

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	218
Land:	Burundi
Kilde:	Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset (ACLED)
Titel:	Country Report - Burundi Crisis Year One
Udgivet:	Maj 2016
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	22. september 2016

COUNTRY REPORT: BURUNDI CRISIS YEAR ONE

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Introduction:

As the crisis in Burundi officially enters its second year, the country remains unstable, as dead bodies (often with signs of torture) continue to be discovered throughout various provinces, high-profile assassinations are on the rise, and newly formed armed opposition groups become more active. Data collection efforts to monitor conflict at the local-level, supplemented by a network of grassroots organisations and trained citizen journalists, suggest that the conflict has a current reported fatality count of 1,155 between 26 April 2015 and 25 April 2016 (as of the time of publishing) – a much higher number than the 474 dead that the UN reported in March ([UN, 22 March 2016](#)). At least 690 of the reported dead (or approximately 60%) are civilians. More than 260,000 people have reportedly fled outside Burundi and thousands have disappeared without trace: approximately 137,000 Burundian refugees have crossed into Tanzania, 77,000 into Rwanda, 23,000 into Uganda, and 22,000 into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ([UNHCR, 29 April 2016](#)).

Direction:

In recent weeks, the crisis has become increasingly wide-

spread throughout the country and increasingly varied with respect to actors targeted by violence – ranging from security forces, former soldiers, and members of various opposition groups. The consequences of the past year are stark, but the crisis is not materializing into a civil war, a coup, or any other form of instability that is immediately recognizable. Since June 2015, reports have been referring to President Pierre Nkurunziza's actions as 'trigger for civil war' and 'spiraling into chaos', yet continue to use the term 'political crisis' rather than 'civil war' to describe ongoing events in the country ([Al Jazeera, 28 June 2015](#)).

Because of Burundi's recent conflict history, some, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, have warned that the ethnic dimensions of the conflict "are flashing red" ([The Guardian, 15 January 2016](#)). However, the past year of political violence has remained primarily between regime supporters against regime critics. Additionally, many civilians who have not necessarily supported, or opposed, President Nkurunziza's leadership or the ruling party National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) have nevertheless become victims of the conflict by seeking a safer livelihood across borders.

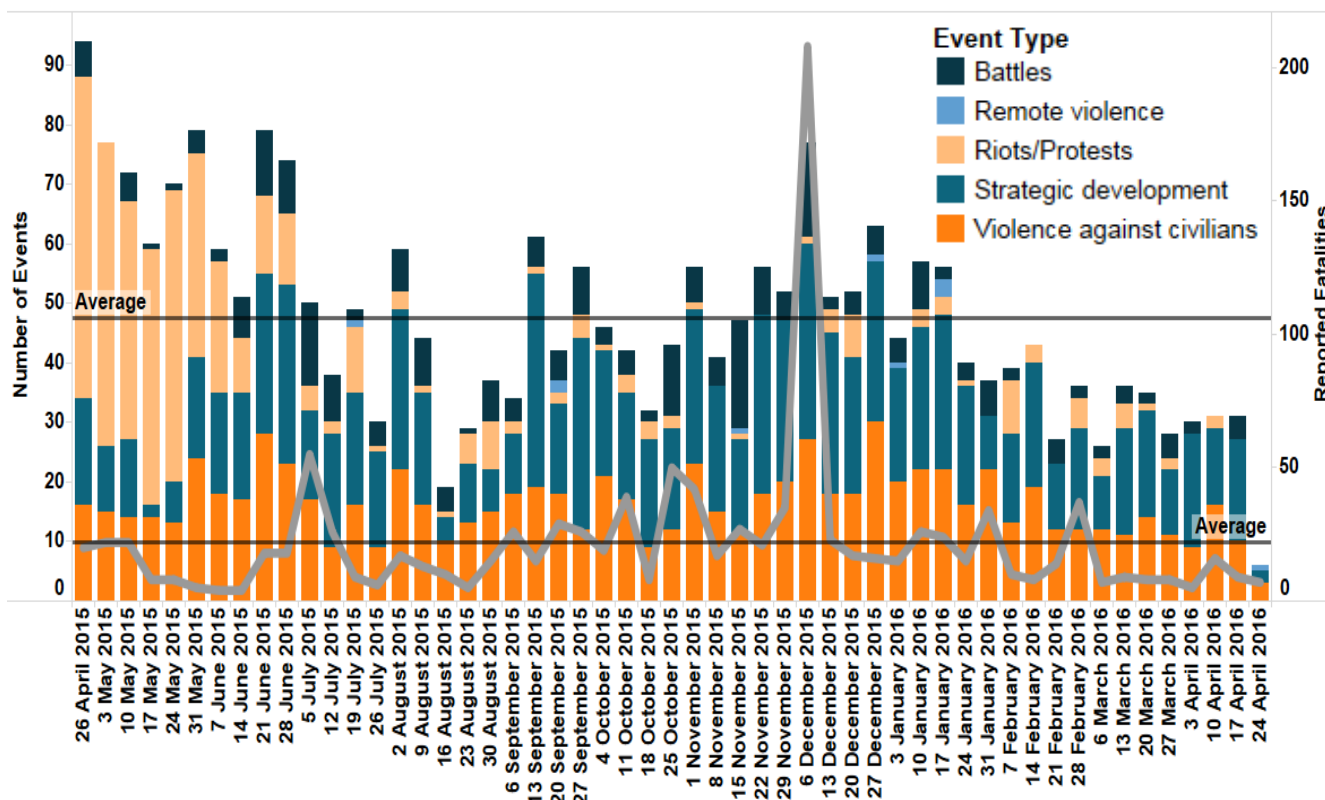


Figure 1: Number of Conflict and Political Violence Events by Type in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 25 April 2016.

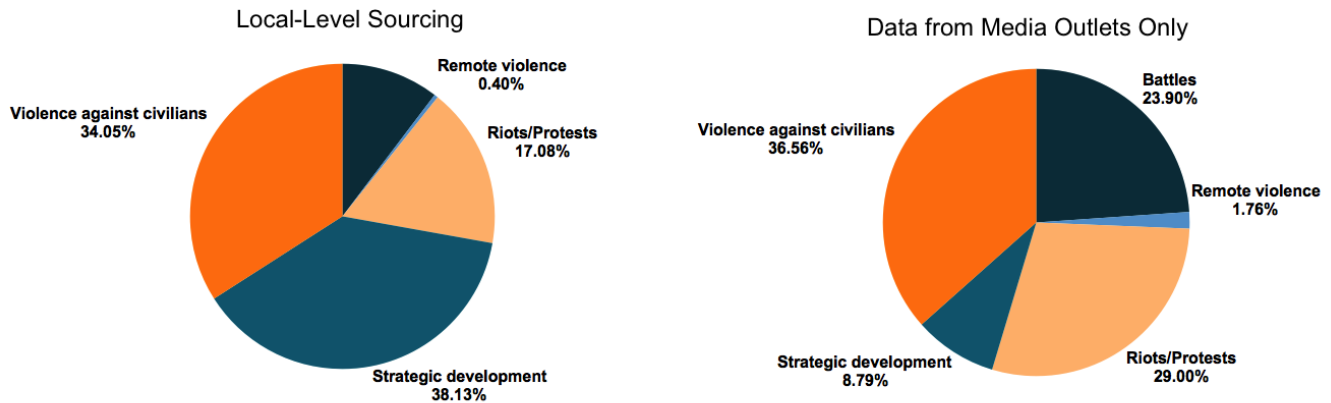


Figure 2: Data Differences by Proportional Event Type in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 25 April 2016.

