

## Burundi

Peace in Burundi was given a boost at the end of 2008 when the rebel group *Peuple Hutu–Forces Nationales de Libération* (Palipehutu-FNL), agreed to enter into the national political process and disarm its forces. The declaration set off a chain of positive events in early 2009 and gave hope that after decades of violent conflict Burundi would finally be on the path toward stability. Nevertheless, the immediate post-agreement momentum quickly gave way to the difficult realities of implementing an ambitious peacebuilding agenda in the context of a still fragile Burundi, especially as the country prepares for elections in 2010.

An assortment of actors, including the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Peace Building Commission, the African Union, the World Bank, and the International Facilitator to the Burundi Peace Process, continued to assist the country in its recovery during the year. While Burundi did make progress in several areas with this assistance, the prospects for conflict are still present and the creation of an inclusive government and addressing the status of rebels and the national security forces present considerable hurdles for the country moving forward.

### Background

Burundi experienced decades of ethnic-based conflict that set Hutus against Tutsis in violent outbursts that often extended beyond its borders. The most recent round of conflict was triggered by the assassination of the country's first democratically elected Hutu president in 1993. This was followed by nearly a decade of bloody civil war between the Tutsi-dominated military and various Hutu rebel movements, including

the *Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (CNDD-FDD) and the Palipehutu-FNL.

Regional mediation efforts led to the signing of the Arusha Accords in August 2000, creating a new power-sharing transitional government, but fighting continued as the CNDD-FDD and FNL refused to accept the agreement. The CNDD-FDD eventually declared a cease-fire and joined the transitional administration in November 2003; the FNL, the remaining rebel group, only reached a peace agreement with the government in September 2006.

In June 2004, the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) was deployed to take over for the AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB). Following the FNL's cease-fire agreement, ONUB was brought to an end in December 2006 and replaced by the UN Integrated Office in Burundi. BINUB is mandated to support the government's peace consolidation efforts; provide assistance in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration

#### UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)

• Authorization Date	25 October 2006 (UNSC Res. 1719)
• Start Date	1 January 2007
• ERSG	Youssef Mahmoud (Tunisia)
• Budget	\$70.2 million (1 January 2008–31 December 2009)
• Strength as of 31 October 2009	Military Observers: 6 Police: 11 International Civilian Staff: 125 Local Civilian Staff: 239 UN Volunteers: 50

*For detailed mission information see p. 200*

(DDR) as well as security sector reform (SSR); promote human rights; and facilitate donor and UN agency coordination. During 2007, BINUB provided close support to the government's interactions with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which had chosen Burundi as one of the first two countries to include on its agenda. The AU Special Task Force was deployed during 2007 to provide close protection for leaders and assist in the DDR processes. Meanwhile, the International Facilitation to the Burundi Peace Process, headed by South Africa, continued to mediate between the parties.

The Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM) was established in November 2006 to monitor implementation of the cease-fire. In June 2008 and in the context of the progress made, the Peacebuilding Commission released a review of the implementation of the peacebuilding framework. The review cited the need for continued cooperation of all parties, called for DDR efforts to conclude by December 2008, and called for a functioning electoral commission to be established by the first half of 2009 in preparation for the elections to be held in 2010.

Burundi saw a steep deterioration in the political, security, and humanitarian situation in the latter part of 2007 and throughout most of 2008, while the 2006 cease-fire appeared to be dissolving. Bearing in mind the consequences that a return to conflict in Burundi could have on the historically volatile Great Lakes region, regional leaders convened a summit of the Great Lakes' heads of state in Bujumbura during December 2008. There, President Pierre Nkurunziza and FNL chairperson Agaton Rwasa signed a declaration committing the FNL to becoming a political party and to begin the commensurate processes of demobilization and disarmament of its forces. Meanwhile, President Nkurunziza agreed to reserve thirty-three civil service posts for FNL leadership and release all FNL-related political prisoners.

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### Key Developments

The first half of 2009 saw brisk implementation of several elements of the December 2008

summit declaration. By the end of January 2009 the FNL had officially dropped the "Palipehutu" ethnic prefix from its name, a point that had previously held up the peace process and barred the FNL from becoming an official political party. The government also made good—if only partially—on its pledge to release FNL-related political prisoners. By 15 January the government had approved the release of 247 prisoners, 118 of whom were released under JVMM supervision. By April the FNL had officially registered as a political party and was committed to running in elections planned for 2010, instilling optimism that Burundi had seen its last war.

