



## **Urgent Appeal for a fair approach to the memory of crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity committed in Burundi**

Date : 23 June 2025

**From :** the below signatory Burundian civil society organizations :

1. Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture au Burundi (ACAT Burundi)
2. Association des Journalistes Burundais en Exil (AJBE)
3. Association burundaise pour la protection des droits de l'homme et des personnes détenues (APRODH)
4. Centre pour le Renforcement de l'Éducation et du Développement de la Jeunesse (CREDEJ)
5. Coalition Burundaise des Défenseurs des Droits de l'Homme (CBDDH)
6. Coalition pour la des Défense des droits Humains Vivant dans les Camps des Réfugiés (CDH/VICAR)
7. Coalition Burundaise pour la Cour Pénale Internationale (CB-CPI)
8. Coalition de la Société Civile pour le Monitoring Électoral (COSOME)
9. Collectif des Avocats pour la défense des Victimes de crimes de droit International commis au Burundi (CAVIB)
10. Ensemble pour le Soutien des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en danger (ESDDH)
11. Forum pour la Conscience et de Développement (FOCODE)
12. Forum pour le Renforcement de la société civile au Burundi (FORSC)
13. Light for all
14. Ligue ITEKA
15. Mouvement INAMAHORO
16. Mouvement des femmes et filles pour la Paix et la Sécurité au Burundi (MFFPS)
17. Réseau des Citoyens Probes (RCP)
18. SOS Torture-Burundi
19. Tournons la Page-Burundi (TLP-Burundi)
20. Union Burundaise des Journalistes (UBJ)

**To the attention of:**

- The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres
- The United Nations Secretary-General Special Advisor on the prevention of genocide, Ms Wairimu Alice Nderitu
- The President of the United Nations General Assembly, Ambassador M. Philemon Yang,
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Monsieur Volker Türk,
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Mr. Bernard Duhaime
- Permanent Representatives to the United Nations

**Your Excellencies, with our highest consideration,**

We, the Burundian civil society organizations, signatories of this appeal, have been informed of a plan to hold a side event this June 25, 2025, at the United Nations Headquarters, on the topic “The 1972 Genocide against the Hutu of Burundi: from memory to action in the framework of the responsibility to protect.” This title raises serious ethical, legal and political concerns.

It is well known that the recognition of genocide is a highly sensitive process, strictly guided by the 1948 Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide. To date, no competent international body has legally qualified the events of 1972 in Burundi as genocide according to international law.

Since the political crisis that has been shaking Burundi since 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which has become a political instrument used by the ruling party (CNDD-FDD), has only carried out isolated work that only serves to divide Burundians who were victims of several tragedies that have bereaved both the Twa, Tutsis and Hutus simultaneously or in separate episodes.

Holding such an event under the auspices of the United Nations may end up endorsing a partial, unilateral and politicized reading of Burundian history.

We would like to express our deep concern on this instrumentalization of the 1972 sad events, which compromises all efforts for national reconciliation and affects the credibility of UN mechanisms in charge of the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities.

Furthermore, such an initiative tends to overshadow other episodes of violences that have grieved the country and affected different sections of the Burundian population, notably in 1965, 1988, 1993, 2015, etc.

More information on this subject can be found in “Alert Report” of 16 Civil Society Organizations published in November 2020 on the political-ethnic instrumentalization of the CVR in favor of the oligarchy of the ruling CNDD-FDD party<sup>1</sup>.

In its September 2020 Report, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi deplored also that the CVR had a very partial approach to its mission which included practically no Tutsi victims (see paragraph 127)<sup>2</sup>.

The same analysis was made by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Mr. Fabián Salvioli, during the 48th session of the Human Rights Council, held from September 13 to October 1, 2021. He stressed that the CVR is criticized for having focused mainly on the excavation of sites dating from the 1972 crisis, whose main victims are known to have been members of the Hutu ethnic group, and for having included few victims of the Tutsi ethnic group in its investigations<sup>3</sup>.

It is to be recalled that the report of the international Commission of inquiry on Burundi S/1996/682 of 22 August 1996, which was set up on 28/08/1995 by the Security Council, concluded in paragraphs 496 to 499 that acts of genocide were committed against the Tutsi minority in 1993, but that an international commission of inquiry on Burundi should be set up, which could be followed by an international criminal tribunal on Burundi, with a view to investigate and bring to court the perpetrators of serious crimes committed since independence.

As the CNDD leadership refused the establishment of this international commission of inquiry which had been initially requested by the government of Burundi and which was also provided for in the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi in its first Protocol, article 6 point 10, after negotiations with the government, the UN Security Council had decided to establish a joint judicial mechanism which would monitor the work of the Commission of inquiry through its resolution 1606 of 20/06/2005. Despite the above, the regime in place, which is indeed the product of a rebellion group involved in the past crimes, currently under investigation by the International Criminal Court because of crimes against humanity committed in 2015, in order to pardon itself and make prevail its own reading of the history, and instead of engaging a reconciliatory truth process, decided to move alone by instrumentalizing a politically motivated truth and reconciliation commission with the view to promote a selective and distorted truth which can only delay the reconciliation of the Burundian people.

The fact that the United Nations remained silent on this issue, despite its statutory mission to promote justice, peace and harmony all over the world, was a missed opportunity to establish the truth, deliver justice to the victims, and prevent recurrence of atrocities in Burundi.

In order to preserve the spirit of impartiality, rigor and sense of responsibility required by any action related to the memory victims of repetitive conflicts and the prevention of mass atrocities and crimes against humanity in Burundi, we respectfully submit the following recommendations:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://medialibrary.uantwerpen.be/files/4739/bb90c62a-5339-416c-a9d9-c7bef1270cb5.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/hr-bodies/hrc/co-i-burundi/co-i-burundi>

<sup>3</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A\\_HRC\\_48\\_60\\_Add.2\\_E.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A_HRC_48_60_Add.2_E.pdf)

1. Preserve the neutrality and credibility of the United Nations by preventing the Organization from lending its platform to initiatives perceived as partisan or politicized if the event happens in its premises;
2. Take the necessary measures to implement resolution S/1996/682, adopted by the United Nations Security Council, by ensuring the establishment of an independent international commission to investigate impartially and exhaustively all crimes against humanity committed in Burundi since independence;
3. Take the necessary steps to ensure that the Security Council puts Burundi back on its agenda to pay due attention to the serious crisis that this country is going through with no prospect of a solution to date.