Background

Over the past few months of 2016, cases of violence, including extra judicial killings, disappearances, cases of abductions, torture and grenade attacks have been recorded. This violence erupted after the decision by President Nkurunziza to run for a third term was opposed by civil society, political parties and international community. The elections held on 29 June 2015¹, 21 July 2015² and 24 July 2015³ lacked acceptance and legitimacy including strong reservations from the African Union. The international community has reacted to these violations through fact finding missions, proposals for peace keeping soldiers, issuance of statements, threats and actual sanctions. These have not abetted the violence and conflict.

European Union suspends direct aid to Burundi

Following the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in Burundi, the European Union (EU) and Burundi held talks in Brussels in late October 2015. During these conversations, it emerged that the EU would suspend direct government aid to Burundi for failure to comply with the Cotonou Agreement.⁴ Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement provides the legal basis for the suspension aid, following a period of dialogue, in cases where one of the parties feels that the agreement’s essential and fundamental elements are not being respected. The Burundi government was expected to present the government’s program, particularly as regards democratic principles, human rights and governance.

Following further consultations which produced minimum results, the EU warned that it would take "precautionary measures" regarding "the ongoing co-operation activities and limiting new co-operative activities of a humanitarian nature". Due to increased state of violence and human rights abuses, the EU decided to suspend direct aid to Burundi government on 14 March 2016⁵. The EU noted that Burundi was lacking of commitments regarding human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law since the latter principles were not respected. In a diplomatic correspondence addressed to President Nkurunziza, the EU indicated its commitment to supporting the people of Burundi including urgent intervention and humanitarian action, whereas direct aid to public institutions and administration are suspended including budgetary support. Any financing conditions and payment modalities regarding Burundi peacekeepers

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¹ Communal and legislative elections  
² Presidential election  
³ Senatorial election  
participating to African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and parts granted to Burundi government as per pre-deployment costs (financed by European Development Fund (EDF) to support peace in Africa) will be reviewed and adjusted in consultation with the Africa Union. The resumption of direct aid to Burundi is expected after the following provisions on the Cotonou Agreement on these issues are undertaken:

- Participation in consultation with the East African Community (EAC) and the African Union (AU) or any other international mediation to dialogue aimed at restoring democratic principles
- Continuation of disarmament with support of international observers; police and the army discharge the mission of maintenance of public order in due respect with the rule of law
- Reopening of private media and settlement of disputes regarding the implementation of the Press Law
- Freedom of exercise of the profession of journalism
- Freedom and security of civil society and human rights defenders
- Handling of ongoing judicial cases
- Cases of jailed protesters and other security offenses be handled in terms of the penal code and international standards safeguarding fundamental rights and freedoms

The EU’s decision will be reviewed at least every six months, including through joint monitoring missions by the European External Action Service and the Commission.

**Resumption of EAC facilitated Peace Talks**

The 17th EAC Summit confirmed that President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda is the EAC appointed Mediator to Burundi whereas former Tanzania President Benjamin Mkapa was appointed to facilitate the mediation. President Mkapa showed his readiness to resume Burundi peace talks as demanded by several partners including the United Nations (UN), the AU and the EU. In a three days trip, President Benjamin Mkapa met President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the EAC appointed Mediator on Burundi, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi as “he wanted to assure President Nkurunziza that there has to be an end to any "silly speculations" about possible violence or confrontations or war between members of the EAC on developments in Burundi, Rwanda or Tanzania.”

**Hate speech**

Over the months, Burundi government repeatedly accused Rwanda of recruiting and training rebels to destabilize Burundi. On 14 March 2015, in a press conference, Police spokesperson claimed Burundi law enforcement agents caught an alleged Rwandan military spy, Mr. Cyprien Rucyahintare. However, reports from Rwanda challenged this assertion and that

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8 Former Tanzanian President Mkapa visits Burundi over political crisis, http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2016-03/19/content_38062819.htm
he was not a member of the Rwanda Army and was only known as a goat thief as his family and court document confirmed.¹⁰

The Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Pascal Barandagiye, in a press conference held on 17 March 2016 threatened to file a complaint against Rwandan President Kagame before international courts as there was evidence suggesting Rwanda’s involvement in destabilizing Burundi. Further the Minister indicated that anti-Rwanda demonstrations will continue¹¹. Following Catholic Church pastoral letter¹² urging inclusive political dialogue aimed at finding a lasting solution for Burundi, Mr. Pascal Barandagiye released a communiqué accusing certain churches of deviating from their original mission and are influencing the population over the socio-political situation of the country¹³. Reference was done to above-mentioned pastoral letter.

