Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI)
Peace Operations Estimate – Burundi Crisis (2015-Present)
(updated 28 March 2017)

**Burundi Crisis (2015-Present) Executive Summary**

Only two years ago, many observers considered Burundi a successful model of a modern democratic nation in Africa.

*Burundi received several awards in the past ten years, to include but not limited to: a peace award from the U.N. Commission on Peace Consolidation in Burundi in 2007; the Model Leader for a New Africa Award in 2009 from the African Forum on Religion and Government; and the Rising Star of Africa Award in 2010 from the Unity International Foundation.*

However, in the spring of 2015, President Pierre Nkurunziza announced his intention to campaign for a third-term (five years) in office, which spurred the conflict of the past two years. The discord, which rapidly devolved from peaceful demonstrations to violence, is predominately polarized between the supporters of the President and a disjointed, multi-faceted opposition. The opposition believes the President’s third term to be a violation of both their Constitution and the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, 2000. In contrast, President Nkurunziza believes he did not violated either tenet, arguing that his first term was based on the Burundi Parliament’s selection and not obtained in a general election. Therefore, he considers his first term does not count towards the two-term limitation of the Constitution.

While the current crisis may have started as a political disagreement, the regime’s “ethnically charged rhetoric,” coupled with actions of both government uniformed agents and “insurgents,” appears to be setting up Burundi for its next civil war. In July 2016, the United Nations (UN) Security Council authorized a UN police force to deploy to Burundi and assist in averting civil war, but the Burundi government remains suspicious of the UN’s interests and unaccepting of the UN’s assistance. In early 2017, the former president of Tanzania, as the East African Community (EAC) representative, planned to host a forum for all parties to the discord (Inter-Burundian dialogue), but President Nkurunziza directed that Burundi would not attend due to the presence of the UN representative. In response, the UN Secretary-General indicated the UN would continue to support the peaceful resolution of the political stalemate, and “The fact that the crisis in Burundi has not so far escalated into a full-blown armed conflict is not an indicator that the worst has been averted.” Major considerations are:
In January 2017, one analysis suggested that Burundi is the most likely country to suffer a coup d'etat in this year. A number of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)—mostly focused on civil or human rights—have been banned by the Burundi government and the remaining NGOs must transfer funds of foreign origin through the Burundian central bank. In addition, the Burundi crisis has the markings of a genocide in the making, with wider regional implications. The recovery of mutilated corpses, where neither victims nor suspected perpetrators can be identified, has increased in the past year. Refugees (currently estimated over 265,000) are fleeing the violence to other Great Lakes Region countries (Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Democratic Republic of Congo, or DRC) that still have their own domestic governance and security challenges. As an example, the DRC, recovering from the M23 rebellion and still addressing other armed opposition groups, shares a large and porous land border with Burundi. Many of the neighboring countries share economic agreements which are—or will be—significantly impacted by continued violence within one of their trading partners. Conversely, the upcoming national elections in neighboring countries (DRC and Rwanda) are likely to create additional conflict that will roll back into Burundi (both current presidents are proposing to campaign for additional terms of office that are not in accordance with their nations’ Constitutions). Despite these challenges—and the Government’s obvious use of “ethnic incitement”—opposition appears to “cross-cut” ethnic rifts. Perhaps because most of the violence appears to be systematically administered, largely by the government forces and their aligned militias.

The July 2016, the United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC) authorized deployment of a UN police contingent of 228 police officers to Burundi has yet to deploy. Intended to monitor human rights and the security situation in its capital city for an initial period of one year (a significant reduction from the April 2016 proposal of 3K UN police), the Burundi government continues to reject the deployment. The Burundi government representative accused the UN of authorizing the force without its consent, thereby violating its sovereignty. A separate deployment of 200 observers from the African Union (AU) and military experts was allowed by Burundi (a reduction from the December 2015 proposal of 5K peacekeepers to serve as African Protection and Prevention Mission in Burundi, or MAPROBU), but it was not deployed.

Burundi is a Troop Contributing Country (TCC) for both UN and AU missions. It is currently the second largest TCC in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with over 5,000 troops in the field. At the same time, it contributes over 1,000 troops or police to various UN missions, mostly within the African continent [but also a small police contingent in Haiti (MINSUTAH)]. Burundi’s rationales for contributing in international peacekeeping indicate an understanding of the various domestic benefits derived from mission participation. While Burundi’s senior military personnel have held significant international leader roles, some individual peacekeepers are accused of sexual abuse in Central African Republic (MINUSCA) as well as AMISOM. In part due to its involvement in the peace operations, the Burundi armed forces were generally perceived as neutral in the political crisis of the past two years, with the exception of a coup attempt in May 2015. However, subsequent assassinations of senior military members and reported ill-treatment of returning peacekeepers may be heralds to a military with divided loyalties.

Mission Overview

1. Background. Since its independence in 1962, Burundi’s domestic social and political tensions have primarily been between the dominant Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority. President Pierre Nkurunziza self-identifies as a Hutu (the ethnic majority in Burundi); however, his mother was a Tutsi. During the last civil war (following the assassination of the first democratically elected president in 2001), he was the leader of the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD), the Hutu rebel outfit, in battles against the Tutsi-dominated Burundi army. He was elected to his first term as President in 2005 by the Burundi
Parliament as part of a transition government as outlined in the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, 2000. He won a general election in 2010, and soon enacted legislation that appeared to target journalists and other civil society leaders and organizations. More legislation in 2013 and 2014 further limited public gatherings and other political and public freedoms. He won his controversial July 2015 election with reportedly 70% of the vote (the opposition boycotted the election based on fraud complaints) and subsequent confirmation by the country’s Supreme Court.

There has been a series of UN operations in Burundi since its independence from Belgium in 1962. In the past ten years, there have been four major UN missions:

- In 2005—during President Nkurunziza’s first election to his office by the Burundi Parliament — the UN Operations (ONUB) organized polls in the context of the country emerging from conflict. At its peak, the mission included 5,665 total uniformed personnel, with a commensurate complement of civilian staff and volunteers.

