

Burundi: A Dangerous Third Term

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	i
Recommendations.....	iii
I. Introduction	1
II. The Radicals in Power	2
A. The CNDD-FDD Makes Way for the FDD.....	2
B. The Structure of Repression	3
C. The Leadership Exploits the Ethnic Rhetoric.....	5
D. The Third Term Political Project: Turning the Page on Arusha.....	7
III. A Dangerously Fractured and Impoverished Society	10
A. A Third Term Marked by Division.....	10
1. A rift with the capital.....	10
2. A rift with the Tutsi community	12
3. A rift with the army	13
B. An Emerging Social and Humanitarian Crisis	15
1. The economic and budgetary impact	15
2. An inevitable deterioration in living conditions	16
C. One Struggle – Multiple Opponents.....	17
IV. The Elusive but Indispensable Dialogue.....	20
V. Conclusion	24
APPENDICES	
A. Map of Burundi	25
B. List of Acronyms.....	26

Executive Summary

One year after President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term sparked the crisis, the situation remains critical. The radicalisation of the regime, which had been steadily increasing since the second post-conflict elections in 2010 and intensified by tensions over the third term in 2015, has seen the rise of the most hard-line leaders of the ruling party. These figures are determined to do away with the institutional system established by the Arusha accord – an agreement between Hutu and Tutsi elites in 2000 which put in place an ethnic quota system for state institutions, including the army, and established a two-term presidential limit. This political strategy to dismantle the accord and the return of violent rhetoric and tactics reminiscent of the civil war, have generated great fear within Burundian society – which, although deeply alarmed, has not yet given in to politicians' tactics of inciting ethnic hatred. With the government and opposition invited to meet in Tanzania on 21 May, it is imperative that the guarantors of the Arusha accord call on them to engage in a meaningful dialogue on the future of the peace agreement and avoid a repeat of the country's tragic past.

Violence, fear, socio-economic decline and deepening social fractures have characterised the beginning of the president's third term. Following protests in April 2015 and Nkurunziza's re-election in July, confrontation has taken the form of urban guerrilla warfare which, beyond the targeted assassinations, torture and disappearances, has had an insidious and devastating impact. By using ethnically-charged rhetoric and demonstrating an obvious desire to bring the democratic consensus of the Arusha accord to an end, the regime has ruptured its relations with part of the population. Some 250,000 Burundians have fled, including a significant portion of the political and economic establishment as well as civil society activists. The flight has drained Burundi of its most dynamic citizens and exposed divisions between the regime on one hand, and the army, the capital and the Tutsi community on the other. Trade between Bujumbura and the countryside has also been disrupted and, according to recent estimates, 10 per cent of the population (1.1 million people) are in need of humanitarian assistance of some kind.

The paradox at the heart of this confrontation is that while Burundi has democratised, the ruling party, the Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), has not. An institutionalised ethnic power-sharing system is completely divorced from a radicalised ethnically-homogenous party reverting to its historical roots (rebel leaders of the civil war era). As the opposition, now forced into exile, seems unable to overcome its own longstanding ethnic cleavages, the regime's current strategy of repression (alleging a Tutsi conspiracy, breaking up the security services and creating units loyal to the regime) has revived fears of genocidal violence within the Tutsi community. There are no signs at present that the population is ready to be mobilised for violence on ethnic grounds. But the simmering social and humanitarian crisis, part of the population's physical, political and economic insecurity, and fear itself, have created the perfect conditions for the situation's further deterioration and ethnic polarisation.

While many Burundians and the international community believed the ethnic problem had been solved with the Arusha accord, it has returned to the fore with

President Nkurunziza's third term. To reverse this trend, a debate should be organised on the necessary amendments to the peace agreement. The regime is presently staging sham debates through a "national dialogue" which remains completely under its control. Ideally, a debate on the Arusha accord would take place in Burundi. This, however, would require the government to lift current restrictions on civil liberties (freedom of expression, press and assembly, etc.) and allow the opposition to return from exile.

Before these conditions are met and in order to overcome the current impasse, a discussion between the opposition and the government on the future of the Arusha accord should take place outside of the country under the auspices of the guarantors of the peace agreement. The meeting called by former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa on 21 May should be the first step in the dialogue on the future of the Arusha accord. In parallel, international actors, the UN and the African Union (AU) in particular, should take measures to prevent the crisis from descending into ethnic conflict and a humanitarian emergency, and prepare for an immediate intervention to prevent large-scale violence.

Recommendations

To reduce tensions, restart the dialogue and convince the government and the opposition to participate

To the government:

1. Engage in constructive dialogue with the opposition, allow the media and civil society to work independently and free from fear, and revise its violent approach to political dissent.

To the opposition:

2. Renounce violence and, for the unarmed opposition in exile, engage in a constructive dialogue with the government and resolve internal disagreements in order to present a common front and clear positions.

To the UN, African Union (AU), East African Community (EAC) and European Union (EU):

3. Formalise a single international mediation structure in order to speak with one voice.

To the guarantors of the Arusha accord (in particular Tanzania and South Africa):

4. Form a working group comprising the National Council for the Restoration of the Arusha Accord and the Rule of Law (Conseil national pour le respect de l'accord d'Arusha pour la paix et la réconciliation au Burundi et de l'Etat de droit, CNARED), the National Forces of Liberation (Forces nationales de libération, FNL), and the CNDD-FDD tasked with discussing the necessary amendments to be made to the Arusha peace agreement.

To the AU and the EU:

5. Agree on how to implement the EU decision to change the financing arrangements for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by bypassing the government and disbursing funds directly to the soldiers.
6. The AU and its partners should also look for another troop contributing country to eventually replace Burundian soldiers within AMISOM in order to prevent Burundian authorities from using participation in the mission as diplomatic leverage.

To prevent a descent into ethnic conflict and be ready to intervene in case of mass violence

To donors who suspended part of their financial aid (the EU, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the U.S. and Switzerland):

7. Contribute financially to track hate speech by the authorities and the opposition in order to fight attempts at ethnic polarisation. Burundian NGOs, with the assistance of some donors, have already begun doing this, but they require further

assistance, specifically to cover speeches by local authorities in the provinces. Financial assistance for the documentation of human rights abuses should also be sustained and increased.

To the UN, the AU, the EU and bilateral partners:

8. The AU should put in place and the EU and the U.S. should expand sanctions regimes to include those propagating hate speech.
9. Agree to deploy immediately several hundred human rights observers and armed international police.
10. Take the necessary measures so that a rapid deployment force can be dispatched in case of emergency, which could include troops from the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

To Burundian and international NGOs involved in local conflict resolution before the current crisis with local mediation structures in place:

11. Reorient the work of these structures toward the documentation of human rights abuses and hate speech in Bujumbura and in the provinces.

To mitigate the impact of the economic and social crisis on the population

To donors who suspended part of their financial aid (the EU, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the U.S. and Switzerland):

12. Verify the political neutrality and technical reliability of non-governmental actors in the context of changing the terms of aid provision. This requires a rigorous political and operational assessment of these actors. For some of them, a partnership with international NGOs and a strengthening of their financial and managerial capacities will be essential.
13. Fund monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the status of food security and sanitation, and conduct budgetary studies to identify the breaking point of key health and agricultural sectors in order to calibrate the financial support they need. Donors should ensure financing changes to their programs do not result in the interruption of all ongoing funding.
14. Create a committee to monitor the Burundian economy, specifically in the health and agriculture sectors and access to basic services.
15. Make available funds for the humanitarian response plan, which remains underfunded.

Nairobi/Brussels, 20 May 2016

Burundi: A Dangerous Third Term

I. Introduction

The current crisis in Burundi, triggered by the April 2015 announcement of Pierre Nkurunziza's candidacy for the presidential election, had been long in the making. The president's ambitions stirred the anger of a section of the population already sorely tested by a deep-rooted economic crisis. But it also exposed rifts within his regime, sparking an abortive *coup d'état* in May 2015 and pushing sections of the army and his party, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), into joining the opposition. The July 2015 presidential election, held in highly contentious circumstances, failed to end the crisis – which has now deteriorated into the suppression of all civil opposition and a wave of targeted killings of individuals from across the political spectrum.¹

In this context of low intensity violence, a highly dangerous process of radicalisation has gained momentum.² The predominant themes of Nkurunziza's third term are the transformation of the CNDD-FDD into the FDD, the evolution of the security forces into a partisan militia, the leadership's manipulation of ethnic rhetoric and the determination to abolish the compromise Arusha settlement – fuelled by painful memories of Tutsi domination, past humiliations and killings.

¹ On the election crisis that triggered today's confrontation, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°224, *Elections in Burundi: Moment of Truth*, 17 April 2015 and Crisis Group Briefing N°111, *Burundi: Peace Sacrificed?*, 29 May 2015.

² Crisis Group Africa Report N°192, *Burundi: Bye-bye Arusha?*, 25 October 2012.

II. The Radicals in Power

A. *The CNDD-FDD Makes Way for the FDD*

The first casualty of President Nkurunziza's candidacy for a third term has been the CNDD-FDD: its moderate wing publicly declared itself against this move back in March/April 2015 and has now left the party, with the dissidents departing into exile and eventually joining the opposition. This split has reduced the movement, once a heterogeneous collection of various groups, to its historic core – the former guerrillas.³ The original wing of the CNDD-FDD (ie, the FDD) is now in sole control.

