



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Burundi

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PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

Mr. Fortuné Gaetan ZONGO, Special Rapporteur (SR) on the Human Rights Situation in Burundi

One year after presenting his report before the UNHRC, the SR introduces his new country-situation [report](#) and reiterates that the implementation of his mandate continues to be hampered by the [lack of cooperation](#) from the Burundian authorities. Nevertheless, despite the absence of visits to the country, the mandate is being carried out with rigour, professionalism, objectivity and impartiality. The SR renews his invitation to the Burundian authorities to engage in constructive dialogue with the mandate, in full compliance with their international commitments. While understanding the concerns expressed about the nature of the mandate, the SR thinks it is worth recalling that maintaining these reservations could be perceived as distancing oneself from the decisions of the UNHRC, to which Burundi contributes as a member.

Ten years after the 2015 electoral crisis, concerns remain about the human rights situation in Burundi. The structural weakness of institutions prevents them from fulfilling their role of promoting and protecting human rights. The [independence of the judiciary](#) is merely an illusion. Interference in governance institutions and the weakening of national human rights mechanisms



are commonplace. The Independent National Human Rights Commission has seen its mandate **weakened by political interference** and irregularities, while the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been weakened by political pressure, leading to the departure of several commissioners.

Civil and political rights have been a real challenge for Burundians over the past twelve months. In June 2025, Burundi held legislative, senatorial and municipal elections. The electoral process, which began in 2023, saw the weakening and **virtual elimination of political parties** that could have challenged the ruling party. As a result, these elections, which should have been steps towards democratic consolidation, were unfortunately marred by serious irregularities, such as the exclusion of major opposition figures, forced contributions imposed on the population, and a climate of intimidation and violence.

This situation resulted in the ruling party winning the elections with over 96% of the vote, which is far removed from international standards and principles for free, transparent and fair elections. At the same time, several reports have documented serious violations, including arbitrary arrests, prolonged detentions, acts of torture and enforced disappearances attributed to the security services and *Imbonerakure* militias. Between August 2024 and June 2025, some 40 enforced disappearances were documented, mainly targeting **political opponents**.

The **humanitarian situation** has also worsened. The influx of more than 67,000 Congolese refugees since February 2025 has led to further discrimination, and worrying violations have been reported in the management of refugee camps. The situation of refugees remains alarming. More than half are still in various refugee camps, exposing them to numerous risks. Some organisations are doing their utmost to care for them and restore a minimum of dignity. Noteworthy to mention the extraordinary contribution of organisations such as Marguerite Barankitse's Maison Shalom.

The SR further draws the Council's attention to the **persistence of land grabbing**, which is a major source of impoverishment and exclusion. Land and property are regularly taken by force from individuals or communities, often without adequate compensation or effective recourse, targeting in particular those perceived as close to the opposition or from minority groups.

The SR further mentions the joint statement issued by several Special Procedures on 1 September 2025, titled 'Burundi - UN experts concerned about increase in serious human rights violations during election period'. This statement was co-signed by the SR himself, the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Working Group on Discrimination against Women, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions. The joint statement notes an increase in **serious violations during the election period**, including enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, summary executions, cases of torture, sexual violence, attacks against journalists and civil society, and restrictions on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. These UNHRC mechanisms unanimously highlighted the numerous violations, including the case of Ms. Sandra Muhoza, a journalist who has been in detention for over a year for exchanges she allegedly had in a WhatsApp group of media professionals.



While civil society and human rights defenders based in Burundi are oppressed, **civil society in exile** is dynamic and provides effective monitoring and oversight. Their contribution to the protection of human rights in Burundi should be recognised. Some examples include *the Iteka League, FOCODE, Tournons la Page, FIACAT, ACAT Burundi, Mouvement Inamahoro*, the Coalition for the Defence of Human Rights in Refugee Camps (CDH/VICAR), and many others.

The situation on the **economic and social rights** front is equally worrying. Nearly 2.2 million Burundians suffer from food insecurity, with the country remaining at the top of the global hunger rankings. The health system is underfunded and unable to meet basic needs. **Women** also continue to face structural discrimination, particularly in access to land and inheritance, reinforced by recent case law that enshrines the primacy of custom over gender equality. These land dynamics undermine confidence in institutions, exacerbate local tensions and compromise national reconciliation. These **alarming findings call for action**. The SR recommends the Government of Burundi to:

- Organise an inclusive dialogue and free and credible elections in 2027; end impunity and investigate human rights violations impartially.
- Strengthen the independence of the judiciary and the credibility of national human rights protection mechanisms.
- Respect land rights and put an end to abusive expropriations.
- Protect the rights of women and children.
- Create the conditions necessary to guarantee the protection of refugees in accordance with international obligations and their return to Burundi.

Since the submission of his most recent report, **new developments** have emerged that warrant attention. These include the arrest of Brigadier General Bertin Gahungu in Bujumbura, following his recall from the Burundi Mission in New York. The SR is monitoring this development very closely to determine whether it is a sign of a genuine desire to combat impunity or rather a manifestation of internal struggles within the CNDD-FDD.

