

# REPUBLIQUE DU BURUNDI



## MINISTERE DES RELATIONS EXTERIEURES ET DE LA COOPERATION INTERNATIONALE

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ALAIN AIME NYAMITWE,  
BURUNDIAN MINISTER OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND  
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DURING THE ICGLR  
INTERMINISTERIAL MEETING, LUANDA, ANGOLA, FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>,  
2016.**

**LUANDA, ANGOLA, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Honourable Ministers,**

1. At the outset, please allow me to extend, on behalf of my delegation, our gratitude to the Government and the people of Angola for the warm welcome and all the kind attention, bestowed on us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Luanda.
2. Today's meeting is held after the 26<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of the Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union. You will recall that the latter took salutary measures for our country, Burundi. The Peace and Security Council, having held a high level meeting, has decided not to deploy MAPROBU, whereas the day before, Burundi was re-elected as a member of AU Peace and Security Council for another two years term. We hereby express our gratitude towards all the AU Member States and as a consequence, to the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) for the trust placed in us.
3. Let me clearly indicate that Burundi is faced with some challenges. But we have Faith that we will overcome them. The supreme authority, H.E. Pierre NKURUNZIZA, President of the Republic of Burundi, as well as other national forces, are conscious of the situation. That is the reason why the Inter-Burundian dialogue has already started, gathering around the table, not only Burundians residing in the country, but also those who are outside of Burundi, all political and social categories together. To-date, more than a half of Burundi Provinces have been covered, and the population expressed its enthusiasm to make significant recommendations which will be part of the synthesis at the end of the current phase of the debate. We must make sure that all the issues of great national interest are treated by all those who wish to speak. In the same way, Burundi supported the process of dialogue, as suggested

by the East African Community, which, as you recall, entrusted the facilitation to H.E Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda. After the launching session of Entebbe, on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015, our Government had wished that consultations proceed with the Facilitation. Alas, due to the Facilitation's loaded calendar, this activity could not take place but other consultations, at the regional level, continue.

4. In the same way, the Special Adviser to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Benomar, continues its work of consultation with the Government and other concerned Burundian parties. The dialogue, like the mandate of the special Adviser, find their legal justification in resolution 2248 of the UN, of November 12, 2015, which calls to negotiations the Government of the Republic of Burundi, on the one hand, and all concerned peaceful stakeholders, on the other hand. Thus, the intrigues of all those involved in violence should cease.

Mr. Chairman,

5. My country, Burundi, believes firmly that the region has relevant peace and security instruments. Our Pact for Peace and Stability in our region as well as the protocols which are integral parts of it, witness to the commitment of the leaders of our organisation, to work for Peace, Democracy and Development in our region. Thus, our delegation finds that the Luanda theme, " Let us accelerate the effective implementation of the pact and its protocols for a better democracy and stability in the Great Lakes Region", could not be more pertinent. If ALL OF US owned our instruments and institutions, we would be able to make the difference.
6. Yet, this seems not to be the case, unfortunately. There are negative forces that are working contrary to the regional Peace and Security efforts. Worst still, is the fact that some of those negative forces are harboured by some ICGLR Member States, in total violation of the territorial integrity of other States.
7. Mr. Chairman, you will remember that on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in New York, our Government gave a report on the acts of aggression and violation of the International Humanitarian Law by the Republic of Rwanda, acts of which Burundi is still victim.

The Burundian delegation showed that the Rwandan Government was involved in the aggression of July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015, by the fact that Rwanda shelters, allows recruitment and training in military camps, harbours, protects and supports some putschists and negative forces. Consequently, the delegation asked (and obtained) from the Regional Interministerial Committee (RIMC) to urge Rwanda to respect the Pact on Security, Stability and the development in the Great Lakes Region and its protocol on non- aggression and mutual defence, in all its aspects. The RIMC had also decided to deploy a Extended Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM )mission to Rwanda in order to verify the allegations levelled by Burundi against that country and forward the report the relevant organs.

For our delegation, this decision was normal because, upon a request made by Rwanda, during the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the EAC, on July 6, 2015, this mechanism was deployed in Burundi, without any resistance, in order to verify the allegations on the supposed presence of the FDLR elements in Burundi. We are expecting the related report.

8. I wish I was able to indicate, here, that such acts have ceased. I wish I was able to report good news. Alas, I am unable to do that. I am unable to give you good news because military recruitments in Burundian refugees camps in Rwanda still go on; because military training sessions for our compatriots in Rwanda go on, as well as incursions, via the DRC this time around.

