

Committee: United Nations Security Council

Agenda: The situation in Burundi

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1. History and Role of the United Nations Security Council

The United Nations was founded in 1945 after the termination of World War 2 to ensure the safety and prosperity among all member states. Because the international society was experiencing dramatic shifts in its political paradigm, it called for the establishment of a transnational institution to eliminate ambiguities in further recoveries and restorations. The United States, France, the Soviet Union (later succeeded by the Russian Federation), the United Kingdom and the Republic of China (later succeeded by the People's Republic of China) primarily contributed to the foundation of the United Nations on October 24th, 1945. After that, they maintained their positions as permanent members of the Security Council (also known as P5) and used veto power to reject pending resolutions. Although their decisions were mainly based on their political orientations and preferences, they endeavored to remain neutral in approaching current events around the world. Narrowing down into the current theme, the United Nations Security Council of the 10th HAFS MIMUN will tackle the situation in Burundi, where continuous struggles and disputes adversely affect the lives of civilians. The United Nations Security Council definitely has to contemplate on this dire situation of Burundi.

2. Agenda Introduction and Background Information





The United Nations Security Council will focus on two impending issues in Burundi: blatant infringement on human rights and unstable political conditions under the interim president. Known as the least happy country in the World Happiness Report 2018, Burundi is one of the most impoverished African nations in the world. Foreign aid accounts for 42% of the entire production and the manufacturing industries mostly rely on resources imported from contiguous nations. It may be a misinterpretation of Burundi as an example of resource curse because it did not have much natural resources from the beginning. Due to the history blotched with unremitting genocides and territorial confrontations among various tribes, the country served as a battlefield for such a long time. Primarily, the direction of the Burundi's government initiated discussions on ways of protecting human rights of the citizens. For example, a journalist named Jean-Claude Kavumbagu was arrested and tried numerous times for subversive activities against the government. Although the Amnesty International categorized him as a prisoner of conscience and requested the government to release him immediately and unconditionally, the government maintained its unwavering stance. In 2009, Burundi convicted some alleged criminals of homosexuality, sparking another controversy about the rights of LGBTQs. People engaged in consensual same-sex relations were prosecuted and severely fined. Amnesty International excoriated the government's decision to arrest LGBTQs under the name of justice as a flagrant violation of right to privacy. Consistently pressured by the international society, Burundi left the International Criminal Court in 2017 and refused its allegations of genocides and anti-humanitarian crimes committed against ethnic minorities. UN Human Rights Watch is regularly publishing reports and keeping track of serious human rights violations to raise awareness of the situation in the country. Besides suppression of journalists and LGBTQs, there are multiple instances of extrajudicial killings, sexual exploitation and bondage and massacres, frequently occurring under the shelter of governmental authorities. United Nations has been sending guidelines to protect fundamental rights of the inhabitants but Burundi seems unresponsive and inattentive to current recommendations.

Fortunately, the efforts of the United Nations paid off on political conditions of Burundi. Between 1993 and 2003, Tanzania and Uganda, members of the East African Federation, and South Africa oversaw several rounds of peaceful discussions and drafted a joint agreement pleasing all the parties involved in the political chaos. These regional efforts were beneficial and conducive to the development into international assistance because they could normalize relations and improve standards of discourses. Since some leaders were extrajudicially banished and incarcerated outside, The South African Protection Support Detachment assisted the safe return of Burundian leaders in exile. The United Nations assumed responsibilities of the African Union Mission to Burundi and supervised the establishment of the transitional government. By adhering to the Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the United Nations took progress in demobilization and disarmament of combatants and rebels. Plus, it aided the return of compulsorily displaced people and refugees to their homeland and executed judicial and institutional reforms to cut off collusive links between the government and the military.



Yet, a Hutu nationalist rebel group named FLN aroused political frustrations in trustworthy election procedures. In 2006, the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries embarked on its financial assistance to ensure the stability of the government of Burundi. As a response, Burundi took part in the East African Community a year later to reinforce the continental economy. Amnesty International reiterated its argument that the government of Burundi should be under international surveillance. Villages composed of former belligerents were ransacked and assailed by the remaining members of the FLN. To deal with this issue, the United Nations projected a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Special Tribunal for investigation and prosecution immediately. Because parties involved attempted to cooperate at the expense of their individual interests, they could resume efforts for ceasefires. In August 2008, Agathon Rwasa, the FLN leader, compromised with President Nkurunziza to end warfare temporarily and hold regular meetings to share ideas on promoting collaboration between the FLN and the national

government. In April 2015, demonstrations against the Pierre Nkurunziza's presidential candidacy for the third term broke out when the ruling party declared its legitimacy. Although the constitutional court approved of his decision to run for the next president, protesters resisted in accordance with their conviction. This was not a trivial political incident at all. President Nkurunziza stymied the attempted coup d'état on 13 May. To secure his position as the president, he even randomly searched and investigated private property of the protesters. Freedom of expression could not flourish in the opposition bench although journalists witnessed numerous cases of human rights abuse, such as torture and unlawful executions. To eliminate restrictions on politics, the ruling party held parliamentary elections on June 29th and encouraged the participation of the opposition. In 2016, the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi came into existence by the United Nations Human Rights Council to divulge egregious conditions of human rights and investigate serious offenders of fundamental rights of the people in Burundi. In the document published by the UN Human Rights Watch in 2019, it clearly explains that inhumane treatment and extrajudicial executions are rampant with most cases undetected (or even concealed) and victims unidentified. The United Nations Security Council should proactively draft resolutions to overcome historical animosity between the opposition and the ruling party for the sake of national unity and solidarity as a nation.

3. Recent Updates on the situation in Burundi



May 2019 Monthly Forecast stated that the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of Nkurunziza's party, has been implicated in serious human rights abuses under the protection of the government. In March 2019, the National Council of Communication in Burundi revoked the licenses of media corporations such as BBC because they produced libelous and scandalous commentaries on the government. Even the Voice of America was

prohibited from broadcasting situations in Burundi due to its connection with a journalist involved in the failed coup d'état. Although the Burundian government thought that its actions are understandable in terms of enhancing its social stability, it is unforgivable to neglect the conditions of civilians. Recurrent natural disasters devastated the villages and displaced approximately 350,000 at an instant. Because politicians were preoccupied with devising better solutions for the political framework, they could not introduce any solutions for salvaging the underprivileged people. Plus, the literacy rate and the final level of education did not improve, which indirectly described deficiencies in education across the country. Although a lot of citizens petitioned and assembled to demand necessities, their requests went unheard.

Unfortunately, the awkward relationships between Burundi and the East African Community did not change at all. This standstill affected the progress of democratization in Burundi and inhibited certain measures from being implemented. To hold credible elections, the Burundian government received a recommended blueprint from the United Nations and installed institutions to guarantee transparency in voting procedures. To preserve peaceful situations under the name of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreements, the country remains actively seized of the matter. Michelle Bachelet, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, publicly expressed her condolences to the deteriorating conditions of human rights in Burundi. She acknowledged that the situation did not improve dramatically but claimed that she will navigate different approaches to resolve remaining issues about human rights abuses. With an interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, she concluded that there should be more deliberations about ways of protecting civil liberties and persuading politicians to fulfill their civic responsibilities. The East African Community (abbreviated as EAC)-led mediation led to insufficient outcomes in improving relationships among the parties involved. Because their discussions centered on the 2020 election, they exchanged their ideas to ensure credible elections. Besides these domestic efforts, the United Nations encouraged the active participation of the Burundian government in international meetings to address their grave issues. Since the government generally remained inactive in international cooperation, the United Nations provided public platforms and opportunities for political discourse with citizens to bring its problems to the international level. Instead of mandating political dialogues, the Burundian government aims for discussions granting equal representation among all the parties competing for the upcoming 2020 elections.

4. Bloc Positions and Possible Solutions (United Nations Security Council)



1) France: France welcomed the interaction of the EAC with the Burundian government. It also widely praised the coordinated efforts among Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya to restore the political stability of Burundi. France requested the government authorities of Burundi to meet expectations of human rights protection from the international society by respecting regional rights. It also suggested creating a constructive political climate to motivate political leaders to exchange their proposals with each other.

2) South Africa: Although South Africa was attuned to the stagnation of political development in a country with a newly emerging democracy, it expressed deep concerns over violation of civil liberties before the 2020 elections. It welcomed the decision of the current president to not run for the controversial third term. However, South Africa claimed that this is not an end of political chaos. It suggested the international society to enhance its level of peacekeeping to prevent reemerging tribal warfare and territorial skirmishes. Taking the history of assassinated leaders in Burundi into account, newly elected leaders can also be vulnerable.

3) Dominican Republic: Dominican Republic expressed reservations about gender inequality in Burundi. Although there were quota systems in politics for Burundian citizens to achieve gender equality, a lot of women still faced sexual discrimination and segregation when having jobs. Because they have been characterized as silenced and suppressed minorities, hate speeches targeted them frequently. Their civil liberties were stolen and unreturned but they could not regain their rights with legal procedures. Therefore, Dominican Republic welcomed the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to kindle feminist movements against oppressive leaders. Since the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission is receiving feedback from female experts in domestic politics, the Burundian government stays attentive to issues about gender inequality.

4) United Kingdom: As an advocate of free journalism, the United Kingdom criticized the Burundian government's revocation of media licenses of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Because the Burundian government blocked the influx of western media companies broadcasting its embarrassing situation, the United Kingdom could not report on serious ongoing human rights abuses. The United Kingdom required the Burundian government to provide tangible steps in its election procedures and anticipated promising results of the 2020 elections. Even though the United Kingdom was anxious about transitions of power in the beginning, it could trust Burundi when Burundi showed respect to the international order and adjusted itself to the guidelines for a new political framework.

5) China: China delved into internal socioeconomic conditions of Burundi by providing solutions about its agriculture, education and infrastructure. Because China has been convincing other African countries pertaining to the One Belt One Road initiative, it has been directly responsive to the needs of African nations. It suggested that China's position is indispensable in the situation in Burundi since the stability of Burundi does not guarantee a sudden economic stability. To prevent further political conflicts after the end of this political chaos, China devised plans for boosting industries and circulating money in Burundi. However, it generally commented on infringements of human rights but did not point out specific aspects related to human rights abuses.

6) Russian Federation: Slightly different from other delegates, Russia explained its stance on preserving national sovereignty of Burundi. Although a lot of military conflicts erupted in Burundi and evolved into protracted warfare among minor ethnicities, the Russian Federation does not agree with economic sanctions against the country. It remains attentive to human rights abuses but it does not require active interventions of the international society. The Russian Federation claimed that preparations for elections and referenda for constitutional reforms are on their way. Therefore, it proclaimed that the situation of Burundi

may change from voluntary and internal shifts in paradigms, excluding external assistance.

7) Germany: Germany claimed that the Burundian government should contemplate on its adjournment in the International Criminal Court (or even a cancellation of the trial). It even strongly recommended the government to “cooperate with internationally agreed mechanisms” to fulfill its responsibility as a nation of the United Nations. Germany considered that negative consequences of civil unrest persisted because of its refusal to review its political complications in the International Criminal Court. It asserted its clear commitment to assure free and fair elections in 2020 to motivate discouraged voters.

8) Indonesia: Indonesia upheld the principle of “neighbors know best” and authorized the proposal of innovative cross-border projects. To continue peaceful dialogues within the African Union and the East African Community, it accentuated the significance of refugee and internally displaced people to gain public support. By suggesting cooperative border projects with adjacent countries in Africa, Burundi may thrive socioeconomically and stabilize its financial standings by preventing the outflow of a lot of refugees. After introducing the weaknesses of the Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan, it appealed to the members of the Security Council to subsidize it more.

9) Burundi: Burundi claimed that the African Union’s Commissioner for Peace and Security failed to address actual issues inside Burundi and ignored intricate political circumstances. Burundi contended that the international society should not “infantilize” its own citizens because they are responsible for their transparent and impartial elections. Burundi stated that electoral codes are appropriately adopted. Plus, regulations of election fraud will soon come into existence to limit unfair competition among candidates. Due to these positive changes, the African Union commended the Burundian government’s progress in providing objectivity and credibility in their upcoming elections. Burundi also noted that foreign actors are sometimes overbearing and unresponsive to their voices. Because Burundi is keenly aware of the backgrounds of territorial conflicts and tribal warfare, it stated that it should decide under the principle of political autonomy. Although Burundi is politically nascent, the people in Burundi amassed their knowledge and experiences through political fluctuations. It is time for the Burundians to take the lead in this exploration.

5. Conclusion

In spite of the Burundian government's commitment to improve the living standards of the citizens, there have been numerous impediments and interferences inside of it. Although the government was mature enough to achieve political autonomy, unexpectedly appearing internal factors considerably affected domestic political conditions. At this point, the Burundian government is setting up its own agendas to facilitate the progress in protection of human rights and empowerment of ethnic minorities to express their opinions. It also provides opportunities for unrestricted political discourses and grants diverse political parties to compete in federal elections. With the persistence of adjacent countries in creating innovative cross-border projects and the adherence to the international guidelines for political stability, the Burundian people can successfully survive in intense strife for civil liberties. In conjunction with its own principle of political autonomy, it should fulfill its responsibility as an individual state which can protect the fundamental rights of people in the territory. "We have the constitution... we have the National Assembly... the national commission of human rights, the commission in charge of preventing genocide," said the government spokesman Prosper Ntahogwamiye. He also added that "The situation and the reason which caused the U.N. human rights office to come to Burundi are no longer there." advocating the closure of foreign institutions in support of the country's future. Along with its structured governmental agencies and commissions, Burundi is looking forward to establishing a peaceful regime with collaborative citizens to prevent future civil warfare.

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