



## ***Burundi Watch Update 25 September-1 October 2017***

### **Summary**

At the end of the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the human rights council, two resolutions were adopted on Burundi. The first creates three human rights experts to deploy in Burundi. The second was the extension of the mandate of the commission of inquiry on Burundi. Meanwhile, killings, arbitrary arrests and abduction are constantly reported.

### **UN extends the mandate of Commission of Inquiry**

The United Nations Human Rights Council concluded the 36<sup>th</sup> session in Geneva and two resolutions were reached regarding the human rights situation in Burundi. The first resolution was presented on 28 September 2017 by Tunisia on behalf of the African group and is mainly centered on the appointment of three human rights experts to be deployed in Burundi. Whereas the second resolution was supported by majority of the African group members, it was strongly opposed by the European Union group. According to the said resolution, the three experts will document human rights abuses and submit their findings to Burundi judiciary, which in turn will judge perpetrators. The second resolution was presented by the European Union group and is aimed at extending the mandate of the commission of inquiry for one year. The resolution assigns the commission to continue the documentation of human rights abuses in Burundi and to report to the human rights council future sessions and to the 73<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly.

While the Burundi government jubilated by praising some African countries for their support, it rejected once more the commission of inquiry on Burundi.

On 29 September 2017, the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi took note of the decision of the United Nations Human Rights Council to extend its mandate for one year. The Commission called on the Burundian government and United Nations Member States to make a firm commitment to fighting impunity and to put an immediate end to the serious human rights violations and abuses committed in Burundi<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission also stressed that it is the primary responsibility of the Burundian authorities to put an end to serious human rights violations committed on their territory. It also called on opposition groups to put an immediate end to human rights abuses and to abstain from all incitement of violence. The Commission called on the African Union to retake the lead in seeking a lasting solution to the crisis in Burundi based on respect for human rights and the rejection of impunity.



*European Union at UN in Geneva on twitter after the voting of the two resolutions on Burundi*

## **Burundi ambassador to AU goes personal**

Burundi is presiding over the African Union Peace and Security Council for the month of October 2017. Surprisingly, the Ambassador of Burundi to the African Union, Amb Dieudonné Ndabarushimana used hate words as he mocked the participation of a 10 Burundian human rights defenders at the 36<sup>th</sup> session of human rights council in Geneva and welcomed the adoption of an African backed

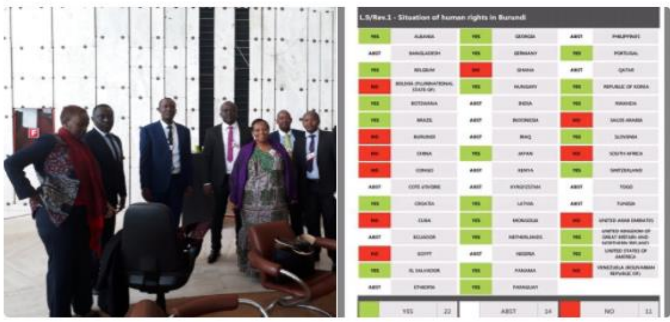
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<sup>1</sup> Commission calls on Burundian government to put an end to serious human rights violations,  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22184&LangID=E>

resolution on Burundi. On his tweet of 29 September 2017, he wrote in French what can translate to “ *Small vampires are not as strong as they claim. They are disappointed! Hurricane Irma nibbled a little on their soup*”.



Les petits vampires ne sont pas aussi forts tel qu'ils le prétendent. Dommage que l'ouragan Irma a grignoté un peu sur leur soupe populaire.



04:17 - 29 sept. 2017

*Amb D. Ndabarushimana on twitter on 29 September 2017*

### **Kamanyola Massacre: Candlelight Vigil in Brussels**

After the massacre of Burundian refugees in Kamanyola in the DRC, the CNARED and the Burundian community of Belgium held a candlelight Vigil in Brussels this Saturday 30 September 2017. Top politicians and civil society leaders participated and demanded the international community, neighboring countries and the UNHCR fully protect Burundian refugees. They also demanded that investigation be conducted as to determine those responsible and bring perpetrators to justice. They also called upon the ICC to open an inquiry in the situation of Burundi for the sake of fighting against impunity.



*Burundians during a Candle Vigil in Brussels on 30 September 2017. Credit: Anicet Niyonkuru and Imburi Phare on twitter*

## **Attack on media continues**

Since the outbreak of the crisis, several attempts on freedom of the press have been committed including the destruction of independent media houses and the suspension of some of them. More than a hundred of journalists were forced into exile.

In the same vein, on 28/9/2017, the national council of communication decided to suspend the radio owned by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, CCB FM+ because of an editorial that commented about the ongoing crimes. The council also withdrew the license of broadcasting from four independent media including RPA, Bonesha FM, Radio Renaissance and Télé Renaissance. The license of



broadcasting was also withdrawn from 10 other media houses that were not able to start operating in Burundi.

During the report period, Bonesha journalist in Makamba, Serges Sindayigaya was arrested on 1 October 2017 and detained under order of the Governor of Makamba, Gad Niyukuru who demanded to take possession of the journalist's cell phone. The governor snatched the cell, instructing the police to detain Serges at the same time. Serges was released after several hours of detention.

## **Killings, grenade attacks and gunshots**

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

- On 24 September 2017, Jean Marie Ngendakuriyo aka Bugemeri was killed whereas another person was wounded in a pub located at Ruvumera hill in the District of Matana
- On 25 September 2017, a lifeless body was found at Gitaramuka hill in the District of Burambi
- On 27 September 2017, Melchiade Ntahomvukiye was killed by unknown people at Kajondi hill in the District of Rutovu
- On 27 September 2017, a lifeless body of unidentified person was found at Masasu Hill in the District of Giheta
- On 27 September 2017, Célestin Nzobarantumye was killed in Cibitoke in the District of Rugombo
- 28 September 2017, a 75 year old Pontien Niragira was killed by unknown people in Ryansoro
- On 29 September 2017, a lifeless body was found in the District of Giheta

## **Arbitrary arrests and abductions**

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

- On 25 September 2017, Seven( 7) persons including Pastor Gaspard Ntawundondera of the “Eglise des Amis” were arrested in Rugombo. They were accused of holding an illegal meeting
- On 28 September 2017, Evelyne Niyonzima was arrested and detained in Kayanza as she travelled to Rwanda. She was released two days later

- On 28 September 2017, Christella Uwineza was arrested in Kayanza as she travelled to Rwanda
- On 29 September 2017, police searched households in Kagwema in the District of Gihanga. Vehicles crossing the area were also searched

## **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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