The 2015 election crisis resolved the rivalry between civilians and the military that had permeated the CNDD-FDD ever since it came to power in 2005. Behind the façade of the movement's civilian leadership, the "bush generals" had always been dominant, legitimised by the role that they had played during the war: they had continued to meet on the sidelines of the party's official bodies, they drew up the lists of candidates for elections, played a critical role in internal wrangles within the leadership and agreed positions in secret, just as they had done during the guerrilla war.⁴

This regressive evolution of the CNDD-FDD continues a long history of splits and violent internal power struggles.⁵ Indeed, this movement is the product of successive schisms within the Hutu resistance. In historical terms, the CNDD-FDD is a dissident strand of Léonard Nyangoma's CNDD, itself a breakaway from the Front for Democracy in Burundi (*Front pour la démocratie au Burundi* – Frodebu).⁶ The FDD fighters rejected the CNDD politicians and opted for autonomy, creating the CNDD-FDD, and they remained its centre of gravity throughout the gradual process of Burundi's democratisation.⁷ The 2015 election crisis signals a new split. Moreover, since the days of the guerrilla war, the CNDD-FDD has experienced internal power struggles that sometimes turned bloody; the history of the party has been marked by sporadic physical eliminations and political excommunications.⁸

³ Before the split, the CNDD-FDD comprised at least four distinct strands, distinguished by the different roles they had played during the war: former fighters and their military commanders, members of the civilian wing, exiles, and late converts to the cause – those who joined the movement after the 2003 agreement and in the run-up to the elections of 2005. Crisis Group interview, CNDD-FDD member, Bujumbura, March 2015.

⁴ During the war, the CNDD-FDD members referred to each other as the "bagumyabanga" – those who keep the secret.

⁵ Given that the party was never truly "demilitarised", the term "remilitarisation" is not applicable. Crisis Group interviews, CNDD-FDD member, Bujumbura, March 2015; diplomat, Brussels, and historian, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁶ The CNDD and its armed branch, the *Intagoheka* FDD, first appeared in 1994. But in 1998 internal disagreement between CNDD President Léonard Nyangoma and his military chief of staff, Jean-Bosco Ndayikengurukiye, culminated in a split, creating two factions. The strand led by Jean-Bosco Ndayikengurukiye gave birth to the CNDD-FDD. Crisis Group interview, historian, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁷ Ibid. "Plongée au cœur du Burundi parano", *Jeune Afrique*, 9 February 2016.

⁸ The most well-known are those that led to the eliminations of Léonard Nyangoma by Jean-Bosco Ndayikengurukiye, of Jean-Bosco Ndayikengurukiye himself by Pierre Nkurunziza, and of both Hussein Radjabu – jailed from 2007 to 2015 – and his successor as party leader, Jérémie Ngendakumana. Crisis Group interview, historian, Bujumbura, February 2016. When Radjabu was sidelined, his parliamentary allies were sacked and there were violent attacks on his supporters. "Rapport alternatif à l'attention du Comité contre la torture", Track Impunity Always (Trial), October 2014.

The CNDD-FDD has not become more democratic since 2005. Tension between civilians and the military reached a brutal denouement with the expulsion of moderates in 2015, and since then control has been solely in the hands of the guerrilla commanders – who were already taking most important decisions and formed the president’s inner circle. This triumph of the CNDD-FDD’s historic core was marked by a return to the methods, mentality and rhetoric of the war era.

B. *The Structure of Repression*

Since mid-2015, armed confrontation between the opposition and the regime has gradually evolved into a low intensity urban guerrilla war, which is progressively spreading out to some provinces.⁹ The response to harassment of the security forces, grenade attacks and targeted killings has been other targeted killings, clampdowns on dissident urban neighbourhoods, security sweeps, police abuses, torture and disappearances.¹⁰ Each camp has attempted to infiltrate the other and win over defectors, and to discredit the enemy by way of a media war.¹¹

In spite of the Arusha accord, and the security sector reform efforts of a group of donors led by the Netherlands, the CNDD-FDD machine has taken control of the security institutions and transformed them into a tool of repression that operates with complete impunity. Over several years, the Arusha accord has been partly dismantled, reform of the security sector has ground to a halt and successive crackdowns have taken place, creating the conditions for ethnic and partisan manipulation of the security forces.¹² But just as in politics, the electoral crisis has stripped away the façade of the security sector, now firmly under the control of “the president’s men”.

Although on a greater scale, repression today functions much as it did in the era of the “Safisha” campaign against the National Liberation Forces (*Forces nationales de libération* – FNL) after the 2010 elections.¹³ The regime does not rely on the whole security apparatus, but only on those elements that it trusts, in particular the National Intelligence Service (*Service national de renseignement* – SNR) and the police. Even before the 15 May 2015 putsch attempt, it kept a certain distance from the army. Furthermore, the authorities also have a network of extrajudicial detention and torture

⁹ Confrontation is not confined to Bujumbura; violent clashes between the opposition and the regime also take place in provincial areas: in early May, about 100 people were arrested in Musaga in Bujumbura and in Mugamba in Bururi province. Report N°22, SOS-Torture/Burundi, 14 May 2016.

¹⁰ “Assassinat du coiffeur et joueur d’arc: la police donne sa version”, *Iwacu*, 5 January 2016; “Nyakabiga: un cameraman tué, la police est pointée du doigt mais elle dément”, *Iwacu*, 10 January 2016; “Just Tell Me What to Confess To: Torture by Police and Intelligence Service Since April 2015” and “My Children are Scared’: Burundi’s Deepening Human Rights Crisis”, Amnesty International, 24 August 2015 and 22 December 2015.

¹¹ Government and opposition blame each other after mass graves were found in Bujumbura. While the government is accused of having concealed the bodies of victims of the December 2015 wave of repression, it claims to have discovered a mass grave in Mutakura, a district in Bujumbura that supports the opposition. “Au Burundi, la découverte d’une fosse commune suscite la polémique”, *Deutsche Welle*, 1 March 2016. Report N°12, SOS-Torture/Burundi, 5 March 2016.

¹² Crisis Group Report N°192, *Burundi: Bye bye Arusha?*, op. cit.

¹³ On this wave of repression, see “You Will Not Have Peace While You Are Living’ – The Escalation of Political Violence in Burundi”, Human Rights Watch, 2 May 2012; Antoine Kaburahe et Jean-François Bastin, *Cinq ans d’éditoriaux et de réflexions (2008-2013)* (Bujumbura, 2014), a collection of editorials from *Iwacu*.

centres.¹⁴ The repression techniques used by the police and the SNR have a long and proven track record;¹⁵ but now this repression is done by units whose members have been carefully selected for their loyalty to the regime:

- the much feared riot squad (*brigade anti-émeute* – police);
- the institutions support squad (*brigade d'appui aux institutions* – police);
- the institutions defence brigade (*brigade de protection des institutions* – army).

This security structure, put in place by the regime in the wake of the 2015 crisis, remains operational, and since early 2016 its preferred technique is the targeting of opponents. Moreover, the Muha and Muzinda military bases near Bujumbura are headed by CNDD-FDD officers who have been heavily involved in violence.¹⁶ The pro-government Imbonerakure militia support the security forces: they have become the back-up force for repression in the capital, are deployed along the border with Rwanda and Tanzania and play a key role in controlling rural areas, where they act as a parallel police force. They carry out patrols, make arrests, impose duty charges, dominate local security committees and issue instructions to local communities (for example, telling them how to vote); rural populations often describe them as the main cause of insecurity.¹⁷

The security institutions' official command structures are effectively short-circuited and exercise no control over repression in opposition areas. Designated units within the traditional structure of the military are ignored in favour of units specially created for the task.¹⁸ The CNDD-FDD "securocrats" initiate and command these operations, which give rise to numerous abuses. The crackdowns are marked by a deepening spiral of criminality: theft and extortion from traders during security searches of opposition districts have been followed over recent months by an accelerating epidemic of kidnapping, with no evident political motivation and sometimes aimed purely at extracting cash.¹⁹

The official hierarchy of the security sector, the product of the politico-ethnic balances agreed at Arusha, has been maintained for the sake of appearances. But the informal hierarchy that already existed before the crisis – having emerged during the repression campaign against the FNL in 2010-2011 – now operates openly.²⁰ This parallel hierarchy is based on former members of the CNDD-FDD who were

¹⁴ Crisis Group interviews, journalists, members of civil society and diplomats, Bujumbura, February 2016. "Dans les geôles de Bujumbura", *Le Monde*, 29 February 2016.

¹⁵ "Rapport alternatif à l'attention du Comité contre la torture", op. cit.

¹⁶ See section III.A.3 on the tensions within the army.

¹⁷ Crisis Group interviews, humanitarian actors, Bujumbura; journalist, Brussels, February 2016. Report N°16, SOS-Torture/Burundi, 2 April 2016. Paradoxically, the Imbonerakure are reminiscent of the Tutsi militia Rwagasore Revolutionary Youth (*Jeunesse révolutionnaire Rwagasore*), the armed wing of the Union for National Progress (*Union pour le progrès national* – UPRONA). Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Jean-François Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972, au bord des génocides* (Paris, 2007).

¹⁸ Crisis Group interview, member of the security services, Bujumbura, February 2016.

¹⁹ According to some individuals questioned in Bujumbura, these abductions are the work of Imbonerakure who have been running short of money since the death of Adolphe Nishimirimana. In December 2015, an SNR agent demanded €2,000 from the family of a human rights activist as the price of her release. Although the agent was arrested, the activist was not found. Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016. "Dans les geôles de Bujumbura", op. cit. Rapport N°8, SOS-Torture/Burundi, 6 February 2016.

