



Burundi Watch Update November 2018



Summary

The month of October was regarded as a decisive month as Burundian invested in peace were invited to the 5th and concluding session of the inter-Burundian dialogue. Despite the massive participation of the opposition, the government of Burundi, the ruling CNDD-FDD party and their allies boycotted the session, claiming October is month mourning in Burundi.

Human rights violations including killings, abductions and arbitrary arrests continue with tireless participation of the Imbonerakure militia who enjoy support from the government and security agencies.

Bujumbura boycotts the last inter-Burundian dialogue

Several announcements were made regarding the 5th and last inter-Burundian dialogue session. In preparation for the event, a team of the facilitators met the government of Burundi, the ruling CNDD-FDD and its allies, and the opposition operating in Burundi. The main opposition coalition CNARED operating from exile was also involved.¹ Civil society and religious leaders were also invited for consultation².

Whereas the internal and external opposition responded massively to the session that was due to start of 24 October 2018, the government of Burundi and its allies announced that they could not attend any of such a political event because October is dedicated to mourning the heroes of independence and democracy in Burundi.

In his opening remarks, President Mkapa regretted the boycott by the government of Burundi and announced that he had deployed all efforts to bring the government of Burundi to attend in vain. He however asked those in attendance write down their contributions to the facilitation team proposed themes and come up with a consensual roadmap towards 2020 general elections.

¹ See <http://atrocitieswatch.org/burundi-watch-monthly-update-october-2018/>

² See Burundi: consultations de la société civile sans celle proche du pouvoir, <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20181021-burundi-consultations-societe-civile-celle-proche-pouvoir>



Partial view of participants to the 5th interburundian dialogue. Credit: Anicet Niyonkuru on twitter

The opposition drafted a 17 pages document that they called as propositions aimed at ending the crisis.

In closing the session, President Mkapa announced that his assignment as facilitator was terminated and that he was to report to the Mediator who in return, will decide accordingly.

Fear grips Burundian refugees in DRC

The two last weeks of October were marked by information that suggested infiltration of the refugee camp of Lusenda in the DRC. According to refugees that we contacted, they fear the repeat of Kamanyola massacre in September 2017³. The fear of Burundian refugees deepened when fighters were reported in f Sange, Butumba and Nyarugi in south Kivu ⁴. A day before, Congolese press announced the presence of FNL combatants inside Lusenda refugee camp⁵.

Note that the camp of Lusenda is located in the area of Fizi in the province of south Kivu and is at about 70 km from the border between Burundi and the DRC and is only at 35 Km from the Lake Tanganyika. The camp of Lusenda hosts 45,090 Burundian individuals⁶ that fled the current crisis.

³ See <http://atrocitieswatch.org/burundi-watch-update-83/>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/sosmediasburundi/posts/2068672229861472?>

⁵ RDC-Fizi : Présence des hommes armés signalée dans le camp des réfugiés burundais à Lusenda (Sud-Kivu), <https://actualite.cd/2018/10/30/rdc-fizi-presence-des-hommes-armes-signalee-dans-le-camp-des-refugies-burundais-lusenda>

⁶ See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/burundi/location/1952>



Aerial view of the refugee camp of Lusenda. Credit: MONUSCO.

Belgian NGO director expelled

On 23 October 2018, the Country Director of the Belgian NGO I.I.I.I Jolien Vanden Broeck was expelled from Burundi as Burundian authorities withdrew her visa when she arrived at Bujumbura International airport. She was evacuated to Kigali by the services of the Belgian Embassy in Burundi. The Belgian NGO I.I.I.I started operating in Burundi in the 2000 and is very active in the fields of democracy, good governance, civic participation and empowering grassroots communities.

EU renews sanctions till 2019

On 25 October 2018, the Council renewed the EU restrictive measures against Burundi⁷ until 31 October 2019. These measures consist of a travel ban and asset freeze against four persons whose activities were deemed to be undermining democracy or obstructing the search for a political solution to the crisis in Burundi.

These activities include acts of violence, repression or incitement to violence and acts that constitute serious human rights violations.

