

BTI 2012 | Burundi Country Report

Status Index	1-10	4.59	# 90 of 128	
Political Transformation	1-10	5.15	# 73 of 128	➔
Economic Transformation	1-10	4.04	# 107 of 128	➔
Management Index	1-10	4.46	# 82 of 128	

scale: 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest) score rank trend

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Key Indicators

Population	mn.	8.4	HDI	0.316	GDP p.c.	\$	409
Pop. growth ¹	% p.a.	2.6	HDI rank of 187	185	Gini Index		33.3
Life expectancy	years	49	UN Education Index	0.353	Poverty ³	%	93.5
Urban population	%	11.0	Gender inequality ²	0.478	Aid per capita	\$	66.1

Sources: The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2011 | UNDP, Human Development Report 2011. Footnotes: (1) Average annual growth rate. (2) Gender Inequality Index (GII). (3) Percentage of population living on less than \$2 a day.

Executive Summary

After a period of guerrilla war and civil strife ended by the Arusha peace agreement in 2000, Burundi radically transformed its structures and institutions through the approval of a new constitution (by referendum in February 2005) and subsequent democratic elections. The country was thus set on a new political course that promised significant socioeconomic changes.

The 2005 elections introduced a new condition that all parties had to present candidates from both the country's ethnic groups (Hutu and Tutsi) to prevent the previous confrontations between exclusive Hutu and Tutsi parties. The new constitution required the formation of a national government with a proportional representation of all major parties, following the model of a consociational democracy. Based on his landslide victory, President Pierre Nkurunziza and his National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy party (CNDD-FDD, a former major Hutu rebel group) were able to exercise control over most state institutions, thus for the first time representing the aspirations of the long suppressed Hutu majority. However, in following years the political elite appeared more concerned with pursuing narrow parochial interests, reflecting different segments of Hutus and Tutsis, rather than focusing on the task of national reconciliation and reconstruction. Authoritarian attitudes of state institutions and human rights violations made all activities of the opposition and civil society groups difficult and intimidated potential critics. By the end of 2008, the general political climate had considerably deteriorated.

A major development in early 2009 was the end of the armed struggle by the last active Hutu rebel group, the National Forces of Liberation (Forces nationales de libération, FNL), with the demobilization of all fighters and the formal conversion of the FNL into a registered political party in April 2009. This had the effect of significantly improving general security in the country. For the first time in almost two decades no politically motivated and armed rebel groups were active in the territory. It also remarkably changed the nature of political competition

between parties, with the FNL (which considered itself the true voice of poor rural Hutus) becoming the main challenger for the ruling party. For its official registration, the FNL had to drop its historical political name, “Palipehutu” (Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People), since the ethnic connotation was considered illegal under the constitution.

Throughout 2009 the political class was preoccupied by debates over framework conditions (such as the independence of the electoral commission) for the upcoming 2010 elections and by early positioning of the major parties, since the elections were seen as crucial for the future entrenchment of power in the country. Party youth militia clashes as well as harassment and intimidation by state security organs against the political opposition and critical NGOs increased noticeably, and local and international human rights organizations as well as external political observers raised concerns about the deteriorating situation.

The general election campaign in early 2010 proceeded more or less normally without any major problems, although with obvious tension between the ruling CNDD-FDD and all other political parties. The key feature of the contest was the fierce competition for Hutu votes between three major Hutu-oriented parties, while the country’s former ethnic polarization (Hutu-Tutsi) had been relegated as a secondary issue. The official results of the elections in May (64% CNDD-FDD, 14% FNL, 6.25% Unity for National Progress (UPRONA), 5% Burundi Democratic Front (FRODEBU)) were immediately rejected as fraudulent by all opposition parties, despite a generally positive assessment of correct conduct by both local and international observers. Almost all opposition parties (except the Tutsi-oriented UPRONA and some small Hutu-oriented parties) subsequently boycotted the parliamentary and presidential elections, thus leaving the field open for overwhelming victory of the CNDD-FDD and President Nkurunziza in both contests, although elections saw a lower voter turnout.

As a result, the domestic political situation has deteriorated and its future is unclear. A government (between the CNDD-FDD and UPRONA parties) has been formed in accordance with all formal constitutional requirements, but the absence of a parliamentary opposition has removed an important barrier against the authoritarian neglect of democratic rights. Critical NGOs and media are increasingly being subjected to intimidation. Several prominent opposition politicians went into exile for fear of being arrested. Opposition parties have formed the extra-parliamentary group Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC), but in view of their internal differences and limited resources it is not likely that the group can become a counterweight to the dominant party. There are also indications that the FNL may return to its origins as an armed rebel movement. In short, Burundi’s possibilities for further democratic transformation have greatly deteriorated, despite its seemingly functioning public institutions on the basis of formally correct elections and in accordance with the constitution.

Socioeconomic progress has been much slower than had been hoped back in 2005, largely due to the country’s large structural and historic economic problems and socio-cultural conditions. Progress is limited by high levels of poverty, overpopulation, a lack of arable land, ecological constraints (drought and occasional floods) and a lack of exploitable natural resources. A final version of a PRSP was formulated and a debt cancellation agreement under the HIPC initiative

with the IMF and World Bank was achieved in January 2009. But no clear national development strategy with discernible priorities has been as yet formulated, attributable to the lackluster performance of the political leadership and a lack of defined goals, but it can also be explained by the country's almost complete dependency on international donors and the extremely limited options for any realistic and independent development strategy. The prospects for any progress are linked with the success of the East African Community (EAC), in which Burundi became a full member in 2007; membership will allow Burundi to pursue a course of liberalization, modernization and privatization, which alone on the national level would be difficult to achieve. Official development aid remains a main source of income. Due to official development assistance (ODA) contributions to the national budget, country programs and projects have survived the last decade, and some progress has been achieved in basic education and rural health. Yet Burundi is still stymied by limitations as one of the poorest and socially least developed countries, while the threat of authoritarianism looms larger in the political sphere.

History and Characteristics of Transformation

From independence in 1962 until the turn of the century, Burundi suffered tremendously under the difficult legacy of history and structural deficiencies. It was only very recently, after years of violent civil strife, that a fundamental political transformation was achieved with the early awakenings of a socioeconomic transformation. Burundi is still one of the poorest countries in the world and highly dependent on foreign assistance and on world market prices for its two main export commodities (coffee and tea).

A deep sociopolitical cleavage between the Hutu (the vast rural majority which accounts for about 85% of the population) and the Tutsi (the historically dominant class, comprising some 14% of the population) extends far back in history, yet was accentuated during the Belgian colonial period as a result of racial thinking and divisive practices of the colonial authorities. The country was thus ill-prepared for independence as a united people. A small minority group (the indigenous Twa, totaling about 1% to 2% of the population) has largely remained unaffected by racial conflicts. The struggle for political power after independence, with Tutsis in full control of the state administration and the new military, resulted in the elimination of a large part of the new and educated Hutu elite after a failed coup d'état in 1965 and subsequent widespread pogroms in 1972 and 1988. All post-colonial, authoritarian Tutsi-dominated regimes, relying on the strength of the army, focused primarily on maintaining their power rather than pursuing development-oriented policies with a view to overcome the existing socioeconomic cleavages.

By 1988, the international community began to apply pressure for bringing about a democratic transformation. This, however, eventually ended in disaster. Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu elected as president in 1993 in largely fair elections, was assassinated by members of the Tutsi-controlled army after barely four months in office, ostensibly as a result of Tutsi fears of domination by the Hutu majority. The introduction of very rapid changes in state institutions,

particularly the threat of established security organs losing their hitherto unchallenged control, had certainly underscored that perception. Ndadaye's assassination sparked a spiral of violence fuelled by radical groups on both sides. Subsequent presidents from the Hutu majority party Burundi Democratic Front (FRODEBU) were blocked by the Tutsi military and political elite. In 1996, former President Pierre Buyoya (1987 – 1993) staged his second coup d'état. Neighboring countries responded with an economic embargo (1996 – 1999). Forced to deal with conflicting party interests, a civil war (with an estimated total death toll of around 300,000), Hutu rebel groups (primarily the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Front for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) and National Forces of Liberation (FNL)), an uncompromising army, militias on both sides as well as external powers demanding the departure of the military regime, Buyoya eventually accepted a peace process brokered by official mediators Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela and subsequently vice-presidents from South Africa.