- The United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) was established by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1719 (2006) of 25 October 2006. BINUB’s purpose was to assist Burundian Government efforts towards peace and stability, through coherent and coordinated response of the UN system in Burundi under the chairmanship of the Executive Representative of the UN Secretary-General. BINUB was also mandated to promote and protect women’s rights and ensure gender mainstreaming. It was extended to 31 December 2008, and again every year until December 2010, to assist the “Government of Burundi to take the necessary measures to create an environment conducive to the holding of free, fair and peaceful elections in 2010.” Elections conducted that year ranged from the communal to the national level, with a record representation of women in public office -- over a third of elected officials and almost half of the government ministers.

- The United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) was established in December 2010, following the re-election of President Nkurunziza in 2010, as a scaled-down operation to replace the BINUB. UNSCR 1959 (2010), charged BNUB with core tasks of reconciliation, equitable economic growth and effective institutions. BNUB was mandated for one year initially, but was extended twice. According to the BNUB’s own website, it “facilitated dialogue between the Government and the extra-parliamentary opposition, and helped the Government of Burundi to professionalize its security forces. Working with the civil society, BNUB promoted the respect of human rights and prepared for the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms.” It was considered completed in December 2013 and any residual responsibilities were transferred to the UN Development Assistance Framework (Country Team for Burundi).

- The United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB) was authorized by UNSCR 2137 (2014), beginning 1 January 2015, at the request of the Burundi government, in order to report on the electoral process for the summer 2015 election season. However, President Nkurunziza’s decision to campaign for the disputed third term challenged the mission and its focus as protests and violent demonstrations occurred prior to, and after, the day of the election. (As example, an attempted coup occurred in May 2015). While the election day itself remained relatively peaceful, the UN reported that the overall environment was “not conducive” to an inclusive, free and credible process. MENUB concluded its mandate on 18 November and its operations closed on 31 December 2015.

Since the closure of MENUB, the UN’s Department of Political Affairs monitors Burundi. In November 2015, Jamal Benomar became Special Adviser for Conflict Prevention and is in Burundi with a team to work with the Government. While the UN’s Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) also still monitors Burundi,
its last official action appears to have been the Chair’s Summary of the Informal Burundi Configuration Meeting of 13 July 2016, just prior to UNSCR 2303 (2016).

2. Mandate. In July 2016, UNSCR 2303 (2016) established a police officer component in Burundi for one year to monitor the security situation and to support the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Burundi continues to reject this mandate at this time.

The resolution authorized a ceiling of 228 United Nations individual police officers for the component, to be deployed in the capital city of Bujumbura and throughout Burundi. The UNSCR also specifies:

- All parties to cease and reject violence;
- The Government to respect and guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms for all;
- All stakeholders to cooperate fully with the East African Community-led, African Union-endorsed mediator and facilitator for an inclusive and genuine inter-Burundian dialogue; and
- The Secretary-General strengthen the Office of the Special Adviser for Conflict Prevention by substantially increasing the number of political officers in Burundi.

The mandate does not address Protection of Civilians issues.

3. Deployment. There are no UN troops or police deployed in Burundi at this time. It is unclear if there are any other international organization monitors or forces deployed (such as the AU or the EAC).

4. Casualties. There is no current UN peacekeeping or police mission in Burundi, so there have not been any causalities to peacekeepers in recent years. However, ONUB experienced the deaths of 24 mission members (of which 21 were military) in its two years of existence (2004-2006). The number of UN peacekeeper fatalities is steadily rising across all current missions. The most accepted reason for this growth is that UN members are deliberately targeted by increasingly capable armed groups. However, the rise in fatalities may also correspond to significant growth to the overall numbers of peacekeepers, combined with the ever more risky environments in which they are deployed. In fact, a recent UN casualties analysis suggests exactly this point—that “overall UN fatalities are not substantially on the rise” once data is controlled for deployment numbers. Instead, “total fatality ratios for the period 1990–2011 are declining…for all three levels: the national contingent, UN mission, and global levels.”

Situation

5. Drivers of Conflict. One report observed the political crisis of the past two years is—

...not the only factor behind the seething discontent and endemic fighting in this Great Lakes country. A history of government intransigence, a lack of will on the part of both government and the opposition to negotiate, a severely repressive regime and the apparent inability of international and regional agencies to intervene successfully all add up to an intractable situation.

The political conflict in Burundi has colonial and ethnic roots, just as those found in other African countries in the region. In fact, Burundi’s ethnic history reflects the history of its neighbor, Rwanda. The two countries share the same dominant ethnic groups, Hutus and Tutsis. In the 1990s, the oppressive Hutus massacred the Tutsis in Rwanda, while in Burundi, the Tutsis massacred the Hutus.

The most recent Burundi civil war concluded with Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, 2000, and implemented in 2005, with the election of the current President. The peace agreement created a power-sharing deal for political institutions—some of which were born out of opposition armed
groups. The agreement also integrated the various rebel groups into the state military, using an ethnic quota system to ensure more balanced representation.

The current political crisis—which includes increasingly violent actions—began with the current President’s announcement of intention to run for a third term, in violation of the 2000 peace accords and the Burundi constitution. However, there had been indications of this intent since his 2010 election win. Since then, his ruling party—the National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD)—have enacted legislation to limit opposition activities and liberty through violence intended to intimidate and suppress.

Some observers note that the Arusha Agreement, facilitated and signed with the late South African President Nelson Mandela, did not address the root of the conflict, suggesting:

The agreement was not really a peace agreement, it was a deal between the government and political parties…and it urged armed groups, which did not initially sign it, to suspend hostilities and negotiate a ceasefire. It was a manifesto for a possible return to peace, including long passages on how to re-organise [sic] the security forces, which had been responsible for much of the violence in the 1990s. It included a commitment to tackle the conflict’s root causes, which the agreement presciently noted were “fundamentally political” and “stem from a struggle by the political class to accede to and/or remain in power”.

Recently, the Burundi Senate released a circular requiring every government office and public enterprise to apply ethnic classifications to its employees. The Senate indicated in its circular that this new requirement is expected under the Arusha Agreement. However, human rights groups believe this to be false. Instead, it appears to these groups the Senate is creating conditions to enable a potential purge of government workers by ethnicity and tribe. Also in 2016, government security forces have used “household books” (cahiers de ménage) to monitor population movements. Usually used to maintain a local census, heads of households must register all persons in residence. Since January 2016, “the presence in a home of a person whose name is not in the book for that household is deemed sufficient grounds to trigger an arbitrary arrest.”