In light of these warning signs, the SR reiterates his **recommendations**, in particular the opening of independent investigations into all serious violations, procedural guarantees for all detainees, effective protection for journalists, human rights defenders and the opposition, and Burundi's full cooperation with United Nations mechanisms. Ultimately, it is undeniable that the Burundian people aspire to peace, justice, dignity and human rights. the SR remains committed to contributing to this goal through sincere and constructive dialogue. Burundi needs sustained support, not only to address current violations, but also to rebuild trust, strengthen its institutions and move towards genuine reconciliation.

REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mr. Fortuné Gaetan ZONGO explains that the key to the situation in Burundi lies in the **denial of the 2015 crisis**, which has led to a stance of insistence. In the SR's view, the first step in resolving the crisis in Burundi is to acknowledge that there is a crisis. The Court of Justice of the East African Community has recognised that the **third term was unconstitutional**. Once this stage of recognition has been completed, the next step is to organise an inclusive dialogue between all Burundian parties. At that point, a timetable or roadmap will be established, which will then allow



for a shift to technical assistance, through which the international community can effectively support Burundi in addressing human rights challenges.

It should be noted that on 1 September 2025, not long ago, **eight Special Procedures** recognised the challenges relating to the human rights situation in Burundi. Hence, it is not only the country-specific Special Rapporteur who decides or takes action. These eight Special Procedures are working together to denounce abuses or, at the very least, serious human rights violations. It is in the interest of the international community to take a look seriously at what is happening in the country, rather than denying the situation.

The international community could **engage in discussions** with the Burundian authorities, or at least with those authorities who are motivated to open this dialogue. In any case, whether there is dialogue or not, whether there is cooperation or not, whether there is progress or not. The SR stresses that the **first step must be dialogue**, call a truce. Then all the actions that can be taken will be effective. Otherwise, at this stage, whatever we may do, even if we provide technical assistance, there is no political will, and Burundi won't get out of this situation.

The SR's thoughts always turn to the farmer who is on his hill in his region, far from the capital, struggling every day to get by, to send his children to school, to get his wife medical care, to get medical care for the whole family, to provide the family with decent housing. This is really his job as Special Rapporteur.

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY BURUNDI AS CONCERNED COUNTRY

The delegation of **Burundi** explains that the country has just successfully concluded parliamentary and local elections, which saw a high turnout and took place in a secure and peaceful atmosphere, as recognised by all international observers who responded to the Government's unrestricted call to attend the electoral process.

It is therefore absurd, if not senseless, to hear the initiator of this mechanism imposed on Burundi, namely the European Union, failing to acknowledge that it provided the Council with deliberately truncated information in order to request its renewal, invoking the need for an early monitoring procedure; to get further bogged down, because without giving up, it certifies in these terms that, 'even though the elections did not give rise to major outbreaks of violence, Burundi remains under close observation until the 2027 presidential elections'.

This simplistic argument clearly demonstrates that the wording and spirit of the Resolution establishing the Human Rights Council are being deliberately trampled on, solely with the intention of maintaining pressure on Burundi, an agenda initiated in 2015, in the aftermath of the failure to overthrow Burundi's republican institutions by force.

Being a representative in a UNHRC Special Procedure requires, according to the code of conduct, proven integrity, impartiality, fairness, honesty and good faith; the fundamental obligation incumbent upon their mandate being strict adherence to truth, loyalty and independence. These principles are not optional but an obligation that brooks no exceptions. Demonstrating moderation and restraint is an essential condition that recognises the independent nature of their mandate.



Does this high sense of responsibility and ethics required shine through in the report presented, given that, without providing any evidence, the SR impudently asserts :

- that among the Congolese refugees welcomed in Burundi fleeing violence in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo this year, the Banyamulenge and Tutsis are subject to discrimination by our authorities! Yet they have been living peacefully in Burundi for some twenty years!
- that several violations of the right to property, land security and access to justice are targeting members of the Tutsi community by influential figures in my country! Which representative of the Tutsi community in Burundi has mandated the SR to speak on their behalf!

The Rubicon has been crossed. The scale and seriousness of such allegations, which are defamatory, dangerous, irresponsible and ethnically charged, must be taken into account, as they call into question the mission of the UNHRC. Has this mandate become a tool for dividing and categorising our communities, conveying discriminatory remarks transmitted by politically motivated sources, composed of those very people who, 10 years earlier, under the guise of a peaceful demonstration that turned into a bloody insurrection, attempted to plunge my country back into the throes of civil war and fratricide in order to gain power that the people had denied them? Has this mandate become a tool of propaganda, which on the one hand praises a disorganised opposition, to the detriment of the voice of the people, and on the other hand dehumanises an entire generation of young people and challenges the legitimacy of the republican institutions in Burundi?

This mandate ignores the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which imposes a fundamental principle of respect for the sovereignty of States, when it assumes the prerogative of calling into question bilateral relations between two countries, in this case, the defence cooperation agreement signed between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi.