The Arusha agreement of August 2000 between the Tutsi-dominated Unity for National Progress (UPRONA) and the Hutu-dominated Burundi Democratic Front (FRODEBU), a number of smaller parties and the military provided the basis for a transitional government eventually installed in November 2001. This government was led for 18 months by Buyoya, followed by the Hutu Domitien Ndayizeye for an initially expected and equal 18-month period, but which was then extended until mid-2005 due to delays in the process. These delays primarily resulted from resistance by several key players (mainly among Tutsi groups) against the proposed new political framework. A referendum to approve a new constitution as foundation of an entirely new political dispensation (with firm quotas for political and military representation of Hutus and Tutsis) was thrice postponed until February 2005. The main obstacle was removed in October 2003 when the CNDD-FDD and other smaller rebel groups gave up armed rebel activities, accepted the peace process and became fully integrated elements of transitional institutions (the government and particularly military and police). Only the oldest rebel movement, the FNL, rejected the power-sharing formulas of the peace process and carried on with armed attacks against state installations and civilian targets.

A crucial turning point in the country's history was in 2005 with the finalization of the transitional process and the introduction of a completely new political and administrative power structure. The new constitution, with its detailed regulations and safeguards for all future political institutions (based on the model of a consociational democracy) was overwhelmingly approved in a referendum, followed by elections with a high voter turnout of over 90%. In spite of acts of violence, harassment and intimidation during the electoral campaign, the elections were orderly carried out with international supervision and were considered to have been free and fair. The CNDD-FDD, which became a political party, emerged as the clear winner with 55% of the votes for the communal councils and 58% for the National Assembly. The party's victory was due to a high percentage of votes from the northwestern and eastern provinces, where it had been active as a rebel movement and disposed of a dense net of former commissionaires and ex-combatants. The rural population honored also the peace and security guaranteed by security forces, which now included former CNDD fighters. The party could draw also a number of Tutsi votes since under the new quota system, Tutsis were promised posts on

all levels of politics and administration. The former leading political party FRODEBU, largely representing the educated and urban Hutu elite, won only 22% of the vote nationwide, the majority of which came from the capital and surrounding areas, mostly because the still-active rebel movement FNL had recommended its supporters vote for FRODEBU. The UPRONA party and other Tutsi parties received about 12% of the votes, thus losing only about 2% to 3% of the Tutsi vote to CNDD-FDD and other small mixed parties. In August 2005, Pierre Nkurunziza (CNDD-FDD) was elected by a large parliamentary majority as president. The new consociational government was formed according to the constitution, comprising all parties which had received more than 5% of the vote, and implementing the mandated ethnic quotas.

The elections and installation of the new government marked the start of a new political era, one with high expectations for a peaceful future. The following five-year period has, however, been largely characterized by unforeseen consequences of the electoral victory of the CNDD-FDD combined with the constitutional quota system, as the majority party was provided with the legal tools to allocate attractive posts in the security forces, political institutions and administration to ex-rebels and to opportunistic or cooperative Tutsis.

An important event was the final consolidation of the new state security forces, particularly the army. Its first test came in 2003 – 2008, in the conflict between Hutu ex-CNDD-FDD rebels and Tutsi soldiers of the former army and FNL rebels. Another was the highly symbolic appointment of an ex-rebel general as army chief in 2009. International recognition was earned by the deployment of army units to the African Union peace forces in Somalia (AMISOM) and confirmed by assistance from the United States, South Africa, Netherlands and Belgium. Closer cooperation with the armies and security forces of neighboring Rwanda and Tanzania for fighting rebels in the region strengthened the country's new role. The political prize to be paid, however, was an oversized security force. Practically all ex-CNDD-FDD combatants were integrated into the army and police, which increased army personnel to 30,000 and police to 22,000. The associated costs amounted to 4% to 5% of GDP, which is more than double the average share spent by Burundi's partner countries in the East African Community.

The army support paid off for the political leadership. With the support of ex-rebel generals in 2007, the president was able to oust his main rival, CNDD-FDD chairman and strongman of the party, Hussein Radjabu. Radjabu was first deposed, then arrested and eventually convicted on treason. This led to a split of the party's parliamentary faction. Due to heavy pressure by the president, the Supreme Court approved the replacement of all members of parliament who belonged to the Radjabu faction by loyal members of CNDD-FDD, thus reestablishing the party's parliamentary majority.

A second important event was a peace agreement with the FNL, Burundi's last active rebel group, which organized attacks against institutions as well as civilians in the capital Bujumbura and other areas until late 2008. The FNL had refused to join the national peace process, since it saw the quota system as not acceptable for the country's Hutu majority. But its leader, Agathon Rwaso, came under increasing pressure from international and sub-regional governments, was forced to deal with the changing politics in its former safe area in South Kivu following

agreements between Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Democratic Republic of Congo President Joseph Kabila as well as the wish of many of his fighters to be integrated into the new army so to benefit from the country's demobilization programs. The peace negotiations between the government and the FNL, under South African and sub-regional mediation, dragged on inconclusively until December 2008. The leaders of the new army were hostile to a far-reaching integration of FNL fighters into the army, and opposition parties encouraged the FNL to delay a settlement, as they believed that victory in the upcoming elections would belong to whomever maintained sufficient recently demobilized combatants in the field to intimidate or otherwise mobilize the rural population, as was demonstrated by the CNDD-FDD in the 2005 elections. Thus Rwasa agreed only in April 2009 to a complete demobilization of his fighters. At the same time the FNL morphed into a political party, expecting to become a major new force in the 2010 elections. However, as the time between demobilization and the elections was short, the FNL was only successful in mobilizing supporters in the capital and adjacent provinces, where it was mainly active as a rebel movement.

Other opposition parties spoiled their chances by infighting over early positioning for the 2010 elections. Especially the FRODEBU party was split over to which extent it should continue to support the government, which was becoming more authoritarian. Finally the party split into FRODEBU and FRODEBU Nyakuri; the latter party decided to back the government, allowing it the two-thirds majority required for legislation.

Amid the political fighting the country's economic and social transformation suffered. The government did not seriously tackle the country's structural problems. But after lengthy and all-inclusive consultations a PRSP was finally formulated and approved, thus enabling the IMF and World Bank to cancel about 92% of the country's accumulated external debt under an HIPC initiative. With the assistance of major donors, primary education and health services could be improved. The "communes" took on more responsibility to improve rural infrastructure. The reform of the tax system by introducing value-added tax was begun. However the privatization of public enterprises stalled, doing private business remained difficult and the fight against corruption inefficient. The government was careful not to sour relations with donors, and followed donor advice as long as the interests of the government's supporters were not affected.

The pre-election campaign was highly charged and there were many accusations of intimidation and harassment by the ruling CNDD-FDD party and the government against political adversaries, but no major breaches of the peace until the first election round (on the communal level) in May 2010. The CNDD-FDD obtained 64% of the vote, FNL 14%, UPRONA 6.25% and FRODEBU 5%. Both international and local observers confirmed that the elections were generally conducted correctly. The victory of the CNDD-FDD in the rural provinces was largely due to the popularity of the president. The political class and urban elite had believed that the denunciation of the government and the president's party as corrupt and having violated human and civil rights would bring enough discredit to the president and his party to inspire voters to vote for change. But opposition parties won a majority, as in the 2005 contest, in only three central provinces. In all other provinces, the CNDD-FDD received a vast majority of the vote. The electoral results showed the cleavage between the urban milieu and the rural poor, who are

more concerned with basic needs (access to land, health care, education and so on) than with good governance. They acknowledged the attention of the president and his government of their situation and the peace guaranteed by the mixed army and police. Probably many rural citizens, particularly the Tutsi, also had no confidence in the leading opposition party, the FNL, and suspected that the party had yet to give up its former radical ethnic ideology. Intimidation and harassment by security forces as well as pressure by the administration however may have played a small role in the electoral outcome. Nevertheless, opposition parties raised charges of fraud against the CNDD-FDD and decided to boycott the subsequent presidential and parliamentary elections. Only UPRONA and FRODEBU-Nyakuri in the end took part in the parliamentary contest, and together with the seats accorded to the Twa minority, won 25 out of 106 seats. President Nkurunziza was reelected unopposed and a new government was formed by the CNDD-FDD and UPRONA parties, in conformity with the constitution's ethnic and gender quota requirements.

The abstention of most opposition parties tainted the democratic character of the elections, even more since leading opposition politicians were harassed following their boycott of the presidential and parliamentary elections. Some politicians were arrested, while others went into exile.

The BTI combines text analysis and numerical assessments. The score for each question is provided below its respective title. The scale ranges from 10 (best) to 1 (worst).