The concerned persons are the Deputy Director the National police, Bizimana Godefroid, the head of cabinet of the presidential administration, Gervais Ndirakobuca aka Ndakugarika, Joseph Mathias Niyonzima aka Kazungu and former official working with the office of the President, Léonard Ngendakumana.

All are accused by the European Union for their roles in human rights violations. In its decision of renew of the decision, the Council considered that the absence of progress in the situation

⁷ Burundi: EU renews sanctions until 31 October 2019, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/10/25/burundi-l-ue-renouvelle-les-sanctions-jusqu-au-31-octobre-2019/>

regarding the four persons subject to restrictive measures justified the extension of the sanctions.

Burundi stand triggers UN firm reaction

Over the 2 last years, the government of Burundi attacked human rights bodies that it accuses of mistreating the Burundian people and interfering in national politics and sovereignty as they denounce human rights violations.

Because of continued human rights violations, the Human rights Council extended the mandate of the Commission of inquiry for one more year. On 24 October 2018, as the Commission of inquiry presented its report at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Not surprising the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burundi to the UN, Albert Shingiro, attacked the independent international inquiry team, threatening to prosecute its members and compared the Chair of the Commission, Doudou Diène, to a participant in the slave trade.

In the statement, Ms. Bachelet also called on Burundi, as a UN Member State, to “show respect” to its institutions and the various bodies, laws and mechanisms it has established. Burundi is also a current member of the Geneva-based Human Rights Council.

“I urge the Government of Burundi to issue an immediate retraction of this inflammatory statement and to offer a full apology to Mr. Diène and the other Commissioners, as well as to the Human Rights Council, which created the Commission, and its President who selected and appointed the three Commissioners,” she said⁸.

Human rights violations

During the report period, several cases of killings, abductions and arbitrary arrests were reported. Authors of the killings were not identified and in majority of the cases, dead bodies recovered were buried without identification. Imbonerakure operated several arrests, alone or together with administrative authorities or security forces. Arbitrary arrest qualify as people were arrested in breach of the law and detained without charges.

On 27 September 2018, a 31 old male Népomuscene Nduwayo was abducted by unidentified people and his body was recovered two days later, on 29 September 2018 in the neighborhood of Gatunguru of the District Ntahangwa.

On 28 September 2018, Pascal Ntahombaye was abducted by unidentified persons from his service in Muyinga and his dead body was recovered in a wastewater gutter in Muyinga on 2 October 2018.

⁸ See UN rights chief denounces Burundi for ‘belligerent and defamatory’ attack on inquiry team, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/10/1024162>

On 30 September 2018, Valérie Ndinzemenshi and her 6 months old baby were killed in the District of Gitaramuka by assailants who dismembered their bodies using machetes .

On 3 October 2018, an attack by unidentified gunmen at Musaga police station in the District of Muha resulted in 2 policemen being wounded

On 3 October 2018, a member of the UPRONA opposition party activist Adronis Nizigiyimana was arrested by the police at his home in Kiyange in the District of Kibago and detained at Kibago police station.

On 5 October 2018, two kids respectively aged of 6 and 4 year were gravely wounded as a grenade exploded in their home at Gisanza in the District of Bururi. The father Cassien Nibizi explained that the grenade was found by the kids in the afforestation of Mpete located in the same zone

On 7 October 2018, an retired military Charles Njeimana was arrested by the police at Murambi hill in the District of Makamba and detained at Makamba police station.

On 7 October 2018, Sergeant-Major Lucien Ntakarutimana aka Mututere working with the National Defence General Army staff was abducted by unknown people in Ngagara Zone of the District of Ntahangwa and taken to unknown destination. Relatives report that he responded to a call of a member of the military police Pascal Hakizimana aka Nyangoma and has not returned ever since.

On 7 October 2018, an attack by unidentified gunmen at Camakombe hill of the District of Mugina resulted in three persons, a mother, her 13-year old child and a one and a half year child being killed. The father was seriously injured.

