The National Intelligence Service (SNR) committed acts of torture including sexual violence. It is hard for victims to report this type of violence and receive support. People accused of participating in political or armed actions against the government, mainly men, were subjected to torture by the SNR, which is under the authority of the President and enjoys a special status for the conduct of its investigations. The SNR used torture to punish and extract confessions by inflicting as much pain as possible. Prejudices and taboos related to sexuality, manliness and rejection of homosexuality, fear of being stigmatised, ostracised and rejected, and the lack of specialised support and assistance for men and boys survivors of sexual violence, contribute to the absence of reporting and receiving support.

CONSEQUENCES

PHYSICAL
- Acute pain, urinary disorders, erectile dysfunction

PSYCHOLOGICAL
- Depression, suicidal thoughts, loss of self esteem

SOCIAL
- Isolation, fear he cannot fulfil his expected role as head of household, domestic violence, destruction of the most valued unit in Burundian society: family with: destruction of the family which is the foundation of the Burundian society

I don't want to be recognized in the street as the one who was taken from behind (...) It's considered shameful (...) I don't know where I would go live if people found out (...).

Other women detained [by the SNR] were raped. They reported it [to senior SNR officials] who behaved as if nothing happened. This shows that this kind of practice was encouraged [...] Upon receiving these accusations, the first thing they should have done was to inquire “who raped you and when ? How did it happen ?”

They undressed me [...] because my hands were still [tied up]. Then they [...] tied my testicles [with a rope] and the rope was attached to a can filled with sand. Then [they told me] to stand up and walk with the can [hanging].
I asked the chief why I was there [...] They were embarrassed because they had no accusations to throw at me, but their plan was to put me in a cell to get me out of the way so that I don’t teach about or campaign for the CNL.

**Weaken the political opposition, primarily the CNL, by targeting its members and supporters**

- By physically eliminating them
- By torturing and subjecting them to ill-treatment
- By arbitrarily arresting and detaining them
- By preventing them from carrying out their political activities
- By preventing their candidates from standing for election and their representatives from observing the electoral process
- By using hate speech and inciting violence against them

**Muzzle independent observers so they do not report on what is happening in the country**

- By unduly restricting activities of the media, civil society and its representatives

**Closely control citizens before, during and after the elections**

- By forcibly recruiting them into the ruling party and by threatening them so they vote for the ruling party
- By preventing or discouraging their participation in electoral rallies
- By not allowing them to fully exercise their right to vote
- By maintaining the omnipresence of the Imbonerakure and allowing them to substitute the defense and security forces

When they saw people queuing to vote and if they suspected someone was going to vote for the opposition, they intimidated these persons by telling them: “Give me your voting cards, we’ll vote for you.” Given that some people are easily intimidated, they got scared and gave their cards because they didn’t want to be beaten.
**BURUNDI: FOLLOWING THE 2020 ELECTIONS, THE EIGHT RISK FACTORS REMAIN**

Compared to the pre-election period, most of the factors remained as they were 🔄, one mitigated 🟢 and another worsened 🔴 *

1. Volatile security situation and persistent economic instability 🔄

2. Widespread impunity for recent and past serious human rights violations 🔄

3. Weak State structures, in particular the judicial system 🔄

4. The existence of political, economic and identity reasons to resort to violence, including to consolidate power and to preserve individual economic interests 🔄

5. The capacity of various actors to resort to violence and to commit violations, in particular the omnipresence of the Imbonerakure in the public sphere 🔄

6. The lack of mitigating factors, in particular of a strong, organized and representative national civil society and of free, diverse and independent national media, in a context of unprecedented concentration of powers by the CNDD-FDD and growing indifference from the international community with regards to the situation in Burundi 🔴

7. Enabling circumstances such as the persistence of serious violations of human rights, support for the Imbonerakure and the increase in hate speeches, including with an ethnic dimension 🔄

8. The existence of triggering factors, such as holding elections 🟢

*See the detailed COI report for more information on the existing indicators for each risk factor: A/HRC/45/CRP.1.
**BURUNDI: PRIORITY ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BURUNDI TO MITIGATE RISK FACTORS**

**To mitigate factor # 6**
- Resume cooperation with the UN and reopen the UN Human Rights Country Office
- Immediately release human rights defenders, journalists and political prisoners
- Guarantee freedom of the press and freedom of association for civil society

**To mitigate factors # 1 and 8**
- Guarantee the freedom and security of political opponents

**To mitigate factors # 2, 3 and 8**
- End human rights violations and the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators
- Guarantee their non-repetition by dismissing or suspending State agents suspected of being involved in violations

**To mitigate factors # 3 and 5**
- Restrict the omnipresence of the Imbonerakure in the public sphere
- Prevent them from substituting the defense and security forces

**To mitigate factors # 2, 4, 7 and 8**
- Systematically sanction hate speech
- Guarantee an inclusive approach by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which includes the four pillars of transitional justice

**To mitigate factors # 1, 3, 4 and 8**
- Fight against economic malpractices and bad governance

**To mitigate factors # 2, 3 and 8**
- Reform the justice system to guarantee its independence and impartiality
BURUNDI: ECONOMIC MALPRACTICES UNDERPIN THE ECONOMY

GRAND CORRUPTION
Common practice in all economic sectors, especially in mining and public works

No investor can get a major business without giving something to the President [Nkurunziza] or the [CNDD-FDD] party.