²⁰ In Bujumbura it has long been known that the effective head of the police is not the director but his deputy. Crisis Group interviews, member of civil society and diplomat, Bujumbura, March 2015.

officially integrated into the security services in the aftermath of the peace accord and on infiltration of the security services by the Imbonerakure, an unknown number of whom have joined the police, the army and the SNR over the past few years.²¹ However, the regime has less control over the army than over the police, because during the integration process, “the army absorbed the rebellion, whereas the rebellion assimilated the police”.²² In other words, there are many more CNDD-FDD veterans in the police than in the army.²³

C. *The Leadership Exploits the Ethnic Rhetoric*

Since the inception of the crisis, ethnicity has become a major theme of regime discourse – and at the highest level. The president of the Senate has resorted to the terminology of the Rwandan genocide – which alarmed international opinion in November 2015 – while the security minister has suggested calling on the party’s provincial activists to crush the urban rebellion.²⁴ Some government officials who regularly criticise what they see as an “ethnically biased civil society” – an allusion to Tutsi predominance in civil society organisations²⁵ – have incited violence and used discriminatory language.²⁶

The rhetoric of the CNDD-FDD goes further than these sporadic ethnically charged statements. The party repeatedly condemns a Tutsi “plot” supposedly orchestrated by Pierre Buyoya (President of Burundi from 1987 to 1993 and from 1996 to 2003) and the Rwandan President Paul Kagame, with the support of foreign allies (the European Union, the U.S. and Belgium and, some claim, France too). According to the CNDD-FDD, this “subversion plan” aims to reestablish a Tutsi regime headed by Pierre Buyoya.²⁷ CNDD-FDD press releases blame the Tutsi for Burundi’s crises and use the lexicon of historical resentments to attack them, albeit mostly avoiding the actual words Hutu and Tutsi. They accuse the Rwandan Tutsi of being behind the massacres that have punctuated Burundi’s history and point to Kagame’s responsibility in today’s violence, portraying him as the regime’s Enemy Number One.²⁸ Recently, they have been trying to reopen the controversy over the 6 April 1994

²¹ Crisis Group interviews, journalists, members of civil society and diplomats, Bujumbura, February 2016.

²² Crisis Group interview, journalist, Brussels, January 2016.

²³ Crisis Group interviews, members of the security services, Bujumbura and Nairobi, February 2016.

²⁴ The president of the Senate revived the term “gukora” which means “to work” in Kirundi and in Kinyarwanda and was used during the Rwandan genocide to encourage the Hutus to massacre the Tutsis. He also promised that property would become available after the violence. “Crainte de violences au Burundi après le discours du président”, *Le Monde*, 6 November 2015.

²⁵ Crisis Group interviews, members of civil society, Kigali, February 2016.

²⁶ This included referring to opponents in dehumanising terms: “We don’t want cockroaches to breed or consolidate their position before our very eyes” (Senate president); “General Rodrigue Bunyoni died in Uganda like a dog because he was against the government. Even the others who are here or outside the country will soon die and be buried like little dogs” (president of the Republic); “It is very important to clean out opposition areas” (president of the Republic); “Opposition people are little stray dogs” (governor of Rutana). Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016.

²⁷ Press release N°005/2016, CNDD-FDD, 10 March 2016.

²⁸ “The CNDD-FDD party informs everyone that what has just happened at Mutakura is evidence of the implication of Paul Kagame, through his recruitment and military training of Burundian refugees to come and destabilise their country since 26 April 2015”. Press release N°04/2016, CNDD-

attack that killed the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, Juvénal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira, a barely concealed attempt to blame Rwanda's current head of state.²⁹ Beyond rhetorical politicking, such theories are fuelling tension between the two countries (condemnations and acerbic exchanges at the UN Security Council, a string of anti-Rwanda demonstrations in Burundi, the arrest of Rwandan "spies" and the death in prison of a former Rwandan ambassador and minister, etc).³⁰

Party propaganda links today's violence to that of the past, rewriting Burundi's history since independence as a permanent Tutsi plot. It places the current crisis in a supposed continuity of Tutsi domination, painting a dichotomy between the people, faithful to their government, and internal and external enemies, between "us" and "them". Evoking episodes of violence in the past and repeatedly using the term "genocide",³¹ it outlines to the Burundian people the origins of the threat they supposedly face and argues that "genocide is in the blood" of Pierre Buyoya, Louis Michel and Marguerite Barankitse.³² Although justified with regard to certain tragic episodes of Burundian history,³³ references to genocide and genocidal plotting recall the war-time political culture and psychosis of extermination that predominated for several decades but which appeared to have been left behind after the Arusha accord.³⁴ Since independence, mutual suspicions of genocidal intent had led both Hutus and Tutsis to feel that they had no choice but to carry out pre-emptive killings in order to survive – a mentality that was a major driver behind episodes of mass violence in Burundi.³⁵ Shaped by the memory of past suffering and a desire to settle historical scores, the CNDD-FDD's attempt at ethnic polarisation in the current crisis is remi-

FDD, 2 March 2016. Memorandum on Rwanda's acts of aggression against Burundi, communications office at Burundi's presidency. "Plongée au cœur du Burundi parano", op. cit.

²⁹ Press release N°005/2016, op. cit. On the death of President Ntaryamira, see in particular the Twitter feed of Willy Nyamitwe, adviser to the Burundian president, March and April 2016.

³⁰ "Burundi: l'étrange mort subite de l'ex-diplomate rwandais Jacques Bihozagara", Radio France Internationale (RFI), 30 March 2016.

³¹ The terms "genocide" and "genocidaire" appear fourteen times in the CNDD-FDD press release of 17 February 2016 and eleven times in the CNDD-FDD press release of 10 March 2016.

³² Press release N°005/2016, op. cit. Shaken by the atrocities committed following the 1993 putsch, Marguerite Barankitse became involved in humanitarian work and established "Maison Shalom" to help and house war orphans. She has received many awards for her work and has expressed opposition to Nkurunziza's third term.

³³ René Lemarchand (dir), *Forgotten Genocides, Oblivion, Denial and Memory* (Philadelphia, 2011); Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Jean-François Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972, au bord des génocides* (Paris, 2007).

³⁴ For example, with sentences like: "The CNDD-FDD notes with bitterness that the 13 May 2015 putschists – who, if they succeeded, were planning to exterminate the CNDD-FDD party's electorate – were no different from other apocalyptic plans that had been attempted in Burundi since independence". Press release N°005/2016, op. cit. For a more detailed review of this, see Louis-Marie Ninondera, "Le Burundi dans les trappes de son histoire" (<https://storify.com/Emayi2011/le-burundi-dans-les-trappes-de-son-histoire>), 15 November 2015.

³⁵ Among the mythical roots of extreme violence in Burundi is the idea that the other side is preparing a genocide. Hutu politicians have made accusations of plans for genocide whose apparent aim allegedly is to equalise the ethnic demographic balance (the Muhirwa plan in the 1960s and the Simbananiye plan in the 1970s). And Tutsi politicians have alleged plans to exterminate their ethnic group to try to find a justification for the genocide against the Hutus in 1972. *Burundi 1972, au bord des génocides*, op.cit; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, André Guichaoua and Gabriel Le Jeune, "La crise d'août 1988 au Burundi", *Cahiers du Centre de recherches africaines*, N°6 (1989).

niscent of a past that many Burundians were hoping was behind them. This makes it particularly dangerous.³⁶

Furthermore, the regime is little inclined to respect freedom of expression, yet through its “national dialogue” it is providing a platform for Hutu radicals already well known on the Burundian political scene, such as Pasteur Habimana, a former FNL spokesman and then dissident, who has claimed responsibility for the Gatumba massacre.³⁷ During the January 2016 consultations, held as part of the “national dialogue”, he cast blame on the old colonial power, expressed anti-Tutsi sentiments and echoed government criticisms of the Arusha accord – which he described as unfair to the ethnic majority; he called for it to be revised.³⁸

Such ethnic rhetoric does not seem to have gained traction among the wider population, but it certainly exerts a powerful influence on the members of the security forces. During their operations, some of them use ethnic insults indicative of their anti-Tutsi feelings. Moreover, Tutsi find themselves subject to more frequent police checks.³⁹

D. *The Third Term Political Project: Turning the Page on Arusha*

During Nkurunziza’s second term, the CNDD-FDD radicals managed to gradually drain the substance from the ethno-political power-sharing system created under the Arusha accord, but they failed to get rid of it officially.⁴⁰ The parliament rejected by a single vote in 2014 their proposal to amend the constitution, and reshape the country’s institutional structure. The current administration is paving the way for an official challenge to the Arusha model by holding national consultations. Boycotted by the exiled opposition and loyalists of the FNL leader Agathon Rwasa, these discussions – taking place under the aegis of the National Commission for Inter-Burundian dialogue – are little more than a CNDD-FDD monologue. The recommendations that are emerging echo the rhetoric of the regime: criticisms of the Arusha accord resurface at each session and participants lay stress on the need to amend the constitution to establish a “true democracy”.⁴¹

Besides warnings and threats directed at opponents of the third term, there are many “spontaneous” calls for the abolition of both the ethnic quotas specified by Arusha and the limitation on the number of presidential terms. During the hearings

³⁶ Abram de Swaan, *Diviser pour tuer. Les régimes génocidaires et leurs hommes de main* (Paris, 2016).

³⁷ The Gatumba massacre of August 2004 carried out by the FNL cost the lives of more than 150 Tutsi refugees who had returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pasteur Habimana was expelled from the FNL in 2009 and founded a competitor party. For a deeper understanding of his thinking, see “Massacre de Gatumba: Interview avec Pasteur Habimana”, Gatumba Refugees Survivors Foundation (www.gatumbasurvivors.org/2011/08/massacre-de-gatumba-interview-avec-pasteur-habimana), 16 August 2011; René Lemarchand (dir), *Forgotten Genocides, Oblivion, Denial and Memory*, op. cit., p. 48-49.

³⁸ Significantly, during a public meeting in Rumonge province he said: “Don’t be too relaxed if you are living with snakes”. See “Pasteur Habimana crache du venin dans un stade” (<https://soundcloud.com/journ-burundi/aud-20160129-wa00331>). Crisis Group interview, politician, Bujumbura, February 2016.

³⁹ Crisis Group interviews, members of civil society, Bujumbura and Kigali, February 2016. “In Burundi, uptick in ethnic rhetoric sparks anxiety over genocide warnings”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 12 janvier 2016.

⁴⁰ Crisis Group Report, *Burundi: Bye-bye Arusha?*, op. cit.

⁴¹ Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016.

of the Commission for Inter-Burundian dialogue in Kirundo, the member of parliament for the constituency called for the revision of the constitution to permit the president to govern the country for life, like a monarch.⁴² In the same vein, several participants demanded an end to the Arusha quotas.⁴³ This revanchist, anti-Arusha tone might appeal to some. However, the tools and methods used by the regime look like the forcible imposition of its message on a population living in fear.

