

Burundi



Risk Assessment Brief

**Melinda Campbell
Alexandra Garigue
Seán O'Connell
Kevin Wyjad**

Based on the CIFP Risk Assessment Methodology

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TIMELINE¹

1300s – Hutu people settle in the region, imposing their language and culture on the original inhabitants, the Twa.

1400s – Tutsi settlers establish themselves as feudal rulers.

1959 – Independence from Belgian colonial rule

1962 – Urundi is separated from Ruanda-Urundi, becomes Burundi

1972 to 1995 – Burundi experiences a series of coups and ethnic massacres that leave hundreds of thousands dead; Hutu and Tutsi rebels fight the government

2000 – Government (Tutsi), 3 Tutsi groups sign Arusha Accords and stop fighting; 2 main Hutu groups refuse. International support stabilizes Burundi's economy.

2001 – Power sharing Hutu/Tutsi government formed

2003 – FDD (Hutu) join peace process started in Arusha; rebel group FNL (Hutu) remains sole active militia.

2004 – UN force takes over peacekeeping duties from African Union troops; demobilization of army, rebels begins.

2005 – Military reform folds Hutu rebel groups (except active FNL) into mainly Tutsi army. The FDD (Hutu) wins parliamentary elections; Pierre Nkurunziza (Hutu) is elected president

2006 August – Former President Domitien Ndayizeye (Hutu) accused of plotting a coup

2006 September – The last active rebel group, FNL, and government sign ceasefire

2006 December – ONUB withdraws, to be replaced by a special AU task force

2007 January – Supreme Court acquits former President Domitien Ndayizeye, along with four of his co-accused, of coup charges.²

CONCLUSIONS

Burundi is at risk of sliding back into conflict. The peace process initiated by the 2000 Arusha accords remains unconsolidated. Although fighting has stopped, except for sporadic outbreaks of violence, underlying problems remain unresolved. The government is a prize because it is the most important source of wealth in the country, but a lack of economic development means that the prize is not large enough to provide payoffs to all the former enemies who are jostling within the terms of an uneasy power-sharing arrangement.

Weak governance is not the only challenge Burundi faces. In the short term, the shadow of a recent civil war still looms over the country. DDR programs are making only halting progress. Adding to this, Burundi's location in Africa's Great Lakes region means that it is affected by the armed struggles of its neighbours. Refugee migrations are dependent upon external factors in many cases. A 'youth bulge' threatens stability as the economy is unable. Land is contested and a potential flashpoint.

In some ways Burundi is an example of hope in its region. The international community has taken an interest in Burundi, but it remains to be seen how much success third party interventions will have. The civil war in Burundi has come to the point of an uneasy settlement, but true resolution still lies in the future. Whether Burundi continues to move forward to lasting peace and reconciliation, or instead moves backward into war, depends in part on factors which its leaders can control – including their own behaviour – and in part on external events in the volatile region where this small country is located.

BACKGROUND

Burundi is a former Belgian colony and consistently near the bottom of human development rankings, with a history of coups and massacres perpetrated by majority Hutus and minority Tutsis against each other.³ Control of the state is seen by both ethnic groups as key to survival. Neither ethnic bloc is monolithic, and individuals do cooperate across ethnic lines. The minority Tutsis have traditionally dominated the military and positions of political power. Pierre Nkurunziza, a former Hutu rebel, is the current president, and his FDD party controls the legislature. His government has become increasingly authoritarian in recent months, with summary executions and arrests of civil rights activists reported.⁴