Burundi's initial riots and protests starting in April 2015 mirror that of other African countries where long-standing presidents have attempted to defy or constitutionally remove term limits. Riots and protests in Burkina Faso in 2014 ousted President Blaise Compaoré within two weeks. In DRC, President Joseph Kabila has been blocked by his legislature from extending term limits. However, riots and protests related to Burundi President Nkurunziza's announcement of a third term did not as quickly bring a resolution. Instead, Burundi's unrest has evolved into a seemingly intractable crisis with street clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups, grenade violence targeting police, militia violence against IDPs attempting to flee, and security agents conducting searches and arrests of suspected rebels throughout the country.

The conflict has been characterised by a shutdown of newspapers, raids on radio stations, and freezes on the bank accounts of human rights organisations. Due to the crackdown on media outlets and civil society, news of conflict events and fatalities are often delayed; many events have likely gone unreported. ACLED data often rely on domestic news and local-level sources. ACLED's Burundi crisis information makes use of crowd-sourced data from the [2015Burundi Project](#) (over a quarter of all events in ACLED's local-level Burundi dataset rely on such crowd-sourced information, which is professionally monitored and validated), as well as a consolidated network of grassroots organisations and trained citizen journalists within the country (over half of all

events in ACLED's local-level Burundi dataset draw upon information from this network of grassroots organisations and trained citizen journalists). Figure 2 depicts the difference between the type of events reported by local-level sources versus media outlets; the local-level sources report much of the 'smaller-scale' yet chronic issues many Burundians face, namely home searches, (at times arbitrary) arrests, and harassment in border regions while trying to leave or re-enter the country.

What is the crisis about?

In 2005, Pierre Nkurunziza's appointment as Burundi's President was viewed as the symbolic end of a 12-year civil war. The CNDD-FDD, founded in 1994, was a Hutu-led opposition, with Nkurunziza's faction splitting from the group in 2001, and signing a ceasefire with Burundi's Transitional Government in 2002. When the political wing (CNDD) and military wing (FDD) merged into a recognised political party in

2005, it appointed Nkurunziza to the presidency. Ten years later, on 25 April 2015, CNDD-FDD announced that Nkurunziza would run for a third term, despite a constitutional two-term limit. On 26 April 2015, riots broke out across the Burundian capital of Bujumbura. Because Nkurunziza was indirectly elected by a majority CNDD-FDD parliament in 2005 (and was re-elected in 2010 with 92% of the vote in a highly boycotted election), the party considered him eligible for a third term ([African Arguments, 10 April 2014](#)). In May 2015, the Constitutional Court upheld Nkurunziza's candidacy. Riots and protests initially

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broke out again in neighborhoods of Bujumbura, such as Jabe and Musaga, which are known for anti-Nkurunziza views. Protests spread to the northern provinces of Ngozi, Kirundo, and Muyinga in the lead up to legislative and local elections on 29 June 2015. Nkurunziza was re-elected in June 2015 with a majority of votes, albeit in a highly boycotted election.

However, prior to this public announcement in April 2015, reports began as early as 2013 that the Nkurunziza regime had a 'youth militia' training in the DRC's Ruzuri plain. This militia – referred to as the Imbonerakure – was reportedly trained by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) former-Rwandan Hutu militia, with interests in keeping a Hutu President (potentially sympathetic to their own goals) in power. The Imbonerakure were reportedly active against protesters once the decision for a third term had been announced in Burundi.

Opponents of a third term cite term limits stipulated by Article 96 of the Constitution and adherence to the Arusha Accords, which ended the civil war fought from 1993 to 2005 by providing constitutional checks on monopolies of power by any one party or ethnic group. In 2014, the CNDD-FDD (generally Hutu-supported) removed First Vice President Bernard Busokoza of the Union for National Progress (UPRONA, generally Tutsi-supported), effectively

disturbing the delicate power balance. This shift was exacerbated by Nkurunziza deeming parts of the Arusha Accords invalid. The crisis has been marked by increasing tensions within the ruling party and within the armed forces. In March 2015, members within Nkurunziza's inner circle, Richard Nimbeshu and then-head of intelligence Godefroid Niyombare, advised the president against seeking a third term. After being dismissed from the security apparatus in February 2015, Niyombare, former General Leonard Ngendakumana, and former Defence Minister Cyrille Ndayirukiye led a failed coup on 13 May 2015. Coup leaders were later sentenced to life in prison, with the exception of Niyombare, who was never arrested. Box 1 (see Appendix) describes a timeline of the events that have thus transpired in Burundi between 26 April 2015 and 25 April 2016.

Dynamics:

The dynamics of the conflict have stayed largely similar throughout the past year; violence against civilians has consistently comprised almost 75% of conflict in Burundi since last July, although riots and protests made up the majority of events in the early stages of the conflict (April to early June 2015) (see Figure 1). Peaceful protests soon subsided – a function of increased violence against protesters of the regime (see Figure 3). From June to

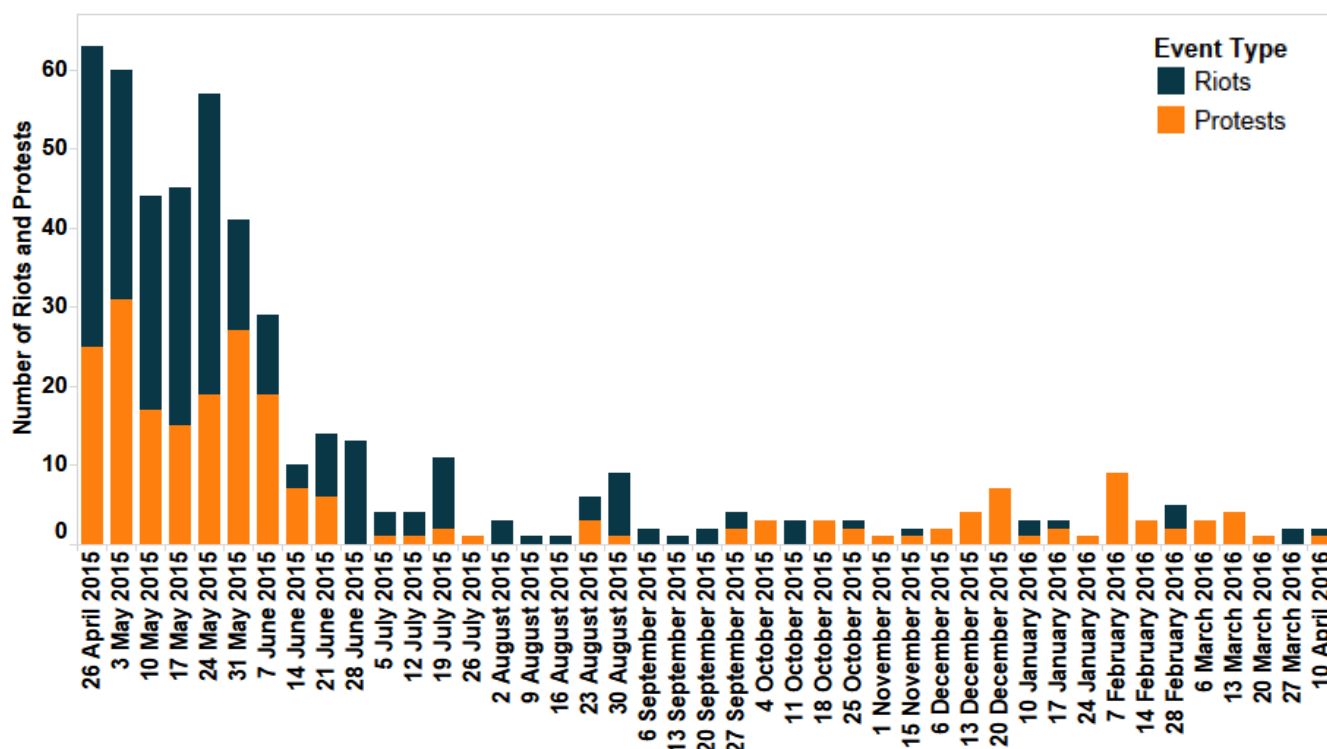


Figure 3: Number of Demonstrations by Event Type in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 25 April 2016.