Transformation Status

I. Political Transformation

1 | Stateness

During the country's civil war (1993 – 2003) the state clearly was not able to exercise its monopoly on the use of force. The situation greatly improved after elections in 2005 with the installation of a new, legitimate government. But the remaining rebel group FNL continued its armed guerrilla attacks in parts of the country until late 2008, undermining the state's authority. This ended in early 2009 with the demobilization of FNL fighters and the integration of most of them (about 2,500) into state security organs. Since then, the full monopoly on the use of force has been generally maintained by the state, but due to the post-election political crisis in 2010, armed attacks have again been on the rise, but on a fairly limited scale and without much clarity as to the underlying political motivations.

After the disputed elections in May 2010, FNL leader Agathon Rwasa went into hiding in neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo and is rumored to be resurrecting the FNL as a rebel force against the government. The government denies the existence of any renewed rebel activities and only admits the existence of isolated incidents by criminal elements. Currently it is difficult to assess the probability of a new violent rebellion.

The legitimacy of the Burundian nation-state is not questioned in principle by any group and there are no claims for territorial secession. The historically evolved concept of a Burundian nation can be seen as generally accepted. The bloody struggles of the past between Hutus and Tutsis had always been about the control (socially and economically) of the existing nation-state, but not about the denial of belonging to the nation. In the past there had long been de facto discrimination against the Hutu majority, thus giving cause for armed rebellion, but the present constitutional dispensation with fixed ethnic quotas and an undisputed majority for the Hutus has introduced a compromise formula acceptable to all. A common language (Kirundi) underscores the national identity.

Question
Score

Monopoly on the
use of force

6

State identity

8

The small Twa ethnic minority group is de facto marginalized (largely due to their own cultural differences), but has been given a special politically protected status.

Burundi is a secular state and religious dogmas do not openly have direct influence on politics. The Catholic Church, however, historically has maintained an important role and held significant influence over Burundian society since the country's colonial period. This has had important bearing on widely held value systems. The president expresses openly his attachment to values of born-again Christians and in doing so, echoes much of the prevailing beliefs of the majority of the population. Other Christian denominations and Muslims represent much smaller numbers in society, but have increased in recent years. The strong religious attachments of the vast majority of the population have had an indirect influence on public life, but have not undermined the principles of a secular state.

No interference of
religious dogmas
9

Due to the country's relatively small size coupled with a high population density, public administration adequately covers the entire territory. Administrative structures are generally small and poorly funded, but have larger responsibilities than in many other African states. The basic service functions of the state are generally available at the level of the 129 "communes" (the lowest administrative units). Access to health services is available for 46% of the population, access to water covers 72% of the population and is planned to be extended in the coming years within the framework of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Many primary rural schools have been rebuilt or expanded. The president during his first five-year mandate gave much attention to the improvement of rural areas, visiting villages and rural areas frequently. These activities have clearly boosted the president's reputation among the rural population and significantly contributed to his (and the CNDD-FDD party's) electoral victory in 2010. Foreign NGOs have resumed partnership cooperation and projects.

Basic
administration
7

2 | Political Participation

The first post-civil-war elections in 2005 were generally considered free and fair. However, with the landslide victory of the CNND-FDD, the presidential party was able to solidify its political position and gain control over most state institutions. The 2010 elections were therefore regarded by all political players as decisive for the country's future power configuration. Therefore, the sequence and modalities of the elections and the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission were the source of considerable controversy, but a compromise was ultimately reached. Following the dictates of the constitution, members of the Independent Electoral Commission were approved by parliament and ultimately appointed by the president. The climate of the election campaign was very hostile. Although marred by only a few incidents, opposition parties and sympathizers were to some extent subjected to harassment and intimidation by state organs. The ruling party made full

Free and fair
elections
6

use of state facilities and resources, and was covered much more closely by the state-controlled media. All this contributed to an uneven playing field.

But there is no evidence that without harassment and irregularities the CNDD-FDD's margin of victory in the communal elections (+7%) would have been substantially different. When the Hutu opposition parties' votes were combined, their loss was less than 4%. In most communities, the CNDD-FDD already had the majority of council members and administrators, the latter also subject to the quota regulation (50:50). An important factor was the particular attention paid by the president to rural areas. The FNL overestimated its appeal to the Hutu population outside urban and rural Bujumbura.

In analyses of the returns, the political orientation of the main Hutu opposition parties FNL and UPD is rarely taken into consideration. The leaders of both parties represent the radical wings of the Hutu rebels. Fearful of new ethnic strife, moderate voters including many Tutsi may have turned to the CNDD-FDD, which in spite of its deficiencies at least has made a substantive contribution to reconciliation between Tutsi and Hutu.

In the first, communal electoral round, the CNDD-FDD was able to consolidate its majority position in the north, center and east, whereas in the capital and the south it improved its results but remained definitively in a minority position. Its main competitor, the FNL, which was organized as a party only one year ago, won 58% of the votes in its stronghold Bujumbura Rural (where it had been active as a rebel movement). However, nationwide it succeeded neither in penetrating the core CNDD-FDD constituency nor in attracting voters from the Tutsi-oriented parties, and was able to draw former FRODEBU voters only to a limited extent.

The losers accused the government of massive fraud, intimidation and harassment. There were in fact some irregularities, but no convincing evidence of fraud was produced, and local and international election observers alike gave a positive assessment of the overall conduct. The FNL nevertheless succeeded in rallying most of the other opposition parties to boycott the subsequent parliamentary and presidential elections (with exception of UPRONA, in the case of the parliamentary elections). U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the East African Community and donor country representatives tried in vain to dissuade the opposition from the boycott.

The parliamentary and presidential elections were held in conformity with existing regulations and were judged by international and local observers to be generally correct. However, the boycott prevented the population from having the chance to engage in an open electoral contest on the national level.

The elected rulers do in principle have the authority and the instruments to govern the country effectively, but they have to be careful not to antagonize some special interest groups too strongly (given the complex socioeconomic fabric of Burundian society). The veto power of the military is limited – due to its 50:50 split between Hutus and Tutsis– to significant matters that would change the essential provisions of the peace agreement or constitution.

Effective power to govern

6

At this point, no effective veto powers are evident. Because of the country's high financial dependency on foreign aid and the good will of its principal international partners (European Union, United States, Switzerland, international financial institutions), the government is obliged to consult with them about all financially relevant policy matters.

The high number of formally registered political parties and civic groups can be taken as indication of relatively liberal practice with respect to the rights of political association and assembly. However, this is very considerably (but intentionally) constrained by the provisions of the constitution that stipulate an obligatory mixed ethnic membership. This was agreed upon as a device to overcome the old ethnic cleavages, but it nevertheless infringes on the absolute liberty of political association. Under the antagonistic political climate during and after the elections, the existence of opposition forces was not directly prohibited, but their operations were threatened by acts of intimidation and harassment by state organs. Meanwhile, there are indications that the security services have been brought under tighter control, and that a more moderate attitude is taking hold, particularly in regard to criticisms by civil society organizations. However, the discrepancy between organizations' permitted formal existence and the limitations imposed by the government's authoritarian attitudes is noticeable.

Association / assembly rights

6

According to a recent Human Rights Watch report, there are signs of moderation in regard to oppositional or critical groups, probably as result of interventions by donors. It is also unclear whether the acts of harassment and intimidation were orchestrated by the CNDD-FDD or security forces. In judging the repressive actions of the government, actions directed against the FNL and the other rather small parties of ADC-Ikibiri should be distinguished, since the democratic credentials of the FNL are doubtful.

The situation with regard to media plurality and the freedom of expression for individuals and associations in general has clearly deteriorated. Print media presence outside Bujumbura is extremely limited; by far the most important media is the radio (both state-owned and private). In the crucial 2005 election year, the role of the media was depicted as quite exemplary and unbiased, but since then there has increasingly been a tendency toward governmental intimidation and the muzzling of any independent critical expression of opinion. In a number of cases, this has resulted in the arbitrary detention of journalists and nonconformist

Freedom of expression

4

personalities. The increasingly authoritarian stance of the government limits the freedom of expression. This has been repeatedly verified by national and international human rights groups.

3 | Rule of Law

The separation of powers between the various state organs and a system of checks and balances both formally and by and large also in practice exist. However, both chambers of parliament have had difficulties acting in opposition to decisions made within the inner decision-making power circle. Due to the overwhelming CNND-FDD majority in the new National Assembly and Senate, the potential to counter the executive branch of government has been further weakened.

