



# MEMORANDUM

ON THE SOCIO-POLITICAL  
AND SECURITY SITUATION IN BURUNDI

Republic of Burundi – May 2017

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## INTRODUCTION

This Memorandum on the socio-political and security situation in Burundi refers to previous documents (reports, articles from the newspapers and others). It quotes all or part of them and, at some points, it improves both their substance and their form.

The main goal of this Memorandum is to draw the attention of the public opinion in general and of the East African community in particular about the injustice that Burundians are being subjected to.

Burundi is a country that strives to strengthen its democracy. It's a country whose people have suffered from several decades of fratricidal war linked mainly to the irresponsibility of certain political actors who put first their personal interests.

At the present time, it is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate the number of Burundians who have lost their lives since the country's independence. No one can assess the losses that the country has suffered as a result of these disturbances, which, apart from the destruction of infrastructure and the economy, have taken the lives of citizens and forced others to leave the country. Deprived of this large part of its human resources, the country could only regress socially, financially and politically.

This Memorandum gives, with precise details, the reasons why the media from all over the world rushed to Burundi in 2015. It evokes without hesitation the lies and the shenanigans around many reports written by NGOs, all of which for a reason easy to imagine, competed in the publication of false reports on Burundi.

In addition, the Memorandum dwells on the violence that has always characterized electoral processes in Burundi, even before independence, while recalling that the political crisis, which erupted in 2015, was a logical continuation of the violence that surrounded the 2010 electoral process.

The document tells of the inter-Burundi dialogue, internal and external sessions, recalls the role played by foreign actors, mainly Belgium and Rwanda in the destabilization of Burundi.

## BURUNDI UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT FOR REGIME CHANGE

The situation that Burundi went through in 2015 when it was the front-page news or one of the main items of worldwide media and above all, when it was, and anyway it is still, on the agenda of the international community, is certainly a matter of curiosity and questioning. This is particularly true as Burundi experienced several decades of socio-political tearing apart against a nearly universal indifference of the global media, international organizations and even regional, continental or international bodies: massacres, ethnic cleansing, genocide, summary executions, forced disappearance, expropriation... so many crimes that haunt the memory of Burundians and that they would not wish to experience again, nor would they want to return to. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been established to help Burundians confront their past by recalling all the opprobrium that plunged them into mourning and exiled them in order to permanently reconcile with one another starting by being brave enough to tell the truth.

In the wake of the 2015 electoral process, both the Burundian and foreign public opinion have daily been served with both alarming and paradoxical messages announcing the imminence of a Genocide, large-scale killings and widespread instability. Systematically conveyed by opinion makers and national and international actors, these prophecies, even when proved false, have almost led to the dislocation of the foundations on which the Burundian Nation is based. However, these actions have the merit of having highlighted the true purpose of all these birds of ill omen: “a change of regime by illegal means” in Burundi. They also helped to reveal to the world the capacity of the Burundian people of opposing any evil schemes to send them back into the horrors and meanders of a fratricidal war.

### POLLS IN 2010 AND 2015 – AND THE BAD LOSERS

In 2015, the whole world held its breath. Burundi was experiencing an electoral turmoil punctuated by political ups and downs and their corollary of human and material damage, with an impact on all aspects of the country's social, economic and political life. At the end of April of that year, some urban neighbourhoods were burning up: burnt tires, barricaded roads, burnt houses and vehicles, not to mention peaceful citizens who were deprived of their dearest possession, life, in the wildest and most horrible way.

It is therefore in a climate of political turmoil that Burundi managed to organize and hold the entire electoral cycle so as not to fall into a constitutional vacuum. When the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) was describing this process, it acknowledged that these elections were held *"in a context of fragmentation of some political groups, internal political disputes and regional and international constraints"* which finally did not defeat this process that was finally well conducted since all the

institutions could be established.<sup>1</sup> The success of this process in this very particular context was largely *"the people's eagerness for voting to renew the country's governing institutions"*, despite the opposition's appeal to the boycott, which was not heard, and despite the shooting and throwing of grenades during the night, on the eve of each election, in order to discourage the population to go to the polls.

What the media, NGOs and other international observers described as *"unprecedented political crisis"* was only an exaggerated element of language to attract ostracism over the power of the Cndd-Fdd which was accused of all evils. It was as if, suddenly, the same international observers or actors forgot the 1993 bloody coup d'état, the murder of the first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, and his collaborators, and the ensuing decade of civil war throughout the country, inflaming even the entire Great Lakes region. It was as if the "international community" had forgotten the massacres of Ntega (Kirundo) and Marangara (Ngozi) communes when former President Pierre Buyoya exterminated tens of thousands of Burundians by Napalm. These actors also pretended to ignore the Genocide of 1972 which took more than three hundred thousand Burundians under President Michel Micombero. In short, it became evident that there was a desire to confuse public opinion so that it stopped thinking about all the ignoble acts which looked like a contestation of the verdict of the polls but which exterminated both elected and voters since the independence of Burundi.

What was seen in 2015 is therefore only a logical continuation of other electoral protest movements, characteristic of the history of Burundi, perpetrated by bad losers always ready to trample the sovereign choice of the people. On the other hand, when comparing the two closest electoral processes, the one in 2015 and the one in 2010, it becomes easy to understand that the two are necessarily linked, with the same actors, the same actions and the same claims, the only difference being that the damage caused in the protest against the 2015 elections is the amplification of the negative impact of the protest against the verdict of the 2010 elections.

In the two electoral processes mentioned above, the Burundian opposition stood for elections in a disorganized manner and as a bad loser it did not bear to be defeated by the CNDD-FDD<sup>2</sup> party. After each failure, it thought of regrouping in a coalition. In 2010, it created the ADC-Ikibiri<sup>3</sup> while in 2015 it created the CNARED-Giriteka<sup>4</sup>.