On 7 October 2018, Mireille Cishahayo was abducted from Buganda center in the District of Buganda after she responded to call from her friend nicknamed Family. No whereabouts of her ever since are known.

On 9 October 2018, the dead body of an elementary school teacher Chadrack Nsengiyumva was found at his home at Mugeregere hill in the District of Kayogoro .

On 9 October 2018, Kibinakanwa was killed by unidentified people at Muzye Hill in District of Giharo

On 9 October 2018, three judges of Nyanza lac residence tribunal namely Spinat Nsabiyaremye, Emmanuel Niyongabo and Silas Nibasumba were arrested and detained by the Prosecutor General in Bururi for allegedly committing forgery in public writing.

On 9 October 2018, Ndayitwayeko succumbed to beating during a mob justice in Mugomere in the District of Rumonge as inhabitants accused him of stealing moto

On 11 October 2018, the accountant at the District of Bubanza, Julie was assaulted by the chief of the zone Jean Marie at his duty office in the District of Bubanza

On 12 October, a man whose identity remains unknown was arrested by Imbonerakure in Kizuka in the District of Rumonge and detained in Rumonge police station.

On 12 October 2018, a 50 year old male was killed by unidentified people who dismembered his body using machetes at Butavuka hill in the District of Rugazi.

On 12 October 2018, a 65 old male Bukuru was gravely wounded at Nyaburondwe of the District of Butaganzwa. Witnesses report that he was intercepted by a group of individuals who assaulted and wounded him in a session of beating targeting the head, neck, back and arms.

On 13 October 2018, a 54 year old member of the opposition UPRONA party, Samson Gahungu working with the District of Gihanga was arrested in the District of Gihanga and detained in Bubanza after he criticized the statement of the President of the Senate Révérien Ndikuriyo who suggested that users of WhatsApp should pay a tax.

On 16 October 2018, a dead body of an unidentified person was recovered floating in the Mubarazi River at the height of Bugesera hill of the District Kiganda. Witnesses reported that the victim showed traces of blood in his face.

On 19 October 2018, an official of the Ministry of health Bwarikindi Terence was arrested in Ngagara zone of the District Ntahangwa by the NIS agents in Bujumbura and taken to unknown destination. Bwarikindi was first searched and his documents, laptop and car were seized.

On 20 October 2018, the representative of the opposition pro Rwas FNL in Gisagara, Jonas Mugara was abducted by Imbonerakure and the NIS chief in Cankuzo, Bonaventure Niyonkuru aka Sakabaka. No whereabouts of him ever since.

On 21 October 2018, Imbonerakure militiamen arrested eleven (11) persons at Gasura hill in the District of Vumbi. Witnesses report that the 11 people gathered to discuss their association. Militiamen Imbonerakure targeted the Vumbi communal council member and pro-Rwas FNL activist Zacharie Muhigirwa and ten (10) other individuals present at the meeting.

On 24 October 2018, Ndikumana was executed by Imbonerakure at Senga hill in the District of Butezi for allegedly stealing three goats. Ndikumana was dismembered as perpetrators used machetes to kill him.

On 25 October 2018, a 12 year teenager Cédric Bigirimana of Bihanga elementary school in the District of Gitega succumbed to grave beating of his teacher Mathieu Mbarushimana who violently beat him breaking his spine.

On 25 October 2018, a 38 year old male Cassien Nimubona was killed at Kazirabageni Hill in the District of Nyanza-Lac. Relatives who observed the dead body report that the victim was beaten to death before killers hang him on a rope to simulate suicide.

On 25 October 2018, a pro-Rwas FNL activist, Fabien Ngerageze and two Rwanda nationals Callixte Mpoenzi and Juvénal Mundane were arrested by the NIS at Rusenda hill in the District of Bukinanyana. Relatives report that they were tied up and embarked in the vehicle of the chief

of the NIS in Cibitoke (vehicle registered D3981A) and taken to the neighboring province of Kayanza.

On 26 October 2018, two dead bodies were recovered at Mirundi Hill, in the District of Bukinanyana. The victims had been tied-up and beheaded.