Further, Burundi remains one of the three “poorest” countries in the world. Food insecurity, urbanization, and economic stagnation have impact on Burundi’s people, especially the youth. A study conducted in March 2015, “documented high levels of concerns among the youth and general public about the relationship between youth unemployment, a perceived increase in criminality, and the risk of manipulation of young people by political actors. A majority of the population—particularly in the capital, Bujumbura—reported not feeling safe to move about their own community.”

6. Significant Events.

a. Recent Events.

- **13 March 2017**. The UNSC noted the Secretary-General’s February report with the following statement, in part:

  …expressed their deep concern over the political situation, the lack of progress in implementing resolution 2303 (2016) and the lack of engagement by the Government of Burundi in that regard…were alarmed by the increasing numbers of refugees leaving the country and disturbed by reports of torture, forced disappearances and killings…urged the Government of Burundi to reengage with international partners…reiterated their regret at the decision by Burundi to suspend all cooperation and collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR)…called on the Government and the African Union to sign without further delay the memorandum of understanding, which will allow the African Union human rights observers and military experts to fully operate in the country in
fulfilment of their mandated responsibilities… noted that a number of bilateral and multilateral partners have suspended their financial and technical assistance to the Government of Burundi… called on States in the region to contribute to a solution to the crisis in Burundi, and to refrain from supporting the activities of armed movements in any way…

- **9 March 2017.** The UNSC heard details that contributed to the Secretary-General’s February report on Burundi, suggesting:

The political crisis in Burundi continued to deepen amid serious human rights violations, mass displacements of people and economic degradation… that any attempt by President Pierre Nkurunziza to seek a fourth term risked undermining collective efforts to find a sustainable solution… concern over the worsening human rights situation there… documented allegations of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and forced disappearances, as well as cases of torture and ill-treatment… more than 210 cases of enforced disappearance between October 2016 and January 2017. Many lived in fear of the Imbonerakure, the ruling party’s youth militia… people needing assistance in 2016 had reached 3 million — or 26 per cent of the population — and there had been a four-fold increase in the number of those who were food insecure. Some 8.2 million people — or 75 per cent of the population — were affected by malaria… almost 390,000 Burundians had fled the country since the start of the crisis.

- **23 February 2017.** Secretary-General submitted his report on Burundi, highlighting that “the key elements of resolution 2303 (2016) remain unimplemented, namely, the increase in the human rights monitoring capacity in the country, support for the inter-Burundian dialogue, the swift implementation of the strengthening of the Office of the Special Adviser, and the establishment of a United Nations police component in Burundi and ensuring its progressive deployment.”

- **20 February 2017.** Burundi rotated a battalion in support of the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM), signaling the end of the salary dispute with the AU that began with the European Union, or EU, 2016 decision to reduce their contributions to peacekeeper funding and cease channeling payments through the Government of Burundi.

- **27 January 2017.** A communiqué released by the guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region expressed “the full support of the guarantors for the East African Community facilitation (for Burundi).”

- **5 January 2017.** The Government of Burundi banned “the country’s oldest human rights group” (ITEKA League) for “sowing hatred and division within the Burundian community.” It was among several that were banned at the time.

- **5 December 2016.** The UN completed its internal investigation into allegations of sexual abuse against Burundian and Gabonese peacekeepers deployed in MINUSCA.

- **November-December 2016.** Several government officials were attacked by unknown people. Although multiple suspects were arrested, motivations for the attacks are unclear.

- **15 November 2016.** The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Burundian Human Rights League (ITEKA) issued a report indicating the Burundian government’s actions of 2016 “heralds a new intensification of repression and crimes against citizens who are considered hostile to the regime.”

- **11 November 2016.** The AU rejects the EU decision “to differentiate the payment procedure of the contingent of Burundian forces from that of other contingents deployed in… AMISOM.”

- **9 November 2016.** President Obama extended actions against Burundi to include sanctions against four Burundians (namely Alain-Guillaume Bunyoni, Minister of Public Safety; Godefroid Bizimana, deputy director general of the National Police; General Godefroid Niyombare who was head of the failed coup of May 2016; and Cyrille Ndayirukiye, former Minister of Defense) while the Burundian government applauded the election of presidential candidate Trump and the United Nations Special Advisor on Conflict Prevention met with the Government of Burundi to implement the deployment of unarmed UN police officers.

12 October 2016. The Burundian authorities adopted a law to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC) in one year.

15 September 2016. The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect issued a report on Burundi, expressing grave concern of “a serious risk of mass atrocity crimes in Burundi as a result of targeted killings, including the assassination of political activists and military officials, widespread violations of human rights and ongoing clashes between the security forces and armed elements of the opposition.”

24 August 2016. UN Special Adviser Dieng issued a statement deploring remarks by Pascal Nyabenda, former leader of the Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD), that could potentially “inflame ethnic tensions, both within Burundi and outside its borders,” and condemning ongoing human rights violations.

30 July 2016. The Burundi government organized a march in Bujumbura to protest the UN resolution; announced rejection of proposed UN police force deployment.

29 July 2016. UNSCR authorized deployment of up to 228 UN police to monitor security and human rights in Burundi for one year.

13 July 2016. Unidentified assailants shot dead Burundian member of East African Parliament Hafsa Mossi, recently critical of regime (other military leaders assassinated, several journalists and civil sector leaders are “disappeared”).

8 July 2016. UN report accuses that Burundian peacekeepers in CAR under investigation for sexual abuses.

29 June 2016. UN Committee against Torture report denounces regime’s abuses.

May 2016. UNICEF secured the release of 60 boys from prison that Government of Burundi forces detained as members of non-state armed groups.

April 2016. The ICC launched a preliminary examination “on acts of killing, imprisonment, torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence, as well as cases of enforced disappearances that have been allegedly committed since April 2015 in Burundi.”


b. Upcoming Events


Operational Environment (GPMESII)

7. Geographic. Burundi occupies an area slightly smaller than the State of Maryland. It is land-locked and borders three countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania. It has an equatorial climate: high plateau with considerable altitude variation; average annual temperature varies with altitude but is generally moderate; two wet seasons (February to May and September to November), and two dry seasons (June to August and December to January).