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September 2015, violent riots were common. From late 2015, 'peaceful protests' have become the primary form of demonstration in Burundi, though these are almost exclusively pro-government protests, over issues including the deployment of AU troops to Burundi, or citing anti-Rwanda and President Kagame rhetoric and chanting. Local reports state that locals are forced to participate in these pro-government protests via threats from police forces and Imbonerakure, a CNDD-FDD youth militia. During protests in March 2016, there were reports that local municipal leaders threatened that anyone who failed to participate would be considered an enemy of the state.

Civilian Targeting

Rates of civilian targeting have increased since the beginning of 2016 and most of the fatalities from this conflict (approximately 60%) have been borne by the civilian population. In the beginning of the crisis, attacks on civilians were more centralized in and around Bujumbura. In more recent periods, these attacks and civilian fatalities are prevalent across the country. Of all reported incidences of violence against civilians in the past year, approximately 49% occurred in provinces outside of the capital areas of Bujumbura Mairie and Bujumbura Rural. Although there is an increasing trend of Imbonerakure beating civilians in Kirundo Provinces bordering Rwanda and in Ruyigi and Makamba Provinces

bordering Tanzania, more than 20% of all violence targeting civilians outside of the capital provinces in the past 12 months has occurred in Bubanza, which borders DRC and Lake Tanganyika to the west (see Figure 4). The most commonly targeted civilian victims in Bubanza are either politically affiliated with the ruling CNDD-FDD or affiliated with the opposition group FNL (see Figure 5). In Bubanza, almost half (48%) of all violence against civilians is perpetrated by unidentified armed groups, and one-third of such violence is perpetrated by Imbonerakure.

Local reporting indicates that violence against civilians has largely been carried out against opposition supporters and civilians trying to flee violence; this violence is carried out by government forces or affiliates of the government. Where an event includes information on a victim's identity and their last known whereabouts, the violence can be attributed to a particular group or section of the armed forces. For instance, arrests and subsequent deaths of the same person are widespread; numerous events describe

police arresting individuals and taking them to 'an unknown destination'. Witness accounts are often vague and inconclusive as to whether an individual was detained in a local jail or forcibly abducted. All political-related searches and arrests, whether conducted by various units of the security forces or by unknown armed groups, are coded by ACLED as strategic developments so as not to inaccurately inflate the number of incidences of violence against civilians. However, deaths of those individuals arrested may not be reported and therefore the number of incidents of violence involving police may be higher than what is reported here. In cases where civilian affiliation can be attributed, supporters of the FNL, MSD, and Amizero y'Abarundi have been targeted (13%, 12%, and 7%, respectively, of instances of civilian targeting in which the affiliation of the targeted civilian is known). In incidences where MSD leaders and activists have been targeted (mainly by unidentified armed groups), 74% of such incidences involved at least one fatality.

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Yet, there has also been an increased trend of military, police officials, and ruling party CNDD-FDD leaders both targeted by opposition forces (as well as 'unidentified armed groups' acting on behalf of opposition forces), as well as targeted by other state forces in cases when individuals are deemed to be critical of the regime. As recently as 20 April 2016, Colonel Emmanuel Buzubona was assassinated in Bu-

jumbura. Although his death is attributed to an unidentified armed group, suspicions lie with government forces. Buzubona had previously been arrested for suspected support of rebel groups during the 11 December 2015 attacks on military barracks. And 25 April 2016, in Bujumbura, unknown attackers used rockets and gunfire to assassinate Brigadier General Athanase Kararuzi, a military advisor in the office of the vice president ([Reuters, 26 April 2016](#)). This highlights the emphasis being placed on complete support and loyalty to the Burundian regime. In cases where civilian affiliation can be attributed, CNDD-FDD members, as well as members of the police and military forces, have been targeted (16%, 9%, and 5%, respectively, of instances of civilian targeting in which the affiliation of the targeted civilian is known).

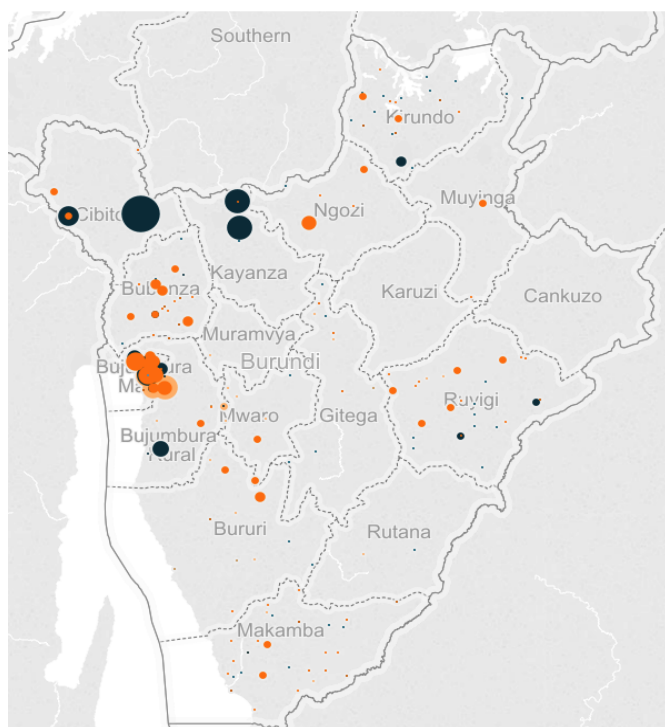
Gendered Repression

In addition to the torture and killing of civilians, especially opposition supporters, 'gendered repression' has also

