



OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND
Conflict and Displacement in Burundi

October 2000



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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 1-58030-008-1

MISSION STATEMENT

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children seeks to improve the lives of refugee women, children and adolescents through a vigorous program of public education and advocacy, and by acting as a technical resource. The Commission, founded in 1989 under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee, is the only organization in the United States dedicated solely to speaking out on behalf of women and children uprooted by armed conflict or persecution.

Acknowledgments

The Women's Commission wishes to thank the International Rescue Committee in Burundi and New York for their advice, assistance and generous hospitality regarding the preparation and implementation of this mission, as well as the many organizations and individuals, local and international, both inside and outside Burundi, that contributed their time and expertise. In particular, members of CAFOB (Collective of Burundian Women's Associations), the Women's Center for Peace, and representatives of the Dushirehamwe network facilitated invaluable meetings with and visits to local projects, organizations and individuals, often outside normal working hours and at short notice. To all those who took the time to meet with the delegation, many of whom are not specifically named in this report, very grateful thanks are extended.¹ The Women's Commission also thanks John Keys of IRC, Alison Des Forges of Human Rights Watch, and Anne Edgerton and Steven Smith of Refugees International for their assistance and support.

Thanks, also, to Marta Bekele, program specialist, and Maha Muna, deputy director, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, for their assistance in organizing the delegation from New York.

This report was written by Trish Hiddleston, with contributions from Rachel Watson and Susan Martin. It was edited by Mary Diaz, Maha Muna and Diana Quick.

Delegation members

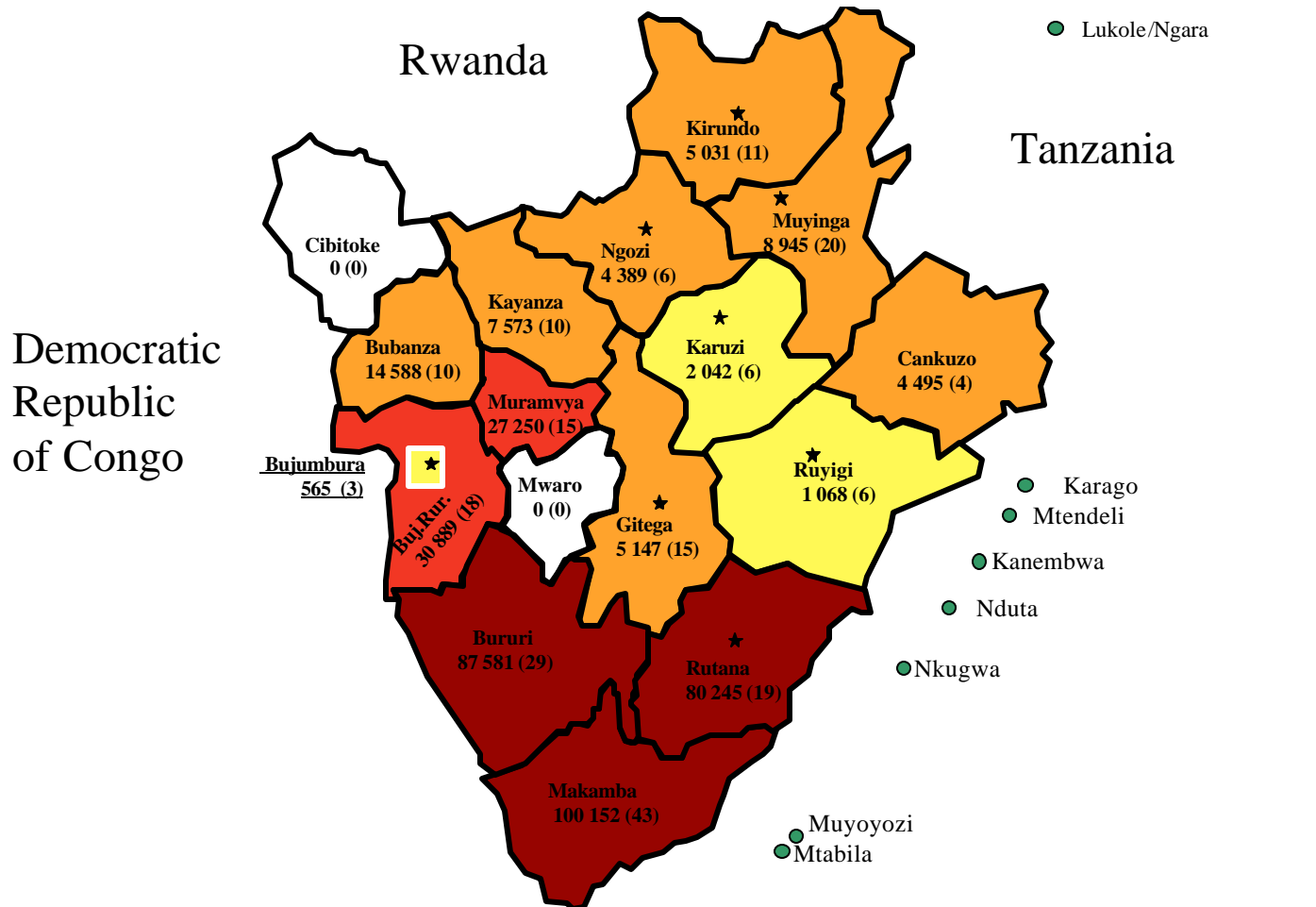
The delegation consisted of Susan Forbes Martin, Director of the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University and Women's Commission Board member; Rachel Watson, Women's Commission Media Liaison; and Trish Hiddleston, consultant, who has had extensive experience working in the Great Lakes region of Africa.²

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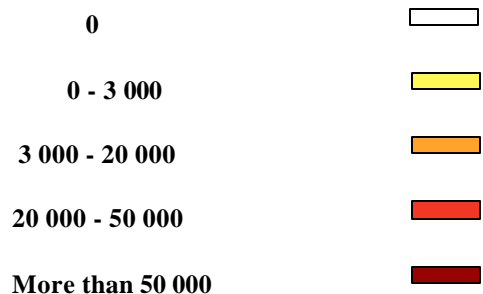
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Internally Displaced in Burundi

- * Over 6 percent of Burundi's population are internally displaced
- * Over 68 percent of Burundi's IDP population are located in the three southern provinces which are most affected by instability



Internally displaced population living in sites



- Burundian Refugee's camps in Tanzania
- Airstrips served by WFP internal flight

Total displaced population in the province (number of sites): eg: Rutana

BURUNDI - Key Facts

Total Population	6.65 million
Population Density	239 per sq. km.
IDPs in sites	393,776
Number of sites	217
Refugees outside Burundi	571,525 (348,117 “new caseload” and 200,000 “old caseload,” i.e., since 1970 in Tanzania, DRC - 20,000, Rwanda - 1207, others - 2,201)
Refugees inside Burundi	25,048 (20,000 and 3,719 old- and new caseload Congolese, respectively, 1,290 Rwandans, 22 Somalians, 17 others)
Returnees + Expelled	220,286 (Tan - 100,346, DRC - 116,174, Rwanda - 11,705, Other - 61)
Feeding Center beneficiaries	50,000 in SFC and 2,500 in TFC (daily average)
No. of feeding centers	214 (186 SFC and 28 TFC)
Food aid beneficiaries	250,000/month (average)
IDPs without access to requirement of potable water	28%
School attendance	Decline from 52% in '92 to 30% in '97, increase to 37% in '99
Illiteracy rate	62.5%
Infant mortality rate	Increase from 110 ('92) to 136 ('96) to 123/1,000 live births (6/99)
Immunization coverage	Decline from 83% in 1993 to 54% in 1996 to 48% in 1998
HIV infection	15.9% in urban, 13.1% in semi-urban and 7.4% in rural areas
Human development index	Decline from 0.341 in 1992 to 0.300 in 1996 to 0.288 in 1999
No. of prisoners	Nearly 8,803 (of whom 70% are awaiting trial, of whom 6,003 are men and 109 women, including 121 children plus 39 infants)

Source: OCHA, Burundi

I. Introduction

MISSION OBJECTIVES

A delegation from the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (the Women's Commission) carried out a fact finding mission to Tanzania and Burundi in early October 2000 to identify particular concerns and needs of the many Burundian women and children displaced inside and outside the country as a result of nearly a decade of violent unrest in Burundi. Women and children experience specific security, health and economic hardships under these conditions. The delegation also aimed to highlight local capacities and initiatives by women's and children's groups to address protection, humanitarian assistance and related issues, including reproductive health, education, reconciliation and peace-building.

Although women were not initially included in the peace negotiations leading to the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in August 2000, they fought for inclusion and had an increasingly significant impact. As fighting intensified rather than decreased following the signing of the Peace Agreement, the delegation sought to identify how the role of women in reconciliation and peace-building should be supported.

Within Burundi, the delegation met with a wide range of representatives from local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, the international community in Burundi, local authorities and government officials, as well as individual and groups of Burundian women from various backgrounds. The delegation was based in Bujumbura. Efforts were made to speak with individuals and organizations outside the capital; these included an overnight visit to Bubanza (Bubanza province) and day trips to Gatumba (Bujumbura Rural province) close to the Congolese border and to Karinzi (Mutambu commune, Bujumbura Rural province). In Tanzania, a delegation member met with Tanzanian government officials, representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and scholars conducting research on refugees in Tanzania. No visits were feasible to the refugee camps in Tanzania within the delegation's timeframe. In addition to research carried out in the region, delegation members met with relevant individuals and organizations in Washington, New York and Brussels.

This report was written in November 2000, and reflects the situation in Burundi as of that time.

II. Executive Summary

KEY FINDINGS

- Women fought hard to be involved in the peace process, with too little appreciation by the negotiators; their participation should be increased and welcomed in the implementation phase.
- The peace process remains fragile. The international community must continue to support the peace process, including supporting women's involvement in the process and women's contributions to peace and reconciliation.
- The United Nations (UN) system in Burundi is in urgent need of strengthening. In particular, strong, competent leadership of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is a priority.
- Consideration should be given to the appointment of a UN lead agency focal point for coordinating assistance and protection for internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- While attention has been focused on the needs of refugees and consideration of possible repatriation, there has been great neglect of IDPs, the majority of whom are women, adolescents and children. In particular, the UN must complete the comprehensive survey, now underway, of their situation and needs, including a detailed demographic breakdown by age and sex of the IDP population. Assistance and protection to all IDPs should be provided as required.
- The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are not well known by relevant actors; wide dissemination of the Guiding Principles, coupled with training, should be carried out on a regular basis.
- While donors remain hesitant about investing in development, all actors should interpret humanitarian assistance in the broadest sense to include reproductive health services, micro-credit and other programs to enable women-headed households to be self-supporting, programs to help women victims of violence and psycho-social programs for children.
- Equal access to education is an imperative for peace, and the international community should encourage and support initiatives to improve the current poor access to education. Specifically, primary education should be free to all Burundian children.

- There is a critical need to promote gender equality generally and specifically in fields such as education and government. The extent of bargaining sex for food and resulting high levels of HIV/AIDS are evidence of gender inequality.

- The HIV/AIDS levels are disturbingly high and need to be addressed by the government and the international community more vigorously.

The conflict in Burundi has lasted more than 30 years, the most recent crisis developing in 1993. During this period, over 200,000 Burundians have lost their lives, many have fled abroad and many more been displaced, some temporarily and some more long term. At present there are approximately 340,000 Burundians in Tanzanian refugee camps, an estimated 170,000-200,000 living in Tanzanian settlements, most since 1972, and an estimated 300,000 who spontaneously settled in Tanzanian villages along the border with Burundi.³ There are approximately 330,000 IDPs living in IDP camps. Approximately 170,000 men, women, adolescents and children are otherwise dispersed in Burundi.⁴ Damage to the infrastructure inside the country due to the conflict has been devastating and the conditions and quality of life have deteriorated because of the crisis.⁵

PEACE PROCESS

In 1998, negotiations for peace were initiated. Most, but significantly not all, of the parties to the conflict signed a Peace Agreement in August 2000.⁶ The parties to the conflict did not agree to a cease-fire. The agreement remains fragile and could collapse at any time. As plans are being made for a transitional government, the continued support of the international community to the peace process is essential.

Fighting has intensified following the signing of the Peace Agreement, as a result of which refugee flows to Tanzania, which had been decreasing steadily between January and July 2000, have increased. Civilians continue to be caught in the middle and the number of deaths continues to rise. Regional instability and conflict also complicate prospects for peace in Burundi.

Women fought for inclusion in the peace process and although they were successful in raising awareness of gender issues and ensuring that the Peace Agreement is not entirely insensitive to gen-

der issues, the Peace Agreement did not incorporate all of their recommendations and they felt insufficiently represented at the negotiating table. Two important recommendations that were not incorporated in the Peace Agreement were a guaranteed minimum quota of representation for women in the new government and specific equal inheritance rights to land for women.

There are many impressive grassroots initiatives promoting peace and reconciliation in Burundi, among them many initiated by women. These include involving women in the peace process, conflict resolution training programs, ethnically mixed women's cooperatives and income generation schemes, and programs for youth from different ethnic backgrounds.