Separation of
powers
5

Following the 2010 election fiasco and the opposition boycott, all powers are far more concentrated in the hands of the ruling CNDD-FDD party than is foreseen in the constitution, which is based on the consociational democracy model.

It remains unclear whether the extraparliamentary forces of the opposition can now become an effective countervailing power based on the mobilization of civil society.

The judiciary is formally independent, and the minister of justice must be a judge and cannot be member of a political party. An Ombudsman's Office was established in November 2010, and an Independent Commission of Human Rights in January 2011. However, the independence of these institutions vis-à-vis the inner power circle is fragile. In the absence of a strong independent and investigative media, and with a general lack of transparency within the political process, very little is in fact known about the workings of the government's inner power structures.

The judiciary is set up as a distinct separate institution, theoretically able to operate fully independently from all other organs of the state. However, judicial appointments are made by the government (by the minister of justice, in consultation with the president), and a certain amount of political pressure has always been exerted within the judicial system. Members of the lower levels of the judiciary are poorly trained and equipped, and the entire judicial system is prone to the temptations of corruption. In a dubious mid-2006 case dealing with an accusation of treason, the Supreme Court made a courageous independent decision against strong government pressure. But in other highly political cases (such as the expulsion of dissident parliamentarians from the legislature as a result of their disagreement with the official party line), the Supreme Court clearly succumbed to governmental pressure. In the prevailing sociopolitical environment, it is extremely difficult for judges to remain fully detached from political influences and pressures.

Independent
judiciary
4

In general, a climate of absolute impunity for public officeholders prevails. Cases of apparent high-level corruption and dubious deals have become known, but have had no visible consequences for the persons implicated. Some vigilant NGOs investigate such cases and make them public, but generally without effecting any improvement in the situation. Of the five countries of the East African Community, Burundi was singled out in a 2010 survey as by far the most corruption-prone.

Prosecution of
office abuse
4

There is no systematic infringement of civil rights associated with people's status as members of societal groups (e.g., gender, religion or ethnicity). The government's increasingly authoritarian and opposition-fearing tendencies have led to many clear cases of intimidation of critical voices, unlawful imprisonment without proven charges, unexplained disappearances of persons, and so on. Infringements of civil rights are frequently reported by concerned civil society groups and (insofar as possible) by critical media. This type of rights infringement has been a constant feature of the societal landscape in recent years, but became more severe in the context of the conflict over the 2010 elections. It remains to be seen whether the recent installation of an ombudsman and an Independent Commission of Human Rights will have a positive influence on protection of human rights.

Civil rights
4

4 | Stability of Democratic Institutions

In a formal sense, all conventionally required democratic institutions do exist in Burundi, and function in accordance with the constitution and other laws. This is the case for both chambers of parliament, the judiciary, governmental structures at various levels and the professional public administration.

Performance of
democratic
institutions
4

The government's formal legitimacy is based on the results of elections in May – July 2010, but this is in fact significantly impaired by the fact of an election boycott carried out by most opposition parties, as well as the rather authoritarian mode of governance of the ruling party and its inner power circle. There is a glaring discrepancy between the formally correct composition of the democratic institutions and the almost complete factual absence of a valid and representative opposition. Since the various institutional levels are all controlled by the same dominant party, there is much less friction than would otherwise be the case if several competing political forces were present.

Although the present situation is obviously deficient in comparison to conventional democratic standards, this cannot be exclusively blamed on the dominant party; indeed, the radical Hutu opposition parties and their exaggerated reaction also bear some responsibility for the current situation.

In a formal sense, practically all relevant political and societal actors operate within the framework of the 2005 constitution, and thus appear to have accepted the new democratic dispensation. However, the extent to which basic principles of democracy are genuinely accepted by all political groups and actors is not yet clear, and has not as yet been conclusively tested. The leaders and activists of the former rebel movements, and former fighters now integrated into the army, particularly of the CNDD-FDD and FNL, have been deeply influenced by their experience of violent guerrilla life and tend toward authoritarian and uncompromising attitudes. The members of the FNL, which considers itself to be the senior and decisive rebel movement, are additionally influenced by their own ethnic and military interpretation of the country's history. As a peasant guerrilla movement rooted in the hills of the west, the FNL became excessively secretive and imprinted by a mixture of Marxism and religious mysticism. The group did not recognize the results of the 2005 elections, and when it concluded the peace agreement in 2008 and integrated its fighters into the national army, it retained the option of returning to violent activity if the results of the election 2010 did not meet its expectations, turning over only a small fraction of its arms cache.

The CNDD-FDD electoral victory outside the center-west provinces was facilitated by the parochial and subservient attitudes of the long-marginalized peasant population, for which security and improvements in health and education were clearly more important than allegations that the distant CNDD-FDD leadership had engaged in undemocratic mismanagement, corruption and partisan justice, as proclaimed by the opposition parties. The proximity to the rural population, as sought by the president, the candidates and activists of the CNDD-FDD, was probably the decisive feature in the casting of votes for this party in 2005 as well as in 2010.

Another important element in this respect is the deeply ingrained fear on the part of (most) Tutsis and their leaders of being completely overwhelmed by the Hutu majority. Tutsis value the present ethnic quota system in the security forces and administration as an essential safeguard for the protection of their status and rights, and therefore distrusted the FNL, which had opposed this provision.

5 | Political and Social Integration

Due to the opposition boycott, the 2010 elections reinforced the CNDD-FDD's dominant position in the National Assembly (with 81 out of 106 deputies) and the Senate (with 32 out of 41 senators). Originally the most prominent Hutu rebel group, the party has in the meantime integrated a substantial number of Tutsis. In the 2010 elections, it had a clear advantage due to its linkages with state structures. There is the danger that the party will use its majority to turn to an increasingly authoritarian political style, exacerbating patronage and clientelism. Its main

Commitment to
democratic
institutions

5

Party system

5

partner, the former state party UPRONA, has a solid voter base among the Tutsi and a disproportionately strong influence within business, society and army circles. The opposition parties' heterogeneous ADC coalition is unlikely to succeed in forming an efficient extraparliamentary opposition force. However, the old bipolar confrontation, featuring pure ethnic parties, seems to have been definitively overcome, although voting behavior is still strongly based on traditional ethnic loyalties.

The topography of well-articulated interest groups is rather limited, and practically all are subject to the historical reality/experience of ethnic mistrust that has permeated Burundian society. Mistrust is evident between specific individuals or along party membership lines, and in general between different social groups (e.g., between the relatively richer strata and the poor majority). Although political parties have been forced to broaden their membership in a transethnic fashion, this has not necessarily been the case for other social or economic interest groups, although such change is beginning to take place and to undermine old attitudes. Most groups represent fairly narrow ethnic and/or regional or local interests. Despite the country's small size, interest groups tend to be fragmented and locally based, with narrow focus. The scope of professional associations is relatively limited.

Interest groups
4

In the absence of any quantitative survey data (such as Afrobarometer) on attitudes toward democracy, it is extremely difficult to judge the population's true level of consent to the values of democracy. The only available proxy indicator might be the rate of voter participation in elections. Despite the opposition parties' boycott, and thus the absence of any genuine choice, turnout was surprisingly high in the 2010 elections (77% in presidential and 67% in parliamentary elections).

Approval of
democracy
n/a

Traditional self-organization does exist at the lowest level (the village neighborhood of the "collines"), but is rare at a larger geographical scale and is generally strongly driven by the impetus of the established higher authorities. The rural population primarily focused on local issues, and trust as a form of social capital does not typically reach beyond local or provincial boundaries. Over centuries, the Hutu peasantry has learned to be rather subservient, and to avoid challenging the highest echelons of society (traditionally dominated by Tutsis). The historically rooted distrust between ethnic groups has to date prevented the emergence of all-encompassing autonomous groups at the national level (with the exception of a limited number of modern civil society NGOs). However, the general situation and societal climate in this regard has significantly improved over the last few years, with generally peaceful conditions prevailing. Ethnic mistrust (or caution) has not entirely disappeared, and is sometimes still present, but exists primarily in the background.

Social capital
3

II. Economic Transformation

6 | Level of Socioeconomic Development

Burundi is one of the least developed countries in the world, occupying rank 166 (out of 169) in the 2010 Human Development Index (drawing on 2008 data), and earning the second-lowest rank in the Global Hunger Index. The poverty situation is clearly one of the most extreme in the world, with 93% living below a poverty line of \$2 per day. This poverty is relatively evenly distributed, except for the rather small urban middle and upper classes. The overall adult literacy rate is 65% (60% for women). Other specific gender equality measurements are unavailable. Less than 10% of the population lives in urban areas (well under the African average) and many peasants essentially live under subsistence conditions with very little cash income. The modern manufacturing and service sectors are very minimal, and regular wage employment is extremely limited. All socioeconomic indicators reveal Burundi's deep structural difficulties, which include the highest population density in Africa, a shortage of arable land and increasing dangers from drought.