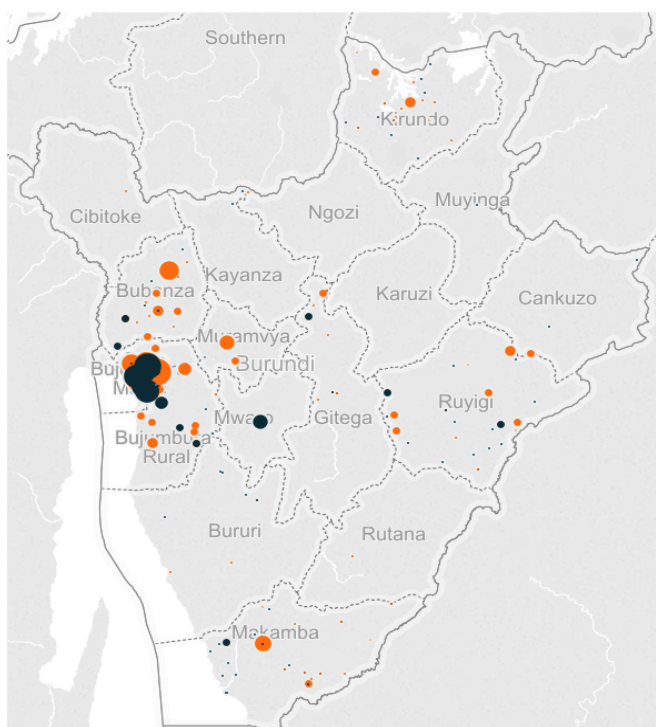
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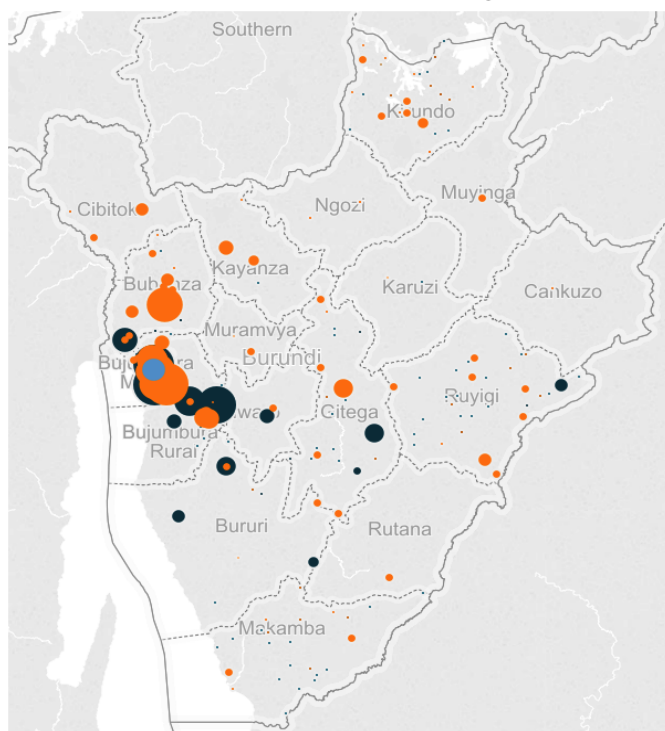
April - July 2015



July - October 2015



October 2015 - January 2016



January - April 2016

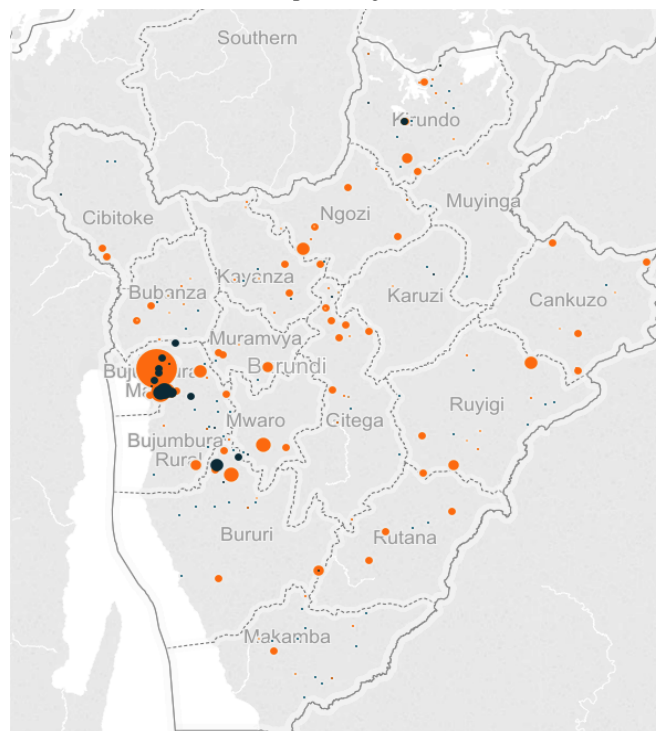


Figure 4: Number of Reported Fatalities by Location in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 25 April 2016.

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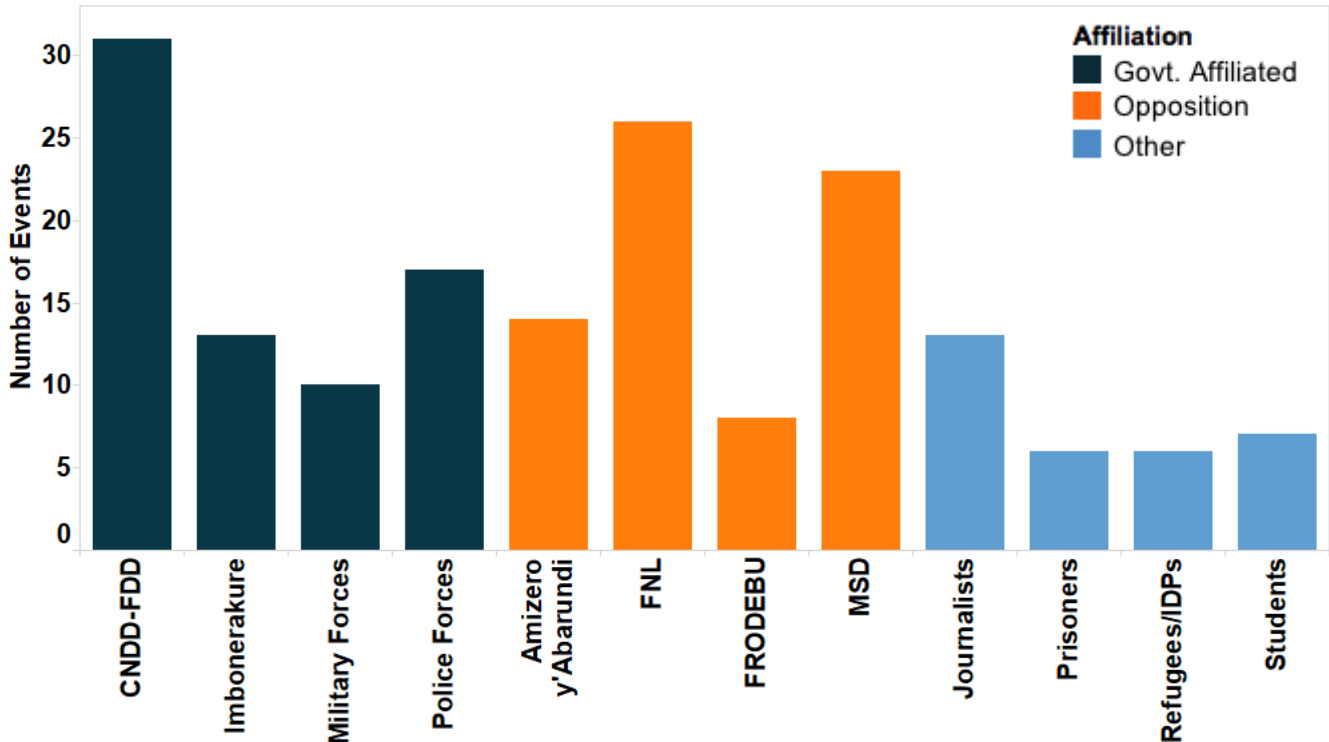


Figure 5: Violence against Civilians by Victim's Affiliation in Burundi, from 26 April 2015 - 26 April 2016.

been seen as a tactic. Gendered repression refers to political violence targeting women in efforts to impact their political participation; it largely includes the use of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) strategies. Although not a commonly reported trend throughout the course of the crisis, there have been several reports of police forces raping women during searches of their homes in 2015, especially in neighborhoods of Bujumbura. There have also been reports of women raped and killed outside of the capital; this may be used as a tactic to thwart women from supporting opposition forces. One body found in Gitega was identified as an MSD member; the woman was reported to have been raped before being killed.