HUMANITARIAN AID AND SECURITY

The deterioration in the security situation inside Burundi and the inability to forecast when peace will be established and what will happen in the meantime have made operating conditions for aid agencies particularly difficult. Inevitably, therefore, the quality and level of planning and humanitarian assistance that can be provided is adversely affected, to the extent that plans may not be made at all. The Women's Commission applauds the courage, dedication and commitment of all those working under extremely difficult conditions in Burundi for peace and for the security and well-being of all Burundians.

Until there is evidence of a measure of peace and security, refugees and IDPs will be unwilling to return home. And as long as there are displaced Burundians inside and/or outside Burundi, any apparent peace will remain at risk and large numbers of people will continue to be dependent on humanitarian aid.

UN COORDINATION

The UN's presence in Burundi is in urgent need of strengthening. In the light of the peace negotiations and the urgent needs of the Burundian population, the Women's Commission urges the UN to strengthen its capacities in Burundi. In particular, OCHA requires the early appointment of strong, competent leadership, which it has lacked for several months now. Further, the UN should designate a lead agency to serve as the focal point for

coordinating assistance and protection of IDPs.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

A large and highly vulnerable population of IDPs (approximately 500,000) is the most in need of protection and assistance in Burundi today. Some are in camps by choice, others by force, and an estimated 170,000-200,000 are otherwise dispersed in the hills, staying with friends or relatives or wherever they can find some form of shelter.⁷ The UN is currently conducting a survey of IDPs, both those in camps and those otherwise dispersed, but it is a matter of serious concern that the results may not be available until some time into 2001. Full-time staff should be assigned to complete the survey as quickly as possible.

What has become of the populations of the forced regroupment camps (by far the majority of which were located in the province of Bujumbura Rural) closed in the summer of 2000 is unclear. They lacked assistance and protection when the camps were closed. Those who have been unable to return to their homes, and other IDPs not in camps for security reasons or because their homes have been destroyed, continue to lack protection and assistance. Some lodge with friends and family, others seek shelter wherever they can find it. Some may have to repeatedly flee their homes and have had their homes looted and attacked on a regular basis.

As the precise number, situation and condition of these variously displaced people are unknown, any particular needs they may have remain hidden and thus are not being met. How many are women and how many are children is likewise unknown, although vulnerable populations that have already been identified indicate that the majority of adults are women. Security and protection are their most pressing needs. They also need emergency humanitarian assistance in the areas of shelter, food, medical care, reproductive health, micro-credit and income generation (particularly for women heads of households), and education for children. Programs for women who have been victims of violence should also be supported.

REPATRIATION

As long as the security situation is precarious in Burundi, an organized repatriation is premature. A cease-fire and the transitional government under

the Arusha Peace Agreement should be in place before repatriation is considered. Even then, repatriation should not go ahead unless the protection of the returnees can be guaranteed. UNHCR and the government of Tanzania should maintain their apparent “go-slow” approach and should reassure refugees that there are no plans for a forced repatriation. Refugees suffered significant cuts in their food rations in the fall of 2000 owing to a blockage in the supply pipeline. This situation should be reversed and refugees reassured that this was not connected to an imminent forced repatriation and none is being considered.



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IDP women at the Moka-Gahongore Displacement site, Bubanza Province

Despite the unlikelihood that repatriation will take place in the near future, contingency planning and preparation for a possible repatriation should continue. Detailed surveys of the potential returning population should be carried out now, broken down by demographic characteristics. Women as decision-makers should be used to determine what conditions are necessary for the return and what information they have and/or require before returning. Where, or when, fighting has subsided, damaged infrastructure should be repaired. Programs which prepare the returning population and those who did not leave, including those that facilitate dialogue between these two groups, should be supported. Burundian women inside and outside the country have already begun such initiatives and more are expected to follow. Cross-border planning, communication and coordination between humanitarian organizations and agencies is essential for a smooth repatriation.

REINTEGRATION AND SECURING THE PEACE

In order to secure and sustain peace in Burundi, ongoing, long-term political and material support will be required in Burundi. Special attention should be given to:

- issues of protection and security, including the demobilization of soldiers;
- resolving land use issues for refugees and IDPs, particularly women heads of households;
- addressing widespread poverty and rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure;
- preventing and limiting the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- education; and
- justice and reconciliation efforts.

The Women’s Commission found ample evidence of Burundian women and women’s organizations willing to address these issues and many initiatives to do so, some informal, some well established, some supported from external sources, and others not. As one woman in Bubanza told the delegation: “This war has caused so much poverty. Women did not create the war. We have been dragged into it. ... So women need to get together to look at our differences. We can work out how to resolve them.”⁸ Peace will not come overnight and will require sustained effort and support to make it hold, but the will already exists among a significant part of the Burundian population and every effort to support them should be made.

III. Background to the Current Situation

“When there’s a conflict it’s the women and the children who suffer most,” claimed the Governor of Bubanza, a province that had seen some of the worst fighting and resultant damage to infrastructure in Burundi since the most recent crisis began in 1993.⁹

Almost all the Burundian women and local women’s and children’s organizations interviewed by the Women’s Commission in Burundi raised the same main concerns and needs:

- concern about the daily violence and potential violence they all live with and the desire for an immediate cessation of killings by all parties (government troops and rebel forces);
- concern over the extreme levels of poverty in the country and the need to address that issue now, first, simply to keep people alive and, second, to avoid people turning to, for example, violence or prostitution for a living; and
- concern that so few children and adolescents are able to go to school and the need to raise levels of school attendance and literacy, again to offer children and adolescents alternatives to violence and prostitution, for example, and the ability to be self-supporting as they grow up.

Their concerns were often inter-linked. As one woman in Bubanza told the Women’s Commission: “Peace is a priority. If peace comes, we can reduce poverty.”¹⁰ The Governor of Bubanza province told the Women’s Commission: “You can’t reconcile hungry people — it wouldn’t last a day. We hide behind demography, ethnicity, etc., but the main problem is poverty.”¹¹

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Burundi has been plagued by inter-ethnic conflict and political power struggles since its independence in 1962. The most recent crisis began after the assassination of the first democratically elected president in 1993.

The conflict in Burundi has the appearance of being between two ethnic groups — the Hutu, comprising about 85 percent of the population,¹² and the Tutsi, comprising approximately 14 percent of the population. Ethnicity as a dividing fac-

tor is significant, but it has not always been so and not all divisions in Burundian society today are rooted in ethnic differences. Regional, political, economic and personal differences are also dividing factors. In some areas, to some people, ethnicity is not the most important factor. One woman told the Women’s Commission that regional background may, in some cases, be more relevant. “A Hutu from the north may feel closer to a Tutsi from the north than a Hutu from the south.”¹³ Neither Hutu nor Tutsi are monolithic groups. Both Hutu and Tutsi have extremists and moderates in their number, those who resort to war and those who do not.

All ethnic groups share a single language, Kirundi. In the past, inter-marriage was not uncommon, individuals could move from one ethnic group to another depending on wealth and power, and political conflicts tended to cut across lines of identity rather than enforce them. The conflict is, many argue, basically a battle over political and economic power.¹⁴ Indeed, the Arusha Peace Agreement notes that Burundi’s conflict is “fundamentally political, with extremely important ethnic dimensions” and that it “stems from a struggle by the political class to accede to and/or remain in power.”¹⁵

Power imbalances were emphasized by colonial strategies. Tutsi were consistently favored by the colonialists and remained in power after independence in 1962. Hutu had been excluded from education, the military and high administrative posts by the colonialists and this discrimination continued after independence. This imbalance formed the basis for the increasing division and tension between the groups.

In 1972, an attack by Hutu insurgents on Tutsi communities in the south caused the death of thousands of Tutsi and led to reprisals that caused the death of over 100,000 Hutu, with intellectuals being particularly targeted. Some 31,000 Hutu refugees fled to Zaire, 4,000 to Rwanda and 23,000 to Tanzania in fear of further retaliations.¹⁶ Many remain in Tanzania to this day. Rebel movements began to form amongst this exiled population. Over the next 20 years, attacks by both groups took place, followed by counter attacks and further reprisals. Hundreds of thousands of Burundians, mainly Hutu, were killed. Fear and distrust between the groups intensified.

In what was seen by some as a model transition to democracy, Burundi held its first democratic presidential and parliamentary elections in 1993. The presidency was won overwhelmingly by Melchior Ndadaye, a candidate of the mainly Hutu party Frodebu.¹⁷ He was assassinated later the same year by a small group of Tutsi soldiers, resulting in violent retaliation by the majority Hutu population targeted against the minority Tutsi population. Brutal Tutsi military repression of Hutu civilians followed. Approximately 30-50,000 people died from both ethnic groups and 700,000 Burundians, mostly Hutu, fled to neighboring countries, mainly Tanzania, as a result.¹⁸ Meanwhile, many Tutsi families fled or were driven out of their homes and sought protection in displaced persons' camps built around military posts, many of which also remain to this day.

The next president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, also a Frodebu member, was killed along with President Habyarimana of Rwanda when their plane was shot down in April 1994.

In July 1996, the current President, Major Pierre Buyoya, of the mainly Tutsi party Uprona, seized power in a military coup.¹⁹ Comprehensive economic sanctions were applied in response by neighboring countries that had a devastating effect on the economy. The sanctions were partially relaxed in 1997 to allow food and medicines to be delivered, and suspended in January 1999, in recognition of progress in the Arusha peace process and the government's engagement in negotiations with other parties to the conflict. Between 1993 and 1999, according to World Bank estimates, the country's mainly subsistence economy contracted by 25 percent. A 1999 report noted that: "Over the five years of conflict [since 1993] and economic sanctions [1996-9], headcount of the poor has increased by 80 percent in rural areas, and more than doubled in urban areas, child malnutrition is estimated to be 38 percent, and reported cases of endemic diseases have increased by over 200 percent since 1993. Access to basic social and health services has been severely diminished."²⁰

Attacks by Hutu rebels and counterinsurgency attacks by the Tutsi army and militia continued after the coup and led to yet more deaths, internal displacement and refugee outflows. Displaced people in camps for IDPs were regular targets.

During 1996-98, the predominantly Tutsi govern-

ment forced approximately 300,000 people, mainly Hutu, into "regroupment" camps, arguing that by doing so they were depriving rebel forces of support in rural areas. Most of these camps were closed following international pressure by the end of 1998.²¹ The policy of regroupment was again implemented in 1999-2000, primarily in the area around Bujumbura.

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burundi has written: "The destruction of the social fabric appears to be the most serious consequence of the crisis. For some, the situation has reached the point where the government has no other means of asserting itself than systematic open warfare. Traditional values are crumbling. The distrust which characterized relations between ethnic groups has in many cases turned to hatred. Each community fears exclusion if the other is in power."²²

PEACE PROCESS

Despite the rancor and violence, some of the parties to the conflict have tried to find peace. In June 1998, the Burundian government and the National Assembly signed an accord to promote internal dialogue mediated by the former Tanzanian president, Julius Nyerere, but they made little progress. After Nyerere's death in late 1999, former South African president, Nelson Mandela, was appointed as chief mediator to the talks and the process benefited from a renewed impetus.

The Arusha Peace Agreement was signed on August 28, 2000 by most parties to the Burundi conflict across the political spectrum, including most, but significantly not all, of the armed rebel movements.²³ They agreed on issues such as the nature of the conflict, reforms in the nation's governing institutions, security, and economic restructuring and development. Leaders of several African countries, as well as President Bill Clinton of the United States, attended the signing ceremony, trying to give the peace process a needed boost. Key issues, including the leadership of the transition period and agreement for a cease-fire, were, however, not agreed upon and questions remained about implementation of the Peace Agreement.

At the time of writing, some observers have expressed optimism that further progress towards

a cease-fire will be made, but many others are less optimistic.²⁴ Nelson Mandela inaugurated the Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) in terms of the Peace Agreement on November 27, 2000 under the chairmanship of Berhanu Dinka, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for the Great Lakes.²⁵ The IMC is to assist in establishing the interim government that will take over before democratic elections are held.

Since the signing of the Peace Agreement, violence has increased in the country.²⁶ There are rumors that the FDD (Forces pour la défense de la démocratie) and PALIPEHUTU-FNL (Forces nationales pour la libération) are receiving external support and may be forming a coalition that has been interpreted by some as a positive move and by others as a negative development for peace.²⁷ There are other signs that may be interpreted as indicating that parties which signed the Peace Agreement are beginning to split apart. As one international head of agency told the Women's Commission: "If you had come to meet me yesterday you would have found me quite optimistic. Today I am pessimistic. Next week could be different again."²⁸

Nelson Mandela has expressed the intention to move the office facilitating the peace negotiations from Arusha to Burundi now the Peace Agreement has been signed. "We will be discussing now amongst (the people of Burundi) and they will have access to us on a daily basis," he said. "That is how we are going to mobilize the country to support our decisions [regarding the peace process]."²⁹ The early establishment of this office would be a demonstration of the international

community's commitment to the peace process as well as maintaining the momentum that has gathered to date. In addition, it could contribute to increased access, as Mandela suggested, to the peace process for the Burundian population.

The insecurity within Burundi has an international as well as a national component and peace, both in the short and the long term, is dependent not only on national politics and events but also on regional politics and events.