This mechanism no longer serves to promote and defend human rights, as it is supposed to do. Indeed, in view of the content of its report, which pits one ethnic group against another, at the risk of arousing mistrust and suspicion between communities, in a context where a people is rebuilding itself and returning to the fundamentals of its ancestral values despised by the former coloniser, the only conclusion that the Human Rights Council can draw is that this mandate is seriously compromised and has lost what little credibility and legitimacy it still had. Burundi cannot tolerate any ethnic rhetoric being used as a political tool in these United Nations forums. Burundi protests and refuses to bow down.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Regional and Cross-Regional Groups

The **European Union** thanks the SR for presenting his report, which continues to highlight the worrying human rights situation in Burundi. The EU voices concern over the persistence of numerous violations of fundamental rights, including arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances of political opponents, allegations of torture, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Reports of the involvement of state agents and



groups close to the government, in particular the *Imborenakure*, are particularly worrying. The EU calls on the Burundian authorities to put an end to impunity through rigorous, independent and impartial investigations. The EU is also concerned about the intimidation suffered by civil society actors, human rights defenders, journalists, bloggers and other media professionals. As reported by a UN Special Procedures group on 1 September, the context in which the parliamentary elections of 5 June 2025 took place, in which the ruling party won all seats in the National Assembly, raises questions about the credibility and competitive and open nature of the electoral process. The EU regrets the limited cooperation with United Nations mechanisms, with a few rare exceptions, and continue to call on the Burundian government to cooperate fully with them, in particular by granting the Special Rapporteur unhindered access to the country and providing him with all the information necessary for the fulfilment of his mandate, as well as by implementing the recommendations of the former Commission of Inquiry. The EU also calls on the Burundian government to establish truly independent national human rights institutions with transparent and inclusive appointment procedures. The EU further encourages the authorities to consider reopening the United Nations Human Rights Office in Burundi. Finally, the EU supports efforts to establish a framework for dialogue to ensure effective protection for Burundian refugees. In closing, the EU asks the SR to describe the main avenues for reflection in order to find a way out of the current crisis in Burundi.

Ghana on behalf of the African Group firmly believes in universality, objectivity, and non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues worldwide, as outlined in [UNGA resolution 60/251](#). Consequently, the African Group strongly opposes politicization and double standards, and believes that the consent of the concerned State remains a crucial element for the success of the implementation of the mandate of any mechanisms established by the UNHRC. The African group recognises that the promotion and protection of human rights should be based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue and aimed at strengthening the capacity of member states to comply with their human rights obligations. All countries must be valued fairly and equally, in full respect of their national sovereignty, recognizing that States have the primary responsibility in promoting and protecting human rights. The African group recognizes the merit of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which has already proven its worth as a unique exercise to which all States voluntarily submit to be evaluated and enriched by their peers. The African Group welcomes the various initiatives undertaken by the Government of Burundi in consolidating the human rights situation, including its constructive engagement with the Universal Periodic Review mechanism and also with UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies. The African Group reiterates the necessity of an objective and constructive approach in analysing the evolution of human rights in Burundi and invites the international community to take into account the Government's commitment and to support its efforts.

Iceland on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries¹ thanks the SR for his valuable reporting and remains deeply concerned that he continues to be denied access to the country. Serious human rights violations and abuses continue to persist in Burundi, taking place in the context of widespread impunity for past and ongoing atrocities. The Nordic-Baltic countries remain deeply concerned by severe restrictions on freedoms of opinion, expression, and peaceful assembly,

¹ Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden.



and by reports of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and widespread sexual and gender-based violence. Victims and survivors of torture and SGBV must receive urgent care, including access to psychosocial support and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services. The Nordic-Baltic countries deplore the shrinking civic space leading up to the elections held in June, which was undermined by the absence of a free and fair electoral process, and express particular concern for the period ahead of the 2027 elections. The Nordic-Baltic countries reiterate their call on the Government of Burundi to engage with the UN human rights mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur as a crucial step towards ensuring accountability. In closing, the Nordic-Baltic countries would like to know from the SR how could the international community best support the protection of human rights in Burundi in the run-up to the 2027 elections.

State Delegations

Belarus rejects country mandates that are imposed on countries without their consent. Unilateral actions undermine dialogue and limit opportunities for complementary joint constructive efforts by the human rights system and the Government in the field of human rights. Belarus is convinced that only the rejection of pressure, objectivity in assessments, constructive dialogue and support for national efforts in the field of human rights can contribute to real progress on the ground. Belarus notes the functioning of a number of national institutions in Burundi designed to promote human rights and emphasise the need to support them. Furthermore, Belarus positively notes the efforts of the Government of Burundi to protect and promote social and economic rights, despite the difficult context, as well as the authorities' commitment to working with universal human rights mechanisms and foreign partners.

Belgium thanks the SR for his report, thereby reaffirming its fully support for the mandate and calling on Burundi to cooperate constructively with the Rapporteur and other mechanisms established by the UNHRC, particularly as a member. Belgium stresses the importance of investigating all reported cases of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions or torture, and of putting in place mechanisms to prevent them. It therefore encourages the Burundian authorities to implement the recommendations of the UN Committee against Torture of 2023. Following the peaceful elections of June 2025, Belgium also stresses the importance of respecting freedom of expression and the rights of the opposition. The obstacles and challenges observed by the electoral missions should be taken into account for future elections. Respect for the principles of democracy and freedom is fundamental to ensuring national harmony. Similarly, preserving political pluralism would provide guarantees for the country's democratic vitality. Given the structural discrimination suffered by women and gender-based violence, which is probably underreported, Belgium asks the SR how can the international community support the Burundian government in responding to this major challenge, which affects half of its population.