KEY INDICATORS	INFLUENCE
<p>History of Conflict</p> <p>CIFP Score 9.0 (high)</p>	<p>Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arusha peace process begun in 1996, allowing Burundi to break out of the zero-sum game that characterized political and social landscape. ▪ War fatigue and receding political violence: 16 out of 17 provinces currently free from violent conflict.⁵ ▪ Peace agreement signed with FNL (Sept 7th 2006).⁶ ▪ Disarmament and re-integration of former combatants.⁷ ▪ Reform and re-organization of the Army attempts to separate it from the political process.⁸ <p>De-Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Historical of waves violence, massacres and genocidal violence due to ingrained inter-ethnic grievances, mutual fear and mistrust.⁹ ▪ Culture of impunity for war crimes committed by all armed forces (government and insurgent forces).¹⁰ ▪ Absence of judicial impartiality and legal accountability increases pre-emptive murders and revenge killings.¹¹ ▪ Proliferation of small arms contributes the legitimization of the use of force and increased gang violence.¹² ▪ UN peacekeeping operation (ONUB) withdrew in December 2006.¹³ ▪ Delay in the implementation of the DDRRR process; lack of funding for stipend of former combatants¹⁴ ▪ Presence of AP mines threaten local populations, increased pressure on civil society especially freedom of press.¹⁵ ▪ Continued harassment of civilians by security forces and continued human rights violations.¹⁶
<p>Governance and Political Instability</p> <p>CIFP Score 8.78 (high)</p>	<p>Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful and peaceful power transition of 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections.¹⁷ ▪ Adoption of draft law by the National Assembly aimed at creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (September 1, 2004).¹⁸ ▪ Draft constitution accepted by most Tutsi parties, preventing a constitutional void (October 2004).¹⁹ ▪ No major outbreaks of large scale, ethnic violence has been linked to political crisis.²⁰ <p>De-Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of trust in the government exacerbated by a recent coup attempt (March 2006) and allegations by opposition groups, civil society, and the media that the government staged the coup to crack down on political opposition.²¹ ▪ Tendency towards single party domination of the 2005 elected government and parliament, causing increased intra-ethnic and regional tensions.²² ▪ Overall failed structural reforms leave socioeconomic situation unchanged in comparison to wartime.²³ ▪ Lack of measures taken to deal with the land claims and infrastructural needs of hundreds of thousands of returning refugees and IDPs.²⁴ ▪ Reluctance of international community in response to clientelistic practices, corruption, and unilateral decision making and actions by government officials.²⁵ ▪ Increased pressure on civil society especially the freedom of the press by government and security authorities.²⁶
<p>Militarization</p> <p>CIFP Score 5.8 (moderate)</p>	<p>Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reforms in 2005 merged Hutu rebel groups with the Tutsi dominated army. Tutsi military elites appear to maintain effective control and many believe democracy with Hutu rule that will lead to genocide.²⁷ ▪ Demobilisation efforts appear to be even handed in their retirement of former army/rebel leaders.²⁸ ▪ A recent pay raise for the army may reduce resentment against the government.²⁹ ▪ A special AU task force is replacing the departing ONUB (UN peacekeeping operation), with South Africa to take a leading role. However, the previous AU force was not as successful as ONUB³⁰ <p>Destabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Burundi spends roughly USD 44 million (6% of GDP) annually on its military.³¹ ▪ Lack of discipline in the ranks is a concern: crime, including rape, is commonplace among soldiers.³² ▪ A history of coups, including the assassination of a Hutu president in 1993 to start a 13 year civil war,³³ suggests low institutional loyalty to Hutu dominated governments. ▪ Demobilisation programs have not been effective. Paramilitaries, including the youth based <i>Jeunes gardiens de la paix</i> continue to challenge DDR in Burundi.³⁴ ▪ ONUB left Burundi in December 2006.³⁵
<p>Population Heterogeneity</p> <p>CIFP score 5.33 (moderate)</p>	<p>Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Religious diversity is non-problematic with 62% of Burundi's population being Roman Catholic, 23% practicing indigenous beliefs, 10% Muslim, and 5% Protestant.³⁶ ▪ Constitutionally, Burundi is a secular state and cleavages have not formed along sectarian lines. The Burundian Catholic Church provides strong support for peace and educational endeavours.³⁷ ▪ Burundi is linguistically homogeneous, as Kirundi is understood by most of the population.³⁸ <p>Destabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Hutu majority (85%) and Tutsi minority (14%) have traditionally struggled for power. The Twa (Pygmy) accounts for a small portion of the population (1%), along with approximately 3,000 Europeans and 2,000 South Asian nationals living in the country.³⁹