While efforts to bring about peace in Burundi proceed, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues. Despite the signing of the Lusaka Peace Accords in June 1999 by all parties involved in the conflict in the DRC, a cease-fire there remains elusive. At the time of writing, fighting has again intensified. Both Burundian rebel groups and the Burundian army are involved in fighting on opposite sides on Congolese soil. Alliances between the government of DRC and Burundian rebel groups are becoming more apparent. The Burundian army has been involved in fighting along with Congolese rebels and other foreign intervenants against the government of DRC. As Burundian rebel forces and the Burundian army continue to be involved in fighting on opposite sides in DRC, the chances of them being able to overcome differences inside Burundi lessen and the fragile peace process within Burundi will be at risk. In addition to focusing efforts on the Burundian peace process, the international community should continue and increase its efforts to bring about peace in DRC and support initiatives to achieve that end.

IV. Women and the Peace Process

“All the population asks is peace,” one woman peace activist told the Women’s Commission.³⁰ Securing the peace was one of the paramount concerns expressed by Burundian women, rural and urban, settled and displaced. In many interviews, women told the Women’s Commission that they wished the fighting and the killing would stop.

In one area where fighting has decreased, the province of Bubanza, the Governor pointed out how people who had returned to what was left of their homes were gradually daring to invest in putting their lives back together and plant crops which took longer to grow than the fast growing ones they had been relying on previously. “It’s a good sign when people cultivate with a long-term view,” he said. “For instance they are now planting manioc which takes three to four months to grow rather than potatoes [which take less time]. They have confidence in their future. They themselves took the initiative. You can observe and see where there is peace.”³¹

It is essential that the international community fully support the peace process, recognizing its fragility and the potential that it may fall apart with disastrous results. There is no guarantee that peace will be established and will hold. Difficult as it is, plans should be made for a variety of possible scenarios, while remaining flexible and well informed as the situation develops. Effective coordination and cooperation among the UN, international and local NGOs and institutions is vital.

WOMEN’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE PEACE PROCESS

Nelson Mandela has been quoted as saying: “Women’s contributions to peace negotiations and rebuilding of Burundian society are essential to sustaining peace, economic and social growth and reconstruction.”³² Yet women’s contributions are often overlooked or dismissed in favor of “policy elites” and “high-policy” matters.³³

Burundian women told the Women’s Commission that they often felt that the negotiations were only being held at high level and involved only politicians, rather than ordinary people, people from civil society, over half of whom are women. They

felt they had a right to be represented and participate fully in the process and they had not had the place they merited.

Initially, no women were directly involved in the negotiations for peace in Arusha. Women have generally been marginalized in Burundian politics and society and lack power and status. Women have not traditionally played an equal role in government. At present the Minister of Social Action and the Advancement of Women, the General Secretary of the Government and 17 members of parliament are women compared with 21 male ministers, a male deputy General Secretary and 104 male members of parliament.³⁴



©Trish Hiddleston

Members of the women’s organization MUCO

Various Burundians told the Women’s Commission that they did not have confidence in the almost exclusively male politician negotiators—either in their role of negotiating for peace or in their role of representing them. There were accusations that they had been motivated by personal interest. “We are the little people here. We’re in peace. It’s the big politicians — they don’t want peace. We’re the victims. We the widows, the women, we suffer all the problems of the war,” one woman in a camp for displaced people told the Women’s Commission.³⁵ They reportedly expressed a similar disdain for politicians in a meeting with the President when they accused the political parties of prolonging the crisis.³⁶

Women’s groups such as CAFOB (a collective of 39 Burundian women’s organizations) and Dushirehamwe (an expanding network of women involved in community development and trained in conflict resolution operative in 10 provinces) lobbied for the participation of women in the

peace process. “If women are excluded from the peace process, women will not feel there is a full peace. Women want to be involved in the process,” Schola Harushiyakira of Dushirehamwe explained.³⁷ In response, some of the 19 political parties involved in the negotiations included three women politicians in their negotiating teams.

Let’s Reconcile!

Take 50 women from 10 provinces, bring them to Bujumbura and train them in conflict resolution techniques. Send them home to their communities to inform their female friends and neighbors about peace and reconciliation. Then ask those women in turn to spread the word to more distant communes. ...

In a country where accurate information may be hard to come by, networks like Dushirehamwe provide a simple formula for communication and hope. This home-grown support group, whose name means “Let’s Reconcile!”, reaches an estimated 7,500 women of all ethnicities across Burundi.

Dushirehamwe’s discussion groups debate women’s concerns such as family planning and health education, as well as confront difficult ethnic issues and the ongoing peace process.

But the network also encourages women to work together to overcome their differences. One group in Gatumba, to the west of Bujumbura, is made up of women who have all been displaced by the ongoing civil war — but for different reasons.

“The Tutsi didn’t want to understand the Hutu, the Hutu didn’t want to understand the Tutsi,” said Victoire Ciza, a Dushirehamwe member. “We decided to find some work together. We got some land and now we work in the field in our group, talking and discussing as we do so.”

Once a month Victoire travels to Bujumbura to gather the latest news on the Arusha peace process.

“To see if there is any message of peace,” she explained. “Then I bring what they say back. And if necessary I go back with what the women say.”

“But we wanted women [there] as *women* [not as politicians aligned to a particular party],” said Catherine Mabobori, one of the lobbyists. The groups continued to lobby until six women from civil society were admitted to the process with official observer status. “We only got observer status, but each time we went to Arusha we made a written statement. To what extent they [the negotiators] took it into account is a big question,” she said.³⁸ The women’s pressure over the two years of the process leading to the signing of the Peace Agreement and their presence as observers did raise awareness of gender issues. Accordingly, the final Peace Agreement is not entirely insensitive to gender issues. But women remain very conscious of the fact that they did not have the right to explain their viewpoints in the plenary sessions nor participate in the commissions.³⁹

THE ALL PARTY BURUNDI WOMEN’S PEACE CONFERENCE

The All Party Burundi Women’s Peace Conference, held in Arusha in July 2000, parallel to the official negotiations, was another initiative aimed at focusing the attention of the negotiators on gender-specific issues and incorporating gender issues into the Peace Agreement.⁴⁰ In total, around 50 representatives from each of the 19 political parties taking part in the peace process (some of whom had been hardly involved in the peace process to that point, however) attended. In addition, women representatives from the Burundian diaspora in Tanzanian refugee camps and elsewhere, and women representatives from civil society inside Burundi, including women IDPs, attended the conference.

A set of proposals was issued to the negotiators for inclusion in the final Arusha Agreement which was due to be signed just one month later, at the end of August 2000. It was recognized that this initiative was coming late in the negotiations.⁴¹ The delegates noted in their final declaration that they deplored the fact that women had been insufficiently involved in the peace negotiations.⁴²

Reiterating much of what the women lobbyists and observers had been pushing for in the previous year and a half, the delegates recommended, *inter alia*, that:

- a charter of women’s rights be included in the new constitution and that all discriminatory laws

be eliminated;

- women occupy a 30 percent quota in all organs and institutions arising out of the Peace Agreement;
- women's rights to land and to inherit land be explicitly included in the agreement;
- special measures be put in place to guarantee displaced and refugee Burundian women and children a safe return and reintegration into Burundian society;
- measures to punish and prevent war crimes and other gender-related crimes, such as rape, sexual violence, forced prostitution and domestic violence, be foreseen; and
- equal rights be granted for male and female children at all levels of education.⁴³

The last three recommendations were generally incorporated into the final agreement and women, as men, are guaranteed property rights, but no specific mention is made of their rights to succession. The charter and the quota recommendations were not adopted. Some of the recommendations for specific changes to the wording of the draft agreement were taken into account, although by no means all. To what extent the conference itself led to the changes is unclear, but it is generally agreed that much of the influence for change came from the constant pressure from women in the corridors in Arusha and in Burundi and from the observers over the two years of the whole process. When asked about the influence they had, many more women who had been involved at different times of the process in various roles, some of whom had attended the All Party conference, said it was the constant pressure that had the most impact. One said that “[t]he UN only became interested when we were already doing something.”⁴⁴ Nevertheless, they all supported the initiative and hoped there would be more such initiatives.

In follow-up meetings in Burundi to the All Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference, at which members of the diaspora could not be present, participants expressed the intention to make efforts to arrange further meetings and continue the dialogue with women from the diaspora. Such cross-community meetings were said to be hard, particularly in relation to discussions on political topics but “... when we are talking about women's

issues, we are talking about the same thing. ... With the peace process, it is inconceivable to talk of repatriation without bringing the women together,” said Catherine Mabobori.⁴⁵

The Association of Women for Peace, in which Catherine Mabobori is an active member, has been working to establish dialogue with women in the refugee camps and in the diaspora. The association has made contact and met with some women already and is planning more contact in the future. The meetings were not easy and the process cannot be rushed, but the association sees the need to try and dispel some of the misconceptions women in the camps may hold about the current situation in Burundi and the misconceptions women inside Burundi may have about the refugees.

Some of the refugees have not lived in Burundi for many years and most left in times of extreme violence and fear. Until they are better known and trust is established, the women's organizations that appear willing to assist when repatriation occurs are less likely to be accepted or trusted by returnees to help them. Asked how women from the camps were likely to view women's organizations willing to assist them on their return, one member of a Bujumbura-based women's organization said, “They see us all as darlings of the government.”⁴⁶ The current government is perceived by the predominantly Hutu refugees as being pro-Tutsi. If mutual trust is established, however, women's organizations could play a significant role in welcoming the returnees and assisting in their homecoming and reintegration generally. If it is not, there will always be the possibility of fear, suspicion and jealousy on the part of both communities.

In most interviews the Women's Commission had with women from Burundi who had met with women from the camps or the diaspora, the women said that it had not been easy. One Tutsi woman described to the Women's Commission how she had gone with some Hutu colleagues to a conflict resolution workshop in Uganda that included, among others from elsewhere in Africa, a few women from the refugee camps. She was genuinely astounded at their view of the situation in Burundi. She said she realized that when they had left the country the situation had been particularly bad. The refugee women asked how she and her Hutu colleagues could be talking together. “It was very interesting. I can say this because I was

there. The women in the camps didn't know how Hutu and Tutsi can talk together now. We explained we have evolved." With regard to the refugees, she said: "We need to try to understand each other. We need to understand that there is individual responsibility for crimes. If the army made mistakes, not all Tutsi are responsible."⁴⁷ Likewise, the whole Hutu population is not responsible for actions carried out by individual or groups of Hutu.

The fact that this woman referred to military excesses as mistakes may or may not be significant in this particular case, but it highlights the fact that some people do not, or dare not, fully or openly admit to atrocities committed by others of the same ethnicity as them. Another woman commented, "We have to recognize that in both groups we have good and bad [people]."⁴⁸ While recognizing how hard it is, these issues must be discussed more openly. The process cannot be forced, but greater contact, the best way to increase debate, can and should be facilitated and encouraged.

Catherine Mabobori, told the Women's Commission: "There is a big difference [between] 1993 and now on politics, ethnicity, etc. The fact that we can hold meetings, for example, with displaced women is because we are women together. We use any means to bring women together. We encourage them to think first about themselves as women, not in terms of their ethnicity. Prostitution is a women's issue. Education for children concerns all women from different political parties and ethnic groups."⁴⁹

In interviews with displaced women, Hutu and Tutsi, the Women's Commission was told: "Some people are more open now — it depends on their situation and their circumstances. Some find it hard and don't want to speak. People are tired. But generally they are more open now." Some displaced women said they felt it would be better if the displaced were repatriated first, and then they could welcome the refugees back "with open arms."⁵⁰

It remains to be seen to what extent women will be permitted to fully participate in the implementation of the Peace Agreement now it is signed, but judging by their increasing activism, it is sure they will press hard to do so. At the time of writing, just one woman has been nominated to the IMC as a party representative out of the 19 parties to the Peace

Agreement. The IMC will include representatives of the OAU, the regional Peace Initiative on Burundi, the donor community and six appointed members of Burundi civil society, designated for their "moral integrity" in addition to the 19 signatories of the Agreement.⁵¹ Women were working for inclusion in the IMC. In any case, once the IMC is in place, an Executive Council will be established in Bujumbura with oversight for day-to-day implementation activities and this will be another avenue for women's participation.⁵²

WOMEN'S INITIATIVES IN THE REGIONAL PEACE PROCESS

Recognizing that national peace may be contingent on regional peace, Burundian women have also been involved in regional peace negotiations. One example is the Consultative Group of Great Lakes Women's Group Collectives involving women's organizations in Burundi, Rwanda and DRC.⁵³

Representatives of the Great Lakes Consultative Group from Burundi, eastern DRC and Rwanda came to the United States in October 2000 to take part in the Women's March for Peace held on October 18, 2000 in New York.⁵⁴ The Women's Commission assisted them to attend, along with women from other countries, the Security Council Open Session on Women, Peace and Security in New York on October 23 and 24, 2000 and facilitated introductions to other relevant organizations and potential partners. As a result of the Open Session, the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling for all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective that includes the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, measures that support local women's peace initiatives for conflict resolution and measures that involve women in all the implementation mechanisms of peace agreements are to be included. The Council also urged member States to increase the participation of women at decision-making levels.⁵⁵

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN THE PEACE PROCESS

At this critical juncture in the peace process, international donors should provide political and material encouragement to the Burundians who are

working towards peace, a cease-fire and eventual repatriation. The international community should continue to provide financial and moral support for projects aimed at peace, national reconciliation and conflict resolution, with particular emphasis on the growing number of women's initiatives.

