

Committee: Security Council

Issue: The situation in Burundi

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Positions: Deputy President / President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates

My name is George Banos and I will have the honor and privilege of serving as the Deputy President of the Security Council in the first annual session of the American College of Greece Model United Nations. I'm an IB student currently attending Moraitis School. I have attended seven MUN conferences and this will be my second time chairing.

As a Student Officer part of my responsibilities will be ensuring the proper functioning of the committee, as well as helping delegates prior and at the time of the conference. This study guide is here to help you understand the topic and also to aid you in your research. However, I strongly urge you to do your own research too in order to come up with original and effective solutions for the issue.

I wish you good luck in your preparation and I look forward to meeting you in the conference.

Best Regards,

George Banos

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of 2015 the governing party in the Republic of Burundi announced that its president, and current leader of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza would run for a third term in office. The announcement was met with many protests by civilians who considered his decision as unconstitutional. The situation turned violent after the



#1: Unrest in Burundi

country's supreme court decided to approve Nkurunziza's right for re-election. As a result of the protest, the government shut down the country's internet and telephone network and started referring to the protesters as "terrorists". At the moment the situation has been deemed "critical" as tens of thousands of people have fled the country, hundreds of people have been arrested and several protesters and police have been killed.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

National Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD)

The CNDD is the party which currently governs Burundi. In 2005 most Burundians supported the party, which won the parliamentary elections. It promised to bring unity in a divided country. Nevertheless, President of the CNDD-FDD Nkurunziza kept gaining power and in 2015 announced his unconstitutional run for a third term in office, which was met with violent protests and clashes.

National Forces of Liberation

The National Forces of Liberation is a political party and rebel group in Burundi which fought in the Burundi Civil War for the Hutu ethnic group. The FNL is led by Agathon Rwaswa and is estimated to have around 3,000 combatants.¹

Hutu

The Hutu, also known as the Abahutu, are a population inhabiting the African Great Lakes region. They mainly live in Rwanda, Burundi, and the eastern Democratic

¹ "National Forces of Liberation." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. Winter 2017.

Republic of the Congo, where they form one of the principal tribal population divisions alongside the Tutsi and the Twa.

Tutsi

The Tutsi are the second largest population division among the three largest groups in Rwanda and Burundi.²

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

The crisis in Burundi officially enters its second year and the country remains unstable. High-profile assassinations are on the rise, and newly formed armed opposition groups become more active. Various NGO's have reported that more than a thousand people have been killed 26 April 2015 and 25 April. At least 690 of the reported dead (or approximately 60%) are civilians. More than 260,000 people have reportedly fled outside Burundi and thousands have disappeared without trace. With Burundian authorities refusing to co-operate with international organizations like the United Nations, the situation seems to be getting out of control.

The crisis

In 2005, Pierre Nkurunziza's appointment as Burundi's President was viewed as the symbolic end of a 12-year civil war. The CNDDFDD, founded in 1994, was a Hutu-led opposition, with Nkurunziza's faction splitting from the group in 2001, and signing a ceasefire with Burundi's Transitional Government in 2002. When the political wing (CNDD) and military wing (FDD) merged into a recognised political party in 2005, it appointed Nkurunziza to the presidency. At that time the Burundi people were mostly supporters of CNDD as the party had managed to "reunite" a fractured nation and end the year-long hostilities.

Ten years later, on 25 April 2015, the CNDD-FDD announced that Nkurunziza would run for a third term, despite a constitutional two-term limit. Many were enraged as they considered this decision as an attempt of an unconstitutional coup from within. On 26 April 2015, riots broke out across the Burundian capital of Bujumbura. In May 2015, the Constitutional Court upheld Nkurunziza's candidacy even though there had been many claims of government officials threatening judges. Riots and protests broke out again in Bujumbura. Protests spread to the northern provinces of Ngozi, Kirundo, and Muyinga in the lead up to legislative and local elections on 29 June 2015. Nkurunziza was re-elected in June 2015 with a majority of votes. Many organizations as well as civilians have suggested that the result of the election was rigged and that the majority of the people were in fact against

²"Tutsi." *Oxford Dictionaries | English*. Oxford Dictionaries, n.d. Web. Winter 2017.

president Nkurunziza. Opponents of a third term cite term limits stipulated by Article 96 of the Constitution and adherence to the Arusha Accords, which ended the civil war fought from 1993 to 2005 by providing constitutional checks on any attempts of governments or ethnic groups to remain in power for more than two terms.