Cameroon thanks the SR for his report and takes note of the analyses and recommendations contained in the report, which highlight the persistent human rights challenges in Burundi, particularly in the context of the 2025 elections, the massive influx of Congolese refugees and the economic and social constraints affecting vulnerable groups. Cameroon welcomes the dialogue between the Burundian authorities and international and regional mechanisms, including OHCHR, with a view to creating conditions conducive to constructive cooperation. In this regard,



it welcomes the recent visit by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which is a strong signal from the Burundian Government of its enhanced commitment at the continental level. Cameroon stresses the importance of increased support from the international community, based on dialogue and solidarity, to assist Burundi in its efforts to consolidate peace, strengthen the rule of law and improve the living conditions of its people in a particularly difficult context. Finally, Cameroon reiterates once again its conviction that only an inclusive approach, respectful of national sovereignty and supported by international cooperation, will make it possible to consolidate the gains made and encourage progress.

China has taken note of the report submitted by the SR on the situation of human rights in Burundi. China commends the Burundian Government for its active efforts to maintain national stability and promote domestic reconciliation, as well as for the progress achieved in advancing and protecting human rights. The current peace and stability in Burundi have been hard-won. China reiterates that the international community should continue to respect Burundi's sovereignty and independence, respect Burundi's efforts to resolve its domestic issues autonomously, and play a positive role in helping Burundi achieve national stability and sustainable development. Regrettably, instead of playing a constructive role, some countries have repeatedly ignored the explicit requests of the Burundian Government and a number of African countries for the UNHRC to abolish this Special Procedure for Burundi. This constitutes both a substantive obstacle to Burundi's stable development and a significant waste of the UNHRC's valuable resources, exacerbating the United Nations' financial crisis. China firmly opposes the politicisation of human rights issues and looks forward to all parties engaging in constructive dialogue and cooperation to address human rights matters, jointly improving global human rights governance.

Cuba reiterates its strong rejection of the imposition of punitive and selective mechanisms that do not have the consent of the state concerned. These practices violate the principles of respect for the sovereignty, independence and self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Mechanisms such as the one established against Burundi are ineffective and doomed to failure because they perpetuate confrontation and antagonism, squandering the resources of this body. The only effective way to promote human rights in all countries is through dialogue and constructive cooperation based on respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of states. The peoples of the world need less interference and more cooperation and solidarity. Cuba reiterates its call to respect the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity.

The **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)** expresses concern that the report portrays the human rights situation in Burundi in a negative manner and interprets certain incidents in a biased way. The measures taken by the Government of Burundi to protect human rights and strengthen social stability, as well as its cooperation with international organizations, have been ignored. Some Western countries are manipulating information and distorting facts to achieve their political objectives, thereby unjustly criticizing Burundi. Such one-sided and malicious reports seriously undermine the credibility and fairness of the international community. The DPRK calls upon all member states to respect the sovereignty and independence of Burundi.



The **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** thanks the SR for his report on the human rights situation in Burundi and welcomes the Burundian Government's ongoing efforts to promote and protect human rights despite the complex socio-economic challenges facing the country. The DRC appreciates the recent political developments in Burundi, in particular the organisation of peaceful, secure and inclusive local legislative elections, with reference to the conclusions of the African Union observers. The DRC calls on the international community to continue to support Burundi in its march towards development through cooperation and dialogue and stresses the need for this much more constructive approach for the country's progress. Furthermore, the DRC thanks Burundi for welcoming Congolese refugees following the invasion of much of the north and south by negative forces supported by Rwanda, and calls on the international community to provide financial resources to support this massive influx of refugees. Finally, the DRC welcomes the positive cooperative relations between the OHCHR, these mechanisms and Burundi, and encourages their strengthening through dialogue and understanding.

Eritrea takes note of the SR's report. Regrettably, the latter contains no positive developments and fails to acknowledge any of the tangible progress, instead presenting an entirely negative assessment throughout. Eritrea reiterates its principle position that country-specific mandates established without the consent of the concerned state continue to be counterproductive. Such mechanisms have consistently failed to foster trust or encourage positive developments. Eritrea believes it is time to bring an end to this particular mandate which after a decade has proven neither constructive nor balanced. Burundi like all sovereign nations bear the primary responsibility for promoting and protecting the human rights of its citizens and this responsibility should be supported through cooperation rather than external imposition. Eritrea emphasizes once again that the Council's role is best fulfilled through dialogue, technical assistance and constructive engagement with states in full respect of their sovereignty and national ownership.

Ethiopia reaffirms its principled position that the promotion and protection of human rights must be guided by the core principles of the UNHCR, namely universality, objectivity, non-selectivity and constructive engagement. Ethiopia underscores the importance of technical assistance and capacity building and strengthening national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights. Recognizing the primary responsibility of the state to protect and fulfill the rights of its people, Ethiopia encourages continued support to Burundi in this regard and commends the positive steps undertaken by the Government, including the implementation of reforms, continuous cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms including the Universal Periodic Review process and engagement with regional mechanisms. Ethiopia encourages Burundi to sustain momentum in implementing accepted UPR recommendations and to deepen its engagement with the UN Human Rights Council in a spirit of cooperation. In conclusion, Ethiopia firmly believes that strengthening cooperation with states complementing their national efforts and focusing on mechanisms that foster constructive dialogue is beneficial to the longstanding efforts to ensure protection of human rights. Constructive engagement remains the most effective path to durable peace.