The Women's Commission found evidence of many small but effective programs aimed at peace, national reconciliation and conflict resolution. More are needed. Whilst it is recognized that it is the most localized, grass-roots initiatives that are often the most effective and appropriate in promoting peace in any given locality, too much fragmentation should be avoided. Projects should be encouraged to work together to the extent possible, or appropriate, to maximize their effect.

Examples of the type of projects promoting peace, national reconciliation and conflict resolution that should receive particular encouragement include:

- programs to increase the involvement and participation of women in the peace process, inside and outside Burundi, and not just in the capital city, such as the initiatives by Dushirehamwe, CAFOB and the Women's Center for Peace. More effort must also be made to include displaced and refugee women.
- programs aimed at women's groups, as well as individual women leaders, to strengthen their capacity to participate at all levels of decision making, including the peace process and future government of Burundi.
- programs that promote dialogue between ethnic and political adversaries at all levels of society, within and outside Burundi, such as the efforts by the Women's Association for Peace which has made contact with women in the diaspora and plans further discussions and efforts by groups such as Dushirehamwe which have taken displaced women back to their original homes to meet with former neighbors.
- conflict resolution training programs, including those targeting women, and especially those that extend their network of trainers and their target population outside the capital city, and which aim also to reach all groups of displaced people. One example is Dushirehamwe, described above.
- peace and reconciliation broadcasting programs, including ones that target women and children

and youth, such as those produced by Studio Ijambo and the Women's Center for Peace, both supported by Search for Common Ground.

Women, Be Brave!

"Women can help a lot with reconciliation. During the war women lost their children, they became widows. They are ready to go to others and start a dialogue with them," says Christine Ntahe, host of *Mukenyezi Nturambirwe* (*Women, Be Brave!*), a radio program supported by the Women's Center for Peace.

"Women express this in my program. We have a lot of testimonies from women explaining what they've done. That helps other women who may not be in favor of peace or who don't dare speak out for peace. When they listen to my program they say, 'Oh, women in that province have done that,' or 'Women in that commune have gone through the same as me.' And then the listener is ready to do the same."



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Recording "Mukenyezi Nturambirwe" (Women, Be Brave!), a show targeted at women's peace associations that encourages peace and reconciliation. The program is produced by the Women's Peace Center at Studio Ijambo, Bujumbura

- programs that raise awareness and focus political attention and policy-making on women's issues and women's rights, such as radio programs informing the population about women's rights, legislation affecting women, reproductive health issues, etc.

Uko Bukeye Uko Bwije (From Dawn to Dusk)

A program looking at family law as it affects women, Uko Bukeye Uko Bwije takes subjects like marriage, divorce and inheritance rights and offers professional interpretation and advice. The program forms part of a campaign by the Women's Center for Peace to educate Burundians about the family legal code. "Often women are not aware of their rights under the law," said Francine Nzibarega, the program presenter. "Many laws do not favor women."

In a recent program on divorce, Francine asked women magistrates to explain in lay terms the intricacies of the divorce courts. A human rights expert outlined areas where the law could be improved to support women, particularly in child custody cases. And Francine interviewed a woman whose husband started divorce proceedings claiming she was an unfit wife. The woman was not aware she had any rights in the court, even though her husband had beaten her so badly she had to go to hospital.

"Like many women, she did not know that the law is there to protect her, too," said Francine.

◦ programs that seek to transcend ethnic and other divisive differences by promoting discussion and dialogue. The Women's Center for Peace has organized workshops on ethnicity. "We started timidly," said their director, Spès Manirakiza. "Our aim was to reach more groups but we started small with mixed groups — rural and intellectual women — to get a good balance. ... Complex things are raised which we don't expect when we begin the workshop."⁵⁶

◦ programs to alleviate poverty-induced tensions, particularly those focused on rural and displaced women. Peace-building can be linked to poverty reduction and economic empowerment of women and the converse is also true. Examples include ethnically mixed women's cooperatives that help women heads of households to become economically self-supporting.

Doing it for the Kids: Goats, Crops and Inter-Ethnic Cooperation

Children never forget what their mothers teach them, believes Perpétue Kankindi. Her own mother, a prominent Hutu, intervened to save the lives of Tutsi women.

"I learnt from my mother that we are all the same," she says.

Now, amongst other activities, she coordinates an inter-ethnic cooperative promoting peace and understanding between women of different backgrounds through the National Council of Churches (CNEB). Hutu and Tutsi women share fields, seeds, harvests — and life experiences.

"The women had to share their seeds, say hello to each other, manage the project together," explains Perpétue, "The Hutu women who were doing the harvest came to visit the Tutsi women in the village. Little by little the fear began to diminish."

CNEB also distributes goats to vulnerable women, on condition that when the goat breeds, the "mother" must hand over the kid to another woman of a different ethnicity. CNEB organizes handover ceremonies where the original "mother" becomes a "godmother" to the young goat. She remains in contact with the new "mother," promoting closer relations between different ethnic groups.

The project brings together not just women but also their younger family members who may otherwise have found themselves on opposite sides of the conflict.

"Now their children can't destroy it because it is the work of their mothers," says Perpétue.

◦ programs to bring youth from different backgrounds, geographical areas and ethnicities together, such as the soccer program organized by Association JAMAA that targets adolescents who were involved in inter-ethnic violence and others with influence over youth who have been or could be attracted to take part in inter-ethnic violence.

JAMAA — Unity

Adrien Tuyaga calls himself a “mixed guy.” His father, a Hutu, was killed in the massacres of the early 70s; his mother is a Rwandan Tutsi. When civil war broke out in Burundi, Adrien found it difficult to take sides.

“Everyone had to choose a camp, but I couldn’t follow either movement,” he recalled. “I could revenge my father, but that would be like killing my Mum. If I joined Tutsi groups, that would be like killing my Dad. So I just stayed at home, did some weights and meditated.”

In a small country like Burundi news travels fast. Everyone knows who remained neutral, who went to war.

Adrien was known for his passion for fitness, and for his neutrality. So when he approached youth leaders on both sides of the ethnic divide to talk about peace, even the toughest street kids listened to him. And when talking was no longer enough, Adrien set up a soccer league. Each team was made up of youth leaders from the same geographical area, but from different ethnic groups. Half the players were Tutsi, half Hutu.

“We targeted the leaders, because they could start or stop the violence. It didn’t matter how well they could play soccer,” said Adrien.

One team took young men from a wealthy suburb of Bujumbura and paired them with team-mates from a poorer area in the hills above the city.

“The rich think the poor guys are all robbers, the poor guys think the rich make all the decisions to make them suffer. This is also about fear and social differences.”

The league is very popular among the locals, who turn out regularly to cheer for their home team at matches on village soccer pitches, even though the “home team” is made up of players from different ethnic groups.

“At first people were confused,” said Adrien. “But they soon got used to it and they liked it. A Hutu defends a Tutsi or a Hutu falls over and a Tutsi team-mate rushes to help. People came to support their area rather than support Tutsi or Hutu.”

Adrien’s organization, JAMAA, means “Unity” in Swahili. Alongside the soccer matches, JAMAA set up weekend retreats for youth leaders, where youngsters previously involved in ethnic clashes could talk, exchange views and get to know each other. JAMAA is also hoping to start vocational training to give these young soccer stars a real alternative to gang life, but Adrien is clear that all these efforts cannot ultimately succeed without real economic development in Burundi.

“There is no work here,” he said, “and if there is no employment for these young men, all this will fall apart.”

More programs are urgently required that will help adolescents all over the country gain access to education, build vocational skills and obtain employment, so reducing the likelihood that they will engage in violence generally, and, in the case of girls, bartering sex. JAMAA and CNEB are

examples. As youth who missed out on school owing to the conflict are now too old to re-enter the school system, consideration should be given to providing them with literacy skills and vocational training.

V. Internally Displaced Persons

“We just want to be able to go home, build a comfortable house, grow some food and dress our children in nice clothes,” one displaced woman told the Women’s Commission.⁵⁷

Protection and assistance to the various groups of internally displaced, including specifically women and children who form the majority of IDPs, are among the most urgent needs in Burundi. Protection requires access and security, as noted above, neither of which can be guaranteed everywhere or all of the time. It also requires basic knowledge about the IDP population and this is severely lacking in Burundi.



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IDP children at Nabubu 1 Displacement Site, Bubanza Province. Nearly 2,000 people live in this crowded camp. 70 percent are women and children.

There are approximately 500,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) living in camps or otherwise dispersed in the countryside or towns. Approximately 330,000 live in camps for internally displaced persons created as a result of the seven-year conflict in the country and approximately 170,000 are otherwise dispersed in Burundi.⁵⁸

In Burundi today, broadly three categories of IDPs, with some movement between the categories, are referred to: the *displaced* in IDP camps, the

regrouped in regroupment or former regroupment camps and the *dispersed* who do not live in camps, but rather live in the forests and marshes or have sought refuge with relatives or friends. The terminology employed can lead to confusion.

IDP CAMPS AND SITES

Referring to the displaced in Burundi generally implies IDPs living in displaced persons camps or sites. They are the most visibly displaced and often references to IDPs might refer only to this group of the displaced population.

IDP camps generally came into being in response to reprisals against Tutsi following the murder of President Ndadaye in 1993. Tutsi civilians assembled around military bases where they could be afforded greater protection. The homes of many were subsequently destroyed, so even if their security could be guaranteed, many have no house to return to. Some of the IDP camp inhabitants are now well established and might be unlikely to move to their place of origin, even if security could be guaranteed and their homes recovered or rebuilt. The majority are assumed to be keen to return home if they could be guaranteed protection, were able to reconstruct their homes and had access to land and a livelihood. “You can see it from the infrastructure [in the camps]. They use plastic sheeting and locally made roofing. There is less investment and involvement. They hope they can go home when conditions allow,” the UNDP Resident Representative told the Women’s Commission.⁵⁹ That assumption needs to be investigated further, however, to ascertain just what it would take for them to return home.

Figures for the number of men and number of women in the camps are currently not available, although the Women’s Commission was told that there are more women than men in the camps.⁶⁰ Forty percent of households in the camps are headed by women.⁶¹

IDP camps generally were established spontaneously. Inhabitants of IDP camps are free to come and go as they please. Regroupment camps, in

contrast, were established by force. Movement in and out of the regroupment camps may be controlled and/or restricted. There are also qualitative differences in the way the camp populations have been treated and in the conditions inside the camps. Treatment and conditions inside the IDP camps were generally better than the regroupment camps, although poor conditions and suffering have been features of both.

REGROUPMENT CAMPS

Regroupment has been a tool of the Burundian government since 1996 when about 300,000 persons, mainly Hutu, were forced into camps, ostensibly for their protection. Most of these camps closed in 1998, but the last quarter of 1999 saw the creation again of regroupment camps, officially termed "protection sites."⁶² Approximately 350,000 people, mostly rural Hutu, were forced into about 50 designated camps mostly in or near the capital on security grounds. Approximately three-quarters of all residents of Bujumbura Rural province were living in such camps at the end of 1999.⁶³ Conditions inside the camps were for the most part appalling and some of the camps were inaccessible to humanitarian agencies.⁶⁴ Women and children were especially vulnerable when food was short. At food distributions they were often sidelined, sometimes despite efforts of distribution agencies.⁶⁵ There were also reports of the rape and sexual abuse of women and young girls in the camps.⁶⁶

There was almost universal condemnation of the camps and extensive calls for their closure. Most were dismantled in the third quarter of 2000 following pressure from Nelson Mandela, the international community and local organizations. The final pressure came from the rebel groups, which made closure of the camps a precondition for joining the peace negotiations.⁶⁷

The camp closures occurred within a very short period and with no preparation for the safe return of the regrouped. Some camps were closed very quickly either because the authorities wanted them emptied as fast as possible, but more often because as soon as the camp population was allowed to leave they did, despite the risks and conditions they then faced.⁶⁸ Asked why people would return home despite known security risks and with no guarantee of protection, one young man simply

replied with a smile, "Home Sweet Home. ..."⁶⁹ Asked the same question, another woman replied, "Liberty has no price."⁷⁰

When the regrouped population left the camps, many faced serious risk without assistance or protection from either the government or the humanitarian and protection agencies. Fighting continued or even intensified in many areas to which the regrouped returned. While the international community rightly demanded the closure of the camps, neither they nor the government made adequate preparations for this contingency. Communication, coordination and cooperation among them were gravely lacking.

Where most of the formerly regrouped population is remains vague. Many appear to have gone home, but others are believed to still be living in or near regroupment camps. Still others are likely to have moved to Bujumbura or other parts of the country. No statistics are available on the relative size of each group.

The Women's Commission received credible reports that some regroupment camps remain either because some of the inhabitants (often women and children) were unwilling or unable to return home (for security reasons or because their homes had been destroyed) or because the authorities would not allow them to return.⁷¹ Most observers agree that most of the camps have now been closed, but the number of remaining camps and the number and condition of their populations are unknown. For the most part they are inaccessible to international agencies for security reasons.