KEY INDICATORS	INFLUENCE
<p>Demographic Stress</p> <p>CIFP Score 6.33 (moderate)</p>	<p>De-Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharp population increases since 1970 with a fertility rate of 6.55 children born/woman (2006) and 63.13 deaths/1000 live births (very high risk of major infectious diseases).⁴⁰ ▪ The average age is 16.6, creating a youth bulge effect whereby social services are drained and gang participation increases due to the lack of employment opportunities (46.3% of population below 15).⁴¹ ▪ The number of HIV/AIDS infected people is increasing.⁴² ▪ Widespread sexual and gender violence, especially among children (60% of reported rape cases).⁴³
<p>Economic Performance</p> <p>CIFP Score 8.13 (high)</p>	<p>Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From 2001 to 2005, economic growth recovered by an average of 2.2% per year.⁴⁴ ▪ In 2005 the government reduced its role in the coffee sector and plans to privatize.⁴⁵ ▪ Reforms continue with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper adopted in September 2006.⁴⁶ ▪ The 2006 IMF program projects a recovery of real GDP to 6% (from service sector and coffee production).⁴⁷ ▪ Poverty related spending has increased to 6.7% of GDP.⁴⁸ <p>Destabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Burundi is a land-locked, resource-poor country with an underdeveloped manufacturing sector. Economy dependent on agricultural sector with 90% of population is involved in subsistence agriculture.⁴⁹ ▪ Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world with a GDP per capita of USD 106.90 (2005).⁵⁰ ▪ In 2002 the number of poor living below the national poverty threshold increased to 65 percent.⁵¹ ▪ Total External Debt is 198.3% of GDP(2005).⁵² ▪ Agriculture, the economy's leading sector, is constrained by structural problems that reduce productivity.⁵³ ▪ Economic growth also depends on volatile coffee and tea exports (90% of foreign exchange earnings).⁵⁴ ▪ Tutsi minority controls the coffee trade at the expense of the Hutu majority.⁵⁵ ▪ Trade balance has been declining since 2002; exports USD 52.7 million and imports USD 239 million.⁵⁶
<p>Human Development</p> <p>CIFP Score 8.61 (high)</p>	<p>Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Burundi's combined gross enrolment for primary, secondary and tertiary schools is 36%.⁵⁷ <p>Destabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Life expectancy at birth is 44 years and the Human Development Index (HDI) value is 0.384 (ranked 169th of 177 countries).⁵⁸ ▪ In 2004, 79% of Burundians had reasonable water access (20 litres a person per day within 1 km of dwelling) from an improved source, such as a household connection, public standpipe, borehole, protected dug well, protected spring or rainwater collection.⁵⁹
<p>Environmental Stress</p> <p>CIFP Score 8.0 (high)</p>	<p>Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government set up a <i>Commission nationale des terres et autres biens</i> (CNTB) to address land and property issues.⁶⁰ ▪ Government set up a national solidarity fund to provide aid to those affected by recent flooding in 7 provinces.⁶¹ <p>Destabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional land inheritance has led to the subdivision of land, decreasing economies of scale, soil fertility, and productivity. Shrinkage of household land that leaves some members landless.⁶² ▪ Between 1965 and 2001, population density more than doubled.⁶³ ▪ Burundi has the second highest population density in Africa (270 persons per km²) and the population is expected to double in the next 20 years.⁶⁴ ▪ Since November 2006, heavy rains have damaged crops, homes and infrastructure in several provinces.⁶⁵
<p>International Linkages</p> <p>CIFP Score 6.84 (high)</p>	<p>Stabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member of 37 international organisations ▪ Tanzania closely involved with Burundi's peace process as a mediator and provider of good offices.⁶⁶ ▪ South Africa has been an important mediator (Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki) in the peace process.⁶⁷ ▪ UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) – monitoring group established in 2006 to replace ONUB.⁶⁸ ▪ In June 2006, UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) began acting as a liaison between the government, AU, World Bank, IMF, EU, NGOs and other bilateral actors to help coordinate aid for Burundi's recovery.⁶⁹ ▪ ICRC – maintains 147 staff in Burundi⁷⁰; UNHCR – maintains 192 staff in Burundi⁷¹ ▪ IMF – USD 102 million (81 million disbursed) Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement, allowing Burundi to access the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program.⁷² ▪ World Bank – 7 operations, USD 272 million, undisbursed balance USD 117.8 million.⁷³ ▪ A special AU task force is replacing the departing ONUB (UN peacekeeping operation), with South Africa to take a leading role. However, the previous AU force was not as successful as ONUB⁷⁴ <p>Destabilizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conflict in Burundi is tied to larger conflict in the Great Lakes region; resurgence of fighting in Burundi could spill into other states, and vice versa. ▪ Some 400,000 refugees are believed to be in Tanzania, some of which have been recently expelled.⁷⁵ ▪ DRC – About 60 000 Burundian refugees reside in DRC while 30 000 Congolese live in Burundi.⁷⁶ ▪ Rwanda – 2,000 Burundians live in Rwanda while Burundi hosts 4,000 Rwandan refugees and 3,500 Rwandan asylum seekers.⁷⁷ (Rwanda and Burundi have close ties between Tutsi and Hutu groups) ▪ UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) – peacekeeping force established in 2004, withdrew in December 2006.⁷⁸