Participants in the “national dialogue” recommend a toughening of legal curbs on the media, civil society organisations – Burundian as well as foreign – and the opposition. They want to see monitoring of their funding and internal ethnic balance. Some advocate the restoration of the death penalty. One provincial governor proposed sending demobilised members of the armed forces to peacekeeping missions abroad. Moreover, Belgium – and Western interference in general – are being scapegoated: there have been suggestions that Burundi should break off all relations with the former colonial power, put it “on trial” for its supposedly harmful role in the nation’s history and ban dual nationality.⁴⁴ The same arguments and proposals are repeated province after province and some were even reflected in the government’s program for 2016: for instance, a requirement for foreign NGOs to transfer their funds through Burundi’s central bank and a check on the ethnic make-up of their staff,⁴⁵ a census of foreigners and a discussion about restoring the death penalty seven years after it was abolished.

Under cover of the “national dialogue”, which is certainly under political control, the CNDD-FDD radicals are seeking to do away with “Arusha’s little deals” and position themselves to retain power indefinitely.⁴⁶ They see Arusha as an injustice that they had to tolerate temporarily: it enabled the Tutsis to obtain through negotiation what they could not get through the ballot box because they are a minority, and to protect their own interests at the expense of the Hutu majority – the ruling party often complains about the numerical inequality between Hutus and Tutsis in certain sectors such as NGOs and the justice system. Encouraged by its victories in the 2010 and 2015 elections, when the opposition did not fully take part, the CNDD-FDD is thus pressing for the compromise democracy born of the Arusha negotiations to be replaced by a majoritarian democratic system. As the current foreign minister expressed back in 2009: “Although important issues were discussed at Arusha, it remains clear that the real contradictions that undermine the Burundian society have not yet been addressed”.⁴⁷

⁴² “Le député Nzeyimana Nestor souhaite un régime monarchique”, *Info Grands Lacs*, 21 January 2016.

⁴³ “Lancement du dialogue interne ou campagne contre la Constitution et l’Accord d’Arusha?”, *Iwacu*, 25 January 2016.

⁴⁴ “Le dialogue à Gatumba: ‘nous réclamons notamment la révision de la Constitution’”, *Iwacu*, 1 February 2016.

⁴⁵ In this regard, the selective use of elements of the Arusha accord is noticeable: ethnic quotas are criticised, but civil society organisations are under pressure to implement them as they are predominantly Tutsi.

⁴⁶ “Plongée au cœur du Burundi parano”, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ Alain Aimé Nyamitwe, *Démocratie et ethnicité au Burundi* (Paris, 2009), p. 195. This book by the current foreign minister, published with the support of the French embassy in Burundi, sets out a critique of Arusha and makes a case for majoritarian democracy. It is striking how, back in 2009, the author was already attacking all those viewed by the regime as enemies today: human rights associations, the Catholic Church, the media, Tutsi politicians – “the favourites of the international community” –, and the U.S.

Carefully chosen citizens put forward proposals in line with the CNDD-FDD program – constitutional change, an end to presidential term limits, the scrapping of ethnic quotas, criticisms of the Catholic Church, Belgium, civil society and so on – to confer the façade of popular legitimacy that was lacking in the 2014 attempt to revise the constitution. This stage-managed “people’s voice” is reminiscent of the “popular petition” of four million signatures that enabled in 2015 the president of Rwanda to change the constitution to stay in power.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ “Le Rwanda vote la révision de la Constitution permettant un nouveau mandat pour Paul Kagame”, *Le Monde*, 19 December 2015.

III. A Dangerously Fractured and Impoverished Society

Over the course of just one year, regime's drift toward radicalisation has driven 250,000 Burundians into exile. Many opponents, but also some rural inhabitants, students and much of the establishment have left the country. The sheer number of refugees and the fact that so many come from rural areas shows that fear prevails both in Bujumbura – the arena for confrontation between the regime and the opposition – and across the country. This highlights the deep rifts that have emerged between the regime, on one side, and the capital, the Tutsi community and the army on the other.

Burundi has now been deprived of institutional countervailing powers and free media. Discordant voices face a choice between self-censorship and exile and a section of the population now fears that the “divide and rule” strategy has evolved into a “divide and kill” strategy. The country's fragile social cohesion has been threatened by the poison of ethnic division, fear and the impoverishment of the population.⁴⁹ The regime has made part of the military, Bujumbura's youth, journalists, civil society figures and business entrepreneurs feel “that they no longer have a place in Burundi”⁵⁰ – but in doing so it has fuelled the mounting opposition; thus it is slipping into a downward spiral that risks culminating in a return to civil war.

A. A Third Term Marked by Division

1. A rift with the capital

Alienating urban elites

The great fear aroused by the rise in tension between the government and the opposition is common to all the refugees, who remember the systematic violence of the past. But everyone has fled for their own particular reasons. The capital, where the country's political, economic and intellectual establishment lived, has lost much of its lifeblood. The main civil society actors and many people at risk because of their profession – lawyers and journalists – have left Bujumbura and gone abroad.

The destruction of the premises of several radio stations after the attempted putsch in May 2015 led some journalists to leave the country.⁵¹ Others fled because of the direction taken by the inquiry into the abortive coup: the prosecutor used phone conversations between putschists and journalists as evidence of complicity.⁵² Still others, faced with the impossibility of continuing with their work amid the intensifying crackdown after the putsch attempt, decided to leave.⁵³ Much of the profession is now in exile.

Many civil society activists have fled, whether or not they were involved in the “Stop the Third Term” movement. The commission of inquiry set up by the government after the failed coup is trying to prove that there are links between the putsch-

⁴⁹ In September 2015, 65 per cent of Burundians interviewed said that people in their local area no longer trusted each other. “Burundi: Conflict Pulse”, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Search for Common Ground, U Report, September 2015.

⁵⁰ Crisis Group telephone interview, member of civil society, Brussels, March 2016.

⁵¹ “A l'intérieur de la crise burundaise (II): quand WhatsApp remplace la radio”, In Pursuit of Peace, 13 May 2016.

⁵² Crisis Group interviews, journalists, Brussels, January 2016 and Kigali, February 2016. “Burundi: en danger, certains journalistes quittent le pays”, RFI, 28 May 2015.

⁵³ Crisis Group interview, journalist, Nairobi, February 2016.

ists, opposition parties – and in particular, the Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (*Mouvement pour la solidarité et la démocratie*, MSD) – and civil society; in November 2015, the authorities suspended about ten civil society groups and blocked their bank accounts.⁵⁴ As a result, many Burundian NGOs fluctuate between continuing survival activities and exile, and remain operational thanks only to the support of their donors.

A section of the business class – who were concentrated in Bujumbura – has also taken shelter from the conflict. Local entrepreneurs sent their families abroad before taking flight themselves. While some businessmen left for political reasons, others were just exasperated by the systematic extortion racket organised by the regime.⁵⁵ From 2005 onwards, the CNDD-FDD became involved in the handling of public contracts, with the late chief of the intelligence services, Adolphe Nishimirimana, having played a key role in the award of deals, according to some experts.⁵⁶ Waiting to see how things develop and concerned not to lose their assets, some business people are shuttling back and forth between their bases abroad and Bujumbura to manage residual local activity, whereas others entrust this task to relatives who have remained in the Burundian capital. Meanwhile, the well-trained Rwandan executives many Bujumbura companies had recruited have left the country, conscious that they represent perfect targets for policemen short of money.⁵⁷

Alienating urban youth

An equally deep rift has developed with young people in the capital, a significant number of whom have gone into exile. Politicised, scandalised by corruption, discontented and jobless, whether or not they are highly educated, Bujumbura youth are paying the price for the major role they played in the campaign against the third term. At the height of the electoral crisis the authorities shut the University of Burundi in Bujumbura, in an attempt to prevent it becoming a centre of protest.⁵⁸ After the 11 December 2015 attack on military bases, the repression of young people in neighbourhoods considered to be opposition strongholds became brutal and indiscriminate, with the police treating all local youths as potential rebels.⁵⁹

The electoral crisis certainly disturbed the education system in Bujumbura in 2015,⁶⁰ but state violence was the most powerful factor behind the departure of

⁵⁴ Report, Commission d'enquête chargée de faire la lumière sur le mouvement insurrectionnel déclenché le 26 avril 2015 (Commission of inquiry into the insurrection of 26 April 2015), Burundian justice ministry, August 2015.

⁵⁵ Crisis Group interviews, entrepreneurs, Kigali and Bujumbura, February 2016. On the growth of corruption, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°185, *Burundi: A Deepening Corruption Crisis*, 21 March 2012. See also the analysis set out by the former second vice president of the Republic of Burundi, Gervais Rufyikiri, "Grand Corruption in Burundi: A Collective Action Problem which Poses Major Challenges for Governance Reforms", Institute of Development Policy and Management (IOB), University of Antwerp, March 2016.

⁵⁶ Interviews by Crisis Group researcher in a former capacity with experts on security matters, Bujumbura, February 2012.

⁵⁷ Crisis Group interviews, member of civil society and diplomat, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁵⁸ "Burundi: 500 étudiants chassés du campus de Bujumbura demandent protection à Washington", Agence France-Presse (AFP), 1 May 2015.

⁵⁹ Crisis Group interviews, members of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁶⁰ In 2015, in the capital, it was risky to walk to school and classes did not take place on a regular basis, either for security reasons or because teachers were absent. Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016.

young people. Many, like their families, felt trapped and hunted down in their local neighbourhoods, and moved elsewhere in the capital,⁶¹ while others concluded that the only guarantee of safety was to move abroad – which also offered the prospect of wider socio-economic opportunities and the chance to pursue their studies. The start of the last academic year at the University of Burundi exposed this haemorrhage, with a mere 1,900 new students showing up when 4,000 had been expected.⁶² Among urban youth facing unemployment, the ongoing crisis reinforces a feeling that there is no future in Burundi.

