



Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	64
Land:	Burundi
Kilde:	Freedom House
Titel:	"Burundi (2006)"
Udgivet:	29. november 2006
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	29. november 2006

Burundi (2006)

Polity:

No polity available

Political Rights:

3*

Civil Liberties:

5

Status:

Partly Free

Population:

7,800,000

GNI/Capita:

\$90

Life Expectancy:

49

Religious Groups:

Christian (67 percent), indigenous beliefs (23 percent), Muslim (10 percent), Protestant (5 percent)

Ethnic Groups:

Hutu [Bantu] (85 percent), Tutsi (14 percent), Twa [Pygmy] (1 percent).

Capital:

Bujumbura

Additional Info:

[Freedom in the World 2005](#)

[Freedom of the Press 2005](#)

[Nations in Transit 2004](#)

[Countries at the Crossroads 2005](#)

Ratings Change

Burundi's political rights rating improved from 5 to 3 due to the holding of legitimate national and local elections.

Overview

In 2005, Burundi achieved a milestone toward bridging its deep ethnic, social, and political divides by holding the first local and national elections since 1993. These resulted in a fundamental political realignment, as the largely Hutu former guerrilla movement, National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Front for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), emerged as the country's largest political force, eclipsing the more traditionally dominant political parties. The legislature subsequently elected CNDD-FDD leader Pierre Nkurunziza as president.

Until this year, with few exceptions the minority Tutsi ethnic group had mostly governed this small African country since independence from Belgium in 1962. The military, judiciary, educational system, business sector, and news media have also traditionally been dominated by the Tutsi. Violence between the country's two main ethnic groups-the Tutsi and the majority Hutu-has occurred repeatedly since independence. The assassination of the newly elected Hutu president of the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU), Melchoir Ndadaye, in 1993 resulted in sustained and widespread carnage.

Ndadaye's murder fatally weakened FRODEBU's hold on power. Negotiations on power sharing took place over the succeeding months, as ethnically backed violence continued to wrack the country. Ndadaye's successor was killed, along with Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana, in 1994 when their

plane was apparently shot down while approaching Kigali airport in Rwanda. This event triggered the Rwandan genocide and intensified killings in Burundi.

Under a 1994 power-sharing arrangement between FRODEBU and the mainly Tutsi-led Unity for National Progress (UPRONA), Hutu politician Sylvestre Ntibantunganya served as Burundi's new president until his ouster in a 1996 military coup led by Pierre Buyoya, who had formerly been president. Peace and political stability within the country continued to be elusive, as armed insurgents sporadically staged attacks and the government security forces pursued an often ruthless campaign of intimidation. The search for peace eventually led to an agreement to allow a measure of political space for the

parliament, which had a FRODEBU majority, and the beginning of negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1998.

In 2000, the negotiations, mediated by former South African president Nelson Mandela, resulted in agreement in principle by most parties on a future democratic political solution to the conflict. Nineteen organized groups from across the political spectrum agreed to recommendations from committees on the nature of the conflict, reforms in the nation's governing institutions, security issues, and economic restructuring and development.

The specific form of the political institutions through which power would be shared and the reform of the military proved to be especially sensitive and difficult issues. In October 2001, the National Assembly adopted a transitional constitution, and a transition government was installed the next month, with President Buyoya temporarily remaining chief of state and FRODEBU's Domitien Ndayizeye as vice president. The failure of key elements of the FDD and the National Liberation Front (FNL) to participate in the transition resulted in both continued negotiations and violence.

By the end of 2002, most of the factions had agreed to stop the violence and participate in transitional arrangements leading to national elections to be held in late 2004. In April 2003, Buyoya stepped down and was replaced as president by Ndayizeye. In October of that year, the FDD reached an agreement with the government. Burundi continued its very slow progress in 2004 toward peace. In August, agreement was reached on the shape of new democratic institutions that would balance the interests of the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi populations and on the holding of elections. Demobilization of former combatants continued, and some refugees returned, especially from Tanzania. Sporadic fighting continued, however, near the capital of Bujumbura.

In January 2005, President Ndayizeye signed a law establishing a new national army, which integrated the existing government forces with all major former guerrilla groups except the FNL. In March, voters approved a new power-sharing constitution, which was followed by local elections in June. In July, the new parliament was elected, in which the CNDD-FDD won 59 out of 100 seats. FRODEBU took 24 seats, and UPRONA gained 10 seats. Parliament subsequently chose Pierre Nkurunziza, who gained 151 of the 162 votes cast, as president in August. Domestic and international observers generally regarded the local and national legislative elections as legitimate and as reflecting the will of the people. This was a considerable achievement, as the country had not held elections since 1993. Prior to elections, preparations required an electoral census, voter registration, adoption of post-transition constitutional legislation, disarming of combatants, and political party campaigning under peaceful conditions.

Burundi continues to struggle to recover from a war that killed more than 200,000 people, mostly civilians. The country also continues to face massive challenges resulting from its shattered economy and significant instability in the Great Lakes region. One rebel group, the FNL, has refused to end its armed resistance.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties

Citizens of Burundi can change their government democratically. Restrictions on political parties have been lifted, and parties and civic organizations function with considerable freedom. Burundi currently has representative institutions at the local, municipal, and national levels in the legislative and executive branches of government.

