



Oral statement by CCPR-Centre co-sponsored by FIACAT, EurAc, Protection International and OMCT

Item 4 - Interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi

43rd session of the Human Rights Council - 9 March 2020

Thank you, Madam President,

The signatory organizations¹ remain concerned about the serious human rights violations in Burundi.

They strongly condemn the confirmation on appeal of the sentence of Germain Rukuki to 32 years' imprisonment for his work with ACAT Burundi and the continued detention of Nestor Nibitanga of APRODH sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment.

They strongly condemn the arrest of four journalists from the newspaper IWACU on 22 October 2019 and their sentencing on 30 January 2020 for having gone to Bubanza province to investigate the security situation. The international media have not been spared, as shown by the withdrawal of the BBC's operating licence on 26 March 2019 and the extension of the suspension of Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts.

The electoral context of 2020 and the current tensions give rise to fears of violent confrontations. There have been several reports of intimidation, mainly by members and supporters of the CNDD-FDD against political opponents. A total of 47 extrajudicial executions, 102 arbitrary arrests and 15 cases of torture were recorded in the last three months of 2019.

The rise in intolerance and ethnic hate speech is also of concern. These discourses are fuelled and sustained, inter alia, by the controversial work of exhuming the remains of victims of past crimes since December 2019 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), whose members are close to or sympathetic to the CNDD-FDD Party.

The closure of the offices of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi and the end of the mission of Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, drastically reduce the possibilities of external monitoring of Burundi at this time of tension. Several authorities have stated that they will not accept independent foreign observers.

The signatory organisations, particularly concerned about the risk of an intensification of the crisis in the context of the 2020 elections, call on the members of the Council to continue to closely monitor the human rights situation in Burundi.

They also call on the Burundian authorities to put an end to serious human rights violations in Burundi and to release journalists and human rights defenders immediately and unconditionally.

Thank you.

¹ Acat-Burundi, Forsc, Coalition des ddhs, Focode, Aprodh, UBJ, SOS-Torture/Burundi, Cosome, RCP, CB-CPI, AJBE, CAVIB, CCPR-Centre, Fiacat, Eurac, OMCT and Protection International.



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