

**Statement by H.E. M. Ambassador Alain Aimé NYAMITWE, Minister
of External Relations and International Cooperation of the Republic of
Burundi**

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Excellence Mesdames et Messieurs les Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement,

Monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée Générale de notre Organisation,

Monsieur le Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies,

Chers collègues, Distingués Délégués,

Qu'il me soit permis de rendre grâce au Seigneur, qui nous a gardé tout au long de notre voyage et nous a permis d'être ici ensemble pour cette importante session de l'ONU.

Je voudrais, au nom de Son Excellence Monsieur M. Pierre NKURUNZIZA, Président de la République du Burundi et au nom du peupleburundais dans son ensemble, exprimer toutes Nos félicitations à **Son Excellence Monsieur Peter Thomson**, digne fils de Fiji, pour sa brillante élection le 13 juin 2016 à la présidence de la 71eme session ordinaire de l'Assemblée Générale de notre

organisation commune. Vous pouvez toujours compter sur l'entière coopération du Burundi au cours de votre mandat.

Je salue également le travail remarquable de **Son Excellence M. Mogens Lykketoft** qui a présidé avec brio la 70^{ème} session qu'il a clôturée en beauté le 13 septembre 2016.

Permettez-moi également de profiter de cette heureuse opportunité pour réitérer Notre confiance à **Son Excellence Monsieur Ban Ki Moon**, Secrétaire Général de notre organisation. Le Burundi lui promet sa pleine coopération durant le temps qui lui reste de son mandat et lui souhaite en même temps une bonne santé, le bonheur et pleins succès pour ses projets à venir.

Nous souhaitons de bons vœux à la nouvelle ou au nouveau Secrétaire Général (e), qui arrive alors que le monde se trouve à un tournant très important.

Mr. President,

Political dialogue and Human rights

On the Political dialogue

The Government of Burundi participated in all the sessions at the invitation of the East African Community Facilitation.

I wish to inform this august body that on September 8th, 2016, H.E. Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, presented his report to the EAC Summit. He called for a renewed commitment of all the stakeholders to engage in the EAC led dialogue.

The Government of the Republic of Burundi is of the view that dialogue should not replace or undermine the democratic tenets of our Constitution.

The Government of the Republic of Burundi wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the dialogue, as expressed at the last EAC Summit. Our Government believes that peaceful political stakeholders, in line with UNSC resolutions 2248 and 2279 are welcome to discuss the future of Burundi.

In the same token, and with a view to opening up to more inclusivity, the National Commission for InterBurundian dialogue has submitted its report of 6 months long discussions with Burundians of all walks of life, from the grassroots communities to the upper echelons of the Society. Citizens have called for a number of reforms needed for more stability in Burundi. Those conclusions are so important and therefore cannot be ignored. The Government has taken note of them.

On Human rights

I stand before you today to reiterate Burundi's unwavering commitment to Human rights. A national commission of high repute and a fully-fledged ministerial department are in charge of Human rights. They need support.

Our Government wishes to reaffirm its commitment to ensure the security of all our citizens, irrespective of their ethnic extraction. Not one of the three ethnic groups is above the rest. Neither, no group is pariah. All our citizens are given equitable opportunities, as established in our Constitution.

Under the conditions Burundi finds herself in, where she is consolidating its security gains, against all sorts of actors whose unique goal is regime change, and whose methods of operation are violent, it is imperative that any assessment of the situation be done with caution. Indeed, rumors, falsified information, social media, all are used to paint Burundi in bad light.

I therefore wish to take this opportunity to categorically reject the purposefully and politically exaggerated reports on alleged Human rights violations in Burundi. Cases were taken out of context, others out of proportion, with no word of the Security personnel who were killed while on duty. That report is marred with controversial selection of victims, while the methodology of collecting testimonies through WhatsApp messages is novelty in UN practices.

Our Government will have a chance to present a comprehensive counter report in the next few days in Geneva.

On the other hand, Burundi reiterates her openness to the African Union Human rights monitors and Military experts.

The Financial and structural challenges that the African Union Commission is facing and which have blocked the generation of the necessary personnel cannot be blamed on Burundi.

As for the Memorandum of Understanding between Burundi and the African Union Commission, our Government calls on the AUC to uphold fully and in good faith the terms of the agreement reached in Bujumbura, during the February 2016 meeting of the 6 African Union Heads of State and Government.