Its terrain is hilly and mountainous, dropping to a plateau in the east. It enjoys several mineral resources, but its land is almost ¾ in agricultural use. Its current land use issues include soil erosion as a result of overgrazing and the expansion of agriculture into marginal lands; deforestation (little forested land remains because of uncontrolled cutting of trees for fuel); and habitat loss which threatens wildlife populations.
8. Political. The 2000 Arusha Agreements and the subsequent Burundi constitution are unique in Africa in that they established ethnic quotas for Hutus and Tutsis within the parliament, presidency, security institutions, and the civil service. They also represented a larger, national consensus for peace: “Through thousands of grassroots dialogues, radio call-in shows, trauma healing, and truth-telling activities, women and men expressed their will to move beyond violence.” However, while Burundi garnered some international respect as a model for post-civil war reconstruction and as a participant in international peace missions, there was little corresponding domestic “peace dividend,” in part due to endemic public service corruption and patronage.

Currently, Burundi has a multi-party system, with two or three strong parties and another party that is electorally successful. Parties are generally based on ethnic background, either Hutu or Tutsi. Over 30 named parties do not have representation in Parliament. Most of the main parties were derived from previously armed rebel or insurgent groups, such as the leading party (headed by the current President), the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie, CNDD-FDD).

Ongoing attempts to mediate the current crisis have not been successful for a variety of reasons, but predominately over the determination of which political parties and their representatives may be included in the dialogue. As an example, government representatives refuse to include representatives of the opposition alliance known as National Council for the Restoration of Arusha Agreement and Rule of Law, or CNARED, although it is recognized by the African Union and regional governments as the government’s dialogue partner. (CNARED includes armed groups under its umbrella.)

The National Commission for Inter-Burundi Dialogue [Commission nationale du dialogue Inter-burundais (CNDI)] was established by presidential decree on 23 September 2015 in response to pressure by the international community for Burundi to have a forum for political and ethnic dispute resolution. Instead, the CNDI appeared to focus on undermining the Arusha agreement, as well as using anti-Tutsi language of “hatred and violence.” Commission gatherings reflect CNDD-FDD’s basic ideology: extermination of the opposition, and victimization of the Hutu to justify repression against the Tutsi, authoritarianism and legitimization of State violence. Regardless of its detractors, the Commission continued its work throughout 2016 and neared “completion” in early 2017. However, observers noted the Commission’s interim report:

…reached a number of conclusions that could undermine the Arusha Agreement — notably, that the majority of citizens demanded an end to presidential term limits and favoured [sic] amendment of the Constitution. Opposition leaders and civil society groups had expressed concern that the process was not inclusive, but rather, controlled by the Government and intended to produce a predetermined outcome.

Also the report recommended: “…proposing new guidelines for monitoring NGOs and civil society organizations, and altering the Arusha provisions for power sharing, participation, and representation.” The ruling CNDD/FDD’s unease with the Arusha Accords predates the current crisis. As long ago as
2000, many in the ruling party believed the provisions for minority overrepresentation were unfair and the rules on ethnic balancing (60 percent Hutu/40 percent Tutsi in the civil service and 50/50 in the security sector) are outdated.

9. Military/Security. The recent political crisis has divided Burundi’s security forces and the army, with some reports of attacks of police against the army and vice versa.

a. State Armed Groups.

National Defense Forces (Forces de Defense Nationale, FDN). The FDN includes a maritime and air wing, with a national Gendarmerie established in 2013. Military service is voluntary, with none under 18 recruited. The army’s professionalism improved in the past decade or more due to the international training and participation in peace missions. Until this past year, the army was perceived as “a multiethnic, apolitical body upholding the constitution and not any given political party.”

Burundi is currently the 2d largest Troop Contributing Country (TCC) involved in AMISOM (approximately 5,400 soldiers), the AU mission mandated to support the Federal Government of Somalia in defeating the militant group Al-Shabaab. There are estimates indicating Burundi has suffered approximately 3,000 Burundian fatalities to date in AMISOM. Their tasks include medical and other humanitarian responsibilities as well as security.

It is the 20th largest African TCC in UN peace operations, to include: MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MINUSTAH, UNAMID, UNISFA, and UNOCI. Burundi’s participation in peacekeeping operations has its critics. Its contribution is perceived, at home and abroad, to be used by the Burundian government as a political and diplomatic tool, creating leverage in negotiations and influence in multinational organizations. In that regard, Burundi’s peace operations participation rationale is similar to many—if not most—other nations’ involvements. However, some of Burundian civil society and internal opposition also suggest that peace operations are “a means to compensate officers and soldiers for their pro-government stance during the current crisis.” Its military professionalism has recently been questioned as well. Last year, some Burundian peacekeeping officers were accused of sexual abuse and exploitation on deployment, particularly in the MINUSCA assignment. Still others were repatriated from peacekeeping missions recently due to allegations of human rights violations in Burundi—the first such action for the UN.

Some observers speculate that Burundi’s troop contributions to AMISOM were the primary reason behind its admission to the African Union’s Peace and Security Council, as well as why the AU does not use stronger language or actions in condemning the current political stalemate in Burundi.

Until recently, the FDN appeared to be neutral in the face of the political crisis, as well as cohesive. Its professionalism was lauded in the summer of 2015 when troops deployed to quell riots refused to fire on the crowds and instead positioned themselves between protestors and the police. However, more
recently returning Burundian peacekeepers find themselves divided by treatment accorded to them, depending on their ethnic background. Some incidents of the past two years—major and minor—may be symptoms of dissenison within ranks. In May 2015, a coup attempt, led by a general officer with the same political party affiliation as President Nkurunziza, highlighted the emerging divisions within the Burundi armed forces. Since July 2015, attacks against military bases and individual officers (and their families) by unidentified armed persons have continued, alongside attacks against government buildings (like the presidential palace in September 2015).

The government also appears to be restructuring the armed forces, by removing Tutsi officers, and reassigning soldiers and officers that are also ex-FAB (former members of the Burundi armed forces prior to 2000) or of the former rebel group, National Liberation Forces (Forces nationales de liberation, FNL). This restructuring violates the ethnic quota tenets of the Arusha Agreement and/or the Constitution. Ex-FAB or Tutsi members report “frequent, but selective, police searches” of their homes and property, or assigned less-maintained or capable equipment, as compared to ex-Parties and Armed Political Movement (PMPA) or Hutu members. A series of high ranking officers’ assignations (on both sides) occurred throughout 2016. Many soldiers are defecting following their tour of duties with AMISOM, other UN missions, or even studying abroad at military academies.