Battles

While battles made up about a quarter of events between July and December 2015, these events have become less common. These battles largely consist of state forces, such as police or military forces, taking up arms against unidentified armed groups, which are believed to often consist of opposition supporters. However, with the crack-down of police searches of homes for weapons and opposition supporters, coupled with the increased targeting of civilians, it has become increasingly difficult for opposition supporters to continue taking up arms against the state, and to be open about their acts against the state. This is

partially why a high proportion of acts involve 'unidentified armed groups'. Battles involving unidentified armed groups are often described as involving 'opposition forces' or 'insurgents'; therefore, it is difficult to attribute violence to just one of the numerous opposition groups active in the country.

There are a number of 'acts of provocation' in this conflict, similar to previous Burundian conflicts. In November 2015, unknown assailants launched two mortar shells at the presidential palace, but caused no damage. Targeting the palace may seem reminiscent of attacks that sparked the country's civil war. Tutsi paratroopers assassinated Burundi's first Hutu president Melichor Ndadaye in October 1993, sparking an ethnic-based war that claimed 300,000 lives.

The deadliest day of the political crisis occurred on 11 December 2015, when armed groups carried out coordinated attacks on military sites in Ngagara, Musaga, and Mujejuru. At least 87 were reportedly killed and 49 were captured. Police retaliated with searches, raids, and arrests throughout Bujumbura. Dozens of civilians' bodies were discovered in mass graves in the days and weeks afterwards. However, mass graves may not only be a tactic of government forces. On 29 February 2016, members of press were allowed to view a mass grave in the pre-

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dominantly anti-government neighborhood of Mutakura. Bujumbura Mayor Freddy Mbonimpa stated that the victims were supporters of a third term ([Bloomberg, 1 March 2016](#)).

The events of 11 December 2015 garnered attention from international organisations, with the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council unanimously backing an investigation into the country's crisis. The African Union (AU) approved the deployment of a 5,000-strong African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU), which has yet to be deployed due to opposition from the Burundi Government. In February 2016, the government agreed to allow 100 military observers and 100 human rights observers into the country. Promised action by the AU, often-postponed peace talks mediated by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, and a visit from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and a delegation of African leaders in late February have had no tangible effect on the number of conflict events. Due to continued reports of acts of killing, torture, imprisonment, sexual violence, and enforced disappearances, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced on 25 April 2016 the start of a preliminary investigation into the situation in Burundi ([International Criminal Court, 25 April 2016](#)).

Who is Involved?

The political and military agents within the Burundi crisis and Burundi government are closely intertwined.

State Forces

The regime and larger government are deeply fractured, resulting in a stalemate amongst internal reformers and regime hardliners. Political tensions since 2005 have been primarily intra-Hutu and within the CNDD-FDD party, with regime hardliners reinforcing their strong position. Evidence of these tensions include counterbalancing military forces and high profile defections. Counterbalancing (when state security forces are intentionally fragmented both to limit the threat of a coup on the regime, and often due to high profile internal regime elites patronizing different forces) is evident: security forces are composed of national police forces, National Intelligence Service (SNR) agents, a unit in charge of protecting state institutions (API), and a Rapid Mobile Intervention Group (GMIR). Police and SNR are involved in the majority of strategic developments involving home searches and arrests of suspected rebels. SNR agents have reportedly

beaten and tortured civilians who are suspected of hiding weapons or housing rebels or foreigners. Leading up to parliamentary elections in June 2015, the Second Vice President of Burundi Gervais Ruyikiri and Speaker of the National Assembly Pie Ntavyohanyuma abandoned the party and fled into exile in Europe ([Inter-Parliamentary Union, 29 June 2015](#)).

The Imbonerakure - meaning "those that see far" - in Kinyarwanda, are a pro-government youth militia for the ruling party CNDD-FDD. This group carries out violence on behalf of the state. Pro-government militias are common features of modern African conflict (other examples include

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the Sudanese Janjaweed, the ZANU-PF militias in Zimbabwe, and Ivory Coast's 'Young Patriots') (see [Raleigh and Kishi, 2016](#)). This youth pro-government militia patrols border areas near Rwanda to the north (primarily Kirundo and Ngozi Provinces) and Tanzania to the east (Ruyigi Province) and south (Makamba Province), and DRC to the west (Bubanza Province). Tanzania continues to receive the largest influx of refugees (an average of 1,000 per week), while both Tanzania and Rwanda are suspected of hosting training grounds for Burundian rebels. There are reports that Imbonerakure have arrested and beaten civilians who return from or attempt to flee to Rwanda or Tanzania. In January 2016, 43 Burundian men believed to have undergone rebel training in Rwanda were arrested while attempting to re-enter Burundi via DRC ([Africa News, 13 January 2016](#)). Other Imbonerakure training camps in DRC were brought to attention by Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa, who was then targeted and seriously wounded on 3 August 2015.

State actions largely consist of home searches and arrests (coded as 'strategic developments'); about half (53%) of state force activity is comprised of these events. Battles and violence against civilians each make up about 17% of state force activity; approximately 13% of events involving state forces are demonstrations, both riots and protests. State force activity over the course of the crisis has occurred in large part in Bujumbura Mairie (approximately half of events involving state forces have occurred in the province).

Imbonerakure, however, exhibit different conflict patterns. Over half (55%) of events involving Imbonerakure consist of violence against civilians. Approximately 28% of events involving Imbonerakure consist of 'strategic developments': primarily arrests and intimidation of individ-

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uals trying to cross the Burundi border. Over 13% of events involving Imbonerakure are battles, and less than 4% consist of involvement in riots and protests. Activity involving Imbonerakure has been less centralized in the capital over the course of the conflict; less than 14% of activity involving Imbonerakure has occurred in the capital provinces of Bujumbura Mairie and Bujumbura Rural. Rather, Imbonerakure activity has largely taken place in the border provinces of Kirundo (24%) to the north, Makamba (21%) to the south, and Bubanza (18%) to the west.

The use of both counterbalanced state forces as well as the Imbonerakure pro-government militia, especially in repressing civilians and opposition, has allowed the state regime to best ensure its survival (see [Raleigh and Kishi, 2016](#)). The activities of these various conflict actors 'complement' each other, both in the type of events carried out by the groups as well as spatially.

Opposition Movements

The opposition to government is fractured, and largely based on internal/external divisions, recent histories in the civil war that lasted from 1993-2005, and previous roles in post-conflict governance. Main opposition parties to the CNDD-FDD include UPRONA (a political party that ruled Burundi for 30 years until the start of the civil war), the former rebel group National Liberation Front (FNL) led by Agathon Rwasa, the opposition Movement for Solidarity and Development (MSD), and the Hutu progressive political party Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU). FNL (formerly Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People, also known as PALIPEHUTU) now consists of about 3,000 militants. In 2014, Rwasa's FNL (generally Hutu) and Charles Nditije's UPRONA (generally Tutsi) formed an opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi (Coalition of Hope Burundians) in opposition to CNDD-FDD. Led by Rwasa, Amizero y'Abarundi highlighted that political divisions were no longer ethnic, but rather ideological ([Radio France Internationale, 21 November 2014](#)). Although the coalition boycotted June 2015's parliamentary elections and July's presidential elections, Rwasa was elected deputy speaker of parliament. Rwasa's refusal to boycott elections, and hence become the only opposition group included in the new government, has caused tension amongst FNL members ([Voice of America, 30 July 2016](#)).

Since the start of the political crisis, several new opposition groups have been formed or seen a resurgence in activity. Formed in 2011, Resistance to the Rule of Law in Burundi (RED-Tabara) has been reportedly active in one battle and two incidences of violence against civilians at the start of 2016. Former Colonel Edward Nshimirimana

formed the Republican Forces of Burundi (FOREBU) in December 2015, with the goals of ousting Nkurunziza and restoring cohesion between national defence and security forces pursuant to the Arusha Accords. In January 2016, Niyombare became a lead 'coordinator' for FOREBU, while General Philbert Habarugura heads the army and Colonel Gilles Ndiwokubwayo acts as army chief of staff ([International Business Times, 21 January 2016](#)). FOREBU has reportedly been active in two battles: an attack on a police station in Musaga in February 2016, which killed four Imbonerakure members, and the assassination of senior army officer Darius Ikurakura on inside a Bujumbura military base on 22 March ([Reuters, 27 March 2016](#)). FOREBU and RED-Tabara jointly carried out grenade attacks on civilians in Cibitoke and Kinanira neighbourhoods of Bujumbura on 6 February. The actual number of clashes and violent events involving both RED-Tabara and FOREBU are likely higher, yet the identity of attackers remains either unconfirmed or unspecified. The most recent armed rebellion (though not yet active in confirmed attacks) is the Union of Patriots for the Revolution (UPR), which published a press on 11 February announcing its intention to topple the Nkurunziza regime.

Lesser-involved political groups include the Union for Peace and Development-Zigamibanga Faction (UPD-Zigamibanga). The Council for the Observance of the Constitution, Human Rights and the Arusha Peace Accord (CNARED), an alliance-in-exile of several opposition groups, formed in August 2015 in anticipation of filling a political vacuum ([International Business Times, 26 August 2016](#)). CNARED supports economic sanctions and asks the international community to recognize that Nkurunziza's presidency expired on 26 August 2015.

While the various opposition groups do share similarities, they do not necessarily exhibit identical conflict patterns. For example, the FNL are involved in a number of battles and also faced many arrests. The MSD, meanwhile, are involved in far fewer battles, yet also face arrests. FRODEBU and RED-TABARA are both involved in more than one instance of civilian targeting, and less so in other event types; FRODEBU members targeted CNDD-FDD members and supporters, while RED-TABARA was identified as responsible for multiple grenade attacks targeting regime supporters.

The spatial locations of these groups also varies. For example, FNL activity has largely taken place in and around Bujumbura (though also in Kirundo and elsewhere). However, FRODEBU activity has been seen in northern and central Burundi, while MSD has been seen in the south and eastern provinces.

Table 2 denotes the affiliations, leadership, armament, involvement, goals, and time and region of activity of the primary state forces and opposition groups active during the Burundi Crisis thus far.

Unidentified Armed Groups

Events by ‘unidentified’ armed groups are frequent occurrence across African conflicts. Unidentified armed groups either do not acknowledge their responsibility for an attack; they are intentionally unidentified, with fluid membership and flexible affiliations, operating as ‘hired guns’; or less commonly, local information might not be able to determine who has perpetrated an act, which may lead to actors behind certain actions to be unidentified.

In Burundi, a significant amount of political violence has been perpetrated by such groups including grenade attacks on civilians, often thrown from motorcycles. At least 100 bodies – attributed to the acts of unidentified attackers – have been discovered in rivers and along roads in neighborhoods throughout the country. ACLED reported in July 2015 that the crisis had moved from riots and protests to a more insurgent character with the presence of unidentified armed groups throwing grenades at poll stations in an attempt to disrupt elections ([ACLED Crisis Blog, 10 July 2015](#)). Bodies were more often found in the capital provinces of Bujumbura Mairie and

Bujumbura Rural in September and October 2015. Since December 2015, this trend has become widespread throughout the country, with reports of incidents of bodies discovered in 17 of Burundi’s 18 provinces. Often, the victim’s identity is not known or reported, making it difficult to determine whether the attackers were government militia, opposition forces, or an independent group or individual. Many bodies are found with hands tied behind their back, suggesting signs of torture.

It may be possible to attribute the affiliation of UAGs to government and opposition forces by distilling how closely their actions conform to these named organizations (see Figure 6).

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Where no affiliation is evident, less than two-thirds (61%) of events involving UAGs are civilian targeting. One-third of their activity (33%) involves ‘strategic developments’ (instances in which home searches and arrests result in the discovery of weapons). In cases where UAGs are assumed affiliated with opposition forces, over half (60%) of events involving these

groups are battles, in which UAGs take up arms against state or state-affiliated forces. Opposition forces who make their intention known often face additional risk and danger. Approximately 22% of these groups’ activity involves ‘strategic developments’. Approximately 18% of events involving these groups consist of violence against

Event Type

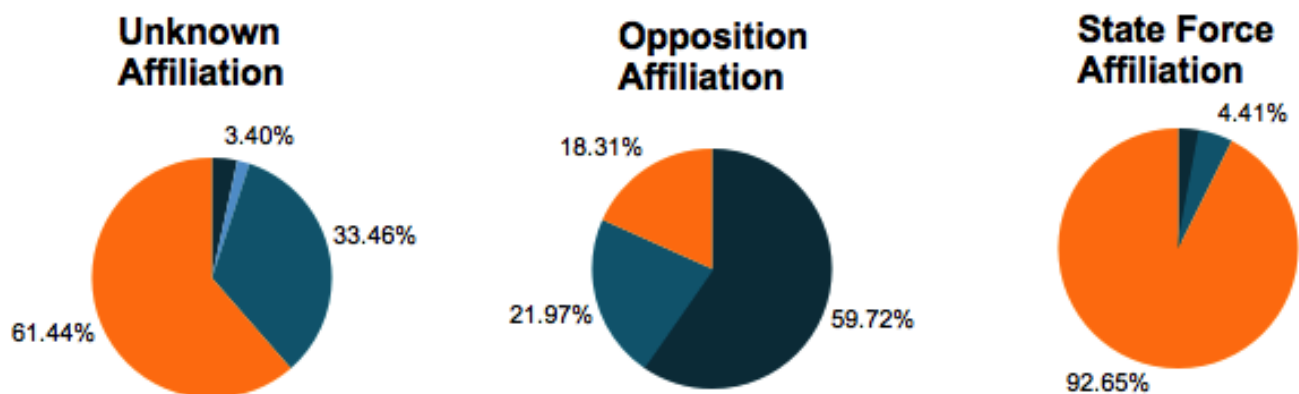


Figure 6: Unidentified Armed Group Involvement by Event Type Based on Affiliation, Burundi Crisis, 26 April 2015 – 25 April 2016.