The current troubles expose the latent social crisis which has been affecting Bujumbura for several years now, with a particularly severe impact on young people.⁶³ The capital is the centre of the country's wealth,⁶⁴ but also socio-economic frustration and marginalisation. The campaign over the cost of living, and calls for a general strike just before the electoral crisis broke out in April 2015, voiced a complaint that many people shared in private: while erecting hotels in Bujumbura, government dignitaries have neglected the residents of the capital in favour of the rural electorate. The map of urban protest lays bare the fact that – contrary to regime claims – the common denominator of dissident neighbourhoods is not ethnicity⁶⁵ but high numbers of discontented young people short of work.⁶⁶ The additional economic shock caused by the current conflict – the flight of the middle class, the end of some economic activities, a slowdown in construction, and so on – has compounded this latent social crisis. The policy of imposing economic punishment on opposition neighbourhoods – notably through the closure of their markets and security forces extortion from traders – and cutbacks in social services in these areas serve only to exacerbate the antagonism between the capital and the regime.⁶⁷

2. A rift with the Tutsi community

Today, Burundi's Tutsi community is afraid. It worries that the position of its elites in the country's civil and military institutional structures will be challenged by a regime that is preparing to dismantle Arusha, while the police is dominated by former CNDD-FDD fighters.⁶⁸ But above all it is worried about the government's inflammatory talk of an alleged Tutsi threat and its apparent encouragement of a revenge

⁶¹ Over the past year, some 40,000 people have reportedly left opposition neighbourhoods. Musaga and Cibitoke, where opposition activity was at its strongest, appear to have lost between 20 and 30 per cent of their population. Even members of religious orders have had to leave these districts because of insecurity. Crisis Group interviews, member of civil society, humanitarian actor and senior religious figure, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁶² Crisis Group interview, teacher, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁶³ For a detailed analysis of the problems confronting Burundian youth and indicators pointing to the emerging crisis in the capital, see Peter Uvin, *Life after Violence: A People's Story of Burundi* (London, 2009).

⁶⁴ 80 per cent of the country's private sector companies are based in Bujumbura. "Burundi 2015", African Economic Outlook, p. 8.

⁶⁵ The government wanted people to think that the uprising was confined only to Tutsi dominated neighbourhoods, such as Musaga and Ngagara, pretending to be unaware of the mobilisation against a third term in Kanyosha, Bujumbura rural and so on.

⁶⁶ Medical students cannot find jobs in Burundi after completing their studies and almost all leave the country to work. Crisis Group interview, teacher, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁶⁷ "Mutakura: des militaires accusés de saccager des boutiques", *Iwacu*, 12 February 2016.

⁶⁸ The defiant attitude of the Tutsi community toward the police is not new. See Peter Uvin, *Life after Violence: A People's Story of Burundi*, op. cit., pp. 56-57.

fightback against the designated enemy – a theme that finds a strong echo in folk memories, in Burundi as in Rwanda.

Admittedly, the population seems to be resisting the attempt at radicalising the conflict along ethnic lines and there have not so far been any intercommunal clashes. On the contrary, solidarity was obvious between Tutsis and Hutus engaged in the struggle in Bujumbura in 2015: opposition to the third term and the public demonstrations were multi-ethnic, with activists from Hutu neighbourhoods helping activists in Tutsi districts, and vice-versa.⁶⁹

Despite this, the Tutsi community still feels persecuted and there is a widespread fear that the government plans a genocide.⁷⁰ Although they concede that the opposition is multi-ethnic in nature, some Tutsis stress the security forces' ethnic bias and double standard when it comes to cracking down on opponents. True or not, a story doing the rounds in Bujumbura is revelatory of the victim mindset of many Tutsis: two young protesters in the Cibitoke district, one Tutsi and the other Hutu, were arrested by the police, but while the Hutu was beaten up the Tutsi was killed.⁷¹

Already the solidarity forged in the mobilisation against the third term is fracturing: while some sceptics are re-evaluating the Arusha peace deal “which brought only an appearance of reconciliation between Burundians”,⁷² others henceforth avoid discussing such sensitive subjects with members of the other ethnic group.⁷³

3. A rift with the army

The FDD internal takeover of security institutions has undermined their legitimacy, particularly in the eyes of the Tutsi community. Tutsi police and military personnel find themselves marginalised within their own institutions. The “demography” of the military is also working against them: all of the generals who retired in 2015 were Tutsis, while those troops who originally served in the Burundian Armed Forces (*Forces armées burundaises*, FAB – the predominantly Tutsi pre-civil war army) are older than the combatants who were integrated into the military at the start of this century. Generally, they are not replaced by new Tutsi recruits when they retire.⁷⁴ The Tutsis' strong position in the army, which they regarded as a form of “life insurance”, is being jeopardised by the departure of the old ex-FAB officer corps.

Although this demographic evolution produces a natural rebalancing of the composition of the military, the government maintains a constant pressure to accentuate the trend. Tutsi officers and former FNL fighters also complain about differences in treatment, claiming that CNDD-FDD elements benefit from favouritism when it comes to promotions and rotating assignments to operations abroad.⁷⁵

Tutsi soldiers are also directly affected by the current crisis – and not only by the arrests that followed the May 2015 putsch attempt and the defections that have

⁶⁹ Crisis Group interviews, politician, Kigali, and members of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁷⁰ Crisis Group interviews, teachers, Bujumbura and Nairobi, May 2015. As an example of the thesis that a genocide is being prepared, see “Rwanda 1994, Burundi 2015?”, Rue89, 16 May 2015.

⁷¹ Crisis Group interviews, youths in the street, Bujumbura, February 2016. “Les jeunes Tutsis arrêtés sont rapidement tués au Burundi”, *La libre Belgique*, 26 February 2016.

⁷² Crisis Group interview, member of the security services, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁷³ Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Brussels, March 2016.

⁷⁴ Crisis Group interviews, members of the security service, Bujumbura and Nairobi, February 2016.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

punctuated 2015. Young Tutsi officers live in opposition neighbourhoods and thus find themselves front row witnesses to the repression. At the highest level of the state they are suspected of sympathising with the rebellion or even of complicity – and are therefore monitored by the military police and the intelligence services, while their homes are the targets of search raids.⁷⁶ Some soldiers have been arrested by the SNR or abducted. Moreover, after the May 2015 coup attempt, some units viewed as unreliable were posted away from the capital.⁷⁷ There have been few cases of resistance,⁷⁸ but some soldiers have left the army, while others have “taken shelter” by going on leave or joining missions abroad.⁷⁹

Some officers in the senior command structure fear that the poor image of the security forces – particularly following the recent discovery of mass graves and accusations that some members of the security forces are implicated – could lead Burundi’s army to be excluded from peacekeeping operations, which tend to offer good salaries.⁸⁰ That exacerbates inter-ethnic ill-feeling within the military, where the mood at general staff meetings is sometimes tense.⁸¹ The rift within the army, between ex-FAB personnel and pro-government units, has been most graphically demonstrated by a string of murders of senior officers from both camps.⁸² The killing on 22 March 2016 of the Muzinda base commander Darius Ikurakure at the army high command in central Bujumbura, sparked the arrest of several soldiers, while some senior officers reinforced their personal guards.⁸³ All the evidence suggests that the suspect – a soldier who managed to escape – had accomplices inside the forces.

⁷⁶ “We are going to punish severely every police who does not wish to obey the orders they are given; do not behave like soldiers – you are well aware of their current position”. The president of the Republic, addressing a meeting with police officers and non-commissioned officers in Kirembe municipality in Ngozi province on 2 December 2015. Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016. In the same vein, Pasteur Habimana claimed that through the May 2015 putsch attempt, Tutsi officers had demonstrated their rejection of democracy. <https://soundcloud.com/journ-burundi/aud-20160129-wa00331>.

⁷⁷ In particular, the 11th armoured battalion and the 121st parachute battalion.

⁷⁸ In Kanyosha a major refused to let the police search his house. Crisis Group interview, member of the security services, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ The military has some 25,000 men, of whom about 7,000 are deployed in two peacekeeping missions in Somalia – the larger troop contingent, 5,000 – and in the Central African Republic. Burundi has participated in the AMISOM operation since 2007 and many units have therefore served a tour in Somalia, benefitting from higher salary. Charles Ndayiziga, “Enjeux autour de l’intervention du Burundi en Somalie”, Africa Policy Brief, Institut d’Egmont, Bruxelles, November 2013. Crisis Group interviews, members of the security services, Bujumbura and Nairobi, February 2016. Three Burundian soldiers were expelled from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the UN refused to allow the Burundian military spokesperson to be posted to MINUSCA. “MINUSCA, les majors de la purge”, *Iwacu*, 12 February 2016.

⁸¹ “Grand malaise chez la grande muette”, *Iwacu*, 2 October 2015.

⁸² “Fears grow in Burundi as executions and desertions undermine army”, *The Guardian*, 29 April 2016.

⁸³ In this respect, 2015 was marked by the murders of General Adolphe Nishimirimana (CNDD-FDD) and the former armed forces chief of staff Jean Bikomagu (ex-FAB), as well as the attempt to assassinate the current armed forces Chief of Staff Prime Niyongabo. The commander of the Muzinda military base, killed on 22 March 2016, was well known for his role in the repression of Bujumbura’s northern neighbourhoods. One of his officers had been killed on 5 February in Cibitoke neighbourhood. On the very evening of the murder of the Muzinda camp commander, an ex-FAB soldier was also killed in Bujumbura. On 20 April, a colonel was executed in Bujumbura while on

Despite the defections and the killings, the government insists there is no unrest within the army – and yet it continues to remind soldiers of their duty to obey orders and takes steps to neutralise those it regards as potentially hostile. In mid-April, some 500 soldiers were quickly posted away from Bujumbura to provincial garrisons.⁸⁴

B. *An Emerging Social and Humanitarian Crisis*

Burundi is sinking deeper into poverty – and an extremely vulnerable population, in this UN classified “least developed” country, is suffering the consequences.⁸⁵ A social and humanitarian emergency now looms within Burundi itself, along with the refugee crisis gathering pace beyond its borders.