#2: The making of a new political crisis in Burundi

In 2014, the CNDD-FDD (generally Hutu-supported) removed First Vice President Bernard Busokoza of the Union for National Progress (UPRONA, generally Tutsi-supported), many believe that this “persecution” was not only political but also an attempt by the CNDD command and the president himself to implement a more Hutu-friendly policy. The tension was fuelled even more when Nkurunziza stated that he considers part of the Arusha Accords as invalid. The crisis has been marked by increasing tensions within the ruling party and within the armed forces. In March 2015, members within Nkurunziza’s inner circle, Richard Nimbasha and then-head of intelligence Godefroid Niyombare, advised the president against seeking a third term. After being dismissed from the security apparatus in February 2015, Niyombare, former General Leonard Ngendakumana, and former Defense Minister Cyrille Ndayirukiye led a failed coup on 13 May 2015. Coup leaders were later sentenced to life in prison, with the exception of Niyombare, who was never arrested. Since then the situation has remained unpredictable with Nkurunziza still in power and people losing their lives on a daily basis.

Further Information

The crisis has become increasingly widespread throughout the country. Targets of attacks are not only military-related but also civilians. The consequences of the past year are stark, but the crisis is not materializing into a civil war, a coup, or any other form of instability that is immediately recognizable. Since June 2015,

reports have been referring to President Pierre Nkurunziza's actions as 'trigger for civil war'. Nevertheless, major media outlets continue to refer to the situation using the term "political crisis". Because of Burundi's recent conflict history, some, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, have warned that the ethnic dimensions of the conflict "are flashing red". The UN, having experienced a horrific failure during the Rwandan genocide, wants to make sure that Burundi will not be another disaster. However, the past year of political violence has remained primarily between regime supporters and regime critics. Additionally, many civilians who have not necessarily supported, or opposed, President Nkurunziza's leadership or the ruling party National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) have nevertheless become victims of the conflict by seeking a safer livelihood across borders. Therefore, it is clear that no one is safe on the ground and that the international community must act as soon as possible.

Burundi's initial riots and protests starting in April 2015 mirror that of other African countries where long-standing presidents have attempted to defy or constitutionally remove term limits. However, riots and protests



#3: Protesters in Burundi

related to Burundi President Nkurunziza's announcement of a third term have not reached a resolution yet. Instead, Burundi's unrest has evolved into a seemingly never ending crisis with numerable opposition groups, violence against civilians and a big number of refugees fleeing the country. Furthermore, the government has used the unrest to block any broadcast of anti- Nkurunziza opinions. During the last year there has been a shutdown of newspapers, raids on radio stations, and freezes on the bank accounts of human rights organisations. Because of such actions the public is often misinformed or even lack any information relating to events and casualties. However, there have been incidents of grassroots journalism by fearless Burundians who do their best to make sure that the people are informed.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Countries

Republic of Burundi

Burundi is a central African country, located on the east side of lake Tanganyika. Burundi's population of 9.511.200 (2009) consists of mostly members of the Hutu or Tutsi tribes. Many decades of conflict and civil war ended when the CNDD-FDD party gained power and reunited Burundi. Nevertheless problems re-appeared in the beginning of 2015, after President Nkurunziza's wish to run for a third time. The people were enraged and protests started which led to many civilian deaths after clashes with the police. The situation in Burundi still remains very critical and this is why the United Nations Security Council should take immediate action.

Organizations

African Union (AU)

The African Union is the biggest intergovernmental organization in Africa and one of the main pillars of unity in the continent. The AU has a long history of cooperation with United Nations and is the main ally of the UN when it comes to overcoming problems in African countries. The goals of the AU are very similar with the ones of the UN, to achieve peace and prosperity in the African continent. The organization has been very concerned about the growing tensions in Burundi and is willing to offer any help to the UN to help stabilize the situation.

United Nations (UN)

The United Nations Security Council is one of the most important organs of the UN. Its decisions are final and are implemented immediately. This is the reason why a subject as important as the situation in Burundi should be discussed in the SC. There is not much time left for the international community to act. It will be up to you, the delegates of the SC to help find solutions to the problems that Burundi is facing.

Human Rights Watch

The Human Rights Watch is an international organization, which fights for advocacy and human rights. The HRW has been involved in many countries since its creation in 1978. Its main goal is "To become a voice of Justice". The organization has a long history of co-operation with the UN and will definitely be an important ally in the effort to bring peace and the rule of human rights law in the Republic of Burundi.