For those who were able to return home, life has been far from secure. The homes and livestock of many have been looted or destroyed in whole or in part. Many fields were not cultivated during the period of regroupment, adding to current food shortages and exacerbated by recent droughts. In some areas the water system has been destroyed.⁷² Insecurity due to rebel and/or military activity remains a real threat both for those previously regrouped and those wishing to assist them. Reports are common of formerly regrouped who returned home only to be forced to flee from their homes to escape attacks from one or the other side of the conflict. But without a more accurate impression of the situation of these people, their needs cannot be assessed and met and they cannot be adequately protected.

DISPERSED PERSONS

The Women's Commission found that the least visibly displaced, and the group about which the least is known, are those persons who are dispersed in the countryside or urban areas with no permanent home. Some are former camp residents and remain in or near IDP or regroupment camps that have been dismantled, unable or unwilling to return home. Others have been forced out of their homes or repeatedly have to flee their homes owing to military and/or rebel threats. Some may be able to stay in their homes on and off and some are constantly on the move, finding shelter wherever they can for however long is necessary. Some may be sheltering with friends or family on a short- or long-term basis. Again, largely because of insecurity, the size, demographic breakdown, condition and particular needs of this group are unknown. This group is likely to be the most vulnerable group of displaced persons and is the least likely to receive assistance. While they are not living at home, they may have no access to their fields to cultivate and may not be registered to receive food assistance. The children of this group are clearly the least likely to go to school.

STREET CHILDREN AND UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Street children and unaccompanied minors could be considered a possible fourth category of IDPs. UNICEF estimates that there are 30,500 orphans as a result of the war, including 5,000 child-headed households, 7,000 separated children, 160,000 orphans as a result of HIV/AIDS, and 2,000 street children.⁷³ The numbers of street children and unaccompanied minors have increased since the crisis in Burundi began in 1993, but the numbers appeared to rise even more after regroupment began.⁷⁴ The Women's Commission had insufficient time to examine this category in detail, but it was clear that this is an area of concern.

Some agencies, local and international, are addressing the particular needs of these children. For children who have become separated from their families because of the war, there are various agencies involved in tracing efforts. If the child's direct family cannot be found, sometimes a member of their extended family will take them in. Children are also fostered informally, sometimes by people who knew the child before and some-

times by people who did not. Fostering is not without problems, as a member of an NGO who works with such children explained:

"Unfortunately orphans (placed in homes) are often exploited. We have follow-up visits after they are placed with relatives, foster parents, and if they are being exploited we tell the authorities and try to educate the family. There's not much more we can do."⁷⁵

Pascalie Sinzinkayo, a member of Bavyeyi Turerere Uburundi (Parents, Let's Educate for Burundi), an organization in Bubanza, a small town about 40 km from Bujumbura, which supports a center for street children, said: "We look after children who have been victims of war. Our aim is to educate them so they understand the value of human life, to tell them not to kill, not to behave like animals like these people with machetes. In our society women are the pillars of the family. We know the value of a child. If we see a child in the street we imagine our own children in that situation and we ask ourselves, what would I do. A child is always a child, a child has no color."⁷⁶

Child No. 10

Pascalie Sinzinkayo is a founding member of Bavyeyi Turerere Uburundi (Parents, Let's Educate for Burundi). The group is setting up a center for street children in Bubanza.

We found children on the street, children begging for a few francs. It's awful finding children like that, sleeping outside under the stars.

I found one child in Mpanda (a displacement site) who was seven years old but who looked younger. He had no brothers or sisters and yet he was called "Bucumi" which traditionally means "Child Number 10." It was so sad. We are trying to do some investigations to see if there are any surviving relatives who could take him in.

We have rented a house in Bubanza with three large rooms and also quarters for the children and the personnel who will work here. We still need money for equipment — beds, chairs, even food! We have 40 children who are currently living with host families, but when the center is ready they will come to live here. The children will receive an education at the local public school.

We just want to be an example to other women in the province, to show them that they could do something similar if they got together.

SECURITY CONSTRAINTS

As the peace process progresses, rather than decreasing, the fighting has increased and continues to this day. During the Women's Commission's visit, preplanned visits to project sites outside Bujumbura had to be delayed, some rescheduled and some cancelled, sometimes at very short notice, while security clearance was obtained or denied. It is virtually impossible for agencies operating out of Bujumbura to leave the city before 9.00 or 9.30 a.m., and most agencies require that their staff be back inside the town boundaries as early as 2:00 or 3:00 p.m.⁷⁷

During the delegation's visit, an Italian lay brother was killed by soldiers.⁷⁸ Shortly after, an Italian nun was killed by armed men. Some observers have suggested that these killings were intended to create panic and instability and others that international staff may be targeted.⁷⁹ International staff are also vulnerable to death threats which are taken very seriously. During the Women's Commission's visit, two international aid workers, one the country representative of an international aid agency, had to leave the country at very short notice as a result of a death threat.

During the delegation's visit, fighting broke out in Bujumbura's Kamenge zone, killing about 20 civilians and causing many others to flee. Fighting also intensified in the northern outskirts of Bujumbura at Tenga-Kivoga.⁸⁰ The sound of heavy artillery involved in that fighting could be heard from time to time in the city. The sound of gunfire is not unusual in Bujumbura, especially at night. Following the delegation's departure in mid-October, fighting between government troops and rebel forces intensified in the east of the country, leading to an increase in the numbers of refugees, both Hutu and Tutsi, fleeing to Tanzania and an increase in the numbers of displaced inside the country. Reports have attributed some of this displacement to attacks by armed groups from Tanzania.⁸¹

These are some of the daily realities for all agencies working in Burundi. The Women's Commission applauds the courage, dedication and commitment of staff in local, national and international organizations and individuals working under these conditions for peace and for the security and well-being of all individuals in Burundi. However, this situation inevitably impacts on the

quality and amount of humanitarian assistance that can be provided. Humanitarian workers can easily become demoralized in these circumstances. Many humanitarian organizations and agencies are stretched to, or beyond, their capacity. Many, like the UN, may have to employ inexperienced albeit well-meaning staff.

In addition, the inability to predict whether peace will be established in the short term, or when it will come about, and what will happen in the meantime, makes forward planning and programming extremely difficult. A number of different possible scenarios must be planned for. The result is that plans may not be taken very seriously, or may not be made at all.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND IDPS

A further impediment to effective humanitarian assistance to IDPs and other war-affected populations is the current weakness of the UN in Burundi. This is due to a number of factors, including the security problems described above, demoralization and staffing difficulties.

The UN significantly pulled back its presence, withdrawing all non-essential international staff following the murder of two UN officials and seven Burundians who were carrying out a humanitarian mission in the south-eastern province of Rutana in October 1999. The killings shocked the humanitarian community, especially the UN, and their impact can still be felt today. Following this attack, coordination among UN agencies and between the UN and national and international organizations deteriorated. The need to improve the situation and to restore stronger collaboration and coordination has been recognized and greater efforts should be made to put this into reality.⁸²

The UN in Burundi has experienced high turnover in key positions and it can be difficult for both the UN and international organizations to find staff, let alone experienced staff, willing to work in the country under the prevailing conditions. Burundi is one of the most difficult places in which to undertake humanitarian and protection work. While the unfulfilled needs are immense, the security limitations are enormously restrictive. The disparity between what can be done in safety and with security and what urgently needs to be done

is highly frustrating for all involved.⁸³

All these factors have contributed to the weakness of the UN in Burundi. However, in the light of current progress in the peace negotiations, the delicate ongoing situation and the urgent material needs of the Burundian population, especially IDPs, the Women's Commission urges the UN to strengthen its capacities in Burundi.

In particular, OCHA requires the early appointment of strong, competent leadership that has been lacking for many months now. There had been some suggestion that the appointment of a new head would be announced around the end of October 2000, but at the time of writing no such appointment has been confirmed, despite the recognition that this appointment is a priority issue.⁸⁴

The current weakness of the UN presence in Burundi is particularly pertinent in relation to IDPs.⁸⁵ As one international donor told the Women's Commission, "The UN is still floundering" in relation to IDPs. He said that he had money available for the reintegration of IDPs and refugees, but could not release it without concrete information. Speaking of refugees, although the same points apply to IDPs, he said: "A plan is okay but insufficient. We need more. We need to know where the people are going to go. We have asked for socio-economic details of these people. It is all very well picking someone up at the border and taking him home, but then what? He may be a farmer and need land. He may be a teacher and not want to be a farmer. And we have none of that information. They blithely say they can set up training centers; sure, they can, but they should be doing that now."⁸⁶ In relation to IDPs, this detailed information is lacking and no plan yet exists.

Theoretically, there should be a multi-sectoral, collaborative approach to IDP issues. What appears to be the case in Burundi is that most agencies recognize that insufficient assistance and protection is being provided to IDPs but that no agency is willing to step forward to insist that more be done. The collaborative approach can work, and has worked in the past in Burundi, when there is a strong, competent humanitarian coordinator and when there is a strong, competent leader in OCHA. But given the recent history of the UN presence (the killings of the UN personnel in Rutana, the staff demoralization and high staff

turnover, including that of the humanitarian coordinator) in Burundi and the lack of a strong leader in OCHA in the recent past and for the foreseeable future, another approach must be tried urgently.

To enhance protection and assistance of IDPs, particularly given the current fragility of the peace process, the UN should consider designating one UN agency as having primary responsibility for coordination of IDP assistance and protection. The lead agency should urgently address the need for improved access to and security of internally displaced persons, including through strong representations to the Burundian government and rebel forces to protect civilian populations, displaced and otherwise, affected by the conflict. It should encourage and facilitate better coordination and cooperation between UN agencies and local and international organizations with regard to IDPs.

While OCHA would be the obvious agency to fulfill such a role, their current weak capacity and absence of a leader makes this a less obvious choice. At present the most appropriate agency may be UNHCR.

The reintegration of refugees and IDPs is inextricably linked and both groups will face many of the same needs and risks. Differentiation between the two, as UNHCR has already recognized, could cause additional tensions. UNHCR has the institutional understanding and experience of such issues to competently fulfill this role.

UNHCR already appreciates that it will deal with IDP needs in the areas where it will be operational in the event of a repatriation. It also understands that it would make sense to implement some of its plans, such as peace-building and reconstruction of infrastructure, ahead of a return. UNHCR will not get involved with IDPs in areas where the agency will not be operational, namely those regions where there will be few returnees. IDPs in these areas may lack assistance and protection if the current state of the UN in Burundi does not improve. All IDPs and refugees should receive the same quality of assistance and protection. If UNHCR were responsible for all IDPs and refugees in all areas of the country, the agency could assure this equality of assistance and protection.

UNHCR has considered the issue and has stated that it will only become engaged with IDPs if cer-

tain conditions are met. These are that:

1. it receives a specific request or authorization from the UN Secretary-General or other competent principal organ of the UN;
2. it obtains the consent of the concerned state;
3. it has access to the affected population and adequate security for UNHCR and its partners;
4. it has clear lines of responsibility and accountability; and
5. most importantly, adequate resources and capacity to conduct the activities are made available.⁸⁷

Whatever approach is taken, it is important that steps are taken now and the necessary resources made available in order to better protect and assist IDPs urgently.

NEED FOR URGENT SURVEY OF IDPS

The Women's Commission applauds the decision of the UN to undertake a comprehensive, inter-agency survey of IDPs but is very concerned about the length of time it will take to complete the survey. Many agencies expressed concern about IDPs, but until comprehensive information is gathered on their situation, no concrete plans for assistance or protection can be drawn up or implemented.⁸⁸ Yet the importance of assessing the situation of IDPs has been recognized by a number of agencies and individuals the Women's Commission spoke with. The UNDP resident representative told the Women's Commission: "You are right in saying that the real challenge now is to analyze in more detail the situation of IDPs. ... It is being done now and it is very important that the IDP plan is ready quite soon."⁸⁹

The survey of IDPs should meet two principal aims:

- to identify the immediate situation and needs of the various categories of IDPs, in camps and otherwise dispersed, including specifically women and children, in order to develop and implement plans for improving their current protection and assistance. It should be comprehensive and the data be broken down by age and sex; and
- to help the UN and other agencies plan and provide for the return, integration in place or resettlement

of IDPs in the event of peace in advance of any significant movements of people, from inside or outside the country, and take the necessary preliminary steps towards that end. Information should be sought on their future intentions or wishes, and what IDPs say it would take for them to return home.

The Women's Commission was told that the survey is to be carried out all over the country beginning first with the camp populations and only then addressing the situation and needs of the dispersed population. Although the Women's Commission was told that the results of this survey would be available around the end of October, it is likely that the results of the first phase will not be available until the end of November, and more likely later, largely due to insufficient resources, primarily human resources.⁹⁰ It would appear unlikely, therefore, that the second phase focusing on the dispersed IDPs will be completed in 2000, and thus that any complete plan can be drawn up and implemented until some time in 2001 when the results of the third phase are available and all the data analyzed.

The target population of the second phase of the survey, the dispersed, is the group probably most at risk and the group about which the least is known. The survey of their situation should be made a priority and undertaken as soon as possible. If further resources, material or manpower are required in order to complete the survey sooner, these should be made available.

