



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

COURTESY TRANSLATION

19 January 2024

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Burundi by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 43rd session in May 2023. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of Burundi was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 54th session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/bi-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volker Türk

His Excellency
Mr. Albert Shingiro
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation of Burundi



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

Measures taken by Burundi to promote women's participation in political institutions, as well as efforts to combat gender-based violence such as the establishment of focal points in all police stations, courts and tribunals are welcome developments. Likewise, the establishment in 2021 of an ad hoc committee to combat trafficking in persons and the Consultation and Monitoring Committee on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons are noteworthy.

Efforts for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular the adoption of the National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Action Plan 2020–2024 are commendable. Measures pursued by the authorities to provide free basic education and school kits for students from poor families are encouraged.

While welcoming the reaccreditation of the Independent National Human Rights Commission to “A” status in 2021, Burundi is invited to guarantee its independence and provide it with resources to enable it to fulfil its mandate. Expediting the legislative review process to effectively establish a national mechanism for the prevention of torture is also encouraged. Furthermore, Burundi authorities are strongly encouraged to take meaningful measures to improve cooperation with international human rights mechanisms, including special procedures and treaty bodies.

Burundi should also guarantee that actions by the State security forces are fully consistent with international human rights law, to thoroughly investigate persistent allegations of arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, mainly targeting the opposition, and prosecute those responsible for such acts, including members of the security forces and Imbonerakure. Burundi should also adopt measures aimed at guaranteeing freedom of expression and opinion, peaceful assembly and association, as well as the normal functioning of civil society and human rights defenders. Burundi is invited to continue combatting endemic corruption by implementing the national strategy for good governance and anti-corruption and holding accountable those who have misused public office for private gain. Burundi authorities should continue the efforts taken to promote the economic, social and cultural rights of the most vulnerable persons such as women, children and persons with disabilities.

Burundi is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the National Assembly and the Senate, the judiciary, the Independent National Human Rights Commission, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. In that context, I take note of the announcement by Burundi in its addendum that it will take all necessary measures to implement accepted recommendations through a national action plan until the next cycle. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is



encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG-related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The Government is further encouraged to further strengthen the Interministerial Standing Committee for the Drafting of Initial and Periodic Reports-up, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Burundi may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
19 January 2024