East African Community (EAC)

The East African Community is an intergovernmental organization with six members: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The EAC is mostly a union for economic co-operation between the states. In 2013 a protocol was signed outlining the Community's plans for a monetary union within 10 years. Many believe that the EAC is a precursor to the establishment of the East African Federation, which would be a full union of the six countries into one state.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS³

Date	Description of event
June 2010	Presidential election. Nkurunziza re-elected in uncontested poll after main opposition parties boycott the vote and parliamentary polls. They say earlier district elections were rigged, and form a new civil opposition Alliance of Democrats for Change (ADC-Ikibiri).
November 2011	Human Rights group says more than 300 people killed in past five months, including opposition party members or members of former rebel FNL; accuse the government of restricting media and political freedom.
June 2013	President Nkurunziza approves new media law which criticized condemn as an attack on press freedom. Law forbids reporting on matters that could undermine national security, public order or the economy.
April 2014	Burundi orders a senior UN official to leave the country after a UN report warns that the government is arming its young supporters ahead of next year's elections, a claim which the government denies.
October 2014	Burundian opposition leader Leonce Ngendakumana is sentenced to a year in prison for slander, in what he describes as a political trial ahead of next year's presidential election.
May 2015	Constitutional Court rules in favor of President Nkurunziza's decision to stand for a third term, amid reports of judges being intimidated. Protestors take to the streets and tens of thousands flee the violence. An army officer's coup attempt fails.

³ "Burundi profile - Timeline." *BBC News*. BBC, 14 Dec. 2016. Web. 12 Feb. 2017.

June 2015	The Electoral commission announces presidential elections will be postponed until July and parliamentary polls until the end of June, following month of protests. Vice-President Gervais Rufyikiri leaves country after opposing President Nkurunziza's plans for a third term.
July 2015	President Nkurunziza wins a third term in the presidential election with 70% of the vote. Opposition leader Agathon Rwaso describes the polls as a "joke".
January 2016	President Nkurunziza threatens to counter the deployment of external peacekeepers after the African Union announces plans to send in 5,000 troops to protect civilians from escalating violence between government and rebel forces.
March 2016	With the political situation showing little sign of improvement, the EU announces that it is suspending direct financial aid to the Burundian government.
May 2016	UN report accuses neighboring Rwanda of supporting Burundian rebels. Rwandan President Paul Kagame denies the allegations.
October 2016	President Nkurunziza signs into law a bill which will see the country withdraw from the International Criminal Court.
August 2016	Burundi rejects deployment of UN police to end more than a year of political violence, saying the plan violated its sovereignty.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB)

It was established by the United Nations Security Council in May 2004, in order to safeguard the application of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement which was signed on the 28th of August 2000. The operation was met with success, according to the Secretary-General's report S/2006/429, which illustrated the prosperous collaboration of the United Nations with the government and the assurance that the local authorities will continue cooperating with the United Nations in the Future. The ONUB halted its functions on the 1st of January 2007 and its responsibilities were transferred to the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi.

United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB):

It was founded by order of the United Nations Security Council so as to take up the tasks of the ONUB. The BINUB succeeded in aiding in the implementation of the

ceasefire agreement, signed on the 7th of September 2006 between the government and the FNL, and in the installation of the rule of law, healthy administration and freedom of press. The BINUB was replaced by the United Nations Office in Burundi in the 1st of January 2011.

East African Community

The East African Community (EAC) has played a large part in the situation at hand and has taken various measures. Unfortunately, the EAC has not taken bold action when it was really required and thus allowed the matter to get out of hand. While it has considerably helped in the prosperous and fruitful dialogue between the two combatant sides, its overall work regarding the situation in Burundi cannot be deemed successful.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Firstly, it is important that further outbreaks of violence in the Burundi region, are prevented, due to the fact that the region is already largely traumatized by the continuous bloodshed. Secondly, the delegates must stress the importance of the promotion of democracy by ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections, that the right of the freedom of the press is thoroughly respected and that all political parties, especially those whose political view is opposing to the government, have the right to express their opinion as well, without being targeted. Thirdly, delegates must focus on the disarmament of all non-state armed forces without neglecting the importance of the repatriation and rehabilitation of the numerous refugees giving specific attention to the reintegration of ex-combatants. In conclusion, if it is considered absolutely necessary, military intervention guided by the United Nations or other countries could be proposed but only as a last resort.

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