

Burundi

At the request of the newly elected government of Burundi and following negotiations with the United Nations on the timetable, the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) commenced a phased drawdown in 2006. The Security Council renewed the mandate until 31 December 2006, while discussions were conducted on the size and functions of a successor mission, the UN Office in Burundi (BINUB). Based on an agreement reached in May, and with a mandate to support the consolidation of peace, BINUB would smooth the somewhat rushed transition and avert a full-scale rift between the UN and the elected government. Meanwhile, the peace agreement of 7 September, signed by the government and the Forces Nationales de Libération (FNL)—the only rebel group that remained out of the peace process—offered significant hope for a return to stability. The fault lines of the fragile peace process were exposed by the government's arrest of opposition politicians in August 2006, and the resignation of the country's second vice president, who cited graft and obstruction in executing her duties.

Civil war broke out in Burundi in 1993, triggered by the assassination of the country's first democratically elected president. The Tutsi-dominated military was pitted against Hutu rebel movements, including the Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie—Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD) and the Peuple Hutu—Forces Nationales de Libération (Palipehutu-FNL). The Arusha Accords, of August 2000, created a power-sharing transitional government. However, it was not until November 2003 that the CNDD-FDD declared a cease-fire and joined the transitional administration. Meanwhile, the

FNL remained a source of insecurity in Burundi's western provinces.

On 1 June 2004, ONUB took over from the AU Mission in Burundi, absorbing many of the deployed troops. Granted a broad Chapter VII mandate, ONUB was tasked with overseeing disarmament and demobilization of militias and rebel groups; monitoring borders, with particular attention to the illegal arms trade; coordinating with the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC); creating a safe environment for refugees; and assisting with elections.

After a decisive election victory for the CNDD-FDD in August 2005, the new government, under President Pierre Nkurunziza, considered ONUB's mission discharged, and firmly requested the peacekeepers' withdrawal. Initially, the nature of the follow-on presence to ONUB proved contentious. In February the government announced its opposition to a "partner forum" that was to include ONUB, UN agencies, and other donors, arguing it would duplicate government functions. International misgivings about the withdrawal were based on the fragility of postconflict institutions, as well as on continued fighting between government forces and the FNL prior to the signing of the peace deal in September 2006.

While security was less precarious in the rest of Burundi, the transition remained at an early stage. Following its phased drawdown plan, ONUB's military strength was about 2,400 by the end of October. The fourteen remaining police officers continued to provide training assistance to their local counterparts and commenced the development of specialized

programs in areas such as investigations, airport security, and prison management.

In April, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1669 (2006), authorizing the temporary redeployment of a maximum of one infantry battalion, a military hospital, and fifty military observers from ONUB to bolster MONUC ahead of presidential and parliamentary elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Reflecting a growing pattern of intermission collaboration, ONUB and MONUC worked jointly on the return of alleged Burundian rebels from the DRC. The forced repatriation of fifty-one alleged FNL rebels, who had been captured by the Forces Armées du République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in South Kivu, raised some human rights concerns, as their status had not been established.

Refugee return was not as high as anticipated, due largely to the continued insecurity caused by the activities of the FNL and armed bandits. The signing of the peace agreement between the government and the FNL set the stage for the return of as many as 50,000 returnees by the end of 2006.

The arrest of the country's former president, Domitien Ndayizeye, and several other

key political figures in an alleged plot to overthrow the newly elected government, heightened concerns about the government's increasing tendency to target members of the opposition, as well as concerns about its poor human rights record. The resignation of the country's second vice president, Alice Nzomukunda, in September—who protested interference with her functions by the chairman of the ruling party—exposed the tensions within the government. It also brought to the fore allegations of corruption and mismanagement of public resources, and further cast doubt on whether there was a coup plot.

Plans for a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) and a special chamber for war crimes were boosted by the visit to Burundi of a mission led by the UN Legal Counsel, who consulted with the government, political parties, civic organizations, and religious and traditional leaders. In reaffirming its support for the establishment of a TRC and tribunal, the UN emphasized its principle of no immunity or amnesty for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

The peace deal between the government and FNL in September marked the end of open hostilities. However, land disputes, lack of economic opportunities, and delays in disbursing benefits to ex-combatants raised concerns about the peace process, as did the increase in human rights violations, the government's intimidation of opposition figures, and allegations of corruption and mismanagement. Improved relations with its neighbors, including the possibility of admission to the East African Community, and the designation of Burundi as one of the first clients of the Peacebuilding Commission, were promising developments. At its second-ever country-specific meeting on 16 October, the commission recommended assistance for Burundi out of the new peacebuilding fund. Consolidation of the gains from peace will require sustained international support for the foreseeable future.

UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB)

• Authorization date	21 May 2004 (UNSC Res. 1545)
• Start date	1 June 2004
• Acting SRSG	Nureldin Satti (Sudan)
• Force commander	Major-General Derrick Mbuyiselo Mgwebi (South Africa)
• Police commissioner	Ibrahima Diallo (Mali)
• Budget	\$79 million (1 July 2006–30 June 2007)
• Strength as of	Troops: 2,353
30 September 2006	Military observers: 87
	Police: 14
	International civilian staff: 262
	Local civilian staff: 327

For detailed mission information see p. 233.

Box 4.3.1 Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peace Operations

The September 2005 World Summit outcome document urged the UN General Assembly to adopt recommendations made earlier in the year by Prince Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein of Jordan on combating sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers. The year 2006 saw the development of a detailed UN strategy toward the problem, alongside an ongoing series of investigations into specific complaints. Between 1 January 2004 and 18 October 2006, investigations were conducted against at least 316 peacekeeping personnel, and these resulted in the summary dismissal of eighteen civilian staff, the repatriation of seventeen members of former police units, and the repatriation or rotation of 144 military personnel (including seven commanders) on disciplinary grounds.

Evidence of the damage SEA can do to the reputation of peacekeeping forces has continued to mount. Surveys of public opinion toward UN operations in Liberia and Burundi carried out by Jean Krasno in early 2006 found that SEA was the biggest single source of resentment toward both missions. In Liberia, 22 percent of those surveyed referred to peacekeepers committing rape or encouraging prostitution. Of 900 Burundian interviewees, 536 referred to SEA, of whom 136 made specific complaints about rapes.

In 2005, the UN General Assembly transferred responsibility for investigating SEA claims to the Office of Internal

Oversight Services (OIOS), outside the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). But Kofi Annan admitted in May 2006 that OIOS lacked the resources to address all cases as they were received, "resulting in a backlog of serious misconduct cases to be investigated." There were 340 allegations of SEA reported in DPKO missions in 2005, and 127 more in the first three-quarters of 2006. Prince Zeid also raised concerns about progress on implementing a strategy for assistance to victims of SEA. Annan presented such a strategy to an expert working group in June 2006, and elements of it were already being implemented by the end of the year.

The strategy proposes that the UN should fine staff members found guilty of SEA, and use the funds to assist victims. Proposed forms of assistance include medical and psychological care, and even basic shelter, clothing, and food. Where necessary, the UN will assist victims in bringing complaints to national authorities, and may finance their legal costs. It will also offer economic reintegration and job training for victims of SEA. The UN will also offer support for paternity suits against UN staff, and aim to ensure that children born as a result of SEA receive support for any diseases transmitted at conception, and for the potential social and economic ramifications of their status. The strategy emphasizes working with community groups and nongovernmental organizations in providing assistance.

DPKO has also worked with the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping on combating SEA by military and police personnel, over whom DPKO has no direct disciplinary authority. In November 2006, it was reported that DPKO's conduct and discipline team had recorded the repatriation of a variety of uniformed personnel in the previous twelve months, including "12 peacekeepers from Nepal, seven from Uruguay, four from Nigeria, four from Senegal, two from Benin, two from Ethiopia, two from Togo and one each from France, Ghana, India, Niger and South Africa." The Special Committee and DPKO are working on a model memorandum of understanding with personnel contributors, by which states would send national investigations officers to the field to handle accusations of SEA against members of their contingents.

While the General Assembly is still considering these proposals, other organizations are searching for new approaches to SEA. In December 2005 the Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) adopted a resolution calling on states to take action against peacekeeping personnel who commit SEA. And in April 2006 the AU launched its first investigation into SEA, following accusations that peacekeepers in Sudan had been involved in sexual abuse.

Sources: UN docs. A/Res/59/287, A/60/861, A/60/862, and A/60/877; OSCE doc. MC.DEC/16/05; Jean Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey of UNMIL's Work in Liberia* (United Nations, Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, March 2006); Jean Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey of ONUB's Work in Burundi* (United Nations, Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, June 2006); Jonah Fisher, "AU Darfur Troops in Abuse Probe," *BBC News Online*, 4 April 2006; Edith M. Lederer, "180 UN Peacekeepers Face Disciplinary Actions for Sexual Abuse," *Associated Press*, 30 November 2006.