Question
Score

Socioeconomic
barriers
2

Economic indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP	\$ mn.	979.8	1168.9	1330.8	1610.5
GDP growth	%	3.6	4.5	3.5	3.9
Inflation (CPI)	%	8.3	24.1	11.0	6.4
Unemployment	%	-	-	-	-
Foreign direct investment	% of GDP	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0
Export growth	%	-	-	-	-
Import growth	%	-	-	-	-
Current account balance	\$ mn.	-108.0	-259.4	-163.6	-300.9
Public debt	% of GDP	177.8	153.8	48.2	47.5
External debt	\$ mn.	1455.7	1438.2	512.7	537.1
Total debt service	\$ mn.	19.1	19.5	19.5	3.4

Economic indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010
Cash surplus or deficit	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Tax revenue	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Government consumption	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Public expnd. on edu.	% of GDP	-	7.2	8.3	-
Public expnd. on health	% of GDP	13.9	13.0	13.1	-
R&D expenditure	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Military expenditure	% of GDP	4.7	3.8	-	-

Sources: The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2011 | International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook 2011 | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Military Expenditure Database 2011.

7 | Organization of the Market and Competition

The institutional market economic framework is relatively weak and inconsistent. Factors hindering the regular functioning of a market-based economy are a large (mostly agricultural) informal sector, widespread corruption, a highly cumbersome bureaucratic public administration and an inclination by decision-makers for ad hoc interventionism without adherence to clearly laid out principles. Despite constant pressure from the IMF, the World Bank, the European Union and other donors for additional economic reforms and general liberalization, progress on this front has to date been half-hearted and haphazard. In a largely clientelistic political environment, it remains tempting for politicians to intervene directly in the economic sphere and to be able to influence economic activities in accordance with political/personal opportunities. However, in view of the significant structural difficulties it is questionable whether the rural poor would benefit from more market competition.

Market-based
competition
4

Due to the small size and the particular structural features of the national economy, there is hardly any practical scope for the effective control of existing monopolies or oligopolies. The recent accession (in 2007) to the wider EAC market may slowly have some practical bearing on this situation by confronting Burundian economic actors with competition from the more advanced EAC partner countries. In mid-2010, the EAC took on the status of a common market (albeit with transitional safety clauses lasting until 2015).

Anti-monopoly
policy
4

Burundi's foreign trade sector is partially liberalized, but continues nevertheless to be subject to cumbersome regulations and border controls (non-tariff barriers). For instance, import duty computations and other complicated administrative regulations, particularly at the Bujumbura port, quite frequently lead to the decay of

Liberalization of
foreign trade
4

goods as a result of time-consuming procedures and a reluctant attitude toward imports and trade in general. In 2004, Burundi joined the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Free Trade Agreement, which necessitated a liberalization of the country's foreign trade regime in conformity with COMESA regulations. However, actual compliance in administrative terms has remained rather slow. With full admission into the EAC (July 2007), Burundi was tasked with gradually adjusting to all formal requirements of the EAC Customs Union (with a grace period lasting until 2010). On the whole, the economy is only very weakly integrated into the world market, despite its heavy dependence on the import of many essential goods.

The banking system is moderately well organized and has a presence in most provincial centers, but is to a large extent concentrated in the capital city Bujumbura. The banking sector is poorly differentiated, hampering the advancement of the economy. No functioning capital market has as yet been established. The vast majority of the rural population lacks access to (or has difficulty accessing) modern banking facilities. Special microfinance facilities are only now beginning to be introduced.

The central bank is legally independent from the government, but is strongly influenced by informal oversight from the IMF, which provides professional advice.

Banking system
3

8 | Currency and Price Stability

Inflation control and an appropriate exchange rate are recognized as important goals and tools of governmental economic policies. The central bank is formally an independent institution. Illicit political pressure from the government is limited by its dependency on international financial institutions. All foreign-exchange dealings have been practically liberalized, with rates determined by currency auctions under the guidance of the central bank. Some private foreign-exchange bureaus are allowed to operate alongside commercial banks. The official exchange rate has been held relatively stable for a number of years (oriented to the dollar, with a tendency toward gradual depreciation); unofficial parallel rates are quoted with margins of less than 10%. Inflation control is difficult, with prices for food and general agricultural products, a high proportion of the country's consumable goods, subject to the vagaries of changing weather conditions. Alongside considerable seasonal fluctuations, the average annual inflation rate has fluctuated in recent years, mostly hovering around 10% (though in 2008 it shot up to almost 25%, mostly due to food and energy costs). More recently, the inflation rate has been brought down to well under 10%.

Anti-inflation /
forex policy
6

The government has had difficulties establishing a firm framework for stability-oriented fiscal policy, as the ruling party has raised expectations among its followers that are difficult to disappoint (this problem exacerbated by the 2010 election campaign). Fiscal discipline has also been a low-priority goal for the former rebel leaders after coming to power. Promises of social improvements (health, education) have raised public expenditures significantly. The quota system has also led to an increase in the number of public employees. The government's heavy reliance on the inflow of aid resources has forced it to more or less follow conditions of financial orthodoxy set by external donor institutions, although at times this conflicts with the political leadership's desire to pursue more populist programs. In 2009, Burundi obtained a significant debt write-off under the terms of the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program. The IMF has generally been satisfied with the country's macroeconomic performance during the period of the three-year poverty reduction and growth facility (PRGF) approved in mid-2008.

Debt has been reduced to around 40% of the gross national income (2009), but donors will need to increase their grants substantially if the country is to avoid new indebtedness.

9 | Private Property

Property rights have long been formally defined by law, but their application and defense has always been precarious. This has become increasingly true in the country's post-conflict environment, with significant changes to the entire sociopolitical and economic fabric of society taking place, and with many people having been uprooted as refugees and now trying to find a new, secure footing. Conflicts over access to land – and not only in the case of returning refugees – hold a high risk of leading to further social confrontations. Existing provisions for the regulation of problems of property rights are far from satisfactory. No clear future land policy has as yet been worked out and consensually agreed to by the key political actors. An assessment by the World Bank shows that procedures for registering property for purposes of business ventures are extremely cumbersome and lengthy.

Private companies can in principle operate freely, but are subject to considerable bureaucratic and occasionally direct political interference. Government and ruling party leaders take a somewhat ambivalent attitude to private business, since they are inclined to believe in a strong state role, particularly in regard to the need for wealth redistribution in a country with a history of extremely distorted socioeconomic opportunities and assets. State companies offer valuable opportunities for patronage and also for corrupt practices. The privatization of public companies and institutions, strongly advocated by the World Bank and other donors as part of their aid support programs, has made slow progress and has met with considerable

Macrostability

6

Property rights

4

Private enterprise

5

reluctance on the part of the political leadership, but continues to be kept on the agenda. According to a World Bank assessment, starting a new business takes considerably longer in Burundi than in most other African countries, due to complex procedures.

10 | Welfare Regime

Burundi lacks public social safety nets for most of its population, excepting a small group of government and parastatal institution employees (and even for these figures, resources provided are fairly minimal), including the top echelons of the military. Recently, policymakers decided to subsidize health care for maternity care, children under five years of age, and HIV and malaria patients. The long years of civil war have in many areas disturbed or even destroyed traditional social structures, but most features of traditional rural solidarity systems have survived to a considerable extent, and still provide a crucial foundation for at least a minimal social safety net for individuals within a family or village context. By far the biggest problems are faced by the many former refugees, internally displaced persons and returned ex-combatants created by the war, who have been (and to a minor extent still are) repatriated into uncertain surroundings without being able to fall back on any organized safety systems. Even the traditional village-level solidarity is already being strained due to the effects of extreme overpopulation in the rural areas and worsening ecological conditions. Opportunities for regular wage employment are very slim. The country clearly has little chance of successfully combating the prevailing poverty on its own.