In order to achieve this, all agencies that initially supported the idea of such a survey should contribute the necessary staff and/or resources to support it. In addition, the appointment or dedication of a full-time staff member, probably most effectively within OCHA or UNHCR, to coordinate the survey and lead the analysis of the results should be made. This staff member should be fully supported with the necessary resources to complete the survey urgently.

To some extent a network of international NGOs, the RESO (Rassemblement, Echange, et Solution entre ONG), has been able to compile data gathered from its individual member NGOs' activities on the ground on the numbers and situations of displaced persons. The UN should make full use of such information and share information they gather from their own survey fully with the NGO com-

munity. The relevant government ministry, the Ministry of Reintegration and Resettlement of Displaced and Repatriated Persons, should also be involved and kept fully informed.

Where security restrictions prevent the gathering of first-hand data, efforts should be made to obtain best estimates from secondary sources, such as local and international NGOs, local authorities, church representatives, local health centers, schools, etc. Often, local authorities have very detailed and accurate data on their local population. Although it is recognized that there may be a tendency in some cases to deliberately distort the data, efforts should be made to access that information.

DISSEMINATION OF AND TRAINING ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (a copy of which is annexed) should be applied and in order to do so, individuals within agencies should have access to them and be aware of their content.⁹¹ The Women's Commission found that few staff of international NGOs and UN agencies knew about the Guiding Principles, and none had received specific training on them.

The UN should disseminate widely the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in both French and English and should translate them into Kirundi, the national language of Burundi. It should also disseminate the Brookings Institution/OCHA Handbook on Applying the Guiding Principles and the OCHA Field Practice Manual that describes specific projects that support protection, also in French and English. On an urgent basis, the UN should institute training programs on their application for UN agency staff, international NGOs, the national government, local NGOs and others. The dissemination of these documents and the training sessions should be repeated at

regular intervals to reach the maximum number of relevant staff and given staff turnover in relevant agencies. Follow-up training should also given regularly. The Guiding Principles should be used in advocating increased access and security for IDPs.

In anticipation of the return of refugees at some point, the UN should also disseminate widely the Guidelines on Protection of Refugee Women, Guidelines on Sexual Violence, and Guidelines on the Protection and Care of Refugee Children, and

Diary of the Displaced

Générose Manirakiza, 33, from Mutambu

When the fighting started, Générose's family home was destroyed and she and her family were forced to move to a regroupment camp.

"My husband died when I was four months pregnant with my baby daughter. We were both sick, but we had no medicine when we were living in the regroupment camp. I was so sick I didn't even realize my husband had died. When I recovered they told me he had died from typhus."

The aptly-named Générose has seven children of her own and also cares for Cesarie, a 13-year-old girl whose brothers and sisters all died from dysentery and malnutrition. Cesarie's mother is dead and her father has mental health problems. She wandered from place to place, begging for clothes and food until she met Générose in the regroupment camp.

"Cesarie had nowhere to go, so I offered to help her. If I can find food for my seven children, surely I can find food for eight. She helps me with the other children and sometimes gets work in the fields to earn some income for food."

Générose and her eight children are now living rent-free in a house in the commune.

"When the regroupment camp was dismantled, a man from the site said I could stay here for a while without paying rent. Without his kindness, I wouldn't have anywhere to live with all my children. My old home was destroyed in the conflict."

"My main problem is providing food for my family. My land is very far away. My old neighbors helped me to cultivate my last crop of cassava and I sold it at the market, but now I have nothing at all. My only relatives have been displaced, too, but they are in Mayuyi, which is too far for me to reach them."

A widow with many children, Générose is one of the more vulnerable women in the commune. She was given food, blankets and a kitchen set in a distribution by the World Food Program and the NGO Concern Worldwide.

provide training for staff in ways to adapt these guidelines to the situation of internally displaced women and children. These guidelines should be distributed in French and English and should be translated into Kirundi. The dissemination of the guidelines and training sessions should be offered at regular intervals due to staff turnover.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The UN, donors and NGOs, local and international, should take all initiatives necessary to reach the largest number of displaced persons with assistance programs. Protection concerns can often be addressed most effectively through assistance programs. The particular needs of displaced women should be taken into account in the planning and implementation of assistance programs and, in order to assess these effectively, women should be involved in the planning and delivery of assistance activities.⁹² The participation of women in itself is an important part of protection.

One example of the protection the participation of women can achieve is displayed in the method of distribution of food assistance. Vulnerable groups, *including women*, reported having been forced to make payments to camp administrators to be put onto food distribution lists.⁹³ Women in Karinzi in Mutambu commune (in Bujumbura Rural province) were consulted about food distributions and committees including women were chosen by the community to oversee food aid distribution to ensure its fairness. The committees were also asked by the World Food Program (WFP) to draw up a list of vulnerable families and individuals to receive food assistance as it was felt that the community knew best who the vulnerable were. In a meeting held with the newly appointed committee members, at which a Women's Commission delegate was present, representatives from WFP stressed that women should be targeted for the distribution of rations for vulnerable families as they were the most responsible for good management in a family. One woman expressed the worry that "Most of the time women suffer because they don't have the money to bribe someone to be put on the [distribution] list." That is why women must be members of the committee, a WFP representative replied. She said the committee members were to ensure the distribution actually reached the vulnerable families. If a vulnerable person did not pick up her distribution, the representative

urged the committee members to go and give it to her, which might also be a way of finding out if she is sick, for instance.⁹⁴

While insecurity is undeniably a major impediment to assistance and protection, and organizations will continue to be unable to reach everyone in need of aid all of the time, there are nevertheless secure pockets where aid can be provided. The UN and international NGOs must be more flexible in their assistance programs to adapt not only to increasing security threats but also to periods or areas where the threat is decreasing. International agencies and NGOs should be pressing the government to provide them with secure access and security to the IDP population.

One country representative of an international NGO said that because major needs in the country are insufficiently funded, less major needs get pushed back. They know they are there and are not ignoring the issue, but inevitably they cannot address all problems. In this specific case he was talking of the problem of street children.

On the other hand, the European Union (EU) delegate told the Women's Commission that the EU has 48 million Euros (almost US\$48 million) allocated for reconstruction projects for the interior of the country. Once infrastructure has been renovated the economy of the people living in the interior of the country can be addressed in preparation for the return of the refugees and internally displaced. "There is a lot of money available to Burundi," he said. "But it is hard to mobilize it. We need access, consistent access, to the countryside to do so. At the moment we are waiting for the next stage of the peace process to start. If the Implementation Monitoring Committee is successful, I imagine that things will stabilize and we will expand our activities."⁹⁵

While donors may be reluctant to support development projects until there is more convincing evidence of an end to the hostilities, there is still much more that can be done now in terms of humanitarian assistance and donors should define emergency aid in the widest possible sense. It is essential that programs in reproductive health and for victims of sexual violence be recognized as fully consistent with emergency standards, NGOs (local and international) implement more programs in those fields and donors support them as necessary.

Emergency humanitarian assistance should include, in addition to the programs now offered:

- Reproductive health services, urgently needed because of the very high urban and rural maternal mortality rate (1,300 per 100,000 live births) and infant mortality rate (116 per 1,000 live births) and prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS (around 20 percent of the population; see below).⁹⁶ Reproductive health services are now included in the Sphere minimal standards for disaster relief, adding to the justification that they should be intensified and multiplied at this stage.
- Increased and better coordinated education on the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS is required. Projects targeting youth, males and females, should be encouraged.
- Programs to help women victims of violence to address the traumas of rape and other violence against them and programs dealing with prevention of sexual violence.
- Psycho-social programs for children. The Women's Commission applauds the development of new programs in this area by some international NGOs.
- Education programs, particularly rehabilitating schools, supplying books, training teachers and, very important for IDPs, helping particularly vulnerable families pay school fees for their children or abolishing fees altogether at primary school level (as well as help to obtain uniforms and books). Such programs will help reduce poverty in the longer term and increase access to education for all children, the poor and girls in particular. It will also contribute to breaking the cycle of violence by providing pupils with realistic alternatives. Education is discussed in greater detail below.
- Micro-credit and other income generating programs to help women-headed households and others to be self-supporting through productive work. Normal requirements for loans may have to be waived or adapted to meet the particular circumstances of women heads of households and displaced women. As one displaced woman told the Women's Commission: "If you get aid it is just for a day. But if you get credit you can improve your situation. But with women [credit agencies] no guarantee, no property, can be given, so they get

no credit. They have no salary, no land they can give as a guarantee. The interest is also too high. Lots of women can't carry out their projects as a result." The women said they needed interest-free credit or low interest with generous repayment schedules.⁹⁷

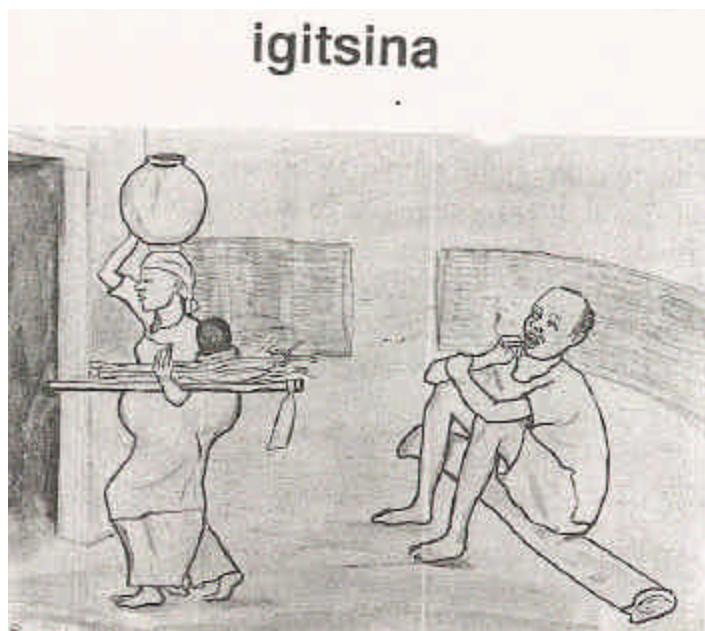
Existing programs dealing with the above issues should be expanded.

The displaced population — in camps or otherwise dispersed — are often forgotten when it comes to such programs. In 1999, the US Committee for Refugees asserts "International donors, dismayed by continued bloodshed in Burundi, provided virtually no new funding for 'children in distress' programs or for 'peace training' in displacement camps."⁹⁸ Given that these groups are the most vulnerable and some of the most in need, arguably, of reconciliation, steps must be taken to reverse this trend.

LOCAL PARTNERS

The UN and international NGOs should develop stronger working relationships, to the extent possible, with local NGOs, including women's and children's associations, and national institutions that may have a greater ability to reach internally displaced persons in secure and less secure areas, as well as better knowledge and understanding of their needs. Various actors involved in Burundi expressed their impression that the government's plan for IDPs is not yet sufficiently developed and needs to be considered in greater detail, recognizing the fact that this is a difficult moment for the government. The government is apparently working on a plan for IDPs, but greater collaboration between international and governmental actors will result in a better plan.⁹⁹ Greater contact with local authorities and local NGOs could lead to more accurate and faster information on IDP movements, their condition and general security. The more and earlier such contact is established, the earlier it can be established as reliable or not and further strengthened. Some such local organizations are well established and known, and some international NGOs and UN agencies have already established partnerships with some local NGOs. Examples are literacy programs, HIV/AIDS education, peace-building and conflict resolution programs, etc. Others are less well known and/or developed, and may lack experience, sophistica-

tion, strength and funding. It will require a conscious effort on the part of international partners to identify and reach these less formal groups.



“Equality”

The Burundian organization IGGA teaches illiterate women to read and write. This drawing is taken from a teaching booklet produced by IGGA in conjunction with UNESCO. The lessons deal with real issues and are an opportunity for women to discuss important topics.

© IGGA, UNESCO

The greater involvement of Burundian organizations and individuals may also contribute to reintegration and reconciliation as Burundians see fellow Burundians coming to their assistance. By working with local NGOs, international organizations can also encourage them to have a gender focus where they may not have otherwise considered gender issues. Identifying such organizations now and forging such alliances sooner rather than

later will also result in needed and beneficial capacity building for Burundian civil society institutions and individuals.

This will benefit not only the development of Burundi, but will also enable international NGOs to establish working relationships now which can be built on in the time of any greater need or crisis, such as repatriation. Such capacity will be particularly needed if peace comes, repatriation occurs and international humanitarian organizations reduce their programs. In due course, should peace be established and hold, international organizations will be able to withdraw earlier in the knowledge that local institutions have the capacity to continue their work as appropriate. The impact of closer collaboration may be difficult to monitor, but strengthening the capacity of civil society will provide a better basis for a more durable peace.

Support should be provided in whatever form is most appropriate. This may not always mean financial support and financial input could harm the original aims or effectiveness of the initiative. Any injection of financial support should be careful to avoid taking ownership of the program away from those who initiated it. Some local initiatives may not require any financial input, others may require substantial amounts. But all parties would most likely benefit from more and better partnerships, contact and collaboration. In any event, it may be that the international requirements for financial accountability might have to be flexible and be reassessed so international organizations can work with more and less formal groups. Support and collaboration should go beyond the well-known, well-established organizations. In some cases, requiring local NGOs to establish accounting mechanisms that meet international stereotypical expectations and/or requirements will so delay their ability to provide aid as to be counter-productive.