France jointly with the EU reaffirms its full support for the SR's mandate and thanks him for the report. Ten years after the outbreak of the crisis in Burundi, the situation remains alarming. There have been repeated human rights violations, including murders, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, a lack of pluralism in various elections in 2025, and attacks on judicial



independence, while opponents, journalists and human rights defenders continue to face repression. France remains deeply concerned by consistent reports of torture and ill-treatment of supporters of pluralism in Burundi. Finally, the National Human Rights Commission is undergoing a serious crisis of legitimacy, with irregular appointments and a failure to respect the principles of impartiality. France supports the renewal of the SR's mandate and encourages Burundi to cooperate with all United Nations mechanisms and to allow the SR to carry out visits, as it did for the promotion mission of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. It is important to put an end to violations of fundamental rights immediately.

Germany thanks the SR for his timely and sobering update. The human rights situation in Burundi remains of grave concern. Germany is concerned by numerous violations of fundamental rights, namely arbitrary detentions, forced abductions, torture and discretionary limitations to the freedom of press and expression. Germany calls on Burundi to ensure full access to justice for all victims of human rights violations - violations which have so far enjoyed impunity. Germany reiterates its concern over the unlawful re-election of the National Human Rights Commission and its lack of independence. It remains of utmost priority that the Commission executes its mandate independently without interference. In the same vein, Germany firmly encourages the Burundi to grant full access to the SR and allow the reopening of the Human Rights Office of the United Nations. Germany is convinced that the worrisome situation deserves the Council's continued full attention. Therefore, Germany underscores the importance of the SR's annual oral update, and asks him how to draw more attention to the human rights situation in Burundi and to indicate more actions that the international community take to improve the situation.

Iran takes note the effort of the Burundian authorities in the area of human rights. The submission of the 11th to the 19th periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reflects as constructive willingness of Burundian authorities to engage with United Nations treaty mechanism. Iran believes that the promotion and protection of human rights must be grounded in the principle of cooperation and dialogue among states, fostering international relation founded on the equal rights of peoples and the right to self-determination. Reaffirming its stance that country-specific initiatives within the Council that lack the consent of the concerned country are ineffective, Iran calls upon the UNHRC to adhere to the foundational principles of universality and non-selectivity as outlined in UNGA resolution 60/251. Finally, Iran urges the Council to extend the necessary technical assistance and capacity-building support Burundi as requested in advancing human rights promotion and protection efforts within the country.

Kenya takes note of the SR's report and recognizes the continued incremental efforts made by Burundi to re-engage with regional and international human rights mechanisms, despite ongoing challenges. Kenya commends the Government of Burundi for resuming submissions to United Nations treaty bodies, including its report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and for hosting recent dialogue with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Kenya further recognizes Burundi's election to the Economic and Social Council and participation in multilateral forums, reflecting continuing commitment to regional and international engagement. Kenya especially notes the technical measures taken to bolster judicial capacity, such as appointing judges and expanding local courts, which signal recognition of the need for a robust justice sector. Kenya encourages Burundi to continue building upon these



steps as it pursues greater accountability, protection of civil liberties, and institutional independence. Political will and constructive dialogue remain critical to this journey. Calling for sustained international technical and financial support be made available and tied to verifiable progress in human rights outcomes, Kenya reaffirms its commitment to supporting Burundi, in the spirit of African solidarity, towards a future of greater human rights respect, stability and prosperity for all.

Russia notes the efforts of the Burundian authorities in the field of human rights. The country has a National Council for National Unity and Reconciliation, a Monitoring Centre for the Prevention and Eradication of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. There is also an Independent National Human Rights Commission, a Human Rights Ombudsman and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Burundian authorities are actively engaged in dialogue with relevant UN agencies, including OHCHR. The Russian Federation welcomes the efforts of the Burundian authorities to prevent discrimination against national and religious minorities. Russia notes the measures taken to comply with the legally established ethnic quotas in state structures. The national prison system is being improved and conditions in places of detention are being upgraded. Assistance is being provided for the return of Burundian refugees. The steps taken by the country's leadership to maintain dialogue with the opposition and representatives of civil society deserve a positive assessment. Meetings are regularly held with the population to discuss issues of the country's socio-economic development. All these measures deserve a positive response from the international community, which should refrain from putting pressure on the Burundian authorities under the pretext of human rights. Russia advocates respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Burundi and non-interference in its internal affairs.

Rwanda remains concerned by the evidence presented of the continued militarization and cross-border involvement including the conviction of soldiers for refusing deployment to the Democratic Republic of Congo highlighting the risks such dynamic pose to regional security and to civilians. Rwanda is further concerned by protection gaps affecting refugees. The report notes discriminatory treatment particularly against Banyamulenge as well as arbitrary arrests of Congolese students. These patterns demand urgent safeguards consistent with international refugee law. Rwanda urges the UNHRC to mandate an urgent review of reported Burundian operations in South Kivu linked to the persecution of Banyamulenge communities with immediate protection measures for civilians at risk. Rwanda is alarmed by Burundi's documented rise in enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention. To support progress and prevent regional spillover, Rwanda asks the SR to address specific recommendations - including regional mechanisms on early warning indicators, protective presence and reporting modalities – to guide states in taking action and triggering timely protection when risks escalate.