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Name	Govt vs Opp	Leadership	Arms?	Affiliations	Primary Involvement in Political Crisis	Goals	Time Period Active	Region of Operation
Police - API Unit	Govt	Operates under command of national police	Y	CNDD-FDD & SNR	Suspected of extrajudicial executions of political opponents; suspected of executing 21 civilians following clashes with armed group in Nyakabiga in Dec 2015	Police unit responsible for protecting state institutions & fight against acts of terrorism	Created in Sept 2015	Countrywide, with majority of activity in Bujumbura Mairie
Police - GMIR Unit	Govt	Under authority of SNR	Y	Operates under authority of SNR; also affiliated with API Unit	Searches and violence against civilians	Specialised reserve police providing rapid response to emergencies	Established in 2006 as part of SNR; became stand-alone force in Dec 2007	Based in Bujumbura, with majority of activity in Makamba Province bordering Tanzania
Police - SNR Unit	Govt	Former leaders include Godefroid Niyombare (dismissed Feb 2015) & Adolphe Nshimirimana (de facto head of internal security at time of assassination in Aug 2015)	Y	CNDD-FDD, GMIR & API Unit	Searches, arrests, and torture of suspected rebels	Seek out info contributing to protection of State and its institutions; detect activities aimed at creating insecurity or threats to constitutional order	Under CNDD-FDD since Aug 2005; general intelligence services provided for 2000 Arusha Accords; exempt from ethnic quotas	SNR detention centres operate throughout country; unofficial detention centre in Bujumbura known as 'Chez Ndayaye'
CNDD-FDD	Govt	Pascal Nyabenda, party president since 2012	N	Police & national security forces; Imbonerakure youth militia of CNDD-FDD	Ruling political party; has held pro-government protests and strongly opposes Rwandan involvement in Burundi; individual CNDD-FDD members have been victims of violence, particularly in Jun 2015, perpetrated by police, military & UAGs	Supports legitimacy of Nkurunziza's third term; silences opposition & those critical of regime; stated support for intl 'presence' but not intl peacekeeping forces	Founded in 1994 as CNDD (political wing) and FDD (military wing); Nkurunziza led faction of 20,000 rebels that split from group in 2001; signed ceasefire with Transitional Government in 2002; CNDD & FDD merged into a registered political party in 2005	Countrywide ruling political party
Imbonerakure	Govt	Ezeziel Nibigira	Y	Youth wing of CNDD-FDD; SNR	Intimidation & violence towards civilians, particularly those attempting to flee or re-enter the country from neighbouring states; suspected of carrying out instructions from general police forces to harm or harass civilians; often wear police or military uniforms	Maintain security at local level; prevent movement of suspected rebels & spies	Reports differ as to whether Imbonerakure established in 2010, or as early as 2007	Countrywide, with large presence in border provinces of Bubanza, Kirundo, Makamba, Ngozi & Ruyigi

Table 2: Primary State Forces and Opposition Groups Active in Burundi Crisis.

COUNTRY REPORT: BURUNDI CRISIS YEAR ONE

May 2016

Name	Govt vs Opp	Leadership	Arms?	Affiliations	Primary Involvement in Political Crisis	Goals	Time Period Active	Region of Operation
Amizero y'Abarundi	Govt	Agathon Rwasa	N	FNL (primarily Hutu) & UPRONA (primarily Tutsi) formed Amizero coalition in 2014, symbolising political divides along ideological lines rather than historically ethnic ones; supported by MSD	Although boycotted parliamentary elections in Jul 2015, won 11 seats; members often searched & arrested by police & security forces	FNL & UPRONA united against CNDD-FDD regime	Since 2014; often referred to as Coalition of Hope Burundians, or Independents of Hope	Countrywide coalition; members often searched & arrested in Ruyigi Province; have also clashed with Imbonerakure in Bujumbura Mairie in Jun 2015 & in Bubanza in Jul 2015
FNL	Opp	Agathon Rwasa	Y	In 2014, formed opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi with UPRONA; actively supported by MSD political party	Battles against CNDD-FDD & Imbonerakure in Kirundo, Bubanza, Cibitoke, & Gitega Provinces; only one battle with UAG	Founded upon Hutu interests; has since coordinated with UPRONA (historically Tutsi-supported) in opposition of CNDD-FDD regime & Nkurunziza's third term	Founded in 1980 in refugee camps in Tanzania, as Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (PALIPEHUTU); armed wing FNL established in 1985; last active rebel group during civil war to sign a peace agreement with government in 2006; registered political party in 2008	Clashes against CNDD-FDD & Imbonerakure have occurred in Kirundo, Bubanza, Cibitoke, & Gitega Provinces; historically engaged in armed rebellion in eastern DRC
FOREBU	Opp	Executive leader is former military General Godefroid Niyombare; military leader is General Philbert Habarugura	Y	On 6 Feb 2016, coordinated with RED-TABARA to carry out grenade attacks on civilians in Cibitoke & Kinanira neighborhoods of Bujumbura	Only confirmed attacks are on a police station in Musaga on 5 Feb 2016, killing 4 Imbonerakure, & grenade attacks on civilians the following day; actual number of attacks attributable to group may be higher	Established to oust Nkurunziza & to restore principles of Arusha Accords	Formed in Dec 2015	Confirmed attacks on security forces and civilians in various neighbourhoods of Bujumbura
FRODEBU	Opp	Jean Minani, party president since 1995; Secretary-General Léonce Ngendakumana, since 2006	N	Following suspicions of a tainted 2010 presidential election, FRODEBU led creation of opposition coalition: Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC)	FRODEBU members often arrested by police and SNR; beaten by Imbonerakure; prominent FRODEBU member Jean Paul Ngendakumana assassinated in Jun 2015	Founded upon Hutu interests	Founded in 1986 by followers of Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected Hutu president of Burundi; in 1993, retaliated against Ndadaye's assassination by reportedly killing 25,000 Tutsis at start of civil war	Arrests & violence targeting FRODEBU occurs mainly in Kirundo & Makamba provinces

Table 2: Primary State Forces and Opposition Groups Active in Burundi Crisis (cont.)

COUNTRY REPORT: BURUNDI CRISIS YEAR ONE

May 2016

Name	Govt vs Opp	Leadership	Arms?	Affiliations	Primary Involvement in Political Crisis	Goals	Time Period Active	Region of Operation
RED-TABARA	Opp	Melchiade Biremba, chief of staff of armed forces since Feb 2016	Y	On 6 Feb 2016, coordinated with FOREBU to carry out grenade attacks on civilians in Cibitoke & Kinanira neighbourhoods of Bujumbura	Clashes with police and military in Bururi in Jan 2016; grenade attacks on civilians in Bujumbura in Feb 2016; actual number of attacks attributable to group may be higher	Oust Nkurunziza, form a transitional government, & disarm Imbonerakure; protect civilians in absence of regional or intl intervention force	Established 24 Apr 2011 following allegedly tainted 2010 elections; comprised of former military, former FNL militants, & youth; armed activity since Jan 2016	Confirmed activity in Bururi & Bujumbura Mairie provinces
UPR	Opp	Victor Ndayahararire	Y	Reports in Jan 2016 that UPR members were organising in Kibira forest in northeast of country, where clashes between military and unknown groups occurred in Jul 2015	On 11 Feb 2016, UPR published a press release announcing its intention to topple the Nkurunziza regime	Oust Nkurunziza	Announced formation on 11 Feb 2016; however, reports mention UPR combatants involved in rebel attacks in Cibitoke province as early as 2012	No confirmed conflict events; press release for formation of the rebellion announced from Karuzi, the least conflict-active province in the country
UPRONA	Opp	Charles Nditije	N	In 2014, formed opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi with FNL	Several UPRONA members have been victims of violence by UAGs in Kirundo province	Founded on ideology of Burundian nationalism; currently in opposition of CNDD-FDD & Nkurunziza's third term	Founded in 1960; helped gain Burundian Independence from Belgium in 1962; party leaders have been involved in several successful military coups against FRODEBU & other UPRONA presidents from 1976-1996	Countrywide political party, with violence against UPRONA members occurring primarily in Kirundo province

Table 2: Primary State Forces and Opposition Groups Active in Burundi Crisis (cont.)

civilians. These are primarily instances in which members or affiliates of the ruling party are targeted; these events often occur in bars and may involve the use of grenades. In cases where UAGs are assumed affiliated with state forces, their patterns of involvement again differ. The large majority of events involving these groups (93%) involve violence against civilians. These often consist of events in which bodies of opposition members and supporters are found along roads or in rivers across the country; the bodies are often found bound and/or showing other forms of torture.

