



Burundi Watch Update 16-22 October 2017

SUMMARY

Several killings, arbitrary arrests and abductions have been reported amid unresolved crisis. In this context, the European Union decided to assist the people of Burundi despite economic sanctions imposed in line with Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. Religious leaders and the ICGLR call for respect of, and care for, refugees.

EU grants 95m Burundi

In a press release of 20 October 2017, the Burundian Minister of Finance, Mr. Domitien Ndiwokubwayo, and the Ambassador of the European Union, Wolfram Vetter, signed an agreement of a grant to support rural development, nutrition, health and energy. According to Ambassador Vetter "With this program, the European Union is stepping up its support for the people of Burundi and this new measure will allow us to quickly implement actions that will benefit the most vulnerable". Ambassador Vetter also stated that: "This €95 million is in addition to the programs launched since 2015 for €119.5 million."

According to the Delegation of the European Union, the support is provided in the context of Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, under which direct financial support to Burundi was suspended in March 2016 until the Burundi authorities make better progress on the respect of human rights, the strengthening of the rule of law and widening political space and freedom of the press. The Ambassador of the European Union recalled that "if the government meets these expectations with concrete measures, the Union will be able to review its decision".

Top rebel leaders extradited to Burundi

Four leaders of the Republican Forces of Burundi (PFB), a rebel outfit operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo against the regime Pierre Nkurunziza were arrested in Tanzania by security forces from both Burundi and Tanzania and thereafter extradited to Burundi where it is believed that their lives are in danger. Officials from the PFB authenticated the news and said that the four had gone on a mission to Tanzania but fell into a trap. It is believed that they were taken to Burundi where they would be tortured to gain information. The Burundi officials have however not made it public about the location of the rebels.

Opposition CNARED denounces the Ombudsman

In a statement dated 16 October 2017, the opposition coalition CNARED stated¹ that it was against initiatives and actions undertaken by the Ombudsman of Burundi, Hon. Edouard Nduwimana. According to CNARED, the coalition doubts his good faith and ability to objectively lead the process of restoring political space in as much as Hon. Nduwimana excelled “in the dismantling of political parties, the destruction of the associative fabric, the closure of private media and the reduction of public spaces and freedoms in Burundi”.

Hon. Nduwimana is accused of holding several meetings with political parties that he himself dismantled, on the grounds that he would allow them to reunite or regroup together.

Hon. Nduwimana is accused of supporting two political actors and two political parties that were divided by him and are working together to sabotage the actions of the genuine opposition gathered in the CNARED and the peace talks to which the CNARED is party.

The CNARED demanded that the facilitator of the EAC led peace talks conduct genuine inclusive negotiations between the government and the real opposition. According to CNARED, Hon. Edouard Nduwimana “has just proven to the world that he is a zealous activist serving the interests of the CNDD-FDD and his boss and that it should be treated as such”.

ICGLR calls for respect Refugee Convention

As the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) held and concluded its 7th Summit of the Heads of States and Government on 19 October 2017 in Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo, it urged countries hosting Burundian refugees to facilitate the return of those willing. The ICGLR considered that those not willing to return be settled far away from the common border as recommended under international refugee law. The ICGLR confirmed its support to the EAC led inter-Burundian dialogue and urged all parties to conclude stakeholder consultations and commit to a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

¹ <http://cnared.info/wordpress/declaration-cnared-giriteka-face-aux-manoeuvres-de-m-edouard-nduwimana/>



Burundi Religious leaders meet in Arusha

On 20 October 2017, Representatives from the Roman Catholic Church, National Council of Churches of Burundi, Council of Union of Christian Churches, Islamic Community of Burundi, Confederation of Church and Revival of Burundi, and Seventh Day Adventist Church released a communiqué entitled “Sustainable Peace in Burundi.”² The communiqué was issued at the end of a meeting organized by the World Council of Churches and the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect.

Religious leaders examined the current situation in Burundi as well as the role of religious leaders and their contribution to enhancing peace, security and reconciliation in the country.



Burundian religious leaders meeting in Arusha. Credit WCC

² See Communiqué of Burundian religious leaders on sustainable peace in Burundi, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-ecumenical-bodies/communique-of-burundian-religious-leaders-on-sustainable-peace-in-burundi/>

Killings

Some of the cases of killings reported over the reporting period include:

- On 14 October 2017, two dead bodies of unidentified persons were recovered in the Rusizi River;
- On 15 October 2017, the dead body of Frédiane Kankindi was recovered floating in the Jiji River located in the District of Bururi;
- On 16 October 2017, an armed attack by unknown gunmen at the residence of Ishmael Ntacobita situated at Rugajo hill in the District of Mugina resulted in one child being killed while four children and their mother were wounded;
- On 17 October 2017, the dead body of an unidentified young woman was recovered at Rushemeza Hill in the District of Bururi;
- On 17 October 2017, the dead body of an unidentified man was found floating in the Nyawisesera River located in the District of Matongo;
- On 17 October 2017, Charles Ndaruzaniye was killed at Bwoga hill in the District of Gitega

Arbitrary arrests, abduction

Some of the cases of arbitrary arrests, abduction reported during the most recent reporting period include:

- On 13 October 2017, ten persons were arrested by Imbonerakure militia at Gatwaro Hill, in the District of Bweru;
- On 14 October 2017, a retired military man, Térance Nicimpaye, was arrested at Musave in the District of Rumonge by the head of the national intelligence service of Rumonge
- On 14 October 2017, Member of the Parliament Pascal Bizumuremyi was arrested by Imbonerakure militiamen at Rushwahunga Hill in the District of Bweru
- On 15 October 2017, five FNL militants were arrested in Mabayi by the Chief of the NIS in Cibitoke;
- On 16 October 2017, Mrs Rogatienne Niyonzima was arrested by National Intelligence Service agents at Kibumbu Hill in the District of Mbuye;
- On 16 October 2017, two persons, Joseph Nahinkuye and Nkurikiye were abducted by the Deputy Chief of the NIS in Cibitoke;
- On 19 October 2017, a Burundian university student, Prudence Nduwayo was abducted from Bujumbura and taken to an unknown location;
- On 20 October 2017, police officer Gaston Cishahayo was abducted from Muramvya and taken to an unknown location;
- On 21 October 2017, four (4) FNL members, Claude Butoyi, David Ninezereza, Vianney Manirambona and Jean Marie Vianney Ntakiyiruta were arrested at Kabezi in the District of Kabezi.
- On 22 October 2017, an estimated 20 persons were arrested by the police in Kanyosha and taken to an unknown location.

Atrocities Watch Africa

Atrocities Watch Africa (AWA) is a non-partisan, civil society organization that provides 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 engagement. AWA's strategy and approaches are grounded in the realization that atrocities can be prevented through various interventions, including, but not limited to, early warning, diplomatic efforts, use of social media and new technologies, litigation, and advocacy campaigns.

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