In addition to this regrouping, intimidation acts against the population through grenade firing, targeted assassination and laying corpses on the streets have always preceded claims for dialogue or negotiation with the winning party.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ceniburundi.bi/IMG/pdf/rapport\\_general\\_sur\\_le\\_processus\\_electoral\\_de\\_2015-12.pdf](http://ceniburundi.bi/IMG/pdf/rapport_general_sur_le_processus_electoral_de_2015-12.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> "Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de Défense de la Démocratie", the ruling party in Burundi

<sup>3</sup> "Alliance Démocratique pour le Changement"

<sup>4</sup> Conseil National pour le Respect de l'Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi - de la Constitution et de l'Etat de droit

## GOAL: REGIME CHANGE IN 2015

During the electoral process of the year 2010, several CNDD-FDD offices were burned in several areas of the country; grenades were fired in public and private venues causing deaths and injuries. Between the communal elections in May and the presidential and legislative elections in July 2010, the NGO Human Rights Watch counted 128 grenade attacks that left 11 dead and 69 injured<sup>5</sup> when the CNDD-FDD counted more than 100 members murdered during this period in the Bujumbura and Bubanza provinces.

When this was occurring, the aim of these politicians, who had no popularity, was to force the newly elected institutions to share with these bad losers the political posts acquired through the ballot box, which is a denial of democracy. This campaign of destabilization continued along the path to the following elections scheduled in 2015, to prevent them from being held and above all with the intention of making a regime change by illegal means.

Some opposition politicians such as Alexis Sinduhije, a leader of the MSD<sup>6</sup>, were involved in recruiting, arming and training these armed bands and, according to a report by the United Nations Experts on the Great Lakes Region<sup>7</sup> published on 29 November 2011, they were trying to "*convince regional and international governments that abuses and acts of corruption committed by the Burundian authorities justified the birth of an armed rebellion.*"

On the eve of the publication of this report, a weekly Burundian newspaper, Iwacu in its November 28, 2011 issue, had published an exclusive interview with Alexis Sinduhije. To the question of the journalist Antoine Kaburahe asking him if he thought about [the elections] of 2015, Mr. Sinduhije surprised many observers by saying: "*2015 cannot be in the picture of the political perspectives in Burundi. [...] Unless there is a miracle, we have embarked on a revolutionary process of at least three years and therefore, there is no room for elections.*" He even promised that this revolution would take place "*with seriousness and responsibility*" because, according to Sinduhije, "*preserving lives of innocent civilians*" should be a necessity<sup>8</sup>.

Less than a week later, France 24 was broadcasting a report by Pauline Simonet on a new rebellion in Burundi, the FRONABU<sup>9</sup>-Tabara, whose rear base was located in South Kivu of the DRC and which curiously would target a "Revolution" in Burundi<sup>10</sup>. All concordant

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/fr/world-report/2011/country-chapters/259441>

<sup>6</sup> Mouvement pour la Solidarité et le Développement

<sup>7</sup> <http://ddata.over-blog.com/3/15/38/72//CONSEIL-DE-SECURITE.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://iwacu-burundi.org/blogs/rolandrugero/files/2015/01/From-2011-28-11-170712.jpg>.

<sup>9</sup> Front National pour la Révolution au Burundi

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.france24.com/fr/20111202-burundi-ombre-guerre-groupes-armes-rebellion-tutsi-Hutu-president-nkurunziza-reporter>

sources indicate that this movement that was throttled at birth belonged to Alexis Sinduhije, like another one that he will launch later, the FOREBU-Tabara later in 2015.

Meanwhile, another rebel group was getting organized in the bush of Milamila in Tanzania. It was the FRD<sup>11</sup>-Abanyagihugu led by a certain Kabirigi Pierre-Claver, who launched his first attack in November 2011<sup>12</sup>. Until April 2012 he was completely defeated and his leaders killed or arrested. In May 2012, the Congolese army announced that they had shot down another important rebel leader named Claver Nduwayezu, known as Carmel or Mukono<sup>13</sup>. The latter had carried out bloody incursions into the riparian areas of Rusizi in Burundi and the DRC. He was accused of leading the bloodbath of September 2011 in Gatumba (near Bujumbura) when at least 39 people were brutally killed.

In September of the same year, it was the turn of a certain Nzabampema, a dissident of the FNL<sup>14</sup>, to declare war against the Government of Burundi, calling all the population to resistance<sup>15</sup>. In 2013 he multiplied ambushes but his movement suffered significant losses of men and equipment that it finally entrenched himself far from the border, in the depths of Eastern DRC where, according to our sources, he remains active in acts of armed robbery.

In 2013, on appeal by the President of the Republic who asked the leaders of the opposition in exile to return home to prepare for the 2015 elections, Alexis Sinduhije returned in March 2013 and publicly announced the purpose of his return: to organize demonstrations similar to the Arab Spring. What had failed through an armed rebellion was therefore to be achieved by a popular uprising, a revolution, according to this opponent<sup>16</sup> who multiplied trips to Kigali.

Exactly one year later, on 8 March 2014, Mr. Sinduhije organized a popular insurrection in which members of the police were sequestered for several hours and disarmed by young people under the influence of drugs, including children.

Civil society activists and senior officials of the Independent National Commission of Human Rights (CNIDH) had to intervene to recover these weapons and hand them over to the police<sup>17</sup>. Once again, Mr. Sinduhije stepped away and remained under international arrest warrant, while dozens of members of the MSD were arrested and tried. This fifty or

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<sup>11</sup> Forces pour la Restauration de la Démocratie

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20111126-une-nouvelle-rebellion-burundi>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.africa1.com/spip.php?article21464>

<sup>14</sup> Front National de Libération

<sup>15</sup> <https://wazaonline.com/fr/archive/declaration-de-guerre-contre-le-burundi-info-ou-intox>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmdlJjVMLws>

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-sd3qzkiU&list=UU3uSN\\_ifXSf8dB\\_HYZrS0jQ&index=76](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-sd3qzkiU&list=UU3uSN_ifXSf8dB_HYZrS0jQ&index=76)

so young people were released three years later and included in the list of 2,500 prisoners who were granted presidential pardon<sup>18</sup> in January 2017.

