



Burundi Watch Update 3-10 September 2017

Summary

During the report period, the number of killings and deaths recovered increased remarkably. The United Nations Human rights council appointed commission of inquiry released a report confirming crimes against humanity in Burundi since April 2015. On his side, the Facilitator in the inter-burundian dialogue, President William Benjamin Nkunda continues his consultations with the aim of organizing an inter-burundian dialogue session in October.

Crimes Against Humanity were committed

In its final¹ report released on 4 September 2017 the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi² concluded that it has reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed and continue to be committed in Burundi since April 2015. These crimes are taking place in a context of serious human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, sexual violence, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and enforced disappearances. The three members commission regretted a lack of will on the part of the Burundian authorities to fight against

¹Commission d'enquête sur le Burundi,

<http://www.ohchr.org/FR/HRBodies/HRC/ColBurundi/Pages/ColBurundiReportHRC36.aspx>

² According to the Commission of Inquiry, the report is a summary. The report will be presented to the Human rights council in Geneva on 18 September 2017. Detailed report will be released before the end of September.

impunity and guarantee the independence of the judiciary and as a result, there is a strong likelihood that the perpetrators of these crimes will remain unpunished said Fatsah Ouguerouz, President of the Commission of Inquiry. Among the alleged perpetrators, the Commission mentioned members, including high level officials, of the National Intelligence Services and the national police force, military officials, and members of the youth league of the ruling party, known as *Imbonerakure*. Due to the impunity protecting the perpetrators of these violations, the Commission asked the International Criminal Court to open an investigation into the crimes committed in Burundi as soon as possible.

The government of Burundi rejected the report claiming it is a western instrument to destabilize national institutions. On Saturday 9 September 2017, hundreds of CNDD-FDD woman league members, Abakenyererugamba marched against the report in Bujumbura and went on demanding that the three commissioners be prosecuted.



CNDD-FDD women league marching against the Commission of inquiry's report and demanding that its authors be prosecuted. Credit: Christophe Karorero and EvelyneButoyi on twitter

Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops

In the Pastoral Letter released on 8 September and read in all catholic churches of Burundi on 10 September 2017, Catholic Bishops of Burundi indicated that the letter follows one released in June 2016 when they stated that peace is only possible when based on truth and justice. They reiterated the call, demanding Burundians to build the country from the foundation of truth, justice, love and freedoms. They

recalled that the country is built by all his citizens without exclusion. Bishops insisted on the necessity of dialogue to prevent violence. They addressed the confusion often held as if the Bishops wanted to interfere in politics and clearly stated that the voice of the Catholic church is quite different from that of any moral, political or faith based organization .

They demanded that the amendment of the constitution proceeds with deep consultations and be made in strict respect of the Arusha peace agreement. Bishops demanded that current political dialogue be inclusive and be genuinely conducted before the situation worsens for they fear further deterioration of the situation and matters related to democracy, common good, security, national institutions, repatriation of refugees, poverty, the future of the youth and the relationship between Burundi and its neighbors.

Mkapa continues his consultations

On 5 September 2017, the Facilitator in the interburundian Dialogue, President William Benjamin Mkapa received the Ombudsman of Burundi, Hon Edouard Nduwimana in Dar es salaam. As he returned to Bujumbura, Hon Nduwimana told media that the Facilitator plans to convene the next meeting of Burundian stakeholders in October. The Ombudsman stressed that the next meeting should be the last session so as to prevent it from interfering with very important national projects including the forthcoming amendment of the constitution. The Ombudsman demanded that when inviting people to the next session, the Facilitator separates those who are not prosecuted and those who under prosecution and should be brought to account for the crimes they committed. Two days later, on 7 September 2017, the Facilitator, President Mkapa received the delegation of the main opposition coalition, CNARED who discussed over the continuation of the dialogue and advocated for inclusivity, calling upon the Facilitator not to exclude those with arrests warrants.



President Mkaapa meeting Hon Nduwimana in Dar es salaam on 5 September and President Mkaapa meeting CNARED delegation. Credit: Macocha Tembele on twitter and Anicet Niyonkuru on twitter.

Killings, grenade attacks and gunshots

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

- On 3 September 2017, a grenade attack at the residence of Hassan Nduwimana located at Kigoma hill in the District of Busoni resulted in its occupants being wounded
- On 3 September 2017, gun fire and shootings were reported at Murambi hill in the District of Muramvya as Imbonerakure militiamen attacked a resident and confronted the police as the latter intervened. The confrontation between Imbonerakure and law enforcement agents resulted in 5 Imbonerakure and 3 policemen being wounded
- On 3 September 2017, The dead body of Elisabeth Nyandwi was recovered in the Nyagonga River, situated near Nyamiyogoro Hill in the District of Muruta
- On 6 September 2017, A dead body of an unidentified man whose arms were tied to his back by a rope was recovered in the Ruvubu River in the District of Muhanga
- On 8 September 2017, A police agent Domitien Nyabenda who attempted to assassinate the Public Prosecutor in Rumonge, Mrs Donathe Niyonsaba on 7 September 2017 was found dead in his cell. Police reports the death is a suicide whereas other sources suggest it's an extrajudicial execution.
- On 8 September 2017, Unidentified individuals assassinated Claudette Irankunda on Muyange hill, in the District of Butezi. The assailants also gravely wounded Samuel Ntirambepa, the father-in-law of the first victim.

Arbitrary arrests and abductions

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

- On 5 September 2017, Frédéric Ngenzebuhoro was arrested at Mubira hill in the District of Mugamba and detained at Mugamba police station
- On 6 September 2017, two Rwandan nationals Jean Félix Nganyirimana and Jean-Pierre Ngoga were arrested in Mparambo in the District of Rugombo under the order of the Police officer Jean Baptiste Habumuremyi who accused them of spying on Burundi and handled them to the NIS in Cibitoke
- On 8 September 2017, Two (2) unidentified persons were abducted from Gusaba Hill, in the District of Murwi . They were taken in a car plate number I3446A of the imbonerakure representative Deo Nsabimana

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.

info@atrocitieswatch.org
www.atrocitieswatch.org
www.facebook.com/atrocitieswatch
www.twitter.com/atrocitiesw