South Sudan takes note of the report and reaffirms its constant stance that advancing human rights aspects requires prior consent of the countries concerned to ensure conducive atmosphere for constructive dialogue and objective cooperation with mandate holders. South Sudan commends Burundi for upholding human rights under the UN framework and for cooperating with the UN mechanisms by submission of its combined 11th to 19th periodic reports to the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination. To conclude, South Sudan encourages both the UNHRC and the international community to assist Burundi in line with its national plan and priorities.



Sri Lanka reiterates its opposition to country-specific mandates which do not enjoy the support of the country concerned. Constructive dialogue with the concerned State is the best way to assist them in a meaningful manner rather than naming and shaming. The UNHRC must adhere to its founding principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, and non-selectivity. Sri Lanka welcomes the Government of Burundi's continuous engagement with the UNHRC through its regular mechanisms including the treaty bodies. Sri Lanka recognizes the efforts of the Government of Burundi towards tackling poverty and social inequalities as well as fighting corruption while working constructively towards protecting the human rights of the people of Burundi. Sri Lanka encourages the Council to assist Burundi's national processes aimed at sustainable recovery and development in accordance with the national priorities of the Government of Burundi.

Sudan takes note of the SR's report and his recommendations. Sudan commends the efforts of the Government of Burundi to promote and protect human rights, strengthen governance, legal reform and socio-economic development, as well as its initiatives in the areas of reconciliation, inclusive dialogue and transitional justice. Sudan further welcomes the outcome of the general elections in June 2025, which represent an important step towards achieving stability. Burundi has demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with human rights mechanisms through its UNHRC membership and ECOSOC, as well as the regular submission of its reports, in particular to the Universal Periodic Review and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Sudan calls on the High Commissioner to continue providing technical assistance in line with Burundi's national priorities. In this context, Sudan would like to know how the mechanisms imposed have contributed in concrete terms to improving the human rights situation in Burundi or elsewhere.

Switzerland thanks the SR for his report and regrets that the mandate holder still does not have access to the country, despite the fact that Burundi has issued a standing invitation since 2013. Switzerland remains concerned by the serious human rights violations in recent months, including cases of enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, acts of torture and extrajudicial executions, as mentioned by the SR in his report. These violations are taking place in a climate of impunity and intimidation. Switzerland closely followed the latest elections on 5 June 2025. Although they were held without major violence, Switzerland remains concerned over the continuing restrictions on civic space and the pressure exerted on journalists, civil society and political parties. Switzerland calls on the government to fully guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. As a member of the UNHRC, Switzerland expects the Burundian authorities to cooperate constructively with the SR, OHCHR and its Regional Office for Central Africa. As Burundi enters a long electoral cycle, Switzerland asks the SR how can the international community help to expand civic space and strengthen the protection of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society.

Uganda, as a neighbouring country, closely monitors the developments in Burundi and commends the Government for the milestones made in the governance and restoration of peace and stability. Uganda notes that the report decries the state of refugees in camps, and the suffering they continue to endure, as the largest refugee host in Africa for a protracted period, Uganda totally understands the burden the government of Burundi has to face. On this issue, Uganda asks whether the SR has engaged the international community on principle of equitable



burden and responsibility sharing in protecting and assisting refugees. Uganda invites the mandate holder and the Council to acknowledge the in-kind contribution of Burundi, they indeed are the largest donor in this case and should not be shamed for their kindness. The lack of cooperation with SR is not news and is unfortunately facilitated by the continued imposition of mandates on countries without their consent, despite not registering any success since its inception. In closing, Uganda urges the Human Rights Council to prioritize dialogue and engagement.

The **United Kingdom** thanks the SR for their latest update and continued efforts to monitor the human rights situation in Burundi. The UK urges the Government of Burundi to allow him full access and to reopen OHCHR's Country Office. Following the recent elections, the UK again welcome the non-violent and timely way in which they were conducted. However, the UK notes with concern the serious irregularities reflected in this report, including voter intimidation, fraudulent registrations, shrinking civic space, and the suppression of opposition voices. The United Kingdom calls on Burundi to protect the freedoms of expression, assembly and association, including by revising legal frameworks that curtail media freedom. The UK further calls on Burundi to ensure accountability for human rights violations via impartial investigations and judicial independence, especially with regards to arbitrary arrests and detentions, and enforced disappearances. Lastly, the UK asks the SR how can the international community support Burundi to strengthen its democratic processes and to protect human rights, especially in the run up to the 2027 elections.

The **United Republic of Tanzania** welcomes the efforts of the Government of Burundi in promoting and protecting human rights and reiterates the importance for the international community to provide the necessary assistance to complement the efforts taken by the Government without undermining the sovereignty of the country. Tanzania further urges international actors in cooperation with the UNHCR to increase the budget for the relevant refugee programs in various regions, in order to relieve the burden on the host countries. Tanzania will continue to work with Burundi, the international community and all relevant stakeholders to ensure the safe and voluntary repatriation of all Burundian refugees.

Venezuela recognizes the efforts undertaken by Burundi and its political will to protect the human rights of its population. Venezuela rejects the politicization and selectivity of the UNHRC in imposing mandates that do not have the consent of the country concerned. These actions flagrantly violate the universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, such as respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela regrets that the UNHRC continues to promote actions that have no positive impact. On the contrary, they are detrimental to dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding, which are the only effective means of addressing national human rights challenges, especially in a context of liquidity crisis in which the proliferation of imposed mandates results in the squandering of scarce resources. Once again, Venezuela calls on the Council to reflect on the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity, definitively eradicating these interventionist mechanisms that exploit human rights for political ends and continue to undermine the functioning and credibility of this forum.



National Human Rights Institutions

The **Independent National Human Rights Commission of Burundi** stresses that the year 2025 was marked by elections for municipal councillors in the hills and neighbourhoods. The electoral process took place in a peaceful and calm atmosphere. The NHRI of Burundi declares that the actors of the joint human rights programme and civil society organisations are fulfilling their mission in complete peace. The NHRI of Burundi remains the guarantor of respect for the principles governing the entire Commission. As for the current situation of the NHRI of Burundi, it should be noted that the appointment of commissioners complied with Burundian law. There is therefore no violation of the law when the competent body exercises its legislative authority with regard to peace-building actions both inside and outside Burundi. The NHRI of Burundi welcomes the Government's efforts. It encourages greater cooperation with sub-regional, regional and international mechanisms for the implementation of ratified protection instruments. To protect the individual rights of detainees, the NHRI of Burundi advocates for the separation of cases, giving priority to detainees with specific needs. Prisoners with mental illness should be interned in specialised centres and those who have completed their prison sentences should be released. With regard to freedom of the press, the NHRI of Burundi welcomes the measure to decriminalize certain press offences. At the same time, the NHRI of Burundi calls for human rights defenders to be granted reversed protection and for the two journalists to be released. With regard to acts of abduction and cases of enforced disappearance, the Burundian NHRI strongly condemns the use of these practices, which are contrary to criminal and humanised justice. With regard to prisoners convicted of political offences, the NHRI of Burundi proposes to explore the criminal code and seek legal avenues for clemency. The NHRI recommends that the Burundian Government:

- Explore the criminal code in order to decide on the amnesty bill and grant amnesty in emblematic cases.
- Decide on the release of acquitted prisoners and those who have served their sentences.
- Instruct the courts to continue implementing the decree on conditional release, giving priority to the rapid processing of cases involving acquitted prisoners and other prisoners who have served their prison sentences.
- Treat the cases of human rights defenders with humanity and speed, and continue to implement other measures aimed at reducing the number of prison projects.

Non-Governmental Organizations

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (DefendDefenders) stresses that this session marks 10 years since the UN Human Rights Council's first response to the crisis that erupted in 2015. With the 10th anniversary of the Council's Special Session on Burundi approaching, DefendDefenders notes with concern the fact that, to date, the risk factors for atrocities remain present. Serious violations continue to be committed with impunity. National institutions are unable and unwilling to remedy these violations. The lack of independence of the National Human Rights Commission of Burundi tarnishes the reputation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). It should be downgraded to B status. UN experts have warned of an increase in violations and violence. Civil society has warned that with the start of a long electoral cycle and the closure of possible avenues for a peaceful transition, there are



more concerns than there were a year ago. DefendDefenders urges the Council to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. There is no conspiracy against Burundi. Many civil society actors and others have been in exile for 10 years. They did not choose this life. They were forced into it by the manipulation of the justice system against independent voices and the risks to our safety. Reiterating its full support for the SR, DefendDefenrdrers asks how to leverage Burundi's obligations as a member of the Council to encourage the authorities to cooperate.

The **International Federation of ACAT (Actions of Christians for the Abolition of Torture)** jointly with ACAT Burundi, the Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR Centre) and the World Organization against Torture (OMCT) thank the SR for his report. Ten years after the bloody 2015 crisis, which resulted in more than 1,200 deaths, 400 enforced disappearances, and forced approximately 400,000 people into exile, total impunity persists for the most serious crimes. In 2024, the organizations recorded more than 170 deaths, 163 arbitrary arrests, the majority of which targeted political opponents, as well as 49 cases of torture and detention. This systematic repression aimed to amuse the voices of all those who had died. Meanwhile, opposition parties saw more than 50 meetings banned or dispersed by the police in a climate of constant fear. The situation has further worsened in the run-up to the legislative and municipal elections of June 5, 2025, to illustrate the repressive trends and revolutions. The opposition secretariat and this Burundian structure have created an interactive map to visualize the dynamics of the repression and highlight the most affected areas, thus strengthening independent and credible documentation. Faced with this rare situation and the existence of serious human rights violations, the organizations urgently call on the Council to renew the mandate of the SR on Burundi and to strengthen its resources.

The **World Organization against Torture (OMCT)** stresses that, since the 2015 crisis, Burundi has experienced systematic repression of journalists and members of civil society, who are the primary targets of intimidation, arbitrary arrest, physical violence, and threats. Despite this commitment by the authorities, the widespread climate of fear hinders the exercise of fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and the press. The case of Sandra Murosa, a journalist arbitrarily detained since 12 April 2024, for commenting in a WhatsApp group on information concerning the alleged distribution of weapons by the current government, is emblematic of this pre-existing repression, which is contrary to international instruments ratified by Burundi. The year 2025 also marks 10 years of forced exile for dozens of members of Burundian civil society and journalists. This exile has led to serious human consequences, such as family separation, integration difficulties, and precariousness. It has also undermined the country's associative fabric and media focus, and reduced the space for political dialogue. OMCT calls on the Council to renew the mandate of the SR on the human rights situation in Burundi and strengthen its resources, and take all measures to ensure the safe and voluntary return of exiled persons to Burundi and their participation in the peace process and national dialogue. Lastly, OMCT calls on the Burundian Government to end arbitrary detention.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) thanks the SR for his report and notes that the human rights situation in Burundi remains deeply concerning, with risk factors for serious human rights violations and atrocity crimes on the rise. Despite some government rhetoric, Burundi has not implemented meaningful reforms to address long-standing concerns related to governance, justice or accountability. Grave abuses persist with impunity. The legislative and local elections



held from June to August were marred by serious irregularities. The ruling party won nearly all seats following widespread reports of intimidation, harassment and exclusion of opposition candidates. These elections mark the start of a long electoral cycle leading to the 2027 presidential vote during which the risk of further abuse is high. Meanwhile, the credibility of Burundi's National Human Rights Commission has collapsed. Its former president fled the country and the current leadership lacks independence. The conflict in DRC has had significant humanitarian and security repercussions in Burundi, including due to the massive influx of people fleeing the fighting. In this context, HRW urges the country to renew the SR's mandate. Burundi needs to fully cooperate with the mandate, reopen OHCHR's Country Office and take concrete steps to restore civic space and advance accountability.

Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration thanks the Special Rapporteur for his comprehensive report and shares his concern over the grave allegations regarding the killing of three members of RED-Tabara in a detention centre in Cibitoke in October 2024 following reports of torture. The Association deeply regrets that these allegations have not been subjected to an independent investigation which - as the SR highlights - entrenches impunity within the security services and reflects the state's persistent failure to meet its obligations under the convention against torture. The Association echoes the SR's alarm at the deteriorating humanitarian situation, the influx of over 67,000 Congolese refugees since February 2025 has been met as the report notes with discriminatory practices, particularly targeting *Banyamulenge* and *Tutsi* communities. Arbitrary arrests including those of Congolese students in Bujumbura starkly contravene Burundi's obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Association urges Burundi to urgently establish the national preventative mechanism against torture overdue since 2014 and to ensure the protection of all refugees and asylum seekers without discrimination. Finally, in the absence of independent investigations at the national level, the Association would like to know from the SR what concrete measures could the international community take to support accountability for torture and ill-treatment in Burundi.

The **Human Rights Research League** is deeply concerned by the flawed electoral process, including intimidation, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and the exclusion of the main opposition leader. The absurdly high results for the President's party speak for themselves and demonstrate the ruling party's refusal to accept democracy. Securing 100% of the seats in the National Assembly after months of pre-elections marked by inaction, including forced voter registration, and the deprivation of public services for those who refused to bow to these pressures is incompatible with the norms and requirements of a democratic state. The League is particularly concerned by the continued increase in attacks against members of civil society who still have the courage to politically oppose the authorities but who are paying a terrible price for attempting to exercise their legally guaranteed rights to freedom of expression and political participation. The League also reiterates that the persistent lack of independence and impartiality of the judiciary and the continued shrinking of civic space are incompatible with the requirements of a functioning democracy guided by the rule of law. In this context, the League seeks for the SR's views on what should the UNHRC and its member states do in the face of these obvious violations of democratic rights.



The **International Organization of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (EAFORD)** thanks the SR for his report which presents a deeply concerning view of the human rights situation in Burundi. EAFORD is concerned by the severely restricted civic and political space that persists. Opposition leaders have been excluded from elections, party offices have been destroyed and citizens coerced into so-called contributions under the threat of reprisals. Incidents of torture and forced disappearance and arbitrary arrests persist, mainly perpetrated by the national intelligence service, police and police, as impunity remains the rule. Institutions supposed to protect human rights are undermined by political interference. The Human Rights Commission has lost its credibility and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been politicized, eroding trust in reconciliation process. At the same time, ordinary Burundians are facing severe food insecurity, collapsing health services in violation of the rights of women and children. Refugees remain exposed to intimidation and forced repatriation and even abduction. EAFORD urges the Government of Burundi to fully cooperate with the SR by granting the immediate access for country visits allowing documentation of abuses, respect and protect civic space and release arbitrarily detained persons, repeal or reform laws, criminalize dissent and ensure the safety of journalists and human rights offenders, ensure that elections are conducted in a transparent, inclusive and safe environment free from intimidation and conduct investigation into past and ongoing abuses, ensuring accountability to end the cycle of impunity.

The **International Federation for Human Rights Leagues (FIDH)** thanks the SR for his work. The municipal elections in June and August were marred by irregularities and marked by a deterioration in human rights. Human rights violations continue to be committed, including executions, enforced disappearances, gender-based violence, torture and arbitrary arrests, without independent investigations being conducted and those responsible being brought to justice. Impunity remains for the alleged perpetrators of these violations, who are state and parastatal actors. In particular, the League reported 34 abductions between January and August, and 57 people killed were victims of gender-based violence, including 73 cases of sexual violence. These violations mainly target opponents of political parties, as well as members of civil society and journalists. This strategy of repression aims to stifle all forms of resistance and political dissent, thereby creating a climate of fear and uncertainty. It is therefore crucial that the SR's mandate be renewed. It will also be necessary to ensure that he can continue and strengthen his monitoring of human rights in Burundi, in particular through consultation with Burundian civil society, and that he has access to the country.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

3 Regional and Cross-Regional Groups

23 State Delegations

1 National Human Rights Institution

8 Non-Governmental Organizations