During the night of December 29 to 30, 2014, the communes of Murwi and Bukinanyana in Cibitoke province (western Burundi) underwent an armed attack from Rwanda via Eastern DRC<sup>19</sup>. This movement was completely dismantled by Burundian Defence and Security Forces. According to the documents seized and the testimonies of those who were captured alive by the Burundian army, the main purpose of this attack was to prevent the 2015 elections from being held and to carry out a coup d'état which was foreseen in May 2015. Among these fighters we noticed a significant numbers of MSD members, particularly minors who, according to the testimonies gathered by the Burundian judicial authorities, had been recruited and trained in Rwanda. This is the case, for example:

- 1) Gérard Minani, 15 years old at the time of the attack, from Marangara Commune, Ngozi Province, son of Zoulou Nzokirantevye and Léocadie Barushimana;
- 2) Ibrahim Nsabimana, 16 years old at the time of the attack, from Mparambo Hill, Rugombo Commune, Cibitoke Province, son of Emmanuel Ntahorukura and Anastasie Ndirakiza;
- 3) Richard Nitunga, 16 years old at the time of the attack, from Ruziba hill, Kanyosha commune, Bujumbura province, son of Marcien Baragomwa and Marie Ntunzwenimana;
- 4) Jean de Dieu Ndizeye, 17 years old at the time of the attack, from Nyarunazi Hill, Buhinyuza commune, Muyinga province, son of Salvator Sahinguvu and Prisca Nibigira;
- 5) Diomède Ntakirutimana, 17 years old at the time of the attack, from Rubimba Hill, Kibago Commune, Makamba Province, son of Bucenjegeri and Ndayishimiye.

The population's uprising of the end of April 2015 that some believed to be peaceful, but which turned out to be an insurrection with regard to the violent methods used and the heinous crimes committed, was the prelude to the attempted overthrow of democratically elected institutions occurred in May 2015. President Pierre Nkurunziza's candidacy for his own succession was merely a pretext since the power takeover by disloyal means was planned long before the CNDD-FDD Party held its Convention on 25 April 2015 to nominate its candidate for the presidential election of the same year.

Young people took to the streets on the morning of April 26, 2015, destroyed public infrastructure and burned cars from the civil service and other republican institutions, blocked roads with barricades and burnt tires, attacked the Police by throwing stones, Molotov cocktail and grenades to them or using assault rifles. Neighbourhoods were left

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ikiriho.org/2017/01/24/au-dela-de-la-liberation-de-58-condamnes-du-msd/>

<sup>19</sup> Democratic Republic of the Congo

by residents who were unable to go to work without risk of being assaulted at a time when children were prevented from going to the schools and some of them placed at the front lines during the insurrection. Houses belonging to the police were burned; the insurgents established barricades and ransomed the inhabitants, etc<sup>20</sup>.

Despite this insurgency in Bujumbura and the climate of fear that froze economic activity in the country, a large majority of the Burundian population remained calm. Out of the 119 communes that form Burundi, 116 remained at peace. On the other hand, the protests became mainly an occasion for a violent questioning of public authority, an increasing process that would lead to the (failed) coup d'état of 13 May 2015.

This violence intensified until the creation of urban militias<sup>21</sup> that attempted to stop the electoral process by disrupting security, mainly in Bujumbura. From June to mid-December 2015, the capital of Burundi lived under more or less heavy night shooting, grenade firing against the police<sup>22</sup> or targeted killings of members of the Defence and Security forces. The most emblematic of these killings was the assassination of Lieutenant General Adolphe Nshimirimana on 2 August 2015<sup>23</sup>, north of Bujumbura, followed one month later by an attack on the Chief of Staff of the Burundian Army<sup>24</sup> (a Hutu ) after the assassination of one of his retired predecessors<sup>25</sup>, Colonel Jean Bikomagu (a Tutsi). These killings targeting people of different ethnicities had the aim of sowing division and creating a schism within the National Army so that these divisions could be recovered by radical opposition through desertions. Meanwhile, the same opposition armed young people<sup>26</sup> in the same neighbourhoods where the insurrection of May and June 2015 had been raging.

Fortunately enough, the commitment of the Defence and Security forces to safeguard national unity and cohesion prevailed over these petty and division-based calculations. For example, the Burundian National Defence Force and the Police, composed of all layers of the Burundian population (50% Hutu, 50% Tutsi, Twa being co-opted), helped the vast majority of Burundians to keep their peace of mind in a context marked by fears and rumours, and to reject the offer of a new civil war<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDFaM1jvd3I>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-burundi-unrest-idUSKBN0TC1OE20151123>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/?s=attaque+contre+police>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/un-assassinat-eclair/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/le-chef-detat-major-general-echappe-a-un-attentat/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/alerte-lancien-chef-detat-major-le-colonel-jean-bikomagu-tue/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/burundi-you-are-young-must-fight-how-rebel-touts-manipulate-young-men-toward-armed-conflict-1514228>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2015/12/09/civil-war-unlikely-burundi>

## **AUTHORS AND CO-AUTHORS OF REGIME CHANGE IN BURUNDI**

The rebellion against the democratically established order that we observed between 2010 and 2015 is not the work of Burundian actors alone. It is clear that foreigners played a very important role in financing; training and arming the insurgents while the international watches. For this reason, some Burundians bear a heavy responsibility for having been very active in organizing acts of destabilization of the country, but to better understand the extent of this aggression against the Burundian people we must go beyond the borders of Burundi. After their defeat, the same actors took refuge in countries that supported them morally and materially. This is the case of Rwanda and the European Union, particularly the Kingdom of Belgium, which welcomed with open arms and which still host the perpetrators of the coup.

### **BURUNDIAN ACTORS**

In this destabilization, the Burundian actors can be subdivided into two categories: Civilians and men in uniform. The former, either radical politicians or activists of civil society, organized a civil insurrection, while the latter, in uniform, planned and carried out an armed insurrection. Nevertheless, the two groups operated in perfect harmony and their actions were synchronized, all their actions converging only to the attempted coup of 13 May 2015. After this failure, they carried out faceless terrorist acts, throwing grenades in public places and killing innocent citizens. They unscrupulously claimed these acts in an interview that former General Leonard Ngendakumana has granted to the Kenyan television channel KTN<sup>28</sup>.

In 2001, Mr. Alexis Sinduhije and Samantha Power, with the support of USAID, created the African Public Radio (RPA)<sup>29</sup>. It is this radio station which, currently broadcasting via its derivative "INZAMBA"<sup>30</sup>, often broadcasts unverified information with division features. It is useful to recall that Mr. Sinduhije has been cited by several UN expert reports on the Democratic Republic of Congo, in acts of destabilization against the Great Lakes region<sup>31</sup> and is under US sanctions.