Specialized units. There appear to be a number of specialized units within the government security (armed forces and police) forces focused on “repressive operations.” Included is the Anti-Riot Squad (BAE), the Institution Protection Agency (API), and the Rapid Intervention Mobile Group (GMIR). To a lesser degree, repressive operations are conducted as well by the Search and Judicial Investigations Squad (BRIJ) and the Traffic and Road Safety Patrol (PSR/SR). Specialized army units include: the Combat Engineer Regiment and the Special Squad for the Protection of Institutions (BSPI). Many of these specialized groups are alleged to collaborate with non-state armed groups, especially the Imbonerakure militia.

b. Non-State Armed Groups. Non-State armed groups are generally associated with former rebel groups and/or current political parties (many of the current political parties were derived from former rebel groups). In the past two years, while operating on behalf of the Burundi national government, police arrested (or attacked, then arrested the survivors) several alleged “insurgent” groups. The government also alleges that the recent assassination of East African Legislative Assembly MP Hafsa Mossi was a “new form of terrorism imported from outside the country” since a witness saw a car with Tanzanian plates.

An increasing number of children have been taken, sold, or given into military service of non-state armed groups. Since April 2015, some reports give that more than 300 children have been arrested by government forces for participation in armed groups, while an unknown number are still with those fighting forces.

As different opposition organizations merge, realign, or fold, a snapshot of the main insurgent groups follows:

- **Imbonerakure Militia.** Formed in 2010, the Imbonerakure (the Kirundi word for “those that see far”) is the youth wing of the Burundi ruling party, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for Defence and Democracy (Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces de défense et de la démocratie - CNDD-FDD). Imbonerakure members are accused of beatings and injuries, extrajudicial killings, banditry, and political killings. Their “trademark” is the piercing of eyes of their victims. The Imbonerakure is also suspected of collaboration with the Burundian authorities in harassing and attacking members of opposition political parties as well as opponents. Such collusion is allegedly achieved by means of integration into administrative activities at the ground level of the national
intelligence service (Service National De Renseignement - SNR) as well as cooperation with the Burundi police and the National Defence Force. A spokesperson for the Burundi police denied the allegations of complicity with police; however, the recent UN report on human rights in Burundi highlighted concerns about the history and composition of the group, whose ties to the authorities were probed. Reports emphasize the Imbonerakure group’s role in gang rapes as well as its forays into Tanzania to harass and threaten Burundian refugees there. Some women were targeted because their husbands or male relatives were members of opposition parties. Compounding the Protection of Civilians challenge are the allegations that Imbonerakure infiltrated the various international relief organizations assisting refugees in Tanzania, such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), in order to use their official positions to mount a subtle intimidation campaign” and force or persuade refugees to return to Burundi. They are accused of setting up roadblocks in order to detain and beat passing civilians and extort money from them. While some members are often arrested for their abuses, they are swiftly released and will subsequently retaliate against their accusers.

- **The National Liberation Front, FNL.** The military wing of the pro-Hutu Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (also known as PALIPEHUTU, for Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu). It operated in eastern DRC for the last twenty years. It is committed to removal of the President. The FNL came under attack from the Congolese army and the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) forces in 2014 and again in 2015. A leaked UN report in January 2016 gave details of an interview with 18 Burundian refugees that said they’d been given military training by the Rwandan authorities and fake papers. The FNL is also active in Bujumbura-Rurale Province, which surrounds the capital.

- **Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi, RED-Tabara.** This group emerged last year, and is believed to be composed of former soldiers, police and ex-rebels. It is also focused on removal of the President. RED-Tabara has been referred to as the military wing of the Movement for Solidarity and Democracy, but several members deny that allegation. They are especially active in Bujumbura. It claims to only target the security forces, but civilians have also been victims of grenade attacks.

- **Republican Forces of Burundi, FOREBU.** This group was led by General Niyombare, who led a failed coup against Nkurunziza in May 2015. The general had fought as a commander in Nkurunziza’s CNDD-FDD rebel group. FOREBU supports the Arusha framework and the reform of a post-Nkurunziza military. It boasts senior security establishment figures in its ranks and was reportedly involved in an attack on a police station in February 2016 that killed four members of the pro-government Imbonerakure militia; and it jointly carried out grenade attacks with RED-Tabara in the city’s Cibitoke and Kinanira neighborhoods, which allegedly targeted civilians. Its most dramatic strike was the assassination of senior army officer Darius Ikurakura inside a Bujumbura military base in March. FOREBU says dialogue can be the only way out of the crisis, but until the government agrees to inclusive talks, it will continue its armed struggle.

- **Union of Patriots for the Revolution, UPR.** This group emerged in the eastern town of Karuzi in February 2016. In its initial statement, the group said it was made up of “civil and military officers” determined to “establish a democratic regime.” According to Burundi News: “The UPR is led by Antoine Sinzumunsi, former general counsel of the Bujumbura appeal court. Between January 2010 and May 2012, he was a justice inspector. It claims to number several dozen fighters.”

- **Movement for Popular Resistance, MPR.** This group emerged with a press release in December 2015, signed by self-styled military leader Didier Nyambariza, a former police officer who fled the country after the controversial 2010 elections which were boycotted by the opposition. It’s believed the group has trained in Congo’s southern Kivu Mountains. It has not claimed any attacks.
- **Burundi Democracy Liberation Force, BDLF.** This group announced itself on social media in May 2016. Its military chief is Célestin Manirakiza, a former rebel in Nkurunziza’s FDD. He worked in senior positions in the police, including the Rapid Mobile Intervention Group – a special unit accused of illegal detentions and torture.

- **Christian Patriot Movement, MPC.** Little is known about this movement, which only announced itself in May 2016. It is led by the mysteriously anonymous figure of Jean-Paul Ndendakumana, unknown in either political or military circles.

- **Organized Criminal Elements (Domestic and Transnational).** Organized crime exists at all levels of society in a complex and dynamic mix of legitimate business people, terrorists, insurgents, rebels; police and army officers; militia groups; and local politicians. Crime exists in many forms, the most prevalent being human trafficking. According to the 2015 Department of State Trafficking in Persons report, Burundi is a source country for children and possibly women subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking; business people recruit Burundian girls for prostitution domestically, as well as in Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, and the Middle East, and recruit boys and girls for forced labor in Burundi and Tanzania; children and young adults are coerced into forced labor in farming, mining, informal commerce, fishing, or collecting river stones for construction. Sometimes family, friends, and neighbors are complicit in exploiting children, at times luring them in with offers of educational or job opportunities.

c. Other International Actors.