SENARIOS

Primary Drivers of Conflict

Governance, the history of conflict, and demography are crucial problems for Burundi. None of these seem likely to be easily solved in the near future. Conflict has been criminalised in the past, and the government remains a valuable prize. A youth bulge is pressing forward, and government institutions remain weak (the recent acquittal of accused coup plotters by the Supreme Court notwithstanding) while the current ruling party seems disinclined to be conciliatory.

Secondary Drivers of Conflict

Under the more immediate problems listed above, Burundi faces serious challenges in the economy, human development, and environmental pressures (with an emphasis on availability of land). These reduce societal resilience to conflict, and could easily become primary drivers if catalysts are introduced. Refugees remain something of a wild card. Sudden massive returns (or inflows from other countries) would overwhelm Burundi, and to a large extent what happens with refugees is dependent on circumstances in the volatile Great Lakes region as a whole.

Best Case

Political elites find that rewards of peace are greater than war because of power sharing and contributions from the international community; the peace process will continue, albeit slowly. Hutu politicians benefit from control, but are sufficiently conciliatory to Tutsi elites to damp down fears of genocide and temptations to initiate another coup. Current trends toward authoritarianism reverse as part of this process. The special AU task force proves sufficient to stabilise DDR processes and prevent or minimize small scale local violence. The Great Lakes region as a whole remains relatively stable because all parties see an interest in peace, and does not cause Burundi undue stress on its peripheries. Refugee returns are slow and orderly, and do not overwhelm Burundi's limited capacity to absorb them. The government works with all stakeholders to find a compromise to land claim and title issues in order to maintain peace. International donor support remains high and maintains some level of economic growth. Nature is kind; floods are not a major concern.

Likely Scenario

The government proves to be Burundi's greatest resource, and competition for control is intense. Elites from all sides find that there is not enough for everyone. The FDD resists power sharing and tries to consolidate its hold on power to retain control of state finances and resources. Because of this other stakeholders feel short-changed, and the relative return of going back to fighting increases for elites who can extract rents from conflict. In spite of limited international efforts the economy does not improve fast enough to support the growing number of unemployed youth, many of whom are armed. Land claim disputes go unresolved and contribute to popular dissatisfaction. Conflict resumes, but on a relatively low scale, with rebel groups splitting their efforts between looting the countryside and trying to topple the government; fissures within ethnic groups prevent genocide. The AU force proves ineffective. Refugee return is slowed by the fighting.