On the side of the Civil Society, some organizations have gone beyond their area of expertise and have taken the path of destabilization. These are FORSC<sup>32</sup>, FOCODE<sup>33</sup>, APRODH<sup>34</sup>, and ACAT-Burundi<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=er6jhq4hCXs>

<sup>29</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis\\_Sinduhije](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis_Sinduhije)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.rpa.bi>

<sup>31</sup> <http://ddata.over-blog.com/3/15/38/72//CONSEIL-DE-SECURITE.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Forum pour le Renforcement de la Société Civile

<sup>33</sup> Forum pour la Conscience et le Développement

<sup>34</sup> Association burundaise pour la Protection des Droits Humains et des personnes détenues

These activists worked closely with political party leaders such as the MSD<sup>36</sup>, UPD ZIGAMIBANGA, SAHWANYA FRODEBU, SAHWANYA FRODEBU NYAKURI and other political actors.

The few thousands of young people who took to the streets of Bujumbura were well organised and fed, while their supervisors received remuneration. It emerged that this funding was transmitted through the accounts of these so-called civil society organizations. In addition, the investigations carried out revealed that the torchbearers of this insurrectionary movement remained in constant communication with the putschists. On the 13th of May, 2015, the day of the coup attempt, soldiers and civilians were together, marching on the city of Bujumbura to take certain strategic positions. After occupying the private media, they tried to besiege the Radio National Television (RTNB) and the International Airport of Bujumbura. They were also together to go and burn the Rema Radio/Television and when the Bujumbura Municipal Police Station was attacked. The insurgents released all prisoners.

## **ROLE PLAYED BY RWANDA**

Rwanda played a very important role in the destabilization of Burundi in the wake of the 2015 electoral process. The armed attack of 30 December 2014, which hit two communes in the province of Cibitoke, was prepared from Rwanda. The captured assailants revealed that they had undergone military training in Rwanda. Moreover, the insurrection of 2015 was obviously supported by Rwanda. Not only did Rwandan elements come to support the insurgents, but also all those who fled had chosen Rwanda as their destination. For example, coup plotters, including those in uniform, were greeted on the other side of the Burundi border by Rwandan officials. These fugitives sought by Burundian justice have benefited from the best of Rwandan hospitality and have continued their political activities against Burundi by recruiting Burundian refugees to convert them into rebels with the participation of Rwandan military instructors and the Logistics of the Rwandan army<sup>37</sup>.

Investigations in Burundian refugee camps in Rwanda, particularly in Mahama, have shown that Burundian youth, and even children, have been forcibly recruited into rebellion units for infiltration into Burundi.

The report by the organisation Refugees International documented these recruitment operations<sup>38</sup> in details, and was later confirmed by the press (Al Jazeera<sup>39</sup>, Newsweek<sup>40</sup>,

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<sup>35</sup> Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture au Burundi

<sup>36</sup> Mouvement pour la Solidarité et la Démocratie

<sup>37</sup><http://bit.ly/1O4n3Wm>

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid*

IBtimes<sup>4142</sup>, RFI<sup>43</sup>), although other sources had already spoken about it (Washington Post<sup>44</sup>, African Defence<sup>45</sup>, France24<sup>46</sup> ).

Moreover, the Burundian administration has already pointed out on several occasions the hindrances of the Rwandan authorities to the return of Burundian refugees to their homeland, with intimidation and long administrative procedures that discourage more than one. It should also be pointed out that on 30 January 2016, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Rwanda admitted before the Peace and Security Council of the African Union that Rwanda did not intend to extradite the persons sought by Burundian justice for participation in the attempted coup d'état of 13 May 2015. Nevertheless, in the context of good neighbourliness and respect for regional treaties on judicial and security cooperation, the Government of Burundi has always reacted favourably to all requests for extradition of Persons considered to be a threat to the vital interests of Rwanda.

In addition, recruitment and military training of Burundian youth, including children, have been denounced by the Special Envoy of the President of the United States of America in the African Great Lakes Region, Mr. Thomas Perriello: "*Rwanda is fully aware of the US government's intention to impose measures in situations similar to those of the M23. We have expressed a number of concerns publicly and privately about the crisis in Burundi. I myself met with some of the former Burundian child soldiers arrested here in the DRC. And we will continue to keep an eye on this situation*"<sup>47</sup> ..."

Burundi's defence and security forces (FDN<sup>48</sup> and PNB<sup>49</sup>) have faced several attacks from Rwanda, of which the most visible are:

A group of armed men from Rwanda tried to attack the Rugazi area, Kabarore commune in Kayanza province, on 10 and 11 July 2015. The record of this attack attempt aimed at derailing the ongoing electoral process cost the group of assailants<sup>50</sup>: 31 of them killed, 170 men surrendered, others captured (see image), 78 weapons seized with 4 generators, 1

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<sup>39</sup><http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/12/14/burundian-refugees-face-forced-recruitment-in-rwandan-camp.html>

<sup>40</sup><http://europe.newsweek.com/burundi-refugees-recruited-rwanda-406039?rm=eu>

<sup>41</sup><http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/burundi-children-refugee-camps-rwanda-recruited-soldiers-1533221>

<sup>42</sup><http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/burundi-you-are-young-must-fight-how-rebel-touts-manipulate-young-men-toward-armed-conflict-1514228>

<sup>43</sup><http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20160105-infiltrations-rebelles-burundais-rdc-dixit-services-congolais>

<sup>44</sup>[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/burundis-dangerous-neighbor/2015/11/18/298b1e88-8bbe-11e5-934c-a369c80822c2\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/burundis-dangerous-neighbor/2015/11/18/298b1e88-8bbe-11e5-934c-a369c80822c2_story.html)

<sup>45</sup><http://www.african-defense.com/defense-news/rwanda-accused-of-recruiting-burundi-refugees-for-new-rebel-force/>

<sup>46</sup><http://www.france24.com/fr/20151104-video-rwanda-burundi-rebelles-anti-nkurunziza-refugies-ingerence>

<sup>47</sup><http://www.france24.com/fr/20151104-video-rwanda-burundi-rebelles-anti-nkurunziza-refugies-ingerence>

<sup>48</sup>Force de Défense Nationale

<sup>49</sup>Police Nationale du Burundi

<sup>50</sup><http://www.mdnac.bi/fr/article/1%E2%80%99attaque-d%E2%80%99un-groupe-arm%C3%A9-dans-la-commune-kabarore>

mortar 60 and 2 Motorola radios. Those who were captured claim to have been trained in Rwanda, before receiving weapons from the Rwandan security services<sup>51</sup>.