1. The economic and budgetary impact

Bujumbura’s urban economy is the first victim of this political crisis. The Burundian economy has a dual structure,⁸⁶ and formal activity, largely concentrated in the capital, particularly in the secondary and tertiary sectors, has been the first to feel the impact of the business slowdown. Commerce, the hotel sector and construction – the latter has been the engine of growth in the capital – are in the doldrums. So, for example, it no longer makes commercial sense for an individual trader to go to Kampala to buy stock; increasingly, traders club together to order supplies.⁸⁷ Similarly, oil imports have plunged from ten million litres per month to just six million.⁸⁸ All economic actors now expect activity to remain weak during 2016 and are consequently taking precautions – storing goods, cutting back on staff, etc.

Besides the fuel supply problem,⁸⁹ trade between Bujumbura and rural areas has been disrupted: the flow of agricultural products to the urban market is hampered by insecurity and prices are rising even while demand is declining.⁹⁰

his way home. “Col Buzubona’s death evidence of clear divisions in Burundi army”, *International Business Times*, 21 April 2016. “Deux officiers tués et un policier enlevé”, *Iwacu*, 23 March 2016. Rapport N°8, SOS-Torture/Burundi, op. cit. Crisis Group email interview, member of civil society, April 2016.

⁸⁴ Crisis Group email interviews, members of civil society and the security services, April 2016. “Pierre Nkurunziza: ne vous laissez pas distraire par les sollicitations politiciennes”, *Iwacu*, 30 March 2016; “Entretien exclusif avec le Général-Major Prime Niyongabo, chef d’état-major général des FDN [Force de défense nationale]”, *Iwacu*, 1 April 2016.

⁸⁵ Burundi sits in 184th place – out of 188 – in the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a life expectancy of 56 years; 82 out of every 1,000 children die before the age of five; 66.9 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Humanitarian response plan, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), March 2016.

⁸⁶ The majority of Burundi’s ten million people live from subsistence agriculture and are therefore largely outside the market economy. The Burundian export economy consists of only a few primary agricultural products (tea and coffee) and minerals (such as gold and tin) for which international markets are currently depressed. The country’s coffee output fell by 50 per cent between 2012 and 2015 and mineral exports are performing no better (gold exports fell from two tonnes in 2012 to 650 kilograms in 2014). Crisis Group interviews, diplomat and economist, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁸⁷ Crisis Group interview, trucker, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁸⁸ Crisis Group interview, economist, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁸⁹ In May, there was a shortage of fuel in Bujumbura and the government imposed restrictions on fuel distributors. Crisis Group email exchange, member of civil society, Bujumbura, May 2016.

⁹⁰ Crisis Group interviews, traders in “Siyoni” market, Bujumbura, February 2016.

The consequences of the 2016 austerity budget – some 18 per cent down on the 2015 budget –⁹¹ are becoming apparent: there has been no across-the-board increase in civil service salaries in 2016,⁹² while breakfast is no longer provided at the university and there are problems in catering for some schools and student boarding facilities;⁹³ the Central Bank is managing foreign currency reserves with great care,⁹⁴ and there are fears for the supply of fertiliser, medicines and so on.⁹⁵

The finance ministry's spokesperson has announced a projection of 3.5 per cent GDP growth in 2016.⁹⁶ However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts a 3.4 per cent decline in GDP for 2016, following the 4.1 per cent contraction seen in 2015.⁹⁷

Government revenues are falling and external aid is being reduced. Indeed, in response to the regime's more hard-line stance, the European Union (EU) has suspended budget support, while a number of individual European countries have put some of their aid on hold.⁹⁸ European donors have also changed the way they deliver aid, seeking to directly support beneficiaries without channelling funds through government agencies.⁹⁹

2. An inevitable deterioration in living conditions

Up to now, Burundi has not been facing a humanitarian emergency, but the UN and NGOs are preparing for this eventuality.¹⁰⁰ The humanitarian crisis is being exported, with 246,000 refugees in neighbouring countries – compared with 85,000 internally displaced persons. But both numbers are rising steadily. Moreover, the current political and security deadlock, with its social and economic consequences – including a reduction in basic services that were already inadequate for the levels of need – risks creating a social and humanitarian emergency within the country itself.

The most recent estimates suggest that 10 per cent of the population – ie, some 1.1 million people – are in need of the whole range of humanitarian assistance, be it protection or food aid. Bujumbura is seeing the emergence of problems typical of conflict zones, such as constraints on humanitarian access to opposition neighbourhoods, traumatised children and a rise in the number of rape cases. Meanwhile,

⁹¹ The budget of the education ministry is down by 27 per cent, that of the health ministry by 54 per cent. Humanitarian response plan, op. cit.

⁹² Article 22 of the 31 December 2015 law setting the general budget of the Republic of Burundi for 2016. Following this decision, the civil service unions told the government of their discontent. "Suppression des annales et primes: mise en place d'une équipe interministérielle de réflexion et de propositions", *Iwacu*, 21 March 2016.

⁹³ "Suppression du petit déjeuner à l'UB", *Burundi Eco*, 5 February 2016; "Retard de paiement des subsides, patience!", *Iwacu*, 5 February 2016.

⁹⁴ In February, the Central Bank had foreign exchange reserves amounting to two months' import cover and was prioritising payment for essential items such as fuel. Crisis Group interviews, economist and diplomat, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁹⁵ Crisis Group interviews, economist and entrepreneur, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁹⁶ "Un gap de 130 milliards de FBU dans les recettes de l'OBR, exercice 2015", *Iwacu*, 12 February 2016.

⁹⁷ See the IMF estimate, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2016. Crisis Group interviews, economist and diplomat, Bujumbura, February 2016.

⁹⁸ "Burundi: EU closes consultations under Article 96 of the Cotonou agreement", press release, Council of the EU, 14 March 2016.

⁹⁹ Crisis Group interviews, donors, Bujumbura and Brussels, February 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Crisis Group interview, humanitarian actor, Kigali, February 2015.

problems that have unfortunately long affected Burundi – such as malnutrition and seasonal epidemics – are likely to be amplified by the contraction in social services and budget cuts in the health sector.¹⁰¹ In Bujumbura the number of children suffering from severe malnutrition doubled between October and December 2015.¹⁰² Across the country, roads blocked by landslides during the last rainy season may not all get repaired. Also, the level of agricultural production in 2016 is uncertain, because fertiliser has become less available and urban consumer demand has declined. In this highly precarious context,¹⁰³ experts fear that a further worsening of the situation could tip the population into a food emergency.¹⁰⁴

Although it lives from subsistence agriculture, the rural population will not be exempt from these difficulties. The urban and agricultural economies are inter-related – which means that Bujumbura’s problems will have knock-on consequences for the rural areas that feed the city; and essential services for the rural population, such as basic health care, or fertiliser supply, could well be lacking. So the UN agencies and humanitarian organisations are currently reinforcing their presence in the country and trying to evaluate risks with regard to nutrition, health, and internal displacement.¹⁰⁵

C. *One Struggle – Multiple Opponents*

The rift that has opened up between the regime and different segments of Burundi’s population, combined with the deterioration in living conditions, have created various opposition movements since the 2015 electoral crisis. But these have not managed to come together under a single banner.

Indeed, the opposition is organised around one civilian platform and a number of armed groups. The National Council for the Respect of the Arusha accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi and of the Rule of Law (*Conseil national pour le respect de l’accord d’Arusha pour la paix et la réconciliation au Burundi et de l’Etat de droit*, CNARED) was established in July 2015 at the instigation of prominent personalities from the “Stop the third term” (*Halte au 3ème mandat*) campaign and the “Arusha Movement” (*Mouvement Arusha*). Chaired by Léonard Nyangoma and then Jean Minani,¹⁰⁶ it is the coalition of the exiled opposition that includes the main opposition movements – except the FNL – as well as two former presidents, members of civil society and the CNDD-FDD dissidents.¹⁰⁷ CNARED prioritises the defence of the Arusha accord, opposition to the third term and campaigning against the out-

¹⁰¹ Crisis Group telephone interview, humanitarian actor, April 2016. Humanitarian response plan, op. cit. Crisis Group interview, humanitarian actor, Bujumbura, February 2016.

¹⁰² It rose from 135 to 268. Burundi Humanitarian Situation Report, UNICEF, 30 January 2016.

¹⁰³ More than 35 per cent of Burundi’s population suffers from food insecurity and there have already been cases of speculation on food products. “Le sucre se raréfie”, *Iwacu*, 12 February 2016. Humanitarian response plan, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Crisis Group interviews, UN personnel and humanitarian actor, Bujumbura, February 2016.

¹⁰⁵ OCHA has just reopened an office in Bujumbura and emergency NGOs are reestablishing a local presence. Crisis Group interviews, UN personnel and humanitarian actors, Bujumbura, February 2016.

¹⁰⁶ “Cnared: Nyangoma éjecté malgré un bilan ‘positif’”, *Iwacu*, 4 May 2016.

¹⁰⁷ CNARED Constituent Act, Addis Ababa, 31 July 2015, and new constituent text, Brussels, 25 February 2016 (<http://cnared.info/wordpress/connaitre-le-cnared>). “Le CNARED à la croisée des chemins”, *Iwacu*, October-November 2015.

come of the 2015 election.¹⁰⁸ In this perspective it calls for the union of all groups opposing the third term and for a dialogue, with international mediation, to move Burundi to a transitional government and new elections. CNARED provides the exiled opposition with a single institutional identity, which enabled it to participate in the talks with the government organised by the president of Uganda in Kampala on 28 December 2015.