**Regional Neighbors. Rwanda** and Burundi have a complicated relationship. Their populations, dominated by the Tutsi and Hutu, are the mirror image of each other. As such, **Rwanda is both a potential security guarantee for the Tutsi minority as well as the source of its political vulnerability.** Rwanda is the second-highest recipient of Burundian refugees, having taken in over 80,000 persons to date. Yet, the number of Burundians deported from Rwanda stands at 4,300 people as of July 2016.

Rwanda was critical of Nkurunziza’s decision to stay in power from the outset and may be actively engaged in destabilization of Burundi. In a report to the UNSC, the entity that monitors sanctions on the DRC charged Rwanda of recruiting and training Burundian refugees that have allegedly been determined to be part of Burundian armed opposition groups.

In addition to Rwanda, the other bordering countries are struggling to accommodate the vast numbers of Burundian refugees. Since April 2015, the largest number have fled to Tanzania (over 164,788), but Uganda and the DRC host almost 30,000 refugees each as well. In the same period, a smaller number (under 5,000 total) moved into Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, and Malawi.

**International Organizations.** There are many other international actors and organizations interested in the stability of Burundi (albeit within their own national or regional concerns). Beyond the UN:

- **African Union (AU).** The AU, and especially the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), appears
very concerned about the Burundi situation. In February 2016, there were plans to deploy some 200 human rights and military observers. (One third have deployed to date.) This was a significant decrease from a December 2015 PSC authorization of a force of 5,000 troops, titled the Mission africaine de Prévention et de Protection au Burundi (MAPROBU). Mandated for six months with the option to renew, it was tasked “to prevent any deterioration of the security situation, [to] monitor its evolution and report developments on the ground [and] to contribute, within its capacity and in its areas of deployment, to the protection of civilian populations under imminent threat.’ This mandate was the first time the organization authorized the deployment of a force not at the host country’s request. However, in the face of President Nkurunziza’s adamant refusal to accept the deployment, the PSC did not submit the plan to the AU General Assembly for approval, essentially revoking the authorization.

Further complicating the relationship between the AU and Burundi are the recent remarks of current AU Chairman and Chadian President Idriss Deby. In his statement, he indicated belief that President Nkurunziza’s third term mandate is not anti-constitutional, which is an opinion distinctly different from the AU’s official position. Despite these complications, as one observer notes:

The AU can support future mediation by clearly stating the current dangers, underlining that violence and intimidation is unacceptable, abuses must be investigated, and free, democratic debate is vital for stability. The AU should also emphasize that opposition violence is unacceptable and dangerous. Burundi’s future direction, including continued application of Arusha Agreement, should be freely debated by all parties.

- **East African Community**. The EAC is a regional intergovernmental organization of six Partner States: the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Uganda. The vision of the EAC is “to be a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa” with a mission statement that includes “to widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa.” It is headquartered in Arusha, Tanzania, which was also the site of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi of 2000. The Republic of Burundi became full EAC member in 2007. The former president of Tanzania is the EAC-appointed mediator in the current Burundi crisis.

- **European Union (EU)**. The EU has many programs in Burundi, in physical presence or purely fiscal. However, in 2016 the EU recently announced a suspension of all direct financial support to the Burundian government due to the assessment that the regime was not committed to addressing the political crisis. With the EU providing almost 50% funding of the Burundi government budget, this resulted in a significant detriment to the general conduct of routine government business—and a reduction of income illegally routed to the regime’s personal coffers. On the other hand, some reports claimed that much of that same funding was directed to support Burundian troops in Somalia in support of AMISOM, which led to Burundi’s threat to remove its troops from that mission, suggesting its potential failure. A compromise apparently was effected, as Burundi still supports AMISOM, but the details are not clear.

- **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**. The predecessor of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), established in 1980 in Lusaka, Zambia. SADCC was formed to advance the cause of national political liberation in Southern Africa, and to reduce dependence particularly on the then apartheid era South Africa; through effective coordination of utilization of the specific characteristics and strengths of each country and its resources. In 1992, Heads of Government of the region agreed to transform SADCC into the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with the focus on integration of economic development. SADC members are Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi,
Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. For unclear reasons, Burundi applied to become a SADC member, although it has been denied to date. According to one SADC official, “You wouldn’t expect SADC to accept a candidate with issues like that,” ostensibly referring to Burundi’s political crisis and its apparent intransigence to EAC overtures to develop resolutions to the situation. However, while SADC’s membership criteria suggests “adherence to democracy, economic development, inclusivity, good governance and the rule of law,” there is a “yawning gap” between SADC’s espoused values and the member-states’ actual practices—suggesting that Burundi may be “shopping” for an international organization that will not make democratic demands of its domestic political provisions.

10. Economic. Burundi is a landlocked, resource-poor country with an underdeveloped manufacturing sector. Agriculture accounts for over 40% of GDP and employs more than 90% of the population. Even with rich volcanic soil, small plot sizes barely yield enough food for many families. In 2010, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations reported that in some parts of northern Burundi, the average farm fed a family of five for only two or three months out of the year.

Burundi's primary exports are coffee and tea, which account for 90% of foreign exchange earnings. 68% of the population exists below the global poverty line. The lack of significant economic growth means there has not been a fundamental transformation of the political economy. Burundi is heavily dependent on aid from bilateral and multilateral donors. Foreign aid in 2014 represented 42% of Burundi’s national income, the second highest rate in Sub-Saharan Africa. Government corruption hinders the development of a private sector.

Major export partners are diverse and include: Germany 12.3%, Pakistan 10.7%, Democratic Republic of the Congo 10.7%, Uganda 8.1%, Sweden 7.8%, US 7.1%, Belgium 6.3%, Rwanda 4.6%, and France 4.4%. The primary export from Burundi to the United States is coffee. Major import partners are: Kenya 15%, Saudi Arabia 14%, Belgium 9.9%, Tanzania 8.3%, Uganda 7.3%, China 7.1%, India 4.9%, and France 4%. The primary U.S. exports to Burundi in 2014 included computer and electronic products.