We must acknowledge the vigilance of the DRC security services and the MONUSCO, which, a few days ago intercepted tens of youths, Burundians, accompanied by former Burundian army officers, along with Rwandans, planning to attack Burundi.

In addition, young people in the refugee camps in Rwanda are under pressure: to enrol or not to enrol, that is the question. As for those who wish to return to Burundi, the process is not facilitated by the Rwandan authorities. We have urged the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) so that it does everything possible to uphold the civilian nature of refugee camps, and also guarantee the right voluntary repatriation.

9. Today, it is important to keep in mind that we are not the only ones to ring the alarm bell. International NGOs, Diplomats, and even the United Nations are aware of it.

Related reports in several languages are delivered, information is broadcasted on what one would rightly call a vast campaign of destabilization of Burundi. A report of the UN Group of Experts (GoE) on the DRC, recently confirmed these facts. That report was subsequently attacked by Rwanda, but this is not the first time that country does so. Lastly, on this chapter, yesterday, appearing before the US Senate, the USA Government has officially admitted, via the Deputy Secretary of State in charge of African Affairs, Linda Thomas Greenfield and Tom Perriello, the US Special Envoy in the Great Lakes Region, that what we have always said of the subversive activities of that country against Burundi is in fact TRUE. Since yesterday, that information has made it in the World press headlines.

You will recall that the instigators of the insurrection of April-May 2015, the coup leaders of May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the rebels of all stripes, have established their headquarters in Kigali. The attempted military coup of May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015, as we have said it and we will repeat it again and again, originated from outside Burundi.

10. Those are acts that we seriously condemn and will always condemn them unreservedly. They are horrible facts that hinder the peaceful coexistence of States. They violate all the standards on which the international relations are built. They do not augur anything good and can, in no manner, contribute to the objectives of our Pact. Because they ostentatiously violate the Protocol on non- aggression and mutual defence.
11. Thus, my delegation appreciates the conclusions of the meeting of the Committee of the Defence Ministers on the security situation prevailing in Burundi and in the Region. My delegation expresses its gratitude for the opportunity offered to our country, to call on the Region. In fact, actually, the ICGLR Member States should rather cooperate for mutual defence, not the contrary.
12. The Pact urges the Member States to base their relations on the respect of the principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the interior affairs of the other Member States, of non-aggression, of co-operation and peaceful conflicts resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Today, the Government of Burundi once again firmly calls on our Committee:

1° to urge Rwanda to immediately cease recruitment, training and the armament of the negative forces which make acts of aggression against Burundi

2° to urge the Government of Rwanda to facilitate the deployment of the JVM on its own territory in order to verify the allegations made by the Government of Burundi against Rwanda and to promptly deliver a related report to the relevant organs. On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in New York, the RIMC “had exhorted the Government of Rwanda to facilitate the deployment of a mission of the EJVM on its territory in order to verify and clarify the allegations made by the Government of Burundi”. Since the date of the formulation of this recommendation to date, the Government of Burundi has not yet been informed about the fulfilment of the mission by the mechanism in question nor about its conclusions.

Then, urge the EJVM to make all the suitable provisions to carry out this mission and report within a short time about the results of the mission to the President of the Regional Interministerial Committee for it to take appropriate measures.

3° Take all necessary measures from the relevant ICGRL instruments violated by Rwanda regarding Burundi.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. We estimate that those are legitimate requests made here because on our side, the Pact has interest and meaning when it is respected by all the Member States. Otherwise, what would be the value of the norms of our organisation, if one can violate them without being condemned? If we are “equal States and States in an equal way”, which obligation the other States do keep to respect instruments that some trample?

15. Effectively, by the signature of the Pact on Security, Stability and the Development in the Great Lakes Region, the Region began inter alia respecting the sovereignty of the States and non-interference in the interior affairs, the respect of the national integrity and not tolerate nor provide an assistance to the armed groups.

What about the respect of that engagement by Rwanda regarding the support of aggression against Burundi by armed groups equipped by weapons and trained by Rwanda?

Mr. Chairman,

Honourable Ministers,

16. This meeting should not be a simple meeting for the Burundi people and other peoples of the Region. Our peoples expect peace and bread. In a nutshell, we want to manage our challenges without interference from anyone, and not from Rwanda in particular.

17. Lastly, allow me to pay a vibrant homage to Professor NTUMBA LUABA for his good and faithful services for the benefit of the ICGLR.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**