Worst Case

Because of instability in the larger Great Lakes region, large numbers of refugees return to Burundi en masse, exacerbating land disputes and shortages. International support is withdrawn or drastically reduced as donor attention turns to Darfur and Somalia. The Hutu dominated FDD government continues its trend toward authoritarianism in an attempt to consolidate power. Competing Hutu groups as well as Tutsis are pressured by the government, and Burundi's political landscape fractures once again; fighting resumes which the weak AU force is unable to prevent. In a very extreme case, genocide (re)occurs as the Hutu majority orchestrates mass slaughters of the minority Tutsis, in part to scapegoat away from problems caused by population, disparity, and land issues. Natural disasters, such as floods, add to the problem.

APPENDIX 1 : Map of Burundi⁷⁹



ENDNOTES

TIMELINE

¹ Adapted from BBC News, "Burundi: Timeline", http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1068991.stm (Accessed January 28, 2007)

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³ UNDP, "Human Development Report 2006" <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/> (Accessed January 22, 2007)

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KEY INDICATORS

History of Conflict

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⁷ Rene Lemarchand, "Burundi's Endangered Transition", Swiss Peace Working Papers 2006, No. 5, 32:

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¹³ Rene Lemarchand, "Burundi's Endangered Transition", Swiss Peace Working Papers 2006, No. 5, 32: <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2006/sp-bdi-25oct.pdf> (accessed January 20th 2007)

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¹⁵ International Crisis Group, "Burundi: Democracy and Peace at Risk" Africa Report No. 120, November 30 2006, 4

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, "Burundi: Democracy and Peace at Risk" Africa Report No. 120, November 30 2006, 6

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¹⁷ CIA World Factbook www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cg.html (accessed January 20th 2006)

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¹⁹ J Brachet, H Wolpe, "Conflict Sensitive Development Assistance: The Case of Burundi" The World Bank Social Development Papers June 2005, 1: [http://www-](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servert/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/09/20/000012009_20050920160040/Rendered/PDF/335920rev0WP271W)

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²⁰ Rene Lemarchand, "Burundi's Endangered Transition", Swiss Peace Working Papers 2006, No. 5, 32: <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2006/sp-bdi-25oct.pdf> (accessed January 20th 2007)

²¹ International Crisis Group, "Burundi: Democracy and Peace at Risk" Africa Report No. 120, November 30 2006, 2

²² J Brachet, H Wolpe, "Conflict Sensitive Development Assistance: The Case of Burundi" The World Bank Social Development Papers June 2005, 5: [http://www-](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servert/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/09/20/000012009_20050920160040/Rendered/PDF/335920rev0WP271W)

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²⁴ Rene Lemarchand, "Burundi's Endangered Transition", Swiss Peace Working Papers 2006, No. 5, 32: <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2006/sp-bdi-25oct.pdf> (accessed January 20th 2007)

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²⁶ J Brachet, H Wolpe, "Conflict Sensitive Development Assistance: The Case of Burundi" The World Bank Social Development Papers June 2005, [http://www-](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servert/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/09/20/000012009_20050920160040/Rendered/PDF/335920rev0WP271W)

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²⁸ IRIN, "BURUNDI: Officers in demobilisation for the first time, official says", 21 August 2006.

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²⁹ ICG, 11

³⁰ United Nations, "Ninth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations

Operation in Burundi", December 2006. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/661/19/PDF/N0666119.pdf?OpenElement> (Accessed January 22, 2007) Kristiana Powell, "From Promise to Practice? The African Union in Burundi and Darfur", *Monograph No 119, May 2005 The African Union's Emerging Peace and Security Regime: Opportunities and Challenges for Delivering on the Responsibility to Protect* Institute for Security Studies. <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Monographs/No119/Chap6.htm> (Accessed January 31, 2007).

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³² IRIN, "BURUNDI: Government under pressure to curb continued rights violations", 27 November 2006.

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Population Heterogeneity

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Demographic Stress

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- ⁴² CIA World Factbook www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cg.html (accessed January 20th 2006)
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- ⁴⁵ IMF. IMF Survey Vol 35 No 20. (20 October 2006), <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/2006/103006.pdf> (accessed 25 January 2007), 319.
- ⁴⁶ IMF. IMF Survey Vol 35 No 20. (20 October 2006), <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/2006/103006.pdf> (accessed 25 January 2007), 319.
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