



United Nations and

BURUNDI



UN Office in Burundi

The United Nations Office in Burundi (UNOB) was established in 1993, at the request of the Security Council, in order to support initiatives aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation in that country. The Office has actively sought to help the parties to the conflict build an internal political partnership and pursue the peace talks. UNOB has been headed by the Representative of the Secretary-General. Most recently, on 11 May 2000, the Secretary-General [appointed](#), with the [concurrence](#) of the Security Council, [Mr. Jean Arnault](#) (France), his Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), as his new Representative and Head of UNOB. He took up his new functions in June 2000. Mr. Arnault succeeded [Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Sy](#) (Senegal), who had been designated as the Secretary-General's Representative and Head of the [United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic](#) (BONUCA).

Background

The long-standing internal conflict in Burundi led in 1993 to a coup attempt in which the first democratically elected President, a Hutu, and six ministers were killed. Fighting between the largely Tutsi army and Hutu rebels followed, resulting in massive internal displacements of people and threatening to further destabilize the region. An estimated 200,000 people died in Burundi's Civil war.

Over the years, the United Nations has been actively involved in a good offices mission in Burundi. However, despite all efforts of the international community and hopes for a lasting peaceful settlement of the conflict, the peace process has made little progress and the security and humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate. Violence in the country has continued to escalate with armed attacks and other violent incidents involving killings, looting and destruction of property. Victims have included United Nations humanitarian relief workers.

On 18 October 1999, the United Nations Secretariat invited a number of Special Envoys

and Representatives for Burundi from the United Nations, OAU, the European Union, Francophonie, Canada and the United States for informal consultations. The meeting assessed the situation and examined how the United Nations could best collaborate in efforts to help advance the peace process. The participants agreed that the situation in and relating to Burundi had deteriorated seriously and would deteriorate quickly further, unless urgent measures were taken.

The Secretary-General decided to send to the region his Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Kieran Prendergast, to discuss measures to keep the peace process on track and what the United Nations could do in cooperation with others to advance those efforts. Despite these initiatives, the situation in Burundi was still tense and the peace process entered a critical stage.

New Facilitator Appointed

United Nations activities support efforts of the Facilitator of the Burundi Peace Process, presently former South African President, Nelson Mandela. Mr. Mandela was designated in December 1999 by a meeting of African heads of state in Arusha, Tanzania, to succeed, as Facilitator, former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere who died in October 1999. To support the work of the Facilitator, the Secretary-General has appointed [Aiyte Jean-Claude Kpapko](#) (Benin) as Senior United Nations Advisor to the Facilitator of the Burundi Peace Process.

During January 2000, Mr. Mandela met in Arusha with the parties to the negotiations and subsequently addressed the Security Council in New York on his peace efforts. Since then, the new Facilitator, supported by the international community, has been actively seeking ways to speed up the pace of negotiations and find a solution to the conflict acceptable to all parties.

Following the designation of Mr. Mandela as the new Facilitator, the Secretary-General decided to raise the profile of the United Nations within the overall efforts of the international community to address the deteriorating political and humanitarian situation in Burundi. He accordingly appointed, in January 2000, [Mr. Berhanu Dinka](#) (Ethiopia) as his Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region. [From 1997 to 1999, Mr. Dinka served as the Secretary-General's Representative and Regional Humanitarian Adviser for the Great Lakes Region.]

On 28 June 2000, the United Nations Security Council met in informal consultations and heard a briefing by Under-Secretary-General Prendergast on the situation in the country, as well as the recent developments in the peace process. In a press statement issued after the meeting, the members of the Council condemned the ongoing hostilities in Burundi, calling on all parties to the conflict to cease their military activities and to cooperate with Mr. Mandela, the Facilitator of the Arusha process.

Members of the Council noted the efforts of the Government of Burundi in the peace process and welcomed in particular the commitments expressed by the President of

Burundi on the dismantling of regroupement camps and on the composition of the national armed forces. On the humanitarian front, the Council called on all parties to respect human rights and international humanitarian law and to allow access for relief aid. They also called on donors to "resume substantial economic and social development assistance to Burundi with regard to security conditions."

Further Developments

Intensive diplomatic efforts led by Mr. Mandela resulted in the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which was signed on 28 August 2000 in Arusha by the parties to the Burundi peace process. The Secretary-General [welcomed](#) the agreement. He regretted, however, that not all parties had signed the document and urged those that had not signed to do so as soon as possible. The Secretary-General underscored the importance for the parties to remain genuinely committed to the implementation of the agreement. In this regard, he called on all armed groups to agree to a cessation of hostilities.

In the following weeks, Mr. Mandela made further efforts to bring the remaining Burundi movements and groups into the agreement. On 29 September, Mr. Mandela traveled to New York to brief the Security Council. In its [statement](#) issued on 29 September, the Council commended Mr. Mandela for his tireless efforts in the cause of peace in Burundi, and encouraged him to continue those efforts. It welcomed the signature on 28 August 2000 of the Arusha Peace Accord, as well as the signatures added to that Accord at a regional summit held on 20 September 2000 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Security Council stressed that the key to achieving a lasting peace in Burundi lay with the Burundian parties and that compromise was the only means to reach such agreement. To that end, it urged all parties to work towards resolving remaining differences over the peace accord, and to proceed to its implementation. The Council also reiterated its call on all parties that remained outside the peace process to cease hostilities and to participate fully in that process. It urged the regional States to continue to use their influence to draw the armed groups into the peace process.

At the same time, the Council remained deeply concerned at the dire economic, humanitarian and social conditions in Burundi and called on all parties to cooperate fully with non-governmental organizations and international organizations involved in the implementation of the agreement.

Humanitarian Aspects

The humanitarian suffering which has plagued Burundi since the outbreak of the current crisis in late 1993 remains unabated. Hundreds of thousands have died as a direct result of the conflict between the Government and opposition forces. The number of Burundian refugees has reached 500,000, and is growing. More than 800,000 people – 12 per cent of the country's population – are internally displaced, many of them as a result of a deliberate government policy relocating civilians, in circumstances where it cannot be justified under international civilian law. Countrywide social indicators, accentuated in areas of conflict, reflect the vast needs that remain unaddressed. Donors have largely

continued to limit their involvement to the financing of emergency assistance, and the Government has not been able to increase the provision of basic services.

Total funding requirements for the 2000 United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Burundi is estimated at US \$70.6 million.

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*Prepared and maintained by the Peace and Security Section, Department of Public Information
September 2000*

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