Political turmoil since 2015 disrupted transportation routes of agricultural goods. Burundi’s budget deficit also increased as foreign aid was truncated in response to the crisis. The crisis in Burundi also damaged regional neighbors’ economic links, however, with the vast majority of Rwandan traders reportedly suspending operations in Burundi due to insecurity; some reports indicate a reduction by as much as 20 percent since the crisis began. There is an ongoing effort from the EU to bar Burundi from becoming a beneficiary of a free trade agreement between the EU and the EAC. However, excluding Burundi from the trade agreement will also impact Kenyan agricultural exporters. Burundi is also an eligible recipient of preferential trade benefits as part of the US African Growth and Opportunity Act, as Burundi is a member of both the EAC and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (both of which have trade and investment framework agreements).

In November 2016, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the UN Resident Coordinator met with Burundi’s multilateral partners — the World Bank, African Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, the United Nations country team and the European Union — to discuss the socioeconomic situation. They agreed that:

Burundi was experiencing severe macroeconomic difficulties, reflected in negative gross domestic product growth in 2015 and 2016, food insecurity, rising consumer prices and falling fiscal revenues, all of which had put pressure on the national budget...Concerns had also been expressed...about signals of disengagement sent by Burundi to its regional and international partners...that international partners might nonetheless decide to disengage with the Government in light of the current situation.
11. Social. Burundi has a population of 10,742,276. A July 2015 report indicates:

The country still suffers effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.

Burundi’s major ethnic group is the Hutu (Bantu) (85%), with the Tutsi (Hamitic) (14%) in a far second place. Much smaller groups are the Twa (Pygmy) (1%), and some Europeans and South Asians. While there are several languages used in Burundi, including two that are unspecified, almost one third of the population speak one of the official languages (Kirundi). The other official language is French. Over 80% of Burundians claim Roman Catholic faith and over 1/5 are some form of Protestant. A large percentage (10%) claim “other” or “unspecified” and only 2.5% are Muslim.

Over 65% of the population is under the age of 25 years, with a life expectancy at birth of 60 years. Almost 30% of the children under the age of 5 years are underweight, with over half of them malnourished. Literacy rate is low, with most children not attending school beyond 10-11 years.

a. Rule of Law. Since the crisis began, most reports indicate more than 500 people have died, many of them in extrajudicial killings blamed on Burundian police, security forces and militias linked to the ruling party. Mass graves have been found in both government-secured areas as well as areas controlled by armed opposition forces.

Rule of Law programs remain undeveloped. The 2014 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) did not begin implementation until March 2016, and immediately faltered in the face of the ongoing crisis. The 2015 Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report claims that Burundi courts failed to prosecute government officials allegedly complicit in trafficking crimes. Upon the release of the UN Committee against Torture report, several participating Burundi lawyers were removed from their positions. In another egregious situation, more than 700 children were expelled from school and many were detained for up to 5 years in prison for allegedly scribbling in their textbooks on the photo of the President. Many of the children in the government detention centers are tortured and abused, including being raped, by the government persons in charge of those facilities. The UN Independent Investigation on Burundi (UNIIB) was initiated in December 2015 and published findings in September 2016. The report concludes that “more than one thousand people have been killed, thousands have reportedly been tortured, unknown numbers of women have been victims of various forms of sexual crimes, hundreds of people have disappeared, and thousands remain in illegal detention.”

It further notes: “the responsibility for the vast majority of these violations should be laid at the door of the Government”. With AU encouragement, the Burundi legislature adopted a law to withdraw from the ICC. It will be effective in one year.

b. Human Rights. Government supporters, specifically the Imbonerakure, use pillage and rape as tools against alleged opposition supporters. Refugees are raped as part of a “toll” as they approach the borders. Observers report:

The fallout from President Pierre Nkurunziza’s controversial third term has plunged the country into a spiral of political violence and widespread human rights abuses. Security forces and members of the youth wing of the ruling party, the Imbonerakure, target opponents and perceived opponents who they kill, rape, torture, forcibly disappear, or ill-treat. Unknown assailants have also attacked or killed senior government officials. The ruling party has banned the most prominent Burundian human rights organizations and allowed the Imbonerakure to control illegal roadblocks and extort money from businesses and civilians. The justice system is deeply manipulated by the ruling party, and impunity is widespread.
By the end of July 2016, the UN Committee against Torture report on activities within Burundi, expressed concern about “the apparent culture of impunity for certain armed groups.” Mass arrests, “disappearances” and arbitrary arrests, targeted killings of political/military/and civil society leaders, use of rape as a weapon, and disproportionate use of force against demonstrators and journalists all are now commonplace in Burundi. In some cases, both the agents and the motive of the abuse are not identified. Also in 2016, the US withdrew a grant for a Burundi NGOs that addresses gender-based violence because the Burundian Ministry of Interior suspended the NGO’s accounts, and thereby its activities, making the funding null. More recently, October 2016 to February 2017, more than twice the number of “disappearances” were reported with 22 bodies that were discovered in January alone. An AU fact finding mission described violations by Burundi’s security forces as “pervasive, systematic, and massive” and the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi concluded that these actions “stem from deliberate decisions and actions.”

c. **Humanitarian Assistance.** The US is Burundi’s largest humanitarian aid donor, both inside and outside of the UN's 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) ($2.9 million and $5.9 million, respectfully).
Mass migration, widespread insecurity, chronic food shortages, a breakdown of social services, as well as the reduction and suspension of external aid, are expected to result in a further deterioration of one of the poorest countries in the world. The World Food Programme reports that over 600,000 people are short of food due to drought and flooding in 2016, with an expected rise to 700,000 by next year. In 2016, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased from 1.1 million to 3 million, or one quarter of the population, while those needing protection rose from 1.1 to 1.8 million. According to the UN Special Advisor on Burundi, the number of food-insecure Burundians rose from 730,000 in 2015 to 3 million in 2017.

Over 380,000 persons have fled to the borders. 60% of the refugees are children and youths under the age of 18, and a high percentage are unaccompanied minors. Another 100,000 are internally displaced persons (IDPs).

12. Information. Most private media is closed down. A media law enacted in 2013 forbids any reporting on matters that “undermine national security, public order or the economy.” Radio is the main source of information for many Burundians. The government runs TV, radio and press outlets, with land-line telephone density among the lowest in the world (although almost half of the population have cell phones).