This multi-ethnic alliance has not so far established a high political profile, formalised a program or produced a vision of its own for Burundi's future. It mainly focuses on applying diplomatic pressure. CNARED's legalistic approach partly explains why it has not created a military wing; but it is also a sign of internal divisions between politicians who have armed groups and those who do not, politicians from the opposition and those formerly in the CNDD-FDD, longstanding and new opponents.¹⁰⁹

Hussein Radjabu has just walked out of CNARED, complaining that it is under the control of particular individuals.¹¹⁰ The FNL leader Agathon Rwasa remains the other main obstacle to opposition unity. Since the aftermath of the 2010 election, he has continued to steer a solo course: having kept his distance from the Alliance of Democrats for Change (*Alliance des démocrates pour le changement*, ADC)-Ikibiri, which attempted to reunite opposition factions after the 2010 elections, today he remains the only opposition politician still sitting in parliament with a handful of fellow deputies, having accepted the 2015 election results. This ambivalent stance undermines the logic and credibility of his anti-government positions¹¹¹ – and disconcerts opposition circles. Some feel that Rwasa is in fact discreetly campaigning against the regime from within the system. But others think his strategy plays into the government's hands and stress that he is unable to exercise any real influence over its actions, even though he earns a salary for his role in the state institutions.¹¹² Doubts about his ability to control his activists compound this lack of political clarity. Indeed, while some FNL activists in Bujumbura are active in the resistance against the regime, groups of FNL fighters based in South Kivu for the past few years appear to have become autonomous from the main movement.¹¹³

The wide range of armed groups illustrates the fragmentation of the opposition. Talks over the establishment of a unified command structure have reportedly failed and each group is now thought to maintain its own forces, their numbers swelled by

¹⁰⁸ Crisis Group interview, CNARED member, Brussels, November 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Crisis Group interviews, opposition members, Brussels, January 2016.

¹¹⁰ "Le Cnared se fissure", *Iwacu*, 16 May 2016.

¹¹¹ The FNL calls for an inter-Burundian dialogue with international mediation and condemns violence by the police. "Déclaration du parti FNL sur la nécessité urgente de relancer le dialogue inter-burundais sous la supervision des garants internationaux" (Declaration of the FNL party on the urgent necessity of relaunching the inter-Burundian dialogue under the supervision of international guarantors), press statement, FNL, 6 September 2015; and "Déclaration du parti FNL sur les opérations militaro-policières en cours à Bujumbura" (Declaration by the FNL party on military-political operations in Bujumbura), press statement, FNL, 15 November 2015.

¹¹² Crisis Group interviews, FNL member, Brussels, January 2016; opposition members, Kigali, February 2016.

¹¹³ The presence of FNL fighters in South Kivu goes back a long way. A group of dissidents commanded by Aloys Nzabampema went to South Kivu after Agathon Rwasa signed a ceasefire in 2008 and other fighters took refuge in the province after the 2010 elections. They have established themselves in the mid-altitude Uvira *plateaux* and in the Ubwari peninsula. Crisis Group telephone interview, UN, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), March 2016. Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016.

between 500 and 1,000 defections from the military.¹¹⁴ They include RED Tabara (Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi – *Résistance pour un Etat de droit au Burundi*), linked to the MSD, and the Republican Forces of Burundi (*Forces républicaines du Burundi*, FOREBU) led by the putschist General Godefroid Niyombare, which is military and essentially multi-ethnic in make-up, as well as the FNL and the Union of Revolutionary Patriots (*Union des patriotes pour la révolution*, UPR), the last of which emerged only in February 2016.¹¹⁵

The FNL and other armed movements slip into Burundi from South Kivu, often through the Ruzizi plain; the Congolese authorities have arrested some rebels.¹¹⁶ Rival claims of responsibility for attacks, and some denials, highlight the rivalries between these groups.¹¹⁷ Despite the circumstances, the opposition remains divided and its unification remains illusory.

Dispersed across several countries – a factor that complicates their strategy – the opposition groups are seeking diplomatic and even military support. Rwanda reportedly helped some dissidents to form an armed group during 2015. Although some sources insist that this assistance has ended, others say Rwanda continues to provide support.¹¹⁸

While it is difficult to pinpoint the responsibility of the various armed groups for each act of violence, several have claimed to have carried out particular attacks, notably against the security forces.

¹¹⁴ Crisis Group interviews, member of the security services and member of civil society, Bujumbura, February 2016.

¹¹⁵ Press statement, Karuzi, 11 February 2016.

¹¹⁶ “Est de la RDC: les autorités présentent 43 rebelles infiltrés”, AFP, 12 January 2016. “Uvira: la population dénonce la présence d’un groupe armé burundais”, Infos Grands Lacs, 16 January 2016. Crisis Group telephone interview, UN personnel, DRC, March 2016.

¹¹⁷ “Entretien exclusif avec Hussein Radjabu: je n’appartiens pas au FOREBU”, Infos Grands Lacs, 22 January 2016.

¹¹⁸ Crisis Group interview, European diplomat, May 2016. Report of the Group of Experts on DRC presented to the UN Security Council in February 2016 (www.reuters.com/article/us-burundi-rwanda-un-idUSKCN0VDo4K). “Asylum Betrayed: Recruitment of Burundian Refugees in Rwanda”, Refugees International, December 2015; “Rwanda aids Burundi rebels, North Korea arms Congo – UN experts”, Reuters, 12 May 2016.

IV. The Elusive but Indispensable Dialogue

At present, the Burundian crisis is caught in an impasse. The severe pressure security forces are exerting on opposition neighbourhoods and cosmetic conciliatory gestures by the government¹¹⁹ have created a deceptive façade of calm that conceals continued political repression and targeted killings.¹²⁰ Despite international pressure, it is proving difficult to get a dialogue between the Burundian government and the opposition underway. Both sides, entrenched in their positions, are playing for time. As the crisis deepens, neither the opposition nor the government is being significantly weakened, but the number of victims is rising steadily and the situation is getting worse.

The Burundian regime has embarked on a dangerous path of exclusion and radicalisation and should change course. To achieve its goals, it intends to crush all dissent and restructure the country's fragile political equilibrium – but can only do so by using force against its own population, a strategy for which the regime's senior personalities could one day be held to account. Those who are within the leadership of the regime, or close to it, should convince their colleagues that the current strategy is hugely destructive and could spiral out of their control, as has previously happened in Burundi's tragic history. The only way to avoid such a scenario is to engage in constructive dialogue, allow the media and civil society to work independently and free from fear and to revise its violent approach to political dissent.

The armed opposition has to realise that its declared determination to overthrow the government, and the use of targeted killings – in which it is thought to be involved (although this remains to be proved) – simply exacerbate the violence. The unarmed opposition in exile should take urgent steps to resolve internal disagreements, so that it can take up opportunities to engage in a constructive dialogue, by presenting a common front and clear positions.

The international community has already agreed on the need to relaunch dialogue and certainly must encourage the government and the opposition in Burundi to take part. These talks should address the issue at the heart of the current dispute: the institutional system established by the Arusha accord. Instead of the sham “national dialogue” currently underway, a discussion about amendments to the peace agreement should be organised. This debate did in fact start during the early 2014 attempt to revise the constitution, but never reached a conclusion. It should take place in Burundi, but that would require the government to lift current restrictions on civil liberties (freedom of expression, press and assembly, etc.) and create an environment in which the opposition could return from exile. Before these preconditions are met, a discussion between the opposition and the government on the future of the Arusha accord should take place outside the country, under the aegis of the guarantors of the agreement. At the meeting planned on 21 May, the latter should set the terms of reference for these talks and propose the establishment of a working

¹¹⁹ As a gesture of goodwill before a series of international visits, the government authorised the reopening of two radio stations and an NGO, freed some detainees and cancelled international warrants for the arrest of individuals suspected of taking part in the May 2015 coup attempt, including fifteen exiled politicians.

¹²⁰ “Burundi opposition leader arrested: family”, AFP, 9 March 2016; “16 militants du FNL pro-Rwasa sous les verrous”, *Iwacu*, 23 March 2016.

group comprising the CNARED, FNL and CNDD-FDD, tasked with discussing the future of the Arusha peace agreement.

To provide effective support for such an initiative, international actors must first of all improve their own coordination – whose flaws were exposed during the recent mediation attempts. Some members of the UN Security Council, like the U.S. and UK, made plain their opposition to the regime back in 2015. And throughout last year, African powers expressed concern at the deteriorating situation.¹²¹ Following the November and December 2015 wave of tit-for-tat killings – notably a 13 December attack on military bases and its bloody repercussions – and upsurge in the rhetorical evocation of ethnic themes, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) announced plans to authorise the deployment to Burundi of an AU force, the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (*Mission africaine de prévention et de protection au Burundi*, Maprobu). The Council suggested that the AU summit should override the Burundian government if it refused to accept this.¹²²

Certain members of the AU Commission, backed by member states keen to see the Union take decisive measures in the event of mass violence, supported taking such an audacious stance. The hope was that this would bring the government back to the negotiation table. But after the Burundian government declared in mid-December that it would not accept such a deployment, the proposal was dropped at the AU's summit on 30-31 January 2016. This retreat reflected both member states' reluctance to intervene in a country against its president's will and their hopes that the situation could stabilise without resort to force. It was also born of the practical difficulties entailed in establishing a force. Some member states also sympathised with the government of Burundi, which tried to pin the blame for the current situation on Rwanda – a line of argument that played well with that country's adversaries in Africa.¹²³

A lack of interest from the East African Community's mediator in 2016 created a vacuum in mediation, which was filled by a plethora of non-coordinated and sometimes contradictory interventions, a situation that worked to the great advantage of the Burundian government.¹²⁴ Instead of pursuing assorted individual approaches, international actors should formalise a single international mediation structure in order to speak with one voice.¹²⁵

Moreover, the donors who have suspended part of their aid should:

- Contribute financially to monitoring the language used by government and opposition to fight attempts at ethnic polarisation. Burundian NGOs, with the assistance of some donors, have already begun doing this, but they require further assistance, specifically to cover speeches by local authorities in the provinces.

¹²¹ See, for example, “L’Union africaine réitère sa préoccupation face à la situation au Burundi”, press statement, African Union Commission, 4 December 2015.

¹²² Press release of the 565th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the AU on the situation in Burundi, Addis Ababa, 17 December 2015.

¹²³ Crisis Group interview, senior international official close to the dossier, Addis Ababa, April 2016.

¹²⁴ Since the start of 2016, Burundi has been visited by the following: the UN Security Council, the Secretary General of the UN, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, a delegation of five African presidents sent by the AU, the facilitator appointed by the EAC (Benjamin Mkapa), religious leaders and numerous special envoys. However, the EAC mediator, the president of Uganda, has not travelled to Bujumbura this year.