VI. Repatriation

At present there are approximately 340,000 Burundians in refugee camps in Tanzania.¹⁰⁰ An estimated 24 percent are women, and 54 percent are children.¹⁰¹ Most are Hutu who fled between 1993 and 1996 after violence eruption following the murder of President Ndadaye, although there has been a continuous, albeit less dramatic, flight in each of the intervening years, mainly to Tanzania. More than half of all Burundian refugees in recent years have originated from four provinces and by far the majority from provinces bordering Tanzania.¹⁰²

In addition to those refugees living in camps, there are an estimated 170,000-200,000 Burundians (mostly Hutu) living in Tanzanian settlements, some since 1972.¹⁰³ Some of these were born in Tanzania, have lived there all their lives and may speak little or no Kirundi. It is unlikely that substantial numbers of this group will return in the initial stages of repatriation.¹⁰⁴ A further 300,000 Burundians are estimated by the Tanzanian government to be spontaneously settled in Tanzanian villages along the border with Burundi. There is no available information on their exact location, nor on their profile.¹⁰⁵

More than 200,000 have returned since 1996, but many of those fled again when they found the situation in Burundi not conducive enough to retain them.¹⁰⁶ In 1999, there were 64,200 spontaneous new refugees from Burundi, mostly to Tanzania, and 12,200 repatriations.¹⁰⁷ Arrivals from Burundi had been steadily decreasing, UNHCR reported, since the beginning of 2000 until July 2000, when increased insecurity led to an influx of 7,800 arrivals in Tanzania in August alone.¹⁰⁸

The Women's Commission urges all actors involved in refugee repatriation to maintain their "go-slow" approach and encourages the Tanzanian government to keep its borders open. Representatives of UNHCR and the Tanzanian government each assured the Women's Commission that they are refraining from encouraging or assisting repatriation for the time being.¹⁰⁹ They should continue to refrain from doing so until there is a cease-fire in Burundi, a transitional government is in place in accordance with the Arusha Peace Agreement and there is clear evidence that the security of the returnees will be guaranteed. The security of returnees must be the

top priority of any repatriation program, and such security is not presently in place in Burundi.

FOOD RATION CUTS IN REFUGEE CAMPS

On July 19, 2000, WFP cut its bi-weekly food rations for refugees in the Tanzanian camps of Kigoma and Kagera by 40 percent due to a severe shortage following a pipeline supply problem. The reason appears to have been due to a dispute between the EU and WFP, but the exact reason remains unclear. WFP and the Tanzanian government made a plea for an immediate response from donors (the funding shortfall for Tanzania stands at US\$7.7 million for the rest of the year). UNHCR told the Women's Commission that it was likely that the shortfall would be reduced to 20 percent.¹¹⁰

The timing of the food ration cuts was damaging in humanitarian terms. Already the impact on the health of the refugees can be seen.¹¹¹ The timing was also unfortunate in light of the recent signing of the Peace Agreement. Some refugees gained the false impression that the cuts were related to an imminent forced or encouraged repatriation. Burundian refugees in Tanzania have apparently expressed fear of forced repatriation following the signing of the Peace Agreement. Many reportedly do not have faith in the agreement, claiming it is unrealistic and was signed in haste, at least in part because of external pressure.¹¹² The cut in food rations could easily be perceived as a first step in "encouraging" the refugees to return home.

Problems in the pipeline should be corrected as quickly as possible and full food rations restored.¹¹³ In the meantime, UNHCR and the Tanzanian government should continue to assure refugees that there is no expectation of, or pressure on their parts, for imminent repatriation.

PLANNING FOR REPATRIATION

In July 2000, UNHCR completed a comprehensive operations plan for the repatriation and reintegration of refugees, the Strategic Framework for the Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi, in response to the renewed impetus in the peace process.

Planning should continue for repatriation, although few anticipate repatriation taking place

soon. Such planning should, however, be done carefully to avoid any misimpression of a forced repatriation. It should also specifically involve consultations with refugee women and include them as decision-makers. Donors should support the planning process to ensure there are sufficient resources to carry out the necessary assessments and take the preliminary steps needed to prepare for an eventual return.

In Burundi, planning should include a more systematic in-depth assessment of the needs of locations to which returnees will go, as well as some preparatory rehabilitation of infrastructure. In Tanzania, UNHCR should obtain complete demographic, socio-economic and other information about the refugees in camps, as well as those in settlements in advance of any movements to help prepare for return. Until that information is available, as noted above, donors may be unwilling to support repatriation or reintegration programs and valuable time could be lost in the pre-repatriation phase. UNHCR is planning such a survey of the Tanzanian camp population. A survey of the 1972 caseload had been completed at the time of the site visits; although the full results were not yet available, it appeared that refugees would return home only if issues pertaining to land ownership were resolved (see below).¹¹⁴

In addition, UNHCR should identify capacities within the refugee population in Tanzania which are particularly needed in Burundi (e.g., reproductive health workers, teachers, etc.) and work towards ensuring that their credentials will be recognized on return.¹¹⁵ This will also go some way to providing work and an income for qualified returnees, as well as encourage them to feel an integral part of the Burundi they fled from. Reintegration and reconciliation in the longer, as well as the shorter term will be encouraged as a result. This will also ensure that these essential skills, which are in short supply in Burundi, are not lost or wasted.

DIFFERENCES IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS AND HOME AREAS IN BURUNDI

If conditions or resources are better in the camps than they are in Burundi, refugees may not choose to return home. Some areas where attention should be paid to improving the situation for the

whole population in Burundi to match provision in the camps are:

- Education. Ninety percent of school age children are reported to be in school in the Tanzanian camps — well above the numbers in Burundi — with, again, a lower proportion of girls. All follow the Burundi curriculum. To date, the Ministry of Education in Burundi has been uncooperative in integrating children from the camps into the Burundian system. Not only will this discourage refugees from returning, but it reinforces the divisions between those inside the country and in power, and those outside the country and not in power, thus endangering prospects for peace. Cooperation between the Education Ministry and refugee camp schools should begin at the earliest opportunity. In addition, education in the Tanzanian camps is free while payment of the required school fees in Burundi is beyond the capacity of many families.¹¹⁶ Education is discussed in greater detail below.

- Health care and reproductive health services are apparently better in the camps and are poor inside Burundi, where much of the infrastructure has been damaged and trained health workers are in short supply.¹¹⁷

CROSS-BORDER COMMUNICATION

On all levels, cross-border consultation, coordination and cooperation are essential and key to a smooth repatriation and a durable peace in Burundi in due course. The UN and international NGOs should encourage cross-border discussions and coordination among agencies providing humanitarian aid in Burundi and those providing assistance to refugees in Tanzania to help them plan for a smooth repatriation. Within some agencies and international NGOs, the Women's Commission found there is a need for greater communication, skill sharing and planning with their corresponding agency or program across the border. Lessons learned from previous repatriation experiences, such as in Thailand and Cambodia and the massive repatriation to Rwanda in 1996/7, should be considered and applied as appropriate.

CONSULTATIONS WITH WOMEN AND BETWEEN WOMEN

Any repatriation should be responsive to refugee concerns. And any repatriation should be respon-

sive to the concerns of women refugees. Both prior to and during repatriation, UNHCR and the Tanzanian and Burundian authorities must have open consultation with refugee women. It is imperative that UNHCR begin consultations with

Umubanyi Niwe Muryango, Our Neighbors, Ourselves

Edited excerpt from radio soap produced by Studio Ijambo, episode broadcast July 2000.

Cassilda is preparing a banana beer party for the neighbors who looked after her when she returned from the refugee camps. Bitwi had his own reasons for wishing Cassilda had not returned ...

CASSILDA: (to herself). I could never have come back without their encouragement — they told me to be brave, to come back to my old farm, and now today they are coming here for a party. ... Everything's ready, we're just waiting for the neighbors to arrive and start drinking!

BITWI: (to himself) Everyone is saying that Cassilda is handing out banana beer for free. If she hadn't come back, I would have harvested her bananas and sold them.

MUKAMUNWA: (on the way to the party): I must hurry up and get a glass of that banana beer! What a good idea of Cassilda's to thank the neighbors for the warm welcome they gave her. It'll help the next refugees who decide to come back home.

Mukamunwa meets Bitwi and they chat for a while. Bitwi has not been invited to the party and is peeved.

BITWI: It doesn't bother me.

MUK: I don't believe you! How can you not want to be invited to drink the best banana beer in town, when I know you enjoy a drop!

BITWI: I only drink what is drinkable. If it's made from the back of a crocodile, then I'm off!

MUK: (confused) What are you saying? What's a crocodile got to do with banana beer?

BITWI: I am telling you that you're going to drink poisoned beer.

MUK: Where?

BITWI: At Cassilda's house, that former refugee you welcomed and considered a friend.

MUK: We're going to be poisoned at Cassilda's house?

BITWI: Why not? These people never change!

MUK: Get out of here, and take your scandalous tales with you!

BITWI: Do you think she came back to live here peacefully with you? No way, she was sent to seek vengeance on you and your children.

MUK: Cassilda!

BITWI: I understand she bought a large quantity of acid.

MUK: (angry) Is Cassilda planning to kill us, after all that we did to welcome her?

BITWI: That kind of behavior never changes. Bye, I warned you — if you commit suicide, it won't be my fault.

MUK: Cassilda!

Mukamunwa runs off to warn two friends about the "poison." The three are running to the party to save their neighbors, when they meet Rugo who has just enjoyed a glass of beer with Cassilda.

RUGO: Where did she get this poison from?

BABFUBUSA: Other people gave her the poison!

RUGO: Who exactly?

BABFUGUSA: The people who asked her to come and kill us!

RUGO: Who do you mean? I think you're listening to rumors too much.

MUKAMUNWA: So it's not true? That silly Bitwi boy!

RUGO: Did all this come from Bitwi?

MUKAMUNWA: Actually, I wondered how he got the information because he never talks to Cassilda.

RUGO: You should have thought about all this before you started running off like that. What if you hadn't met me? Some schemer like Bitwi snaps his fingers and you jump!

refugee women at the earliest opportunity so their concerns are taken into account in planning for repatriation and reintegration. Women must have access to the information necessary to make an informed choice regarding voluntary repatriation and if UNHCR arranges for community leaders to visit Burundi to assess prospects for return, women must be included in these visits.

In preparation for a possible later return, the Committee of Women for Peace is, on a modest scale, facilitating visits of internally displaced women to their place of origin to meet up with former neighbors who are still there to dispel misimpressions and reduce fear.¹¹⁸ The benefits of bringing women together and dispelling misconceptions have been discussed above. In due course, it could be that women's organizations in Burundi facilitate these kinds of visits by women in the Tanzanian refugee camps in advance of a future return. Already there has been such contact, as discussed above. Some of these initiatives may be very low key and may not wish external recognition, but all such initiatives and programs that promote cross-border dialogue between ethnic and political adversaries should be supported and encouraged. The Tanzanian and other governments should help make available a neutral site in which to bring together Burundian women from inside Burundi and the refugee camps,.

The Women's Center for Peace has already begun working on a contingency plan to bring together its network of women and women's associations in the northern provinces to help them prepare to receive former neighbors who have been exiled in Tanzania. It is hoped that the network can assist in the distribution of aid and to balance assistance to local and returning groups.

It is essential that Burundian refugees have access to as much accurate, unbiased news and information from Burundi as possible. Likewise they should be fully informed about the peace process,

as should Burundians inside the country. Their reported distrust of the process mentioned earlier is evidence of why this is necessary. The peace and reconciliation broadcasting that Studio Ijambo is doing in Burundi should be available to Burundians in the Tanzanian camps as well. Jesuit Refugee Service's Radio Kwizera, based in Tanzania, broadcasts to all the refugee camps along the entire Burundi-Tanzania border. Because of political sensitivities, there have been concerns on the part of Tanzanian officials about Tanzanian stations collaborating with Bujumbura-based media. Efforts to resolve this issue should be supported.

REPATRIATION AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

UNHCR, donors and NGOs should support the type of peace and reconciliation projects discussed above that will help refugees reintegrate with populations who stayed within Burundi. The various efforts to involve women in the peace process in Burundi and in Arusha and the training programs in conflict resolution skills, which involve women from all ethnic groups, backgrounds and regions are potential models. This must be done in advance of possible repatriation and funding must be made available now, rather than waiting for movements to begin.

While it may be premature for donors to pledge specific funds for repatriation and rehabilitation, they should be prepared to make funds available in advance of population movements if these become more likely. In any event, they should provide political and material encouragement to the Burundians who are working towards peace, a cease-fire and eventual repatriation. If peace is not secured in the near or foreseeable future, Burundi will still need the same, if not more, funding for emergency responses. In either scenario, refugee assistance should be maintained at least at current levels.

VII. Reintegration and Securing the Peace

When peace is established in Burundi, which may or may not be in the near future, it will likely remain fragile for some time to come, particularly while regional conflict continues. It can be expected that most of the refugees and displaced persons will return home, with the exception possibly of those who were especially damaged during the crisis and those who have been displaced or exiled for very many years. Burundi will require ongoing political and material help from the international community to reintegrate refugees and displaced persons and to build a durable peace. The damage to the social fabric and infrastructure of the country cannot be underestimated.