Carefully crafted constitutional arrangements require the National Assembly to be 60 percent Hutu and 40 percent Tutsi, with three additional deputies from the Twa ethnic minority and a minimum of 30 percent of the deputies being women. Governments must include all parties that have won at least 5 percent of the votes cast in parliamentary elections. The president must appoint two vice presidents from different ethnic groups, and they must be approved separately by the lower and upper houses of parliament by a two-thirds majority.

While the lower house of the parliament-the National Assembly-was directly elected, locally elected officials chose the Senate. Each of Burundi's 17 provinces chose two senators-one Tutsi and one member of the Hutu majority. Both houses then elected Nkurunziza as president. Six political parties are represented in the new government. Seven of the ministers are women. CNDD-FDD members currently hold 12 ministries out of 20 cabinet positions. Eleven of the ministers are Hutus while nine are Tutsis.

There are more than two dozen active political parties, ranging from those that champion radical Tutsi positions to those that hold extremist Hutu positions. Most are small in terms of membership. Many Tutsis have now joined formerly Hutu-dominated parties.

Some government revenues and expenditures have not been regularly listed on the budget, which has contributed to corruption problems. Burundi was ranked 130 out of 159 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2005 Corruption Perceptions Index.

The extent of press freedom has traditionally been related to the broader political context: when progress has been made on negotiations to resolve the crisis, the authorities have tended to accord greater respect to press freedoms. The media have been subject to self-censorship and periodic government censorship. However, a wide range of political perspectives are heard and seen, and the opposition press does function, though sporadically. The press group Reporters Without Borders placed Burundi 92nd out of 116 countries in its most recent press freedom rankings.

Radio is the main source of information for many Burundians. The government runs the sole television station and the only radio station with national coverage, as well as the only newspaper that publishes regularly. The BBC World Service, Radio France Internationale, and the Voice of America are available on FM in the capital of Bujumbura. Several private radio stations exist, although generally with limited broadcast range. One private radio station,

accused of broadcasting "defamatory" and "abusive" remarks about the government during the legislative campaign, was briefly closed by the authorities. Print runs of most newspapers are small, and readership is limited by low literacy levels.

Freedom of religion is generally observed. The ongoing civil strife and the predominant role of the Tutsis have traditionally impeded academic freedom by limiting educational opportunities for Hutus.

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly and association. However, past transitional governments occasionally restricted this right in practice. There is a modest but important civil society with a key area of focus on the protection of human rights. Constitutional protections for unionization are in place, and the right to strike is protected by the labor code. The Organization of Free Unions of Burundi has been independent since the rise of the multiparty system in 1992. Most union members are civil servants and have bargained collectively with the government. In 2005, nurses and teachers both staged one-month-long strikes that were then resolved. The Burundi Trade Union Confederation (COSYBU) represented civil servants in a strike action.

The judicial system is seriously burdened by a lack of resources and training, and by corruption. Given Burundi's recent history, there are far more existing and potential cases than can easily be handled by the current judiciary, and many of them are highly sensitive politically. Many crimes go unreported. Conditions in prisons continued to be poor and at times life-threatening. As of the end of 2004, some 4,700 people remained in detention without trial. Trials of individuals accused of participating in the violence that followed the 1993 assassination of former president Melchior Ndadaye continued. In late 2004, the Senate adopted legislation reforming the Supreme Court and allowing it to review earlier court verdicts. The criteria for review included rulings by a national or international jurisdiction on errors in the original trial. The president had not approved the law by the end of 2004.

As part of the peace agreement, the composition of the national security forces must also be equally balanced ethnically. In addition, Burundi has approved a UN plan for a truth and reconciliation commission to investigate more than four decades of ethnic conflict. A two-part mechanism is planned to clarify the historical truth regarding the conflict, investigate the crimes committed, and bring those responsible to justice. The commission would have the authority to prosecute those bearing the greatest responsibility for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. It is slated to have five members, two of whom will be Burundians.

At least 95,000 people remained internally displaced at the end of 2004, some since 1993, although about 160,000 returned to their home areas during 2004. Burundians continue to be subjected to arbitrary violence, whether from the government or from guerrilla groups. A total of 129 people were victims of "summary and extrajudicial executions" in Burundi carried out by the army or rebels between April and June, according to a UN report. The report on the human rights situation in the country also alleged 127 cases of rape, arbitrary

and illegal arrests, abductions, torture, or lynching. Most of the abuses happened in the province of Bujumbura Rural and Bubanza, the main areas of activity of the FNL.

Burundi's annual per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$600 ranks it 164th in the world. About 93 percent of the workforce is engaged in agricultural production, and 68 percent of the population lives below the poverty line as determined by the CIA's 2005 World Factbook. According to statistics published by the Central Bank in Bujumbura, most economic indicators sharply declined with the advent of widespread insecurity in 1993. Access to basic social and health services has been severely diminished.

Women have limited opportunities for advancement in the economic and political spheres, especially in rural areas. As part of the negotiated political agreement, parties agreed that parliament would be composed of 30 percent women. Only 5 percent of females are enrolled in secondary school. Widespread sexual violence, including rape, against women occurs, according to Amnesty International.