On July 12, 2015, in Muyinga, Giteranyi commune, in the Ruzo area, security forces seized 60 Kalashnikov assault rifles buried along the Kagera River flowing from Rwanda. A month later, on August 7, 2015, on the Masaka hill in the Gisenyi area in Kirundo province, some 30 Kalashnikov assault rifles, 810 cartridges, 58 shippers and 52 suspenders were seized from a group of men who came to attack the chief town of Kirundo. Among them, a former Burundian policeman admitted in court that their unit had been recruited and trained in the refugee camp of Mahama, Rwanda. Enlisted under the encouragement of Dr. Jean Minani, a refugee opponent who lives in Kigali, each of the assailants was to receive 200,000 Fbu at the end of the attack in Kirundo.

All these weapons had a common feature: they were not marked, which is not the case for the military arsenal in Burundi. Numerous outfits of the Rwandan army were seized during the disarmament operations of the population, in recent months, as here, in Mutakura (military effects seized on October 23, 2015, see image).

A fresh attack took place on 21 November 2015 at Top Hill bar in the capital of Kirundo province and aimed at assassinating the governor and political leaders close to the ruling party in Burundi. The three assailants in action were disarmed by the security forces before confessing in open court that they were still acting under the instigation of Dr. Jean Minani, who is also a former elected MP in Kirundo, and led the CNARED coalition.

After the successive failures of the various attacks carried out by groups coming directly from Rwanda, the Rwandan intelligence services decided to change their itinerary for Burundian recruits. Indeed, the Congolese intelligence services alerted Burundi as early as October 2015 that Burundian insurgents were going to infiltrate Burundi via the Congolese border with false administrative documents. It did not take long for press inquiries to support this information<sup>52</sup>.

This Congo infiltration network set up by the Rwandan military intelligence service (DMI) is involved in transporting Burundian infiltrators to the border until the Rusizi River, after providing them with false Congolese voter cards.

Thus, on 12 January 2016, the Congolese army presented to a Congolese parliamentary delegation some forty infiltrators intercepted with Congolese electoral cards to facilitate their entry into Burundi<sup>53</sup> (see pictures). The Burundian intelligence services will later arrest five of them already present on the Burundian territory.

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<sup>51</sup><http://www.isanganiro.org/spip.php?article9448>

<sup>52</sup><http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20160105-infiltrations-rebelles-burundais-rdc-dixit-services-congolais>

<sup>53</sup><http://uviraonline.com/fizi-le-general-fariala-presente-les-infiltrés-en-possession-des-cartes-delecteur-a-la-delegation-de-kin/>

Several young people who were trained in Rwanda finally broke the silence. Some were arrested and others laid down their arms voluntarily, went to the police and agreed to speak to the local and international press. Poignant testimonies with evidence about the chain of command and the actions they had to take in order to put pressure on the Bujumbura government. The phenomenon of mutilated bodies found daily in the streets of Bujumbura in 2015, the despicable assassination of three aged Catholic nuns in September 2014 in Kamenge, the fire that destroyed a Chinese supermarket, T-2000, in September 2015, etc.

## **THE BREACH OF INTERNATIONAL LAW BY RWANDA**

The actions of Rwanda constitute a violation of principle N°4 of the United Nations charter of 1945 stipulating that: *“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.”* Rwanda has also violated the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the Treaty establishing the East African Community.

- All peoples shall have the right to national and international peace and security. The principles of solidarity and friendly relations implicitly affirmed by the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirmed by that of the Organization of African Unity shall govern relations between States.
- For the purpose of strengthening peace, solidarity and friendly relations, States parties to the present Charter shall ensure that:
  - any individual enjoying the right of asylum under Article 12 of the present Charter shall not engage in subversive activities against his country of origin or any other State party to the present Charter;
  - their territories shall not be used as bases for subversive or terrorist activities against the people of any other State Party to the present Charter.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights is an integral part of the **Treaty Establishing the East African Community**, a Community that shall ensure the promotion of peace, security, and stability within, and good neighbourliness among, the Partner States.

The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region has also been violated by Rwanda. Indeed, Article 4 of the Pact provides that, *“the fact that a Member State hosts on its territory armed groups or insurgents engaged in armed conflicts or involved in acts of violence or subversion against the Government of another State violates the prohibition of resorting to threat or force and the principle of non-*

*interference in the internal affairs of that State.*” Sub paragraph 2 of article 5 of the same Pact provides that "the fact that a Member State offers direct or indirect support of any kind, to armed groups involved in conflict or violence and / or seeking to cause an unconstitutional overthrow of a government of another state is a violation of the prohibition of resorting to threat or force and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a State".

On top of that, Rwanda repudiated and abused the values of the Convention on Refugees. In fact, recruiting and militarily training refugees who went to seek refuge in their country “constitutes a flagrant violation of the Convention of 28 July 1951 on the Statutes of Refugees”. Added to that, forced recruitment of refugees for military purposes by the Government of Rwanda to destabilize their country of origin Burundi is also evident violation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, signed in Addis Ababa Ethiopia on 24 February 2013. Article 5 of the Framework Agreement stipulates inter alia that the countries of the Region strongly committed themselves:

- *Not to interfere in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries;*
- *To neither tolerate nor provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups;*
- *To respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring countries;*
- *To respect the legitimate concerns and interests of neighbouring countries, in particular regarding security matters,*
- *To neither harbour nor provide protection of any kind to persons accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or crimes of aggression, or persons falling under the United Nations sanctions regime; and*
- *To facilitate the administration of justice through judicial cooperation within the region.*

It is even more regrettable to see that Rwanda recruited minors for military purposes, which is a flagrant violation of the Convention on the Children’s Rights adopted in 1989 and which is part of International legal instruments for the guarantee and protection of Human Rights.