On the UN Security Council Resolution 2303, adopted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, Burundi was shocked by the surprise and non-consensual manner in which it was adopted. While consultations did not lead to approval of the proposal made by the penholder, some members of the Council thought it wise to put Burundi before a fait accompli. Yet Chapter VI resolutions are predicated on the consent of the concerned government.

Mr. President,

Concerning the Humanitarian situation

Our Government has made the return of refugees a priority. We are conscious of the most difficult conditions they live in, where they are,

mostly in the countries of our immediate neighborhood. No effort will be spared to allow every single one of them to return home. Security of their goods and properties is guaranteed. Around 90.000 refugees have voluntarily returned home over the last 4 months. I wish to call on all our neighbors to facilitate the voluntary repatriation.

The Government of the Republic of Burundi is in contact with the UNHCR for the initiation of tripartite negotiations with the host countries.

Again, in line with the relevant provisions of resolutions 2248 and 2279, on the one hand, and in compliance with the 2013 Framework Agreement on the DRC and the region, on the other hand, the Government of the Republic of Burundi calls on all our neighbors, to refrain from aiding and abetting violent schemes by some groups, especially those who failed in their bid to overthrow the democratic institutions in Burundi on May 13th, 2015 and have attacked Burundi on July 10th, 2015.

The Report of the UN Group of Experts on the DRC submitted a few months ago to the UN Security Council is comprehensive and clear on the activities of those groups, which, more than once, have attacked Burundi.

The Government of the Republic of Burundi urges the Security Council to act on the findings.

On the UN Reform

Africa and other parts of the world, have again and again called for the reform of the organs our Organization, in particular the Security Council. Resolution 62/557 of the General Assembly has paved the way for the conduct of the negotiations leading to the reform.

As countless delegations have pointed out, it is absolutely unacceptable that more than 7 decades after, our Organization still works in the same post war mindset, with a few members claiming more rights than the rest of the membership.

The Government of the Republic of Burundi supports fully the African Union position, known as the Ezulwini consensus. Our organization needs to be given a new impetus.

However, even before that goal is reached, a few steps can still be undertaken. For instance, the three African non-permanent members of the Council should also be given more responsibilities and allowed to work independently.

If more than 70% of the situations under consideration by the Council come from Africa, it is not too much asking that the so-called pen

holders be some African countries, especially in light of the biased perception of Africa, entertained by some former colonial masters, sitting in Council.

Mr. President,

The horror and the shock which characterize the images of the migrants seeking refuge in Europe are a constant reminder to all of us that the world we live in has become one of shared opportunities but also common challenges. While we call on the receiving countries for more humanity in catering for the migrants, we believe that it is important to sit down and analyze the deep-rooted causes of mass exodus of young men, women and children, who find it necessary to risk their lives in the wild seas, in search for better opportunities. One way of curbing this phenomenon, is to support all well meaning development programs undertaken by the countries of the South. In ensuring the social and economic rights, more people will find a good reason to stay in their countries. And this can only happen, if we all understand that all countries need to be respected in their political, social, economic and cultural fabrics. Which is not the case today, unfortunately.

Mr. President,

On Terrorism

This session takes place at the time when terrorism affects the entire world and hits all our regions.

Yes some progress has been made but we have to recognize the fact that efforts aimed at developing a common strategy have not yielded the expected result. Terrorist attacks rock all parts of the world and are so close to all of us. This upsurge in those attacks is a source of concern for my country.

My Government once again condemns terrorism in all its manifestations and expresses sympathy to the victims of this scourge.

My delegation believes that the fight against terrorism needs to continue with more determination. To match words with deeds, since 2007 Burundi has sent its troops to fight terrorism and violent extremism in many parts of the world. More than 5000 Burundi troops are in Somalia to fight against the Al Shabab, in the context of the AMISOM.

Our continued presence in Somalia is predicated on the ironclad commitment of Burundi against terrorism, in full solidarity with our brothers and sisters on the continent and beyond. We believe that the fight against terrorism in any part of the world a contribution to Global Peace.

Although politically motivated reasons were used to justify the non rotation of the two Formed Police Units (FPUs) in the Central African Republic, Burundi remains committed to Peace and Security. Our men and women in uniform are still ready to continue serving in MINUSCA with the same zeal demonstrated by our police units in Côte d'Ivoire, Haïti and Darfour.