Continued killings and attacks

During the update period, grenade attacks decreased. However, dead bodies were found in some locations. Some of the reported incidents include the following:

- On 15 March 2016, a body (male) was found near Kaburantwa River in Cibitoke (west of Burundi). Witnesses suggest he had several injuries on the body.
- On 15 March 2016, Mr. Adrien Mudomo a member of the ruling CNDD-FDD party from Gatwe in the District of Mugamba was killed.
- On 15 March 2016, Mr. Pascal Kazungu a member of the ruling CNDD-FDD party was killed in Kibago Makamba.
- On 15 March 2016, at 12:05 a grenade attack occurred in Kamenge, Gare du Nord, injuring 3 people.
- On 17 March 2016, a body identified as Mr. Salvator Ndayikengurukiye was found in Camabare, in the area of Buruhukiro in the district of Rumonge (South of

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¹¹ Le Burundi veut que le Rwanda s’explique …,http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/le-burundi-veut-que-le-rwanda-sexplique/
¹² Communiqué of the General Assembly of the Catholic Church Archbishops of 4 March 2016
¹³ Pas de dialogue avec les putschistes, certaines églises dévient de leur mission selon le ministre de l’intérieur, http://www.bonesha.bi/Pas-de-dialogue-avec-les.html
Burundi). His body had several bullet injuries. Witnesses suggest the body was thrown by Police agents who fired into the air several times to disperse surrounding crowd

- On 17 March 2016, a policeman was killed in Mubira, in the area of Nyagasasa in the district of Mugamba (South of Burundi)
- On 19 March 2016, a man with his throat slit open was found in Buyenzi 13th Avenue n°32
- On 19 March 2016, a body tied with handcuffs was found in a street between the neighborhoods of Bwoga and Kwibuka in the district of Gitega (centre of Burundi).
- On 19 March 2016, Mr. Didier Sindakira, a Imbonerakure chief in Mukike (South west of Burundi) was attacked while heading to his residence in Rukina. He was injured on his leg and admitted to a healthcare center

**Arbitrary arrests**

During the update period, police continued their random searches in several neighborhoods of Bujumbura. Dozens of youths were arrested and detained incommunicado. Some of the reported cases include the following:

- On 14 March 2016, Mr. Jean Marie Ndikumana was brutalized and arrested by Police agents in Nyakabiga in the District of Mukaza
- On 15 March 2016, six students from the Université des Grands Lacs Kiremba (South of Burundi) were arrested by Police. They were detained for several hours in Bururi before being compelled to appear before the Prosecutor the following day. The 6 students are were known for being active during anti-third term demonstrations. They were accused of having been in touch with a certain Phocas who escaped from Bururi jail on or around 13 March 2016.
- On 15 March 2016, 3 brothers Patrick Nzisabira, Salvator Nibigira and Alexis Niragira were arrested by police in Musaga in the District of Muha. Their whereabouts are still unknown. Neighbors suggest they were abducted
- On 18 March 2016, five members of the Mouvement pour la Sécurité et le Développement (MSD) including Jean Claude Kineza known as the president the MSD in Mukike were arrested and detained in Mukike police station. Witnesses suggest they were arrested by Major Gahomera, Army Commander of Mujejuru camp.

**Atrocities Watch Africa**

Atrocities Watch Africa (AWA) is a non-partisan, civil society organization and institution that intends to provide continental leadership in matters pertaining to the prevention of mass atrocities within Africa and beyond, through multi-pronged approaches that infuse ownership, legitimacy, and sustainable interface. AWA’s strategic and approaches are grounded in the realization that atrocities can be prevented through various interventions, including, but not limited to, early warning mechanisms, diplomatic efforts, use of social media and new technologies, litigation, and advocacy campaigns.

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