## **WESTERN ACTORS**

It is no longer a secret, Burundi has faced an international plot in 2015, with a clear will to effect a regime change, undoubtedly sponsored by the West. In a declaration dated December 1, 2016, Donald Trump, then President - elect in the United States, announced that his country would no longer invest in the policy of "regime change", which inevitably is a blow to certain acts of Western actors in the fight against Burundi.

This is the case, for example, with Ambassador Samantha Power who represented the United States at the UN. Through her Twitter account, and whenever she was given the opportunity to do so in her role at the United Nations, she constantly criticized the Burundian authorities for a clear usurpation of power, motivated by personal relationships which exist between her and a Burundian opponent, a long-time companion, who currently lives in Kigali, Mr. Alexis Sinduhije. Indeed, Ambassador Samatha Power and Alexis Sinduhije, whom Congolese Jean-Pierre Yuma (known as Alex Engwete) calls "*Birds of the feather flock together*"<sup>54</sup> have been friends since 1997, at the height of the Burundi crisis that followed the assassination of the first democratically elected Burundian president.

There is no illusion whatsoever that the European Union, through Belgium, has played and continues to play a major role in the destabilization of Burundi and does not hide it.

In an exclusive interview given by the Belgian Foreign Minister to France24<sup>55</sup> television in February 2016, Didier Reynders did not hide his feelings, saying that his country had asked "the President not to stand for re-election", that is an admission of interference in another country's internal affairs.

Then, the Belgian Minister acknowledges that his country has proposed that "*members of the opposition abroad, whether in Rwanda, Belgium or elsewhere, can participate in a dialogue*". However, most of those who failed in the 2015 coup d'état are in Rwanda and Belgium and receive preferential treatment from both countries. And pressure is regularly put on the government to agree to violate its own laws and "*negotiate*" with these putschists to "involve everyone in the management of the country in a correct way". Thus the "correct way" advocated by the European Union is none other than the denial of democracy, by involving "those who have failed to operate an illegal overthrow of institutions in 2015" in the "*management of the country*".

This wish to see someone else rule Burundi in 2015 has gone so far as to become the condition laid down by the European Union for its financial support for the 2015 elections. A few weeks before the launch of the electoral campaign, the European Union's electoral observers were ordered to withdraw, hoping that in the absence of funding Burundi would abandon the electoral process and consequently falls into a constitutional vacuum. After Burundi succeeded by counting on its own resources and people to organize the whole electoral process, the European Union then chose to asphyxiate Burundi financially by suspending its development aid. However, Burundians still hold reasonably well, tightening their belts and preferring to live on little means instead of being abused by the world.

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<sup>54</sup><http://alexengwete.blogspot.com/2010/05/burundi-alexis-sinduhije-my-hero-in.html>

<sup>55</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABDOEZgsFFk>

There is no doubt that the coup attempt of May 2015 and the insurrection which preceded it had, in the absence of an apparent support, had the blessing of the Union European. The authors of the putsch were able to easily enter Europe, benefiting from full support of the Belgian administration, even if their travel documents had been deactivated by the Republic of Burundi.

To all these ill-treatments there are international pressures to adopt resolutions and make decisions aimed at compelling the Government to let go and negotiate with the Putschists.

### **CASTING OF LIES BY THE MEDIA**

The Great Lakes Region has experienced bloody crises that have been largely fuelled by the spread and transmission of hate messages through some media outlets. Rwanda and Burundi have suffered particularly from some of the media that operated on their territory, which eventually turned out to be opinion media that defended the vital interests of those who owned or financed them. In Burundi, most of the so-called independent media were funded by NGOs or Western countries, which, in turn, made them march at a pace whenever "the financier" set the tone for this or other purpose.

With the "change of regime" as a goal by 2015, the media orientations were indexed on a long campaign of manipulation of opinion, by a casting of lies, some that journalists themselves directly committed as false witnesses and others of which they were the propagators by organizing and selecting false testimonies.

Thus, in the midst of rumours and false reports of imminent deaths, erroneous facts or prophecies reported by the media as stereotyped metaphors, the population panicked and began to flee to Rwanda and then to Tanzania and the DRC, by the end of 2014, long before the 2015 elections. The radio RPA of the politician Alexis Sinduhije announced drums beating that mass graves were being dug in Kirundo (northern Burundi) to prepare for Genocide. Whenever the Government brought these journalists who violated the law to justice, some of these "financiers" raised their voices and denounced the "violation of freedom of expression" as if the journalists were not supposed to obey the public order and the laws that govern the Republic like other citizens. And there is no reason why a journalist should not be a law-abiding citizen, who complies with the laws of his/her country<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup>Bernard Béguin, *Journaliste, qui t'as fait roi ?* Editions 24 heures - Lausanne, 1988, p.10

## **NGOs AND THEIR COMPILATION OF BIAISED REPORTS**

That western countries act to overthrow regimes and install others, in order to shift their selfish interests is no longer to be demonstrated. Several countries in Africa or elsewhere have been the victims of these plots and it is their peoples who pay a heavy price. Nevertheless, each fatal blow against a regime is preceded by a long campaign of manipulation of opinion and reports of International Organizations (NGOs) aimed at preparing the opinion. It is all the more true that most of these publications come out every time a decision-making meeting or summit on Burundi is scheduled, with recommendations in line with the goal the West would like to achieve, depending on circumstances.

In 2014, they began to alert an alleged distribution of weapons to the youth (Imbonerakure) of the ruling party in Burundi, which was obviously found to be inaccurate and misleading. Then, these organizations directed their slander campaign on paramilitary formations for young people in Kiliba - Ondes in the east of the DRC. All these elements have never been substantiated with evidence and the few evidences that these organizations exhibited were soon to appear completely false. Yet these organizations have not let go. They have begun to alert the international opinion about the risk of genocide in Burundi, concentrating all their efforts on this new discovery. Nothing has been spared, from the distortion of facts to the making of evidence.