13. Infrastructure. There are seven airports in Burundi, but only one with a paved runway. Only 10% of the roads are paved, and most are in urban areas. While a land-locked country, Burundi shares Lake Tanganyika with neighboring countries and has several lake ports.
**Peace Operations Functions**

14. **Command and Control.** On 9 November 2015, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Jamal Benomar as his Special Adviser for Conflict Prevention, who has since deployed his team in Burundi and is working with the Government to support a “credible and inclusive political dialogue” and advise the authorities on addressing security concerns.

15. **Intelligence.** As there is no current UN deployment, there is no intelligence apparatus in place.

16. **Operations.** There are no current operations.

17. **Protection.** There is no current mission that requires protection. In addition, the mandate proposed by the UN did not specify any Protection of Civilians task. However, several UN agencies are present in Burundi with protection tasks, especially among refugees and children. Many observers believe there is an increasing risk of mass atrocity.

18. **Sustainment.** There is no current mission. However, any mission will have sustainment challenges due to the poor infrastructure.

**Issues and Considerations**

19. **Issues.** While the major issue for Burundi is resolving the political crisis that is due to the third term of the current President, the most concerning issue is the potential for the systemic violence (torture, rape) to devolve into mass atrocity violence. Related concerns are:

- Inclusion of opposing views in a domestic political settlement.
- Security and Protection of Civilians from all parties.
- Addressing the issues of “good governance.”
- Recognizing the impact of a de-stabilized Burundi on its regional neighbors as well as in the peace operations in which Burundi participates.
- Keeping (or returning) the neutrality of the Burundi military and security forces.
- Recognizing the impact of economic sanctions against Burundi on its future economic status and its regional neighbors.

20. **Considerations.**

a. **The US.** Perhaps the most pertinent consideration for Burundi are those apropos the future US policy and interests in Africa in general—and with President Nkurunziza in particular. Certainly perceived US disinterest in Burundi appears to inspire Nkurunziza to continue his obstinacy about holding national elections and leaving his office. He applauded the results of the November 2016 US national election, suggesting that a US policy change was “welcomed”. It is less clear what US policy changes—if any—the new Administration may promote. Some observers noted that “not one of the 29 leaders the president-elect had spoken to in the week following his election was from sub-Saharan Africa” and that “in his sole foreign-policy speech as a candidate, President Trump mentioned Africa only once…” (he has reportedly spoken to some African leaders in the past month). In the past, both as a presidential candidate and in previous years, President Trump has indicated little interest in African issues, except to castigate President Barack Obama’s Power Africa initiative (a bipartisan effort to build reliable electric power grids) as corrupt.

With little new Administration US policy objectives detail regarding Africa to review, future direction can only be extrapolated from other proposals and statements. Arguments that suggest the “America First”
perspective will have negative repercussions on the African continent are supported by recent language and actions that suggest the following:

**Antipathy toward trade agreements and regulation.** President Trump has indicated antipathy over many international and bilateral trade agreements. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a trade deal offering preferential access to US markets to some three dozen African countries, may be considered one of those “bad deals”. While Congress renewed it for 10 years (in 2016), it may be possible to secure the votes to repeal it.

**Inclination to significantly reduce—and, in some cases, eliminate—funding for aid and development programs.** The US provides significant development aid, security assistance, and emergency humanitarian assistance to Burundi. Perhaps most significant to *long term US interests in Africa*, however is that “China has positioned itself to be a steadfast partner for Africa in a time of geopolitical uncertainty and questionable American commitment to the continent…(replacing) the United States as Africa’s largest trading partner.” Therefore, it may be a “strategic mistake” to disengage from Africa if matters between the US and China escalate.

b. UN. The UN appears at a standoff with Burundi. The Government does not appear to be concerned with any actions the UN suggests, either alone or through other regional organizations. One action that may be still viable are *sanctions* against individuals in Burundi, such as travel bans and asset freezes. The Security Council can also establish a Panel of Experts—similar to those panels used for other monitoring—to identify Burundian officials, whether in government or the opposition, most responsible for summary executions, torture, and other serious human rights abuses since April 2015.” Such sanctions “would directly target abusers, and would have no negative effect on the broader Burundian population.” In addition, the UN should look for assistance opportunities among Burundi’s near neighbors, especially by the EAC members that are receiving the refugees and may also become instable. Other *recommendations include* (specific to mass atrocity prevention):

- Conduct independent investigations into any allegations of human rights abuses, torture and extrajudicial killings.
- Authorize the deployment of a more robust UN police presence, and/or the AU “should expedite deployment of the 200 authorised [sic] human rights and military observers and work with the UN to quickly agree on and disburse the financial, technical, logistical and other assistance needed for the deployment.”

c. Burundi. While the *search for a political solution* is must be paramount, there must also be a corresponding interest in “conflict mitigation, social programs within Burundi, and a long-term commitment to addressing the critical poverty and structural impediments that will continue to drive vulnerability in Burundi and the wider region if left ignored and unaddressed.” Other *recommendations include*:

- The government should honor its commitment to release detainees, allow independent media and ensure civil society can operate freely;
- The government and opposition must refrain from using language that could exacerbate ethnic tensions or incite political violence; and
- The government should also reconsider its decision to withdraw from the ICC.

For the Burundian citizens, continuing to resist the government’s efforts to incite ethnic turmoil is vital.
Resources


- Africa Center _Dismantling-the-Arusha-Accords_
- Africanin _Perspective_ _The-Harrowing-Journey-to-Peace-in-Burundi-the-Limitations-of-Regional-Bodies_
- Cooperation and Conflict Burundian Intervention (2016)
- Council on African Security and Development (CASADE), Report re UN and AU Partnership in Peacekeeping Challenges and Opportunities, Feb 2016
- Council on Foreign Relations Global Conflict Tracker (Burundi)
- Crisis Group _Twelve-Points-New-African-Union-Commission-Chairperson_
- European Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Factsheet Burundi (October 2016)
- Foreign Policy (Burundi)
- Global Responsibility to Protect—Burundi
- Institute for Peace in Partnership, An Overview of UN and AU Cooperation, February 2016
- Peace Operations Review, Politics in Place of Peace
- United Nations Documents (Burundi), UN, OCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview 2016 and UN, OCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan (Burundi)(November 2016)
- UN Secretary General Report on Burundi (February 2017)
- US Agency International Development--Burundi
- US Department of State, Embassy--Burundi and US Department of State--Burundi Fact Sheet