

Burundi

Despite a steep deterioration in the political, security, and humanitarian situation in Burundi in the latter part of 2007 and early 2008, efforts to revitalize the 2006 peace agreement between the government of President Pierre Nkurunziza and the *Peuple Hutu–Forces Nationales de Libération* (Palipehutu-FNL) received a boost with the signing of a cease-fire between the parties in May and the subsequent compromise agreements on Palipehutu-FNL’s unconstitutional Hutu reference in its name and FNL’s status as a political party in December 2008. However, by the end of the year, delays in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), as well as what some perceived to be a growing tone of authoritarianism from the ruling party, the *Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (CNDD-FDD), had raised doubts about the stability of the cease-fire agreement and the country’s future. In the meantime, South Africa, in its capacity as facilitator, established a Political Directorate to address issues relating to the implementation of the September 2006 peace agreement. Meanwhile, the AU Special Task Force continued to manage the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM) and provide security for FNL leaders and other related groups.

Background

Burundi has experienced decades of ethnic-based conflict that set Hutu against Tutsi in violent outbursts that have often extended beyond its borders. The most recent period of conflict was triggered by the assassination of the country’s first democratically elected Hutu president

in 1993. This plunged the country into a bloody civil war between the Tutsi-dominated military and various Hutu rebel movements, including the CNDD-FDD and the Palipehutu-FNL, that would continue for nearly a decade. Regional mediation efforts eventually 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, did not reach a peace agreement with the government until September 2006.

In June 2004, the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) was deployed to take over for the AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB), which had been deployed in 2003. 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). The latter

UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)

• Authorization Date	25 October 2006 (UNSC Res. 1719)
• Start Date	1 January 2007
• ERSG	Youssef Mahmoud (Tunisia)
• Budget	\$39.0 million (1 January 2008–31 December 2009)
• Strength as of 31 October 2008	Military Observers: 8 Police: 10 International Civilian Staff: 118 Local Civilian Staff: 221 UN Volunteers: 50

For detailed mission information see p. 202

is mandated to support the government's peace consolidation efforts, provide assistance in DDR and security sector reform (SSR), promote human rights, and facilitate donor and UN agency coordination. In 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 on its agenda.

Key Developments

During the first few months of 2008, Burundi suffered a noted deterioration in its security environment, including increased armed attacks on civilians, and in some cases on provincial government officials, and a considerable rise in criminal activity. Large-scale hostilities between the government and the FNL resumed in April and continued until the signing of the cease-fire agreement on 26 May. It was particularly worrying that this deterioration occurred in parallel to major setbacks in the political situation, including paralysis of both the broad-based government formed in November 2007 and the National Assembly.

In the face of these developments, a series of efforts were made and mechanisms instituted to revive the peace process. The Political Directorate, comprising the UN Secretary-General's Executive Representative, representatives of the South African facilitator and the Regional Peace Initiative, as well as the African Union, European Union, South Africa, Uganda, and Tanzania, and representatives of the government and FNL, considered proposals put to it by the facilitator in mid-January 2008 that aimed at restarting the stalled peace process. In the following month, a meeting of regional and international stakeholders held in Cape Town agreed on an action plan to further the peace process in Burundi. Meanwhile, a Group of Special Envoys for Burundi was formed in order to support the work of the Facilitator and the Political Directorate.

Guided by the objectives outlined in the UN Peacebuilding Commission's 2007 strategic framework aimed at promoting good governance, strengthening rule of law, reforming the security

sector, and ensuring community recovery, the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism was established in November 2007. Identifying clear benchmarks and indicators, as well as potential roles for other relevant actors, the JVMM's mandated tasks included monitoring implementation of the cease-fire agreement and of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. In June 2008, in the context of progress during late May—the new cease-fire that had been reached with the FNL and the subsequent return of exiled rebel leaders, including the FNL's chairperson, Agaton Rwasa—the UN Peacebuilding Commission released a progress report. It cited the need for cooperation of all parties in implementing the peace agreement, called for DDR efforts to conclude in December 2008, and called for a functioning electoral commission to be established by the first half of 2009 in preparation for the 2010 elections. A number of UN Peacebuilding Fund projects were implemented during the year to support progress on these priority issues.

