



## ***Burundi Watch Update 18-24 September 2017***

### **Summary**

The reporting period is dominated by the presentations of the final report of the commission of inquiry on Burundi at the 36<sup>th</sup> human rights council in Geneva. Grave crimes including killings, abductions and arbitrary arrests continue as does hate speech and incitement of violence continue.

### **Burundi on spot in Geneva**

The interactive dialogue on Burundi at the Human Rights Council in Geneva was held on 19 September 2017. The Chairman of the Independent Investigation Commission, Fatsah Ouguergouz outlined the gist of his report. He called on the International Criminal Court to open as soon as possible investigation into the crimes committed in Burundi since April 2015, in view of the seriousness of the crimes documented by the Commission and the fact that Burundi has neither the will nor the capacity to prosecute crimes under international criminal law.

In his intervention, the Ambassador of Burundi, Rénovat Tabu did not respond to any allegation raised by the Commission. He continued the government's rejection of the ICC, denying all the crimes. He focused his intervention stressing that Burundi is victim of international conspiracy for it defends national sovereignty; and suggested that

Burundi rather needs truth for crimes committed in the past. The President of the national institution of human rights, CNIDH, Jean-Baptiste Baribonekeza, in turn, repeated the government's denial policy and rejected a potential resort to the ICC.

At least 34 states spoke during the interactive dialogue, including four African countries (Sudan, Rwanda, Chad and DRC). At least 29 States expressed their support for the Commission or their deep concern at the serious human rights violations in Burundi. Many countries have called for the renewal of the mandate of the commission of inquiry and supported the call for the ICC to open its investigation if this will help end impunity in Burundi. The attack by the bureau of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Bujumbura and the massacre of Burundian refugees in Kamanyola in the DRC have raised the outrage of the countries. Five countries (Russia, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela and DRC) denounced the "politicization" of the Human Rights Council, but no country rejected the contents of the commission of inquiry's report. In a very brief statement, China reiterated its support for the inter-Burundi dialogue process. A strong delegation of Burundian civil society was present in Geneva to support the IOC-Burundi report and calls for the renewal of its mandate and the suspension of Burundi from the Human Rights Council. Civil society and several international NGOs call for the end of impunity in Burundi and support the opening of an ICC investigation.



Picture: Civil society delegates at the 36<sup>th</sup> human rights council in Geneva. Credit: Pacifique Nininahazwe on twitter

## Investigate Kamanyola massacre

In the aftermath of the killing of Burundian asylum seekers in the DRC, several organizations and institutions reacted by demanding that investigations be conducted to know the truth about matter. The European union released a statement<sup>1</sup> also calling for investigation. Burundi refugee community in Uganda and Rwanda declared a three days mourning as they called hosting countries to fully protect refugees according to international humanitarian law. On 20 September 2017, civil society delegates met the UNCHR officers in Geneva and engaged them regarding the security of Burundian refugees in the region and strongly demanded that investigation be conducted.



Picture: Gathering at Kabusu Center in Kampala on 21 September 2017. Credit: Arsène Arakaza on twitter

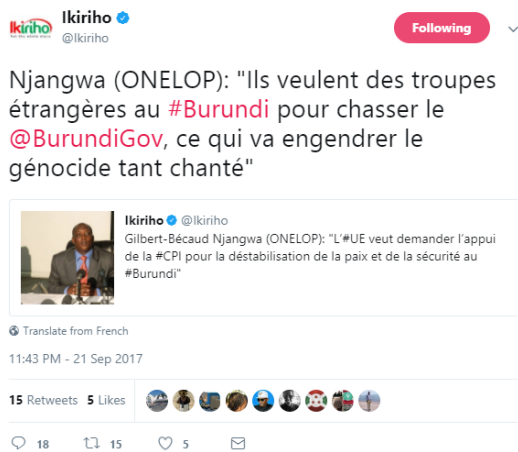
## Continued hate speech

The government of Burundi and the ruling CNDD-FDD party and its allies are still mobilizing against the report of the commission of inquiry, speeches inciting violence are frequently used. While addressing a huge crowd of people on 16 September 2017, the CNDD-FDD secretary general, Evariste Ndayishimiye stated that Burundi fought against

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<sup>1</sup> Déclaration locale de l'Union européenne concernant les violences de Kamanyola, [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/dr-congo-kinshasa/32491/d%C3%A9claration-locale-de-lunion-europ%C3%A9enne-concernant-les-violences-de-kamanyola\\_fr](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/dr-congo-kinshasa/32491/d%C3%A9claration-locale-de-lunion-europ%C3%A9enne-concernant-les-violences-de-kamanyola_fr)

MAPROBU that would be “washed out” if it came and the 228 suggested UN police will be fought and terminated within 2 hours. In the same vein, the FNL leader Jacques Bigirimana repeatedly stated that should Pierre Nkurunziza be killed, there will be a genocide. A pro-regime activist, Gilbert Bécaud Njangwa told *Ikirihó* that “there are some who wait for foreign troops in Burundi to overthrow the government of Burundi; that will trigger the long awaited genocide”.



## Killings, grenade attacks and gunshots

Some of the reported cases of killings and grenade attacks include:

- On 17 September 2017, two persons were wounded by machetes by unknown people in Kanyosha in the city of Bujumbura
- On 18 September 2017, the dead body Mujojo was recovered in Munyinya in the District of Butezi.
- On 18 September 2017, Anastasie Ntungwanayo was strangled by unknown people in Murama in the District of Ryansoro
- On 19 September 2017, the dead body of Elysée Ihezagire was recovered in Mushasha in the District of Mutimbuzi. Witnesses suggest that he was killed because he was an eye witness to the imbonerakure torturing a woman

- On 19 September 2017, the dead body of Félicien Mvukabanka was recovered in Carama in the city of Bujumbura
- On 21 September 2017, Bernard Bitorwa was killed by unknown gunmen in Kabere in the District of Bukinanyana. His wife was wounded
- On 22 September 2017, a dead body of unidentified person was recovered in Kigutu in the District of Vyanda.
- On 22 September 2017, Sabushimike Innocent was killed in Bikara in the District of Busoni
- On 22 September 2017, a grenade attack at Rusaka resulted in 4 persons being wounded including Serges Sindihebura, Jean Claude Habonimana, David Ntahonkuriye and Bakundumuhari Ferdinand



*Picture 3. A dead body recovered in Carama. Credit: Teddy Mazina on twitter*

## **Arbitrary arrests and abductions**

Some of the arrests and abductions that were reported during the period report:

- On 18 September 2017, seventeen (17) teenagers were arrested in Gihofi and detained in Gihofi. They were arrested as they were travelling to Tanzania
- On 19 September 2017, Dieudonné Ndikumasabo was arrested at Mpimba as he visited a detainee. He was detained at Musaga police station before he was released a day later on 20 September 2017

# **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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