## **STRATEGY OF THE TERROR**

To support their assertions, to make their previous reports and alarmist alerts on the situation in Burundi, and especially to save their faces, certain media and NGOs, have echoed the events that burdened Burundi in 2015, when Burundians, Blood and tears courageously wrote another page in the history of their country, victim of an international conspiracy to prevent them from continuing their democratic march.

Through intimidation and terrorist acts, throwing grenades into public places, targeting police and civilians, kidnapping people who were found murdered, tied up or mutilated, spreading rumours to Neighbouring countries, ... as many crimes committed and even claimed by coup plotters and other criminals without these NGOs or international media dare to take them into account. On the contrary, these "opinion makers" have done everything to attribute these heinous crimes to Burundi's defence and security forces and to the youth of the Cndd-Fdd Party, the Imbonerakure.

In order for decisions to be made against Burundi, in international forums, such as the sending of foreign troops, there must be a situation of general insecurity and fear. This

could only happen through a "strategy of terror" established and implemented by those who wanted a change of regime in Burundi.

## **MANUFACTURE OF 'KILLING MACHINES'**

The truth may never have come to the surface if, after several months of committing acts of terrorism by young people arrested or those who have surrendered, they had not decided to confess their own horrible agenda. They revealed how they were recruited, trained, the identity of their trainers and, above all, the goal to be achieved: "to attract the attention of the international community".

Indeed, in order for decisions to be taken against Burundi in international forums, such as the sending of foreign troops, it was imperative that there should be insecurity in the country, for general fear and displacement of the population. This is how young people were recruited and trained in Rwanda. Some of them acknowledged that they had begun to operate long before the elections by committing murders and abominable crimes such as the vile and savage murder of the three Catholic elderly nuns of Italian nationality in Kamenge in September 2014<sup>57</sup>.

## **DISSEMINATION OF SHOCKING IMAGES VIA SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media played a very important role in this "strategy of terror" with the will to display a Burundi that would live an "apocalyptic nightmare" and whose citizens would be in "danger of being exterminated by a sanguinary power". Horrific and shocking pictures have ignited the social networks and were distributed without restraint, as if it were a competition, a sort of race against time each wanting to be the first to alert the world, photo or Video clip, on possible mutilated corpses found in the streets of Bujumbura. While it is true and most regrettable that some shocking images reflected the sad reality of the Burundians' daily life at the time, it is clear that hideous and horrendous images were gleaned from the Internet from images that involved massacres and acts of terrorism away from Burundi.

## **THE DIALOGUE PROCESS: A WAYOUT?**

The 2015 insurrection and its corollary of bloodshed as well as acts of terrorism and vandalism are rooted in the very distant past. Indeed, the history of Burundi is punctuated with similar facts, in the wake of its elections, and since its independence. The general elections of 2015 are necessarily linked to those of 2010 with the only difference that the

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<sup>57</sup>[http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2014/09/08/burundi-trois-religieuses-italiennes-violees-et-assassinees\\_4484029\\_3212.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2014/09/08/burundi-trois-religieuses-italiennes-violees-et-assassinees_4484029_3212.html)

most recent ones have led to a series of misfortunes and pains more than those that preceded them. If not, grenade throwing, corpses in the streets, opponents who refuse the verdict of the ballot boxes and form a coalition, displacements of populations terrorized by these losers, is already seen and it is very regrettable. Consequently, it is impossible not to link the coup attempt of May 2015 with the insurrection which preceded it by a few days, reminding us of the demons of yesteryear, the assassination of the first President democratically elected and its collaborators in 1993 and the civil war that has plunged Burundi for more than a decade.

The people of Burundi resumed with democracy in 2005. They chose to bury the hatchet and vengeance in favor of a peaceful coexistence in harmony. They mandated their leaders to prevent him from returning to the fratricidal war. In line with the resolve adopted by the Government in 2010 against the protestors of the choice of the people, in 2015 a process of inter-Burundian dialogue was added, under the facilitation of a National Commission of Inter-Burundian Dialogue (CNDI) as well as another dialogue facilitated by the East African Community (EAC) to which Burundi belongs.

However, for reasons of idiosyncrasy, this internal process which integrates participation, inclusion and which the Burundian population has taken ownership, is overlooked or neglected by some outside actors. Instead of supporting this internal dynamic, which is the best way-out, the latter prefer a process that excludes much of the vital forces of the Nation.

## **INTERNAL PROCESS BY THE CNDI**

The Interburundian dialogue is facilitated in Burundi by a National Commission for Inter-Burundian Dialogue (CNDI), composed of fifteen members of Burundian nationality, appointed by decree, respecting the constitutional balances. The CNDI is composed as follows:

1. Three representatives of religious denominations;
2. Three representatives of political parties or political actors with members in the Parliament;
3. Two representatives of the extra-parliamentary political parties;
4. Two representatives of the Civil Society;
5. One representative of the Batwa ethnical group;
6. A representative of the National Defense Force;
7. A representative of the National Police of Burundi;
8. A representative of the Judiciary;
9. A representative of the Youth Forum.

Between its establishment and the writing of this MEMO, the CNDI has spent 592 hours in listening sessions and exchanges with the population. It has organized meetings in the

18 provinces of Burundi, and then it has traveled all the 119 municipalities of the country. The CNDI also met with organized groups such as women, youth, trade unions, registered political parties, religious denominations, journalists, students, economic operators, police officers, civil society as a whole, etc.

In addition to these workshops, members of the Interburundian Dialogue Committee met with representatives of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), then with the South African Embassy in Burundi, the Diplomatic and Consular Corps as well as the International Organizations present in Burundi, not to mention the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Outside the borders, the CNDI regularly participated in the Interburundian Dialogue Sessions in Entebbe, Uganda, and Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania. Members of the CNDI also visited South Africa in Durban as part of capacity building through the ACCORD. At the invitation of the Diaspora, the CNDI organized Interburundian dialogue sessions in Scandinavian countries, Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

## **ARUSHA AND THE INTRICACIES OF A SABOTAGED DIALOGUE**

The East African Community is working hard to help Burundians find a lasting solution to the political problems that surrounded the 2015 electoral process. From Entebbe in Uganda to Arusha in Tanzania, the Facilitation of the EAC was able to organize consultations with stakeholders in the dialogue. Several field visits, in Burundi, have also allowed the facilitation to understand the true nature of these political upheavals and their cause.

