



Burundi Watch Update

11 – 18 December 2017



Burundi weighs on dialogue report

The Secretary-General and Spokesman of the Government Philippe Nzobonariba published a [report on the just concluded Inter-Burundian dialogue](#) in which the Burundi government recognized the mediator Uganda President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the facilitator Benjamin Mkapa and all the participants and their views. In the report the government of Burundi asserts that Burundi is not suffering from any crisis, let alone a political stalemate, inasmuch as the current institutions elected by the people in 2015 are functional. It also reaffirms its determination to defend the sovereignty and the political and economic independence of the country.

Citizens to pay for 2020 elections

The government of Burundi has hatched a plan to make the citizens pay for the 2020 elections since most external funding has been halted on account of human rights violations by the Burundian government. The government is looking to raise the funds by deducting up to ten percent of civilians' salaries and taking contributions from citizens. Minister for the Interior Pascal Barandagiye said the government would seek contributions from every household that will pay 2000 francs (\$1.13) a year and students of voting age will contribute 1000 francs (\$0.57) annually. [World Bank data from 2016](#) shows that sixty five percent of the population of Burundi lives below the poverty line. Mr. Barandagiye said that the total amount required is not yet known but when the needed funds are raised, the collection will stop.

Increasing presidential terms to 7 years

President Pierre Nkurunziza and his allies are looking to change the constitution to extend the length of presidential terms from five years to seven years starting

in 2020. With the new constitution potentially “resetting” term limits, this could see the President Nkurunziza in power until 2034. On Tuesday 12 December, while addressing farmers, the president said that the government would organize a referendum on the amendments in 2018 and he threatened those that planned to oppose the project whether by speech or actions. The coalition of opposition parties CNARED rebuked the campaign and called it a declaration of war.

Something not right says Rwasa

The government of Burundi says the recently launched referendum campaign (see above) is aimed at strengthening and advancing the country’s laws after more than two years of political violence. Vice President of the National Assembly Agathon Rwasa said, “Till this very minute, the so-called project of amendment of the constitution has been concealed, and I wonder why? Since a constitutional matter is a national one why should President (Pierre) Nkurunziza hide it till this moment. But for the time being it seems that they are in haste, for what purpose I don’t know. All that we can see it’s clear that Nkurunziza is aiming at remaining in the office for life.”

Free human rights activist

The Human Rights Watch has urged the Burundian authorities to free Nestor Nibitanga or atleast produce him in court. Nibitanga is a human rights activist who has worked for the Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons was arrested at his home in Gitega province and has been in detention since November 21.

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

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