was told that he had committed suicide using his bed sheet in the police cell.
5. The enforced disappearance of Mr Boniface Twagirimana, 1st Vice President of our party FDU-Inkingi: he mysteriously disappeared from a maximum-security prison of Mpanga on October 8, 2018.

We would like to recall that the US State Department country report on human rights (2017) accuses the Rwandan government of "arbitrary or unlawful killings; torture; harassment, security forces' disregard for the rule of law". Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have made similar reports. What is shocking is not that the trigger-happy policemen act with impunity, but the lack of political will by aid donors to use their leverage to bring the Rwandan government to end this brutality.

Once again, we call on the international community to put pressure on the Rwandan government to investigate these killings and bring the culprits to justice and to end this barbarism.

Done in Rouen on January 26, 2019

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