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**UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi:**

**the 2020 electoral tensions call for prevention**

**GENEVA (2 September 2019)**– The UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (COIB) will hold a **press conference** in Geneva on **4 September 2019** at **1 p.m.** to brief the media about their latest report addressing the human rights situation in Burundi.

Less than nine months ahead of Burundi’s 2020 presidential election, the COIB documents in its current report the continuation of serious human rights violations committed against citizens in Burundi amidst a climate of politisisation and intimidation by members of the youth wing of the ruling party (Imbonerakure), agents of the National Intelligence Service, the police, as well as local administrators.

“It is extremely dangerous to speak out critically in Burundi today,” explains the COIB Chair, Doudou Diène. “The stifling of such voices is what allows the country to present an illusion of calm,” adds COIB Commissioner Lucy Asuagbor. But “it is a ‘calm’ based on terror”, says fellow COIB Commissioner Francoise Hampson, “as shown by the continued commission of crimes against humanity and the very serious human rights violations that we have documented”.

Given the politically sensitive electoral period ahead, the COIB decided to be forward looking as well. The report reviews whether the risk factors set out in the “Framework of analysis for atrocity crimes”, developed by the UN Office for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect (2014) (https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/about-us/Doc.3\_Framework%20of%20Analysis%20for%20Atrocity%20Crimes\_EN.pdf) are present in Burundi. The results of this objective analysis are stark as all the common risk factors for criminal atrocities are present in Burundi. “There is no better early warning than this,” says Mr. Diène. “Our analysis should be carefully considered, if the often repeated commitments to prevention are to have any meaning.”

The press conference on Wednesday will take place at the UN in Geneva, press briefing room III in the presence of the Commissioners [Doudou Diène](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIBurundi/Pages/Commissioners.aspx#diene)  and Francoise Hampson.

The briefing can be viewed live online at: <http://webtv.un.org>.

The official report will be released the same day with a press kit including b-roll video footage and infographics.

The COIB is scheduled to present its final report during an interactive dialogue with the UN Human Rights Council on 17 September 2019.

***For more information and media requests, please contact:*** *Sandra Miller, COIB Secretariat, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),* + 41 22 917 3426 */* [*smiller@ohchr.org*](mailto:smiller@ohchr.org)*) or Rolando Gomez, Human Rights Council Branch, OHCHR (*+41 22 917 97 11 / [rgomez@ohchr.org](mailto:rgomez@ohchr.org))