Among other things, the Facilitation has understood that those who are grouped within the CNARED coalition and who challenge the legitimacy of democratically elected institutions and call for a transitional government are not in step with reality, much less with the Vision of the EAC and Facilitation. Instead, the Facilitator pointed out that the objective of the current process is to prepare a road map for the 2020 elections in serenity.

The Government of the Republic of Burundi has shown its support for this process by sending a high-level government delegation until it decides in February 2017 not to participate. Due to pressures, the Facilitation decided to exclude some political parties and to extend its invitation to personalities, however, pursued by the Burundian Justice. The "inclusive" dialogue advocated by the international community had just been sabotaged. The Facilitation did know that the Government of Burundi could not violate its own laws by responding to a process that did not take into account the sovereignty of Burundi.

## **BURUNDI FACES ITS CHALLENGES**

Burundi's remarkable momentum since 2005 in the fight against poverty has often been hampered by political and security disruptions that have shaken Burundi around the electoral processes of 2010 and 2015, leading to disturbing humanitarian situations which the Government should always face. For several years, Burundi has been engaged in a fierce struggle against poverty and food insecurity, which are largely the consequences of climate change affecting a Burundian population that lives mainly on agriculture and livestock.

Since 2005, the country has returned to the path of democracy, organizing general elections every five years so that the people of Burundi could renew its leaders through the ballot box. Unfortunately, this has not yet been understood by a certain political class, which thinks it can lead without the green light of the population, which means that each election is preceded or followed by troubles in the country, provoked by these unpopular politicians.

However, Burundi's greatest challenge is economic. Poverty and deprivation are and will always be the bed of political instability because politicians manipulate young people, frustrated by the lack of insurance for a better tomorrow. However, the inclusion of young people is the priority of priorities in the development programs initiated by the Government of the Republic of Burundi.

### **BURUNDIAN REFUGEES. WHY HAVE THEY FLED?**

Several thousands of Burundians crossed the border and sought refuge outside the country. Most are suffering in some refugee camps. While some responded favorably to the Government's call and efforts to return home, others preferred to stay, while others in Rwanda were blocked and unable to make the way back, And this to feed the chronicle of a political bargaining around these refugees.

The reality is that the majority of Burundians who continue to move out of the country are fleeing precarious living conditions, not violence or insecurity as some claim. During a field visit in June 2015 by President Nkurunziza to inquire about the situation in Kirundo province, bordering Rwanda, the natives expressed their complaints about the high cost of living caused by bad seasons observed in their region. They then talked about the promises of a better life made to them by "recruiters of refugees" who even prepared buses to take the volunteers to the camps established in advance by Rwanda.

Those who were called refugees fleeing insecurity in Burundi, to manipulate both national and international opinion, were ultimately Burundians who aspired to a decency of life that climate change could no longer guarantee, most of them being farmers.

Other members of the same family from Batwa community who came back from Rwanda have told their truth: "We heard rumors of imminent war, people advised us to flee before the war began; there have never been any acts of violence in our locality".

It is unnecessary to revisit the political calculations behind all these maneuvers that transformed refugee camps into recruitment and military training bases, but from this field visit, the Government of Burundi found that population movements are generally due to natural disasters that add food insecurity to an already precarious way of life in rural areas.

## **THE PROBLEM OF REPATRIATION OF THE BURUNDIAN REFUGEES**

Conscious that the security situation is not the main cause of population movements, and considering that a nation deprived of thousands of its citizens can hardly progress, the Government of Burundi has undertaken an extensive awareness campaign aimed at refugees to encourage the voluntary return of Burundians.

The Government reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring security and fostering a climate conducive to the development of the entire population. It is from this perspective that the Government of Burundi has committed to work with local administrations to organize the reception of refugees with dignity. It is also the duty of the local administration to look after the lands and other property of those who have fled to avoid any conflict upon their return. The repatriation of refugees is a guarantee of sub-regional stability, inasmuch as it is proven that among those who have fled, either because of poverty or because of rumors of imminent war, some are enrolled in rebellion movements against Burundi, in flagrant violation of international refugee laws.

## **THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY**

More than 65 percent of Burundians are young people, who constitute the major part of the working population. Fighting poverty necessarily involves the socio-professional integration of young people; it also means investing in and improving education systems. If youth unemployment has become a global problem, the dimensions it takes in our country Burundi are worrying. According to ISTEERU, 75% of the economically active population is employed in the informal sector, compared to 18% in the public sector and 7% in the formal private sector. Faced with the problem of youth unemployment, the Government of Burundi in collaboration with its partners, the private sector, civil society and youth associations are gradually collaborating in the implementation of national policies geared towards socio-economic integration, the most important of which are the National Policy on Technical Education, Trades and vocational training, the National Youth Policy.

## CONCLUSION

In view of misleading and erroneous information circulating, either against the Burundian government accused of shrinking space for political freedoms in Burundi or against the youth affiliated with the ruling party (Imbonerakure) to whom are wrongly attributed all evils and violations of human rights in the country, it is urgent to break the silence and explain to both the national and the international communities that the country comes from far away. Any act that could undermine the consolidation of peace and social cohesion must be punished with the utmost energy for the survival of millions of Burundian and stability in the region depend on them.

It should be recalled that in 2005, Burundi, as a way out of crisis, successfully held general elections after those of 1993, which led to the assassination of elected officials, starting with the Head of State himself, the Speaker and Deputy-Speaker of the National Assembly as well as several members of the Government.

Amid rumors and slanders conveyed by some people and organisations, Burundians returned against one another, waging a total, fratricide, and ethnically drawn-up and motivated war which would last a decade, killing hundreds of thousands of people while forcing into exile several hundred thousand others.

In Burundi, the problem itself has never been the elections. Indeed, the Burundian people has the merit of having organized several elections in peace and serenity, but difficulties always emerged before or a few days later, amid the killing of elected officials from top to bottom. Certainly, the year 2005 thus opened the way for a new era, an era of free, transparent and peaceful elections, and an era during which elected leaders were able to complete their term of office, which was the first time in the history of Burundi since its independence.