The precantonment process for the FNL began in June 2008, but stalled shortly thereafter following the government's arrest of several rebel members accused of violating the cease-fire by continuing recruitment. The FNL denied the charges. However, the government remained skeptical given that the FNL had not officially applied for party affiliation and had missed a 12 July deadline for turning over its list of soldiers to the JVMM, a step necessary to facilitate the cantonment process. Uncertainty over the number of FNL members undermined the DDR process and raised doubts about the FNL's commitment to the peace agreement. Additionally, the low number of weapons surrendered at cantonment sites and acts of banditry by FNL members continued to impede the process.

Political differences were further aggravated by the ruling CNDD-FDD's authorization of the replacement of twenty-two sitting parliamentarians with CNDD-FDD supporters. This spurred fears of unchecked powers and the potential reemergence of an ethnically divided government. Meanwhile, human rights groups continued to report increased violence emerging

4.2.1 Security Council Resolution 1820: Women, Peace, and Security

On 19 June 2008, the UN Security Council held an open debate titled “Women, Peace, and Security: Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict” and unanimously adopted Resolution 1820, recognizing that sexual violence as a tactic of war is not just a gender issue, but also a matter of international peace and security, especially in peacekeeping contexts. Resolution 1820 states that widespread and systematic sexual violence can exacerbate conflict, impede the restoration of international peace and security, and have negative consequences for peace, reconciliation, and development.

Resolution 1820 reinforces and is intended to complement the landmark Resolution 1325 (2000), which urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts. Eight years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, member states reiterated their deep concern about

violence against women and children in armed conflict, which is becoming systematic and widespread especially in conflict zones.

This was aptly characterized by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the beginning of the June 2008 debate, when he stated that “violence against women has reached unspeakable and pandemic proportions in some societies attempting to recover from conflict.” He added that “violence poses a grave threat to women’s security in fragile post-conflict countries and undermines efforts to cement peace . . . by creating a culture that punishes violence and elevates women to their rightful role, we can lay the foundation for lasting stability, where women are not victims of violence, but agents of peace.”

The Secretary-General stated that, in order for a strategy to succeed, awareness must be raised and effective security measures must be established, including training

of national military and police forces, close monitoring of human rights, and prosecution of perpetrators.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) will play a significant role in the implementation of Resolution 1820 by developing appropriate guidance and training resources for peacekeeping missions, ensuring continued engagement and partnership with troop- and police-contributing countries, facilitating the increased deployment of female uniformed personnel, and continuing to uphold the policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations. In order to comply with the provisions of the resolution, DPKO will lead a UN systemwide effort to prepare a report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution, which is due by June 2009.

from issues related to the redistribution of land. With 400,000 Burundians recently repatriated, and an estimated 90,000 in 2008 alone, serious concerns have been raised regarding the government’s ability to deal with the redistribution of property and what mechanisms could be used to verify claims made by returnees.

In a positive turn of events, on 4 December 2008, at the Great Lakes summit in Bujumbura, President Nkurunziza and Agathon Rwasa, leader of the FNL, were able to reach agreement on several issues that had previously impeded peace consolidation. In particular, the two agreed that the FNL would drop the Hutu ethnic reference from its name, move its forces into assembly sites, and assume a greater role in government.

Nevertheless, by the end of the year, the challenges facing Burundi remained considerable.

The unsatisfactory pace of implementation of the peace agreement between the government and the FNL could still derail the modest gains achieved in the peace process. The slow progress of DDR efforts, combined with the perceived lack of commitment to an ethnically integrated government, indicate that much more work needs to be done toward aligning the interests of all parties. Meanwhile, preparations for the planned 2010 elections are placing enormous pressure on all aspects of the revived peace process. The anticipated large number of returnees, particularly from Tanzania, among whom FNL has a considerable support base, would likely add to the tense political climate. The international community, including the UN Peacebuilding Commission, faces daunting challenges during the year ahead as they continue to support peace consolidation efforts in Burundi.