BAD GOVERNANCE AND MALPRACTISES
Untraceable contributions from mining companies for community development
Deductions from salaries paid to soldiers deployed in peacekeeping missions abroad
Late, and to this date, inadequate compensation for people expropriated in the context of development projects funded by international aid

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND ILLEGAL ACQUISITIONS OF INTERESTS
Senior authorities active in economic sectors falling within their purview

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT
Opaque procurement procedures creating opportunities for corruption and malpractices for the benefit of individuals close to those in power

CUSTOMS FRAUD
Significant illegal trade in minerals and in particular gold

ILLICIT ENRICHMENT
Concerns senior Government, Administration or CNDD-FDD officials

The above economic malpractices reduce the State’s resources and therefore affect all human rights

The minimum core obligations of the State to guarantee the right to be free from hunger, to enjoy free primary education, to receive primary health care and shelter
The progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights, including the rights to health, education, social protection and an adequate standard of living
The protection and promotion of civil and political rights, in particular guaranteeing an efficient justice system, which is essential for the protection of all fundamental rights
The multiplication of various “contributions” required from the population, often under duress, which contributes to its impoverishment
**BURUNDI: SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN’S RIGHTS SINCE 2015**

*More than half of the Burundian population is under 18*

- Children killed
- Girls raped
- Teenagers arbitrarily and/or illegally arrested and detained and have been subjected to acts of torture and ill-treatment
- Children shut out from school for political reasons
- Children forcibly recruited into the Imbonerakure
- Teenagers forced to vote for the ruling party in the 2020 elections

**The day after the coup, on 14 May 2015, soldiers came to his home, surrounded the compound of his house [...] and killed his wife and three children. The bodies were found in the house with gunshot wounds.**

“I saw people who came and took my father. The others stayed and raped my mother, and then they killed her. After that, they seized us and they raped us. [...] We were beaten because of our screams.”

“Imbonerakure, police officers and agents of the National Intelligence Service are the main perpetrators of these violations. These violations were carried out with total impunity. In most cases, their parents were afraid to file a complaint for fear of reprisals.”

**CONSEQUENCES**

- Children forced to flee the country, sometimes without their family
- Children denied their rights to education, health, food and family life
- Girls and boys severely traumatized by the violations they experienced and/or witnessed and in need of appropriate care

“The damage caused by exposure to violence in early childhood is often irreversible, damaging brain development, compromising children’s physical and mental health and, in more severe cases, leading to disability and death.”

Publication Date: 17 September 2020  
**BURUNDI: WHY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST REMAIN VERY CONCERNED**

The risks remain high, the democratic space has significantly narrowed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nearly all the risk factors are unchanged; the structural factors have not been addressed.</th>
<th>The youth group of the ruling party, the Imbonerakure, continues to be used as a security force, particularly in rural areas, their actions largely unchecked.</th>
<th>Opposition and civil society actors remain under threat and continue to be pursued by the law enforcement authorities; most were arrested or fled.</th>
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<td>Multiple security incidents in recent months and regional tensions remain high.</td>
<td>Impunity reigns</td>
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There is no indication that the level of human rights violations has abated under the new Government

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<th>Persons under sanctions for their role in the 2015 crisis and the heads of institutions that commit serious human rights violations have been named to senior positions in the new Government.</th>
<th>The rules and practices of those institutions that allowed human rights violations to occur in the past are still allowing them today.</th>
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<tr>
<td>The national institutions that should serve to defend against human rights violations are unable or unwilling to do so, including the judiciary, the Parliament, the Independent National Human Rights Commission, the Ombudsman, etc.</td>
<td>Divisive identity politics continue to be used when convenient</td>
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Proliferation of hate speech, including with ethnic dimensions, for political objectives

Economic and social rights remain distant, financial transparency is low and corruption is widespread

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<th>74% of the population lives in poverty, 1.7 million suffer from food insecurity, and the State is unable to fulfill fundamental economic and social rights.</th>
<th>A portion of development/humanitarian assistance as well as public and private contracts is commonly siphoned off.</th>
<th>Monitoring of some beneficiaries of international assistance is impeded, e.g. the returning refugees.</th>
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There is presently little motivation for meaningful reform

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<th>The ruling party has achieved an unprecedented concentration of powers at all levels through the 2020 elections.</th>
<th>The exploitation of lucrative natural resources (rare earths, gold) and the management of national monopolies incentivize the retention of political power.</th>
<th>Repatriation of Burundian refugees underway, often without international oversight and with no information available on whether the causes of their flight have been resolved.</th>
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<td>The stream of human rights violations since 2015 have weakened the ability of the political opposition, civil society and general public to effectively demand reform.</td>
<td>Independent international human rights monitoring is needed as much as ever.</td>
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