Conclusions:

The Burundian conflict is a contest between regime supporters and regime critics. It should be not 'ethnized' by external viewers or analysts who ascribe political maneuvering in both Rwanda and Burundi to identity divides. The dynamics discussed above clearly illustrate how the violence and participants are a function of political competition, often by high-ranking and 'included' elite mem-

bers. The trouble within the political settlement in Burundi both before and after the 2015 election should be cause for great concern: purges, defections, and volatility within elite circles are commonly associated with prolonged, widespread, and intractable conflict cycles.

The African Union's 5,000-strong African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU) has yet to be deployed due to opposition from the Burundi Government. Civilians have to be protected from increasingly diffuse and fatal political competition, including IDPs in camps. Open questions that are yet to be answered include how government and opposition forces will continue to fragment, and what effects that will have on intra- and intergroup violence.

The Burundi Crisis Local-Level Dataset, as well as other resources from ACLED's Burundi Crisis reporting efforts, can be accessed [here](#).

APPENDIX

May 2016

Burundi Timeline 26 April 2015 – 26 April 2016

April 2015

25 - CNDD-FDD announces President Pierre Nkurunziza will run for a third term, despite constitutional term limits

26 - Hundreds riot and protest throughout Bujumbura; police respond with tear gas and live ammunition, killing six rioters and protesters; government officials also stormed offices of Radio Publique Africaine to disrupt live broadcasts of protests

May 2015

13 - Former Army Chief of Staff Major General Godefroid Niyombare leads a coup attempt while Nkurunziza visits Tanzania; Nkurunziza regains full control two days later

15 - Following failed coup, government bans main radio stations *Rema FM* and *Radio Isanganiro*

23 - Unidentified gunmen kill UPD-Zigamibanga leader Zedi Feruzi in Ngagara

June 2015

25 - Unidentified group with machetes assassinates Jean-Paul Ngendakumana, FRODEBU leader in Rugombo Commune and a candidate in local elections

29 - CNDD-FDD wins nearly 80% of seats in parliamentary elections; boycotted by some opposition groups; several high-ranking CNDD-FDD leaders abandon the party prior to elections

July 2015

10 - Intense fighting in Kayanza Province between military and mutineer military forces loyal to General Niyombare; 12 killed

11 - Intense fighting in Cibitoke Province between military and mutineer military forces under command of exiled General Leonard Ngendakumana; 20 killed; alleged support from Rwanda to Niyombare and Ngendakumana

21 - Nkurunziza re-elected for a third term with a majority of the vote; several FNL members killed following the election

August 2015

2 - Unidentified men in military uniforms launch rockets and gunfire from a military vehicle in Kamenge, killing Adolphe Nshimirimana, former Chief of National Intelligence Services

3 - Unknown group attacks and seriously injures Burundian civil society leader Pierre-Claver Mponimpa in Kinama; sparks riots in Musaga and Cibitoke

15 - Two unidentified attackers on a motorcycle assassinate former Army Chief of Staff Jean Bikomagu in Kabondo

September 2015

23 - At least 15 bodies of opposition members and activists found throughout Bujumbura following clashes between police and unidentified groups in Mutakura, Cibitoke, Ngagara, and Kamenge

29 - Unidentified gunmen fire shots and grenades, killing Jean Baptiste Nsengiyumva, an MSD leader in Muramvya Province

October 2015

13 - During clashes in Ngagara, 'insurgents' abduct three policemen; in retaliation, police execute seven civilians, including a journalist and a staff member of the International Organization for Migration

18 - MSD activist Charlotte Umugwaneza, whose family is originally from Rwanda, found in Gikoma River outside Bujumbura, showing signs of torture

23 - Police execute two unarmed rebels in Kibira forest, which straddles four northeastern provinces

28 - Police execute four rebels captured in Gishubi in Kayanza Province

APPENDIX

May 2016

November 2015

7 - Nkurunziza's stated deadline for opposition forces to disarm and receive amnesty

18 - Unidentified armed group launches two mortar shells at the presidential palace, but shells miss and cause no damage

December 2015

11 - Heavily armed groups carry out coordinated attacks on military barracks in Ngagara, Musaga, and Mujejuru; 87 killed in clashes

11 - Military and police forces retaliate with violent raids of suspected rebel households; dozens of bodies buried in mass graves in Buringa, Mpanda, and Kanyosha; existence and location of graves discovered by satellite imagery in January 2016

11 - API Unit of police forces executes 21 civilians, shooting them in the head, in Nyakabiga

17 - African Union Peace and Security Council approves a 5,000-strong African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU), yet to be deployed

23 - Former Colonel Edward Nshimirimana announces the Republican Forces of Burundi (FOREBU), aiming to oust Nkurunziza and restore cohesion between national defence and security forces

28 - Peace talks begin in Entebbe, Uganda

January 2016

3 - FNL youth league president William Nimubona found dead in Kinama

13 - Grenade attacks target and kill five police officers in Mutakura; In Kiyenza, soldiers kill former Captain Idi Omar Bahenda and former Police Brigadier Jean Claude Niyongabo, who defected and were thought to be recruiting rebels

25 - Clashes between RED-Tabara and government forces in Bururi Province; seven killed

February 2016

5 - FOREBU kill four Imbonerakure during an attack on a police station in Cibitoke neighbourhood of Bujumbura

13 - Thousands of ruling party supporters in seven provinces protest against the deployment of AU troops and against Rwandan involvement in Burundi

29 - Members of the press are allowed to view a mass grave in Mutakura; police claim opposition forces responsible for killing and burying Nkurunziza supporters

March 2016

4 - Following grenade attacks in Kamenge, SNR agents arrest 35 suspects including a soldier, and torture them with acid

15 - CNDD-FDD official Adrien Mudomo shot dead in Bururi Province

16-18 - Government releases 859 detainees as part of an agreement with the UN to release up to 2,000 prisoners

22 - Senior army officer Darius Ikurakure shot dead inside army headquarters in Bujumbura, reportedly by another soldier; Army Major Didier Muhimpundu shot and killed in a bar in Rohero

April 2016

11 - MSD activist strangled to death in Kayanza Province; Three bodies found bound together in a mass grave in Kadidiri, Ngozi Province

20 - Gunmen with rifles and grenades kill Colonel Emmanuel Buzobona and his driver in Kinama

24 - Unidentified gunmen assassinate FRODEBU activist in Kirundo Province; MSD activist's body found in Gitega Province; Imbonerakure suspected perpetrator though not confirmed

25 - In Bujumbura, unknown attackers use rockets and gunfire to assassinate Brigadier General Athanase Kararuzza, a military advisor in the office of the vice president

25 - International Criminal Court in The Hague announces preliminary investigation into the situation in Burundi