Refugees International argues that “The relationship between peace and reconstruction is such that the two processes must occur simultaneously so that neither process is unraveled by the lack of the other. ... A meaningful investment in public works programs will not only contribute to the necessary reconstruction of infrastructure, but will also reduce violence by promoting reconciliation, boosting morale and stimulating economic activity.”¹¹⁹ Rehabilitation of infrastructure, shelter, health clinics and hospitals, schools, etc., is an imperative. Much of the country has been destroyed and massive rehabilitation and reconstruction will be needed. The international community must stand ready to provide this essential support without lengthy delays.

Even with considerable support it will take many years to reconstruct the infrastructure and social fabric necessary for a durable peace. The international community must be prepared to commit the necessary, significant resources to do so over an extended period of time.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The international community should assist the government of Burundi and local organizations in:

- Protection and security. If peace is to be durable, the Burundi people must feel secure from both rebel and governmental abuses. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights-Burundi should be strengthened, with support from the international community, and a staff member des-

ignated to monitor and promote women’s rights.

- Peacekeeping. Once a cease-fire is agreed, an international peacekeeping force should be mobilized to monitor the cease-fire. This will provide evidence of the international community’s support and commitment to the cease-fire and complement the momentum towards a lasting peace. The peace-keeping force may also have a role to play in disarmament and military training.

- Demobilization of soldiers, with particular attention to child soldiers and youth. The Women’s Commission had insufficient time to study the question of child soldiers in depth, but it is an issue to be taken seriously. Accordingly, no conclusions are drawn on the extent of or the reason for the problem, but it is not unrelated to poverty and the lack of alternatives for earning a living. “Children follow the soldiers because they want to get something to eat,” one international worker commented.¹²⁰ While the political process determines the nature of the demobilization, the government of Burundi and the international community should begin planning for reintegration of demobilized soldiers and combatants. In particular, soldiers will need skills training and access to legitimate income generation activities to avoid a return to violence, as will youth if they are to avoid entering a life of violence. Attention should also be given to the families of former combatants.

- Addressing poverty. Underlying much of the conflict is income disparity and extreme poverty. As the UNHCR representative explained to the Women’s Commission: “All of our focus is on ethnic issues. There comes a time when the economic situation affects reintegration. It is the whole point of a durable solution.”¹²¹ If Burundi is to achieve peace and stability, attention must be given to building up its economy and providing equal economic opportunities for all Burundians. Micro-credit and other income-generating programs to enable women to be self-sufficient should be supported, recognizing that women may find it impossible to put up commercially required guarantees or meet standard repayment terms.

- Justice. The justice system must continue to be strengthened to provide equal access for and protection of Burundian men and women from all ethnic groups, regions and backgrounds. Issues of justice and impunity must be discussed more and debated more openly if the final proposals are to

reflect what Burundian men and women want and if they are to be accepted not only by political leaders and politicians, but also by the mass of the population. The various alternatives are complicated and some highly politicized. Most Burundians have suffered in one way or another as a result of the violence. There is no easy solution to the issue, but shying away from discussing the problems will not contribute to the best solution nor enable the population to come to terms with the outcome. It is inevitable at this stage, especially without more open discussion and debate at all levels of society, that whatever solution or solutions are opted for, they will be seen by one group or another as an unacceptable compromise. The Burundian government should encourage debate on these issues and the international community support initiatives to do so in whatever form — radio, small group meetings, during rest breaks while women are working in the fields, in schools, in other fora.

Finally, the international community should support the government of Burundi and Burundian NGOs and individuals in all reconciliation efforts. Even after a cease-fire is signed, projects to promote peace and reconciliation will continue to be needed. There is no instant, easy solution to the various, complex problems Burundi faces and all those involved must appreciate that sustained, ongoing intervention and support will be necessary. The international community must be prepared to invest in long-term support to Burundians in their quest for peace.

Three areas that particularly affect women and merit specific attention are land, HIV/AIDS and prostitution, and education.

LAND ISSUES

Two inter-linked problems are at issue in relation to land — the need to provide land to returnees and women's rights to land.

Many displaced persons, inside Burundi or as refugees in exile, have lost land and homes. These will need to be restored to them and their homes reconstructed if they are to be able to return. In some cases, the availability of land will be a precondition for return. Many of those who left in 1972, sometimes referred to as the “*sans addresses*” or “*sans terre*” — those without addresses or

without land — and those who have been internally displaced for a lengthy period may genuinely have nowhere to return to because their land has been taken over or their property destroyed. Specific attention should be given to addressing their needs for land. Access to land has been identified as possibly the main factor in the decision of the 1972 refugees to return or not.¹²²

As UNHCR noted, “[i]f the availability and distribution of land is not resolved satisfactorily it could very easily become a source of renewed conflict.” UNHCR has expressed the intention of conducting a study together with the government, Committee IV of the Arusha Peace Agreement on Reconstruction and Development and development partners in Burundi on land availability and usage, including legal and environmental aspects. Land that has been occupied by others since being left by refugees also needs to be identified. The Women's Commission stresses the importance of such a survey and encourages its completion at the earliest opportunity.¹²³

The Arusha Peace Agreement provides for “fair compensation and/or indemnification” if land cannot be recovered, but as one government official, talking of the political versus the practical aspects of the Peace Agreement, told the Women's Commission: “A just compensation — what's that?”¹²⁴

Women, especially women heads of households, are particularly vulnerable if they do not have access to land, as is the case with many IDPs now and will be the case with returnees if this issue is not addressed beforehand. At present, women have no right in law to own or inherit land. In practice there are complicated circumstances when women may be allowed to occupy and work land after the death of a husband or father, but they have no right to do so in law.

The Association of Women Lawyers has been examining the current laws relating to land and the right of succession and a group network of local and international NGOs, spearheaded by OCHA, is just beginning to study the area together.¹²⁵ Initiatives to inform women of their rights and raise awareness of the issues has already been carried out by, among others, the Women's Center for Peace, Studio Ijambo and UNIFEM.¹²⁶

Access to land, including reclamation of lost land

or compensation, will be a major issue on the road to peace. The international community should encourage initiatives to ensure equal access to land ownership and inheritance for men and women both at the legal and at the practical level. Even if there is a change in law, there will be a great need for awareness raising to ensure its application. The specific needs of women-headed households in relation to access to land and shelter will need to be addressed.

BARTERING SEX FOR SURVIVAL AND HIV/AIDS

Without any form of income and occupation, the Women's Commission was told that women and young girls were increasingly turning to prostitution as a result of the ongoing conflict. Those in IDP camps, or otherwise displaced in urban or rural areas, are especially vulnerable. One organization explained: "When people were living in the [IDP and regroupment] sites we saw many problems, promiscuity, prostitution, AIDS. But now these are lower when people return to the *collines* [hills]. Any family situation, stability, helps."¹²⁷ Nevertheless, even once the conflict is over, HIV/AIDS spikes during the conflict mean heightened post-conflict risk.



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A reproductive health clinic in Buyenzi-Ruvumera, Bujumbura, run by the women's organization ABUBEF. This NGO also runs a barber's shop that gives away free condoms and a restaurant that screens health education videos.

The Women's Commission was repeatedly told that "prostitution" had increased in recent years along with poverty, although this is obviously hard to measure. "In the crisis we lost many good values," Spès Manirakiza, director of the Women's Center for Peace, told the Women's Commission.¹²⁸ "Women's problems came to the surface. Women

tell me, 'We live here without anything. We need salt, vegetables, *lenga lenga*,¹²⁹ aubergines (egg-plant). We are obliged to sell ourselves because we know we would die tomorrow because of hunger otherwise.' " About one woman, Ms. Manirakiza said: "She would prefer to feed her baby and die herself of AIDS. She earned 100 francs [about 10 cents]." The immediate need to feed starving children overrides the humiliation and known risks involved.¹³⁰ "Women say they can't abstain when their children are dying of hunger. They see it as inescapable," said the president of an organization working with orphans whose parents died from AIDS, La Famille pour Vaincre le SIDA (FVS — A Family for Defeating AIDS). "It's not really prostitution. It might just be occasional. If a man gives her 20 francs (about 2 cents) for salt she accepts. It's not as though she is doing it as a job."¹³¹ The reasons for "prostitution" are complex, but the decision to enter into barter sex is most frequently the absence of adequate income. Until alternative income-generating possibilities are available to women, bartering sex for survival will likely remain.

Inevitably the risk and prevalence of HIV/AIDS has increased as a result. Generally, it is said that 20 percent of the urban population is HIV-positive. The percentage in rural areas is said to be 6-8 percent, although some think that the figure in rural areas is closer to 20 percent also.¹³² In 1998, 20 percent of women tested in the provincial town of Gitega were found to be HIV-positive and among them 24 percent of the women under 20 were HIV-positive. Forty-two percent of sex workers tested in the capital city, Bujumbura, in 1993 were found to be HIV-positive.¹³³

Condom use is disliked by men and is thus rare (1.5 percent now and 4 percent before the crisis).¹³⁴ ABUBEF, a women's organization that works in reproductive health in Bujumbura and outside the capital city, told the Women's Commission that a survey had been carried out showing that women did not use contraception because men would not agree to it. They therefore made a point of targeting men, including youth, in their AIDS prevention and family planning education and in supplying free condoms.¹³⁵ The Women's Commission was told on more than one occasion that a belief existed that sexual intercourse with very young girls does not carry the risk of HIV/AIDS.¹³⁶ Another reason given for

knowingly risking unprotected sexual intercourse was summed up for the Women's Commission: "If you can die tomorrow by a bullet, why worry about AIDS?"¹³⁷

Both international and local organizations, as well as the government, have, albeit only relatively recently, begun awareness raising and education campaigns in different parts of the country and in schools, but programs are fragmented and too few in number. "Their impact has been marginal. The crisis gives the justification to politicians, local authorities, even us to an extent, to say 'Let's think about AIDS another time, we have a war'. More needs to be done," the resident representative of UNDP told the Women's Commission. Better coordination of the various programs is required. And yet, he said, AIDS is the main cause of death in Burundi after malaria. Although there is a national plan, there has been little action in the field and that is where more concrete action is required, he noted.¹³⁸

The level of HIV/AIDS awareness is difficult to assess. Other individuals and organizations told the Women's Commission that awareness and prevention campaigns were slow to get off the ground, sometimes for political or religious reasons, although that is now changing. The subject needs to be opened up for discussion. The Women's Commission heard of some initiatives to do so, including raising the issue in youth meetings, literacy classes for youth and for adults, and in peace and reconciliation initiatives.

EDUCATION

There are an estimated 1.1 million children of primary school age (7-12) in Burundi and only 37 percent of these children were in school in 1999; approximately two-thirds of Burundi's primary aged children (about 600,000) did *not* attend school in 1999.¹³⁹ Less than 9 percent of the 13-19 age group attend school.¹⁴⁰ At university level, differential access is even more pronounced. There are very few Hutu students and only one Twa, and regional imbalances are particularly marked. Burundi has fewer university students than any other African country.¹⁴¹ Although the government allocates a high percentage of its budget to education, the amount spent on each primary school child is significantly less than on each secondary child and again significantly less

than on each university student.¹⁴²

The literacy rate for men in Burundi is 49 percent and a mere 22 percent for women (compared with 66 percent and 46 percent, respectively, in Africa generally).¹⁴³ School attendance rates for girls are well below those for boys (44 percent in primary school, 30 percent in secondary school and 25 percent at university level).¹⁴⁴ There has been an increase in non-formal education by untrained teachers, and girls have especially benefited from this. However, the quality of teaching is markedly lower than that given in schools and this cannot be a substitute for formal primary education for either boys or girls.¹⁴⁵

Female literacy has a bearing on the provision of health and nutrition to their children, as well as psycho-social development. The mothers' educational level has been significantly linked with decreasing infant and maternal mortality, falling fertility rates, improved levels of infant and child development and enhanced social outcomes for children.

"In our culture, many families prefer to send their boys to school, while the girls remain at home. We need to make women aware of the importance of sending girls to school," one mother told the Women's Commission.¹⁴⁶ Another reason for non-attendance at school is simple poverty.

Primary school fees are 1,000 Burundi francs (\$1) a year; in addition, school uniform and basic materials must be purchased. This is simply too much for most families. Although there is apparently a government scheme to pay fees for children who cannot otherwise afford to go to school, none of the women the Women's Commission spoke with had benefited from such a scheme.¹⁴⁷ Some displaced women told the Women's Commission they had not even applied as they did not believe there was any chance of succeeding.¹⁴⁸ On the contrary, some women told the delegation that they had asked and had been refused assistance, and others said they had not even asked for assistance as they knew it would be hopeless.¹⁴⁹ A UN official told the Women's Commission that in one IDP camp, a child had been expelled for not paying the fees.¹⁵⁰ If there is insufficient money in a family to send all children to school, boys tend to be favored over girls.¹⁵¹

As mentioned above, Tutsi have predominated in

the civil service, judiciary and army and there has been differential access to education for decades. Tutsi children have been favored over Hutu children and Tutsi children from certain regions favored more than others. If a more even ethnic balance is to be achieved in the civil service, judiciary and army, as is required in the Arusha Peace Agreement, those who have been excluded to date must be educated sufficiently to carry out their responsibilