



Burundi Watch Update, 21-27 March 2016

Background

As the violence stemming from the disputed 29 June 2015¹, 21 July 2015² and 24 July 2015³ rages on, a new trend has emerged targeting senior army officers. High profile army officers have been killed, raising tensions within the army and the country since many believe it may degenerate further into widespread ethnic confrontations. Some of the senior army officers had been accused of participating and orchestrating enforced disappearances, torture and abductions of individuals opposed President Nkurunziza's third term bid.

Killing of High profile army officers fuels tension

Lt. Colonel Darius Ikurakure was the Commander of the Camp Muzinda, located 20km from the capital city. Camp Muzinda is an Army Division specializing among other things in landmine-clearing. However, its commander was pointed out in several operations in Bujumbura targeting youths mainly in the neighborhoods of Cibitoke and Mutakura. He was killed by 3 bullets from a pistol. The fatal shooting occurred around IPM at the Army Headquarters premises on 22 March 2016. The killer was neither identified nor arrested as he/she left the firearm at the murder scene. The same day in the evening, **Major Didier Muhimpundu** was shot dead by an unknown person who called his cell phone and pretended have an urgent message for him. **Major Didier** was killed at the entrance of a pub known as "Bar Hibiscus" located in downtown Bujumbura, not far from the office of the President in Rohero. Since the assassination of **Lt. Col Darius Ikurakure**, former *Forces Armées Burundaises* (FAB) officers were arrested or received death threats including **Major Prudence Ndayisenga** and **Captain Nicholas Nkunuzumwe**. These two were later arrested and detained by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) on 22 March 2016. **Major Herménegilde Ntamagara** was arrested in Musaga on 26 March 2016 and also detained at the NIS headquarters.

The *Force de Défense Nationale* (FDN) was formed in 2004 following the signing of the cease fire agreements between the government of Burundi and the then rebel movement CNDD-FDD⁴. Currently, the FDN is composed of members of former rebel movements that identify

¹ Communal and legislative elections

² Presidential election

³ Senatorial election

⁴ The general agreement of cease fire was signed on 16 November 2013 between the government of Burundi represented by Domitien Ndayizeye and the CNDD-FDD represented by Pierre Nkurunziza.

as *Partis et Mouvements Politiques Armés* (PMPA) dominated by Hutu and former FAB dominated by Tutsi. Theoretically, the Army and the Police are composed of 50% Hutu and 50% Tutsi pursuant to article 257 of the Constitution of Burundi. The same was agreed in the Arusha agreement for the aim of preventing genocide and *coup d'état*⁵. Despite forming the FDN, some former PMPA often behave in the manner that confirm they kept strong ties with the ruling CNDD-FDD party of which they get instructions whereas the law of the land prohibits security forces of affiliating to any political parties⁶.

Hate speech

In a communiqué of 26 March 2016⁷, the *CNDD-FDD* clearly states that it will never sit together with “terrorists-putschists”. The statement elaborates further on strong accusations against Rwanda President, Paul Kagame and the Catholic Church of Burundi. The statement claims that genocide thinkers are situated in Rwanda because Kagame has experienced it (genocide) in his country and wanted to export it in Burundi. The party *CNDD-FDD* holds accountable Paul Kagame and Louis Michel of all human and material damages, mass graves, terrorism, disappearance of Bagumyabanga (Members of the *CNDD-FDD*), and demonization of national institutions to the extent they are portrayed as genocidal, planning of genocide in Burundi. The communiqué is a denial of genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda and a sensitization tool for mass atrocities since Burundi institutions are now controlled to date by the *CNDD-FDD* hard extremist wing.⁸

Continued killings and grenade attacks

During the update period, grenade attacks and gunshots resumed in several locations, with a few reported casualties and damage. Some of the reported incidents include the following:

- On 22 March 2016, **Mr Dieudonné Nsengiyumva**, a policeman was shot and killed in the neighborhood of Carama (North of Bujumbura). He worked with the special police for the protection of institutions (API) and was assigned to security of the parliamentarian **Mrs Mo Mamo Karerwa**
- On 22 March 2016, the houses of 2 families were attacked by an armed group in Kibimba in the District of Gisozi (Centre of Burundi). No injuries were recorded
- On 23 March 2016, 2 grenade attacks targeted military cadets' van while on their way to the Military Hospital located in Mutanga Nord. A few cadets were injured
- On 23 March 2016, **Mr. Dieudonné Mpawenayo** from Campazi (commune of Muruta, in the province de Kayanza) was killed by a grenade attack
- On 23 March 2016, a gunfight between Burundi army and the rebel movement led by **General Major Aloys Nzabampema** broke out in Rukoko national reserve (West of Burundi) and 2 soldiers were killed. **Gen. Nzabampema** claimed to have taken **Lt.**

⁵ Article 14(g) of the Arusha peace agreement

⁶ Article 82 of the Constitution prohibits security forces from affiliating to political parties

⁷ The full communiqué (French version available the time of release of update) can be read for the *CNDD-FDD* on <https://twitter.com/CnddFdd>

⁸ Le Rwanda cherche à « exporter » le génocide, accuse le parti au pouvoir au Burundi, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/313710/politique/le-rwanda-cherche-a-exporter-le-genocide-au-burundi/>

Irambona Alexis working with Burundi Army (the National Defense Force) as a war prisoner and pledged he will be treated in accordance with international humanitarian law

- On 24 March 2016 a grenade attack was reported in Rwibaga in the District of Mugongo Manga.
- On 25 March 2016, a 53-year-old driver **Mr. Gérard Mbonigaruye**, from the district of Burambi in the South of Burundi was killed by soldiers patrolling in Gasekebuye in the district of Muha
- On 25 March 2016, a police station was attacked in the district of Rutovu in the South of Burundi
- On 25 March 2016, a gunshot attack in Musaga resulted in 4 soldiers being wounded
- On 26 March 2016, a gunshot and grenade attacks in Musaga resulted in one person's death

Arbitrary arrests

During the update period, police intensified their random searches and arrests in several neighborhoods of Bujumbura and upcountry. Dozens of youths were arrested and detained *incommunicado*. In some of the reported incidences, police and the *Imbonerakure* militia subjected victims to thorough beatings and ill-treatment. Some of the reported cases include the following:

- 22 March 2016, simultaneous police searches were conducted in the districts of Mukike, Mugongo Manga and Mugamba, 3 young boys were arrested in Mukike, 18 young boys and 2 girls were arrested in Musaga, all were brought to police station of the respective districts.
- On 21 March 2016, **Mr. Arcade Nkurunziza** was arrested by **Samuel Bapfumukeko** aka **Destino**, NIS chief in Makamba; he picked up him in a Toyota Car widely known as *Ti* and taken to unknown destination, his whereabouts remain unknown,
- On 25 March 2016, **Mr. Bernardin Derrick Banzubaze** from Quartier Asiatique and **Mr. Boris Sinagoye** from Kinanira à Bujumbura were arrested at the Ruhwa Immigration post (border between Rwanda and Burundi in the Cibitoke, North West of Burundi). They are suspected of complicity in the assassination of **Lt. Col Darius Ikurakure**
- On 25 March 2016, police search was organized in the District of Kiganda (Centre of Burundi), youths were randomly searched and interrogated, no arrests were made
- On 26 March 2016 at least 6 unnamed youths were arrested in Mutakura and their whereabouts remain unknown according to witness testimonies.

Sixty families' approach the ICC and OHCHR

Families of 60 victims of extrajudicial killings have through their lawyers' petition the International Criminal Court (ICC) and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Duly mandated, the lawyers have requested that 60 families of the victims they represent must be permitted to actively support the authorities, through the collection of evidence regarding the circumstances of the alleged executions and the identification of the perpetrators and accomplices. In the petition of 24 March 2016, the lawyers have asked to meet with the ICC investigating prosecutor and members the UN's Committee of Experts

to examine ways and means to carry out these investigations without endangering lives and families of the victims in Burundi.

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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