

**Burundi: New Government, but no progress in sight on the human rights front**

GENEVA (23 September 2020) – The Commission of Inquiry on Burundi presents today its final report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on its investigation of a crisis dating back to 2015.

The Commission’s report this year documents serious human rights violations that occurred in a tumultuous year culminating in multiple, far-reaching elections. With so much at stake, every effort was made to prevent Burundi’s main opposition party, the CNL (National Freedom Council), from winning seats, including through summary executions, arbitrary detentions and arrests, torture and sexual violence. To that end, the authorities targeted not only CNL members and supporters, but also muzzled independent observers, including journalists and civil society representatives, and imposed tight control over ordinary people. The result was an unprecedented concentration of power by the ruling party at all levels of government.

Following years of solid investigations of sexual violence committed against women, this year the Commission was able to take an in-depth look into sexual violence against men. The Commission has found that it is often committed during detention at the National Intelligence Service for intelligence gathering purposes. The severe physical pain inflicted is compounded by the psychological scars of stigma, or fear thereof, which touch upon deeply held cultural taboos.

The investigators also focused this year on serious violations of human rights committed on children and adolescents since 2015. With over half the population aged under 18, the Commission has deep concerns for the future of those who have been physically and psychologically traumatized, as well as for the future of the nation.

In fulfilling a new dimension of its mandate to report on “the economic underpinnings of the State”, the Commission has found strong indications that corruption and illicit financial flows underpin the Burundian economy. The report, read together with previous reports of the Commission, shows how depriving the State of revenue dramatically limits its ability to ensure the rights of the people of Burundi, 74% of whom are officially poor and who have in fact been further impoverished by forced contributions to projects of the State or of the ruling party.

“The new Government has a unique opportunity to rectify the destructive course that Burundi has been on for far too long,” said Doudou Diène, Chairperson of the Commission. “The Burundian people are waiting for meaningful, positive changes. The Human Rights Council must show that it expects nothing less.”

The presentation to the Human Rights Council can be followed live at:

<http://webtv.un.org/>

Please note that the Commissioners are available for interviews.

***Infographics in English, French and Kirundi are available at:***

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIBurundi/Pages/CoIBurundi.aspx>

**Info sheet on the economic underpinnings of the Burundian State** can be found at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIBurundi/Pages/CoIBurundi.aspx>

More information on the work of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIBurundi/Pages/CoIBurundi.aspx>

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