Social safety nets
3

Mechanisms for providing equal social and economic opportunities to all segments of the population are still extremely limited, although recent changes within the political power configuration are now gradually beginning to make some difference. Before this political turnaround, the Tutsis had vastly superior opportunities for educational, social and economic advancement and far greater access to political privileges, at least as compared to almost all Hutus (with a small number of exceptions). The new political situation has opened many new opportunities for politically connected educated and urban Hutus, but a broadly based, fundamental change of society with respect to educational and economic opportunities will take many years. For the immediate future, the majority of Tutsis (predominantly living in towns, with solid educational backgrounds) can still extract considerable benefits from their historical privileges, while for most rural Hutus it will be very difficult to close the gap. The Twa ethnic group remains almost completely shut out from any opportunities. Women still suffer from traditional disadvantages, but systematic efforts to improve educational opportunities for girls have met with some success,

Equal opportunity
5

and in the modern urban environment women do have the opportunity to secure fairly good positions, if not on a fully equal basis. However, this is primarily due to the legal quota (30%) rather than to their male colleagues' convictions.

11 | Economic Performance

Both because of fundamental structural deficiencies and the effects of the long civil war, Burundi has one of the least developed and most vulnerable economies in the world. Per capita GDP in 2009 was just \$393 in purchasing power parity terms, the second-lowest on the entire African continent. Facing serious ecological problems as well, Burundi barely has the ability to assure self-sufficiency in food production (it is listed at the bottom of the Global Hunger Index). The modern economic sector is very small, employing just 6.4% of the total labor force. It was only after the 2005 elections and the installation of a new government that a new period with emphasis on national reconstruction and the revitalization of the economy got underway. This was accompanied by promises of substantially enhanced external aid support, on which Burundi will remain dependent for a long time to come. A number of new initiatives have been undertaken, but overall macroeconomic performance has remained disappointing and even lackluster, although this has been partially attributable to unfavorable climatic conditions (drought, floods) and corruption. The GDP growth rate in recent years has remained disappointing at around 4%, while inflation, after a peak of 25% in 2008, was still 11% in 2009. The negative current account balance continues to hover at around 15% of GDP, while the government fiscal deficit has fluctuated between 5% and 7% of GDP despite substantial foreign aid. Given the limited possibilities for increasing the production of agrarian export goods, the value of imports has continually grown faster than have exports receipts, with no sign of improvement of the structural trade deficit.

Output strength

4

12 | Sustainability

Given the stress of the country's immediate short-term problems (survival under conflict conditions, severe overpopulation, low level of agricultural technology) little attention has been given to safeguarding the longer-term sustainability of various environmental factors. Burundi's Environmental Performance Index (EPI) score of 44 is quite low, as is its rank at 140th out of 163 listed countries. Degradation of soils and the rapid destruction of the last remaining forests are already very serious problems, since this further undermines the country's ability to feed its population and also decreases the availability of water resources. In addition, the decline in Lake Tanganyika's water level represents an ecological danger for the whole region. At the local level, the population (sometimes under the influence of NGOs) may be increasingly aware of the dangers of certain practices, but they typically see few if any viable alternatives in their daily pursuit of a very

Environmental
policy

4

modest living. It is mostly as a result of externally financed aid programs that more attention is beginning to be drawn to environmental concerns.

The entire education system suffered heavily during the period of the civil war, and is still in the process of a gradual recovery. The quality of education and of the existing facilities is generally poor, although the government has in recent years made great efforts to devote more funds to the education sector. An amazing 7% of gross national product (GNP) seems to have gone into education in 2008. However, the reference to the share of GNP is somewhat misleading, as it includes the high amount of foreign aid going into education.

Traditionally there had been a noticeable bias in favor of secondary and tertiary education (strongly concentrated in the capital city) for just a small number of beneficiaries, with primary education in the rural areas getting fairly little attention until recently. This was changed most dramatically with the installation of the new government in 2005. As one of the new government's first measures, school fees for primary education were abolished. As a consequence, the number of pupils suddenly shot up without adequate provision of teachers, classrooms or schooling materials. The entire school system is still struggling to cope with the situation (one indication is an unusually high gross enrollment rate of 135%, the result of a backlog of older children now going to school). The government's emphasis on primary education was apparently one key to its popularity in the 2010 elections.

There is almost gender equality in primary schools, but much less so at the secondary and tertiary levels. The enrollment rate at the tertiary level is still quite low, at 2.5%. The literacy rate of 66% is about average in Africa, considering the high level of poverty. Significant efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of education are still needed. Modern R&D activities are practically nonexistent. The national university in Bujumbura is inadequately equipped, the level of teaching quality is low and there are frequent strikes.

Education policy /
R&D
4

Transformation Management

I. Level of Difficulty

The structural constraints hampering successful political and economic transformation are extremely high. They include a very low absolute level of economic and social development; a difficult geographical situation (landlocked, high-cost transport arteries); precarious ecological conditions; extreme overpopulation in combination with limited land resources; extremely high incidence of poverty; the need to integrate many returning refugees, internally displaced persons and ex-combatants back into society; poor infrastructure; a lingering ethnic polarization (although this no longer inevitably present in daily life) with memories of a very violent recent history; a generally low level of education (mainly among the Hutus); a lack of experience with market-based entrepreneurship; and a still relatively inexperienced group of political leaders (from the standpoint of technical and administrative competencies).

Structural
constraints
9

Traditions of civil society organization are fairly weak, and are largely confined to the Tutsi community in urban Bujumbura, although this situation has begun to change quite remarkably during the last few years. Traditionally, few NGOs have been able to transcend the deep-rooted and still-extant lack of trust between the two ethnic groups. The rural Hutu population has hardly any tradition of organized civil society (other than very simple neighborhood solidarity); in part due to its long history of subservience to the ruling Tutsi elites. Even the new political authorities seem little inclined to actively encourage the emergence of a more vital civil society, and are instead perpetuating an authoritarian style of governance. Nevertheless, some positive moves in the direction of more interethnic cooperation and the expansion of activities into rural areas have occurred since the end of the civil war.

Civil society
traditions
8

The fundamental polarization between the Hutu and Tutsi population groups, which is also an expression of widely diverging social classes and power relationships, is at the historical roots of Burundi's political and socioeconomic conflicts. But there has always been (and still is) a reciprocal relationship between the two phenomena – that is, the prevailing socioeconomic class differences and the asymmetrical power relationships have had the effect of entrenching ethnic polarization and each

Conflict intensity
7

ethnic group's perception of the other. But following the end of the civil war, the peaceful 2005 elections and the inauguration of a government with electoral legitimacy, most people have softened their previous attitudes and have begun to deal increasingly openly with the tainted question of ethnicity. However, deep-rooted fears of violent attacks of each side against the other (as traumatically experienced many times during the recent history) remain.

There are also splits within the upper echelons of the traditional society – the Ganwa, the Hima, the Tutsis and so on. The military dictators (Micombero, Bagaza, Buoya) and many officers belonged to a non-Hutu group of minor status, the Bururi-Himas.

Religion has not generally been a factor in conflicts, since the dominant Catholic Church has by and large been able to maintain credibility among both ethnic groups. Moves to promote the interests of the hitherto fairly small Muslim community are relatively young, and remain limited.

In addition, there are conflicts over arable land which will undoubtedly lead to serious problems in the future. Generally, conflicts on the basis of access to resources and/or aid are quite common; these are not necessarily related to ethnicity, but may appear to be along ethnic or political lines. Envy is a common phenomenon as a result of the widespread poverty.

The 2005 constitution, with its stringent quota regulations establishing a consociational system of governance, was intended as a compromise formula designed to overcome the country's history of ethnic and social conflicts. For the first five-year electoral period following the constitution's enactment, this goal was by and large accomplished. But during the 2010 election campaign, a new "pure" power conflict emerged, now principally between three competing Hutu-based parties (each with somewhat unclear profiles in terms of intended social policy goals). In the aftermath of the elections, with their charges of fraud and persecution of the opposition, a new and very confrontational style has come to characterize the political landscape. The possibility of a return to organized political violence and rebel activities remains.

As the review period closed in January 2011, it was simply not possible to fully assess the medium-term effects of the 2010 post-election confrontation. Speculations and rumors telling of a possible resurgence of FNL rebel activities have not so far been independently verified, but there are indications that some FNL fighters may be reassembling on the territory of neighboring DR Congo, and cooperating with other groups.

Several prominent opposition leaders have gone into hiding outside of Burundi in the aftermath of the confrontation over alleged fraud during the first election round (communal elections). As of the time of writing, their strategic intentions were not at all clear.

Within Burundi, opposition parties can presently operate only as extraparliamentary activists.

II. Management Performance

14 | Steering Capability

Question
Score

The political leadership has found it difficult to focus consistently on long-term goals regarding constitutional democracy and a socially responsible market economy. Indeed, given the very substantial political and socioeconomic restraints, the fragility of the political configuration, and the expectations of the hitherto largely neglected Hutu majority, such behavior would be unlikely. Short-term political exigencies have often had to take precedence over longer-term priorities. However, the government has finally chosen to follow the recommendations of the international financial institutions (IFIs) and major donors. This is reflected by a PRSP document and a socioeconomic program dubbed “Vision Burundi 2025.” Given the country’s overwhelming dependence on external aid if any substantial national development is to take place, as well as the relative lack of national expertise, the role of the external agencies in setting priorities will remain very strong and the level of national decision-making correspondingly somewhat weak. This significant donor influence can lead to problems: The delay of the PRSP was due to lengthy consultations with a large number of organizations. However, the process in general started very late, only after the 2005 elections.

Prioritization
4

In accordance with popular expectations, priority has been given to social sectors that badly needed improvements (education, health), but little progress has been made in terms of raising the economy’s productive capacities.

The government is in principle committed to implementing its stated political and economic reform goals, but the many existing structural restraints and the lack of sufficient capable manpower often prevent successful implementation. Numerous obstacles prevent the realization of a full-fledged market economy: Entrenched interest groups block reductions in the control of public institutions, and the masses of poor people understandably expect the state to play an active role in overcoming the country’s uneven development, rather than leaving this to market forces that would benefit already-privileged groups. The implementation of government

Implementation
4

policies is often jeopardized by the lack of administrative and technical expertise, as well as by the influence of corruption, nepotism and political favoritism. In regard to its political aims, the ruling party has been quite successful in implementing programs securing its political appeal (although not necessarily in compliance with objective overall developmental goals).

The political leadership has generally proved to be fairly flexible, even to some extent simply opportunistic, in its pursuit of concrete policy measures. It has clearly learned from past experience in regard to avoiding ethnic polarization, and has been cautious to adhere largely to the provisions of the constitution, including a sufficient number of Tutsis in leadership positions and avoiding the ostentatious promotion of too many Hutus without regard to formal merit criteria (although political cronies without professional experience have been given positions of responsibility). With respect to socioeconomic policies, the government has shown hardly any rigid ideological convictions, but there has also been little in terms of innovative approaches. The prevailing attitude is one of pragmatism, largely in line with the requirements outlined by donors, on which Burundi is heavily dependent. Governmental activities are generally characterized by administrative routine, and much less by efforts to introduce dynamic or innovative new approaches. The inauguration of the new government in 2005 initially raised expectations for great steps toward the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country and a new, dynamic development pattern. However, these have been largely disappointed as a result of ongoing political bickering among the political elite. In terms of socioeconomic development, Burundi has clearly lagged behind other East African countries, with only limited policy learning in evidence.

Policy learning
5

15 | Resource Efficiency

In all past regimes in Burundi, the efficiency of the utilization of financial and human resources by the state was quite low, and largely determined by patronage considerations, the existence of a bloated bureaucracy and the resource hunger of dominant security organs.

Efficient use of
assets
4

During his first term, President Nkurunziza found it difficult to change this situation significantly, even if he was initially willing to try. New expectations of patronage for public positions obviously had to be met. Nkurunziza personally tried to introduce a more ascetic leadership style and to set a positive example as a modest leader, but this had relatively limited overall impact. The complex nature of the government, made up of representatives from different political groups, did not lend itself to a coherent and frugal use of state resources, as various camps had to be satisfied. The state's administrative configuration is directed more toward long-existing routine procedures than toward efforts to introduce modern and efficient styles of management. Patronage is unlikely to be reduced and quality similarly

unlikely to be increased under the new power configuration. The government will furthermore be obliged to honor the terms of the quota system, thus retaining oversized military and police forces.

The complex composition of the government, mandated by the constitution's quota requirements, makes efficient coordination of the activities of various ministries and other public bodies very difficult, since the politicians in decision-making positions tend to seek to bolster their own public profiles and pursue their own priorities without adhering to a coherent and coordinated overall government strategy. In his first term, President Nkurunziza did not play a very forceful role as undisputed leader, nor did he show clear ambition to determining the country's overall development strategy, thus leaving a leadership deficit at the very top. But he became popular due to his frequent visits to rural areas and his expressed concern about concrete local issues and problems. It remains to be seen whether he will exercise more forceful leadership in his second term.

Policy
coordination
4

The government has repeatedly made official commitments to fight corruption more energetically than did previous regimes. Upon his reelection in 2010, President Nkurunziza again pledged to make an anti-corruption drive one of his priorities during his second term in office. But the evidence over the last five years has clearly shown an alarmingly high level of corruption at all levels, including very top of the government.

Anti-corruption
policy
3

Some specialized NGOs have on several occasions been able to identify particularly outstanding cases of high-level corruption. Several ministers and a second vice-president have over the years been forced to resign due to charges of corruption; however, there is a widely held perception that these were isolated cases, and that by and large a climate of impunity prevails. As a general rule, existing anti-corruption mechanisms are very leniently applied, and in most cases no stringent measures are taken.

One reason for this is that the president has to consider the fragility of the post-conflict power configuration. Corruption charges against army officers, Tutsi and ex-rebel Hutus, among others, have to be balanced. Moreover, in view of the very fragile political power constellation, it is often not possible to take strict actions against offenders with powerful political protection. Thus, the legal instruments to prosecute corruption are in place, but using them without reference to the perpetrator's social or political position is another question.

Burundi is generally considered to be by far the most corruption-prone of the five East African countries. The newly dominant position of the CNDD-FDD party may render stringent anti-corruption measures even less effective than in the past, since the party elite wields almost unchallenged control of all state activities.

16 | Consensus-Building

All major political actors have come to a rudimentary consensus on twin goals in the political and socioeconomic arenas. The political compromise presently forming the foundation for all public institutions (including the military) has been codified in the 2005 constitution, which stipulates a complicated system of fixed ethnic quotas for all public elected and administrative bodies and for the military. In the run-up to the constitutional referendum, these provisions were firmly rejected by practically all Tutsi parties, since they feared they would ultimately be outmaneuvered by the Hutu majority, but this is nevertheless the best presently available compromise (and is accepted for the time being). No agreement on an unfettered democratic system (without quotas) is presently possible, since it would leave the Tutsis without a guarantee of protection. As such, all relevant political actors do in principle agree with the concept of a consociational democratic model of governance. The new conflict over the fraud charges connected with the 2010 election process does not fundamentally invalidate this agreement.

Consensus on goals
5

There appears to be only a somewhat vague consensus on general market economic principles among most political actors, although the state is still widely expected to take primary responsibility for promoting development and rebalancing existing inequities of wealth distribution. Political leaders' convictions as to the genuine value and suitability of pure market economy principles are somewhat mixed and ambivalent.

The distinction between democratic reformers and anti-democratic veto actors has since the controversial 2010 election cycle become extremely blurred, as there is evidence of anti-democratic elements among all competing groups (government and opposition). Meanwhile, the old polarization between Hutu and Tutsi lost its primary relevance in the political contest.

Anti-democratic
actors
5

Political rivalry between various Hutu-dominated parties – particularly the ruling CNDD-FDD, the formerly dominant FRODEBU, the radical splinter wing of the CNDD-FDD, the UPD, and the FNL as the last-converted rebel group – transformed the political battleground, heightening risk that the delicately balanced political consensus might be disrupted. The CNDD-FDD exploited its control of the public administration, thus jeopardizing any guarantee of a level playing field in the electoral contest. However, the opposition parties' subsequent boycott of the parliamentary and presidential elections also violated the principles of competitive democracy. The 2010 election contest was a sheer power conflict over political control of the country, without adherence to the free and fair play of democratic rules by any side. Responsibility for this state of affairs can be apportioned to almost all members of the political class.

It is presently unclear whether a new operational modus can be found enabling the alliance of opposition parties to have an impact as an extraparliamentary force and countervailing actor to the government until the next elections, in 2015. The FNL took second place in the 2010 communal elections, but then opted to boycott the following electoral rounds; it subsequently raised the specter of a potential reversion to active rebellion, thereby opting out from its acceptance of democratic principles.

The lengthy transition process following the 2000 Arusha peace agreement and the new political dispensation based on the stipulations of the 2005 constitution were and still are geared toward overcoming the deep-rooted political, social and economic cleavages that have long been a feature of Burundian society. The negative legacies of the past cannot easily be erased, but the carefully balanced compromise formula has to date been able to prevent the existing socioeconomic cleavages (which will remain volatile for a long time to come) from leading to further flare-ups.

The political competition between parties has now shifted to a power contest between several Hutu-dominated parties (see “anti-democratic actors”), while the main Tutsi party, UPRONA, is represented in the present government as a junior partner with several ministerial portfolios (including one vice-president), thus upholding the consociational principle.

The present political leadership – like that of all previous regimes – does not feel comfortable or sufficiently safely established to freely and generously accommodate the critical expression of civil society groups, even though such groups are relatively weak and limited in number and scope. Existing civil society actors are predominantly based in Bujumbura and Tutsi-dominated, causing them to be regarded rather skeptically by the authorities. Any potential for positive influence by independent civil society actors is thus largely ignored. No national, effective civil society exists. The few well-known civil society groups and actors are part of the political class in the center. They have come up with very commendable and highly important work, but have repeatedly been subjected to intimidation, harassment and outright persecution by security agents of the state.

Since 2000, the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (following the example of South Africa and Sierra Leone) has been proposed as part of the general peace process. However, the government has proved hesitant, and concrete progress has consequently been extremely slow despite U.N. offers to establishing a commission and a special court for dealing with war atrocities. Members of all the various groups (former regimes and governing parties, military, rebel groups) are in one way or another implicated in the commission of atrocities during the war years and earlier ethnic pogroms. They are thus primarily interested in finding and sustaining compromise formulas for forgiveness without digging too

Cleavage /
conflict
management
6

Civil society
participation
3

Reconciliation
4

deeply into the past, while groups of victims (and to some extent the international community) expect at least a modicum of accountability for the dark years of Burundi's recent past. There is therefore a vague recognition of the need to deal constructively with this history, but this has to date been largely ignored in the interest of preserving the current relatively peaceful coexistence between the different antagonistic forces. In addition, there are no available structures to facilitate the process of asking for forgiveness on the one hand and issuing pardons on the other. Except for the church in some places, as well as a few local NGO activities, there is no public forum for forgiveness, although the general population appears in principle ready to forgive (a product too of the lengthening time since the events in question). A TRC may soon get underway, but is likely to draw only lackluster official government support.

17 | International Cooperation

Given the country's structural deficiencies and the devastating effects of the long years of war, the government has no option but to rely very heavily on the support of international aid donors. Even the international routine of receiving and properly implementing these aid resources was unfamiliar for the inexperienced new government team that came into power in late 2005. Shortcomings in dealing with aid procedures and in making efficient use of available programs did therefore occur, but this was to be expected, and indeed was almost unavoidable. Over the years this process has become more routine, but substantial scope for improvement remains. The state administration generally attempts to make good use of external support, knowing full well that there are hardly any other sources available (such as foreign investment on any significant scale). The country is completely aid dependent, and the government has extremely limited ability to pursue a development agenda of its own.

Effective use of support

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When executing aid programs, the government tries to act as a reliable and credible partner in its dealings with international actors, but consistency between agencies is often undermined by diverging views within the complex government coalition and the resulting lack of a common government position. This is to a large extent the outcome of the highly volatile and confusing domestic political environment of the last few years, and has led various donor agencies to express public doubt and frustration as to Burundi policymakers' professional and political reliability.

Credibility

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The government's conduct before, during and after the 2010 elections has led practically all external observers and analysts to doubt the credibility of its commitment to democratic principles. Indeed, the democratic legitimacy of the government has been severely tainted during the last two years.

During the period of transitional governments (after 2000), Burundi was in fact involuntarily almost under the tutelage of regional neighbors (including South Africa) that were seeking to mediate in the internal conflicts and find a compromise formula enabling a new beginning. With varying degrees of willingness or reluctance, most of the internal feuding groups eventually accepted the demands of the regional mediation process. In 2008 – 2009, even FNL ultimately agreed to lay down its arms.

The government is fully aware of the need for good neighborly relations with all countries in the sub-region. Fairly cordial relations have been established above all with Rwanda and Tanzania, the country's most important neighbors. A very important step was admission as a full member (in July 2007) into the East African Community. This will eventually integrate the country much more closely with the rest of the region, although it is by far the weakest EAC member and is likely to remain so.

Burundi is not likely to pursue any ambitious sub-regional foreign policy goals of its own; rather, its interests will lie in maintaining good relations with all neighbors and in keeping as much as possible out of emerging conflicts. Burundi is one of only two countries (the other is Uganda) that has contributed African Union peacekeepers to Somalia. This was officially declared to be a token of regional solidarity in reciprocation for the international support it had received, but may have been more specifically aimed at pleasing the United States, which strongly supported the mission.

Regional
cooperation

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Strategic Outlook

Burundi faces very severe challenges in both the political and socioeconomic realms, exacerbated by growing ecological stress and overpopulation. As one of the poorest and socially least developed countries in the world, Burundi will clearly need substantial continued external support for quite a long time to come if any broad-based general improvement in the population's well-being is to be expected. With a new constitution and generally acclaimed elections in 2005, the political situation for the first time in Burundi's post-independence history seemed to provide a modestly optimistic framework for the reconstruction and further development of both a legitimate state and a modernizing economy. However, this configuration proved to be highly fragile in the face of renewed antagonistic political confrontation associated with the flawed election cycle in 2010. With the reemergence of armed rebel activities now a possibility, the country is presently at a very critical juncture.

In late 2009, for the first time in many years, a general condition of peace had been achieved that extended throughout the national territory. The FNL had demobilized all its fighters at last, and had converted itself into a registered political party. All was set for a crucial electoral contest in 2010 between a handful of relevant political parties; the old ethnic polarization between Hutus and Tutsis had moved clearly to the background, and there was strong competition for the control of national power between several Hutu-dominated parties.

Though the ruling CNDD-FDD showed an increasingly authoritarian style, issuing intimidating threats against adversaries in such a way as to undermine any genuinely level playing field, the political climate nevertheless remained relatively normal until the communal elections in May 2010. Following the balloting, charges of fraud made by all opposition parties and their subsequent boycott of the national elections severely upset the country's consensus on the constitutional principles of consociational democracy. As of the time of writing, no rapprochement between the government and the opposition alliance was discernible, and some FNL elements were making vague threats of returning to armed resistance.

This looming negative scenario ought to be actively addressed by Burundi's external partners – both the sub-regional neighbors and the wider international community. Unfortunately, despite very close and influential involvement in earlier years, fairly little outside attention is presently being paid to the Burundian political conflict, as least long as the situation remains outwardly free of violent upheaval. However, such an event cannot be ruled out much longer in the absence of a new domestic compromise between all major players. Donor countries and agencies should exert persistent diplomatic pressure and use aid-related conditionality clauses to push the government and the ruling parties to implement a genuine political liberalization (full freedom of expression for the media, NGOs and political parties; an end to human rights violations, etc.). Due to Burundi's obvious aid dependency, this would probably have a noticeable effect, but has not to date been pursued strictly enough. Over the past two years, the government has been able

to engage in authoritarian behavior without strong reprimand from the donor community. The neighboring EAC member states in particular ought to more strictly monitor Burundi's conformance to generally acceptable standards for an open and competitive political system. However, a dual strategy also needs to be pursued vis-à-vis the opposition parties, which are presently excluded from the political decision-making landscape. Using a mixture of pressure and support, they need to be persuaded to terminate their boycott and return to participate in a new political dialogue (provided the government can also be brought to accept this).

All efforts need to be made to prevent the FNL leadership from following through on its threat to revert to armed rebel activities. Civil society organizations and NGOs should be supported in their demands for human rights protections and an open political climate, both through diplomatic praise and concrete material means.

The attainment of sustainable peace and political stability will also depend heavily upon progress in the rehabilitation and modernization of Burundi's economy, as a prerequisite for improvements in the social welfare of significant parts of the ordinary population. Even with a substantial and sustained increase in international aid support (something not presently certain, due to the donor community's doubts as to the present regime's competency and resilience), the country's structural constraints make any major transformations unlikely in the short term. Nor do the current leadership's current development efforts appear to be wholly determined. Given the country's low level of general socioeconomic development, reaching the status of a socially oriented, differentiated market economy does not appear to be a realistic goal for the near future. All efforts in coming years will continue to be focused on rather modest improvements, rather than on genuine structural economic transformation. The U.N. Peacebuilding Commission selected Burundi as one of its two initial countries of focus (together with Sierra Leone), raising hopes that additional international attention would also be forthcoming, but this has not been the case. In summary, overall socioeconomic perspectives for Burundi are certainly considerably better than they have been for many years, but remain modest in absolute terms.