¹²⁵ “Burundi: Time for Tough Messages”, Statement, Crisis Group, 24 February 2016.

Financial assistance for the documentation of human rights abuses should also be sustained and increased.

- ❑ Verify the political neutrality and technical reliability of non-governmental actors in the context of changing the terms of aid provision. This requires a rigorous political and operational assessment of these actors. For some of them, a partnership with international NGOs and a strengthening of their financial and managerial capacities will be needed.
- ❑ Fund monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the status of food security and sanitation, and conduct budgetary studies to identify the breaking point of key health and agricultural sectors in order to calibrate the financial support they need. Donors should ensure financing changes to their programs do not result in the interruption of all ongoing funding.
- ❑ Create a committee to monitor the Burundian economy, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and the International Monetary Fund.
- ❑ Make available funds for the humanitarian response plan, which remains underfunded.

The EU and bilateral partners should expand sanctions regimes to include those propagating hate speech or inciting ethnic discrimination.¹²⁶ They should also demand an end to the prosecution of journalists and the media. Although cautious in scope, there have been some signs of opening that need to be encouraged: the radio stations Isanganiro and Rema FM have reopened and the new president of the National Communications Council has held a meeting with exiled journalists in Brussels.¹²⁷ While international actors cannot themselves foster the emergence of a pluralistic media environment in Burundi, they should provide financial support for the Burundian media that have been set up in exile and encourage meetings between them and the authorities.

International and Burundian NGOs that were involved in local conflict resolution before the current crisis and have local mediation structures in place should reorient the work of these structures on documenting human rights abuses and hate speech at the local level.

The EU and AU are in the process of agreeing changes to the financing arrangements for AMISOM, to bypass the government and disburse funds directly to the soldiers.¹²⁸ Because soldiers on peacekeeping missions all have bank accounts they should be paid by direct bank transfer. The AU and its partners should also look for another troop contributor country, to eventually replace Burundian soldiers within AMISOM in order to prevent the government from participation in the mission as diplomatic leverage.

¹²⁶ Sanctions against those responsible for violence (freezing bank accounts and visa bans) have been taken by multilateral organisations and some countries. “Burundi: the EU adopts sanctions against four individuals”, press statement, Council of the EU, 1 October 2015.

¹²⁷ “Les médias burundais au cœur de la crise”, press statement, Burundian media Round Table, Brussels, 24 March 2016.

¹²⁸ As Crisis Group recommended in February 2016. “Burundi: le temps des messages forts”, op. cit. See “EU takes aim where it hurts Burundi – peacekeeper funding”, Reuters, 29 March 2016.

The several dozen AU observers currently in Burundi – whose modus operandi is reportedly the subject of negotiation between Bujumbura and the AU – have no visible profile on the ground. But the AU and UN should pool their resources to deploy a significant number of international human rights observers and armed police – to deter both the security forces and armed opposition from engaging in violence. The two organisations should redouble their diplomatic efforts to persuade the government to accept such an international presence. The UN has forces just a few dozen kilometres from Bujumbura and should be ready to intervene rapidly to stop any bloodbath if there is an escalation in violence. It should therefore take necessary measures so that a rapid deployment force can be dispatched to Burundi in case of emergency, which could include troops from the UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (*Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo*, MONUSCO).

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees and NGOs should put in place a rigorous monitoring of refugee camps located in neighbouring countries, where the armed opposition is reported to recruit fighters.

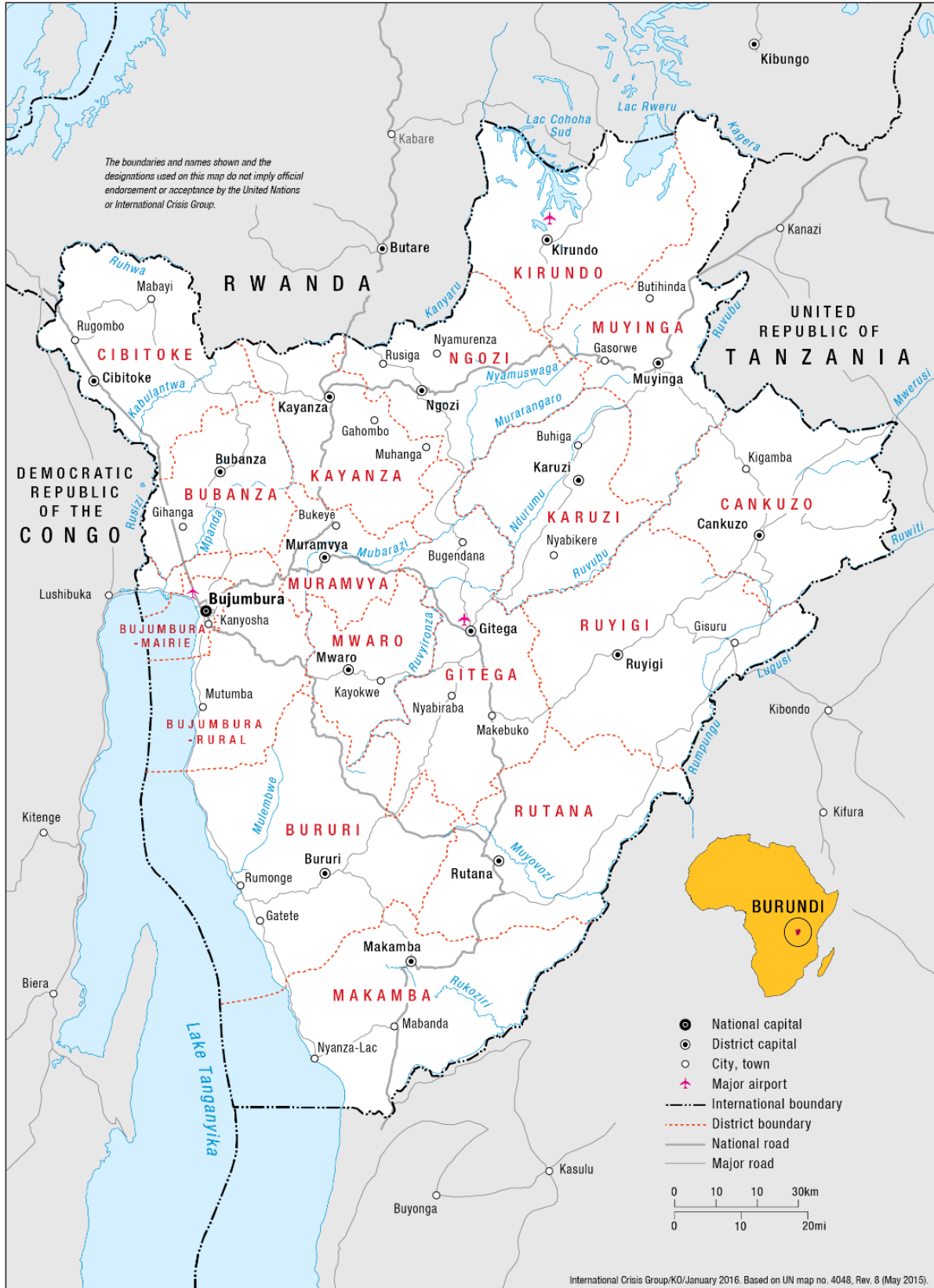
V. Conclusion

The future is uncertain. A sharp and dramatic escalation in violence is possible – or a low intensity guerrilla conflict could continue for years, with the potential to gather momentum. The compromise Arusha settlement, pursued for such a long time and painstakingly negotiated, has not resolved the ethnic question, yet has at least managed to de-dramatise it. However, the consolidation of power by a party that, fundamentally, has never believed in the deal, could lead to a unilateral rejection of the Arusha process, against the wishes of an important section of Burundi's population.

At the heart of the present confrontation lies the following political question: “Should the institutional system established by Arusha be changed or not?” But the answer is less important than the way this response will be solved. A resort to force serves only to counter violence with violence, revive ethnic antagonism and drag Burundi into the past. A democratic debate could open the door to the elaboration of a new post-Arusha consensus and lead Burundi toward a lasting peace.

Nairobi/Brussels, 20 May 2016

Appendix A: Map of Burundi



Appendix B: List of Acronyms

CNDD-FDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy – <i>Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces de défense de la démocratie</i>
AU	African Union
EAC	East African Community
EU	European Union
CNARED	National Council for the Respect of the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi and of the Rule of Law – <i>Conseil national pour le respect de l'accord d'Arusha pour la paix et la réconciliation au Burundi et de l'Etat de droit</i>
FNL	National Liberation Forces – <i>Forces nationales de libération</i>
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
FDD	Forces for the Defence of Democracy – <i>Forces de défense de la démocratie</i>
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – <i>Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo</i>
Frodebu	Front for Democracy in Burundi – <i>Front pour la démocratie au Burundi</i>
SNR	National Intelligence Service – <i>Service national de renseignement</i>
UPRONA	Union for National Progress – <i>Union pour le progrès national</i>
RFI	<i>Radio France Internationale</i>
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
MSD	Movement for Solidarity and Democracy – <i>Mouvement pour la solidarité et la démocratie</i>
IOB	Institute of Development Policy and Management
AFP	<i>Agence France-Presse</i>
FAB	Burundian Armed Forces – <i>Forces armées burundaises</i>
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic – <i>Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République centrafricaine</i>
FDN	National Defence Force – <i>Force de défense nationale</i>
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ADC	Alliance of Democrats for Change – <i>Alliance des démocrates pour le changement</i>
RED Tabara	Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi – <i>Résistance pour un Etat de droit au Burundi</i>
FOREBU	Burundi Republican Forces – <i>Forces républicaines du Burundi</i>
UPR	Union of Patriots for the Revolution – <i>Union des patriotes pour la révolution</i>
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
Maprobu	African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi – <i>Mission africaine de prévention et de protection au Burundi</i>
PSC	Peace and Security Council [of the African Union]