Burundi has no other interest than helping our brothers and sisters to recover their dignity and their freedom.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the partners who continue to support these missions. As a Troop Contributing Country, Burundi calls on the UN to fill the gap left by the reduction of the EU budget on AMISOM.

Burundi participates also in other initiatives such as the CBRN, aimed at preventing terrorist groups or non-state actors from acquiring chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear substances, which, once in the hands of those groups, can be diverted for terrorist purposes.

However, Mr. President, all those initiatives cannot help us reach the goal, if the structural causes of inequalities and poverty are not dealt with. People need to have bread on the table.

SDGs and climate change

SDGS

Our delegation wishes to remind us all of how all member states need to incorporate the 17 SDGs in the design of their policies, programs and expenditures.

On her part, Burundi is committed to put her citizens at the center of her Development policies. With the valuable support of our partners, the Government of Burundi will respond to the needs of the most

vulnerable in the most inclusive manner.

Climate change

Burundi has joined all countries in fostering and implementing a sustainable, reliable climate regime, as well as a legally binding instrument. We need to consolidate the gains achieved on that epoch making day of December 21st, 2015. In a few months, Burundi will join the list of the countries which have already ratified the Paris agreement.

Mr. President,

October 13th, 1961, His Royal Highness Louis Rwagasore, Prime Minister, was assassinated in Bujumbura by elements close to the colonial administration, while chairing his first and last cabinet meeting. He is our independence hero.

January 15th, 1965, Pierre Ngendandumwe, Prime minister, was gunned down in Bujumbura by a local embassy staffer.

October 21st, 1993, His Excellency Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected President of Burundi, was assassinated by the one ethnic group army.

May 13th, 2015, the bid to overthrow the legitimate institutions of Burundi failed.

What all those sad events have in common, is the unhealthy and obvious involvement of foreign elements.

It is useful to remind all of us that the social fabric of African nations is more complex. What Burundi demands is to be fairly looked at, and not through the lenses of other situations, in other countries. Foreign interferences in the affairs of Burundi are absolutely not welcome because, even if even if some still have difficulties to understand it, Burundi flies its flag of a sovereign state, since July 1st, 1962.

Three communities live in the beautiful land, bordered in the West by the second deepest lake in the world, the majestic Lake Tanganyika, and two countries in the North and East. Indeed Hutu, Tutsi and Twa live in harmony in Burundi and have a say in the affairs of Government, as provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi. No group is above the others and none is below.

One needs to take into account the suffering and the pain endured by our People as a result of the bad leadership of the Past.

The wounds left by the massacres of the past call us to remember all our citizens with no distinction of class or group. Victims know no majority or minority. The pain is the same. We therefore refuse manipulation or falsification of History.

Our citizens still mourn their loved ones, lost to ignorance and barbarian practices of the military regimes that overthrew the Monarchy and proclaimed the Republic. For more than 40 years, the different administrations in Burundi got busy segregating and killing citizens on the basis of ethnicity.

The Arusha accord of 2000 and the 2005 Constitution, defined the place of all citizens in the Administration, in what was seen as the equitable way of ensuring peace and stability.

Those tenets are **STILL** in place today and the Arusha Agreement is **FULLY** respected in our institutions.

In the same vein, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, envisaged in the Arusha Accord, has now been established.

We therefore call on the United Nations to support the work of that commission. The Burundi now have a forum which will address events of their sad History. They need to know why they moved from a nation where ethnic communities lived in harmony to one where citizens lost their lives, on the basis of their ethnic extractions. In this process, it will be possible to tap into the knowledge resources of the United Nations, which had entrusted the administration of Burundi to a third country.

Lastly, all our People (the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa) want, is to live in Peace and Harmony. They, in unisson, reject the genocidal rhetoric. They form one

single society, one single nation. They share the faith in a common future, which they want Peaceful and Prosperous, a future of equitable opportunities.

As His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, the President of the Republic of Burundi has said time and again, **THERE WILL BE NO GENOCIDE IN BURUNDI.** This is our faith, this is the faith of all our People. By all means, **WE**, the People of Burundi, will fight this evil.

God bless you for your kind attention.