FNL's acceptance as a political party was contingent on the complete separation of its political and military components. By mid-March, 3,475 FNL personnel had voluntarily disarmed while FNL chairperson Rwasa, along with other FNL leadership, had also publicly disarmed and registered for demobilization. Despite demobilization progress, an alarmingly small amount of weapons were turned over during the DDR process. The parties agreed to the terms of the FNL disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process in April, whereby 3,500 FNL elements would be integrated into the national security and defense forces, while 5,000 would be demobilized. Meanwhile, 11,000 elements, including 1,000 women, would be treated as adults associated with the movement and would not receive the full complement of DDR compensation. It was also agreed that the AU Special Task Force would oversee the handover of FNL weapons.

Following the closure of the World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme on 31 December 2008, a range of institutional actors collaborated to create a new three-part configuration to support DDR in Burundi. Under the new arrangement the JVMM oversees the disarmament and verification of former combatants with the support of the Facilitator, the African Union, the Burundi government, and BINUB. Meanwhile, demobilization and reintegration is led by the Technical Coordination Team of the National Commission for Demobilization, Reintegration, and

Reinsertion and is supported by the World Bank. Finally, strategy for long-term reintegration of ex-combatants at the community level is developed under the leadership of the Burundi government with the support of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other international partners.

The post of International Facilitator to the Burundi Peace Process, held by South African Charles Nqakula, was closed in June 2009 and was followed by the creation of the Partnership for Peace in Burundi (PPB). Similar to the role of the Facilitator, the PPB structure was created to monitor the consolidation of the peace process, making sure it remained on track while assisting the FNL's transformation into a political party in advance of 2010 elections. The PPB comprises representatives from regional stakeholders Uganda and Tanzania, the AU, the International Conference of the Great Lakes, and BINUB. The latter was responsible for logistical support and providing the secretariat for the PPB.

Despite these efforts, gaps in the DDR process highlighted a series of broader threats facing the peace process in Burundi. Along with the 11,000 elements formerly "associated" with FLN, the DDR processes over the years have created a population of former combatants in Burundi who remain disassociated from the benefits of the peace. Burundi is rife with weapons, and economic circumstances are bleak. Unsurprisingly, the resort to criminal activity has become an increasingly frequented option. During 2009 this resulted in an environment of uncertainty and insecurity characterized by a persistence of criminal activities throughout Burundi, ranging from armed robberies and looting to rape, abductions, and ambushes.

With these security concerns in mind, BINUB continued to support Burundi in addressing insecurity through reform of the security sector. The mission assisted the government in establishing civilian oversight of the security sector, while providing logistical and technical support to the national police. BINUB also supported the establishment of the National Commission for Civilian Disarmament, which seeks to address major public concerns

regarding the high presence of weapons among the population. The establishment of transitional justice mechanisms to try alleged transgressors of crimes during Burundi's conflict, however, remained unformed throughout the year. Meanwhile, BINUB continued to support building the rule of law with direct technical and logistical support to the justice sector, yet access to justice among the population remained limited.

Preparations for the 2010 elections began during 2009, but a consistent level of political hostility served to hamper progress. An atmosphere of mistrust between the opposition parties and the incumbent CNDD-FDD gradually heightened throughout the year. Parliament's April 2009 establishment of a national independent electoral commission, which aims to prepare the country for the upcoming elections and oversee the voter registration process, was initially a good indicator of progress. Nevertheless, from its inception, the commission was fraught by disagreement regarding its composition. This tension reached an apex in September when its funding was cut by the government on account of overrepresentation by opposition groups. In a positive development, after months of political wrangling, Burundi's parliament adopted a bill on an electoral code.

Limited political freedom throughout Burundi during 2009 was a source of considerable concern and holds implications for the prospects of holding free and fair elections in 2010. In the second half of the year, there were numerous crackdowns on opposition-party gatherings and it appeared that both the government and the opposition were increasingly using intimidation and violence as a political tools.

During the year the PBC continued to follow the situation in Burundi and pledged its support for upcoming elections and the broader peace consolidation process.

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## Conclusion

The elections planned for 2010 will present a significant test to the resiliency of both the peace process and Burundi's nascent governing structures. In December 2009, the Security Council

renewed BINUB's mandate for another year. While the constellation of international and regional actors in Burundi will remain necessary components to guide this process, the adherence

to an inclusive and fair political process on all sides of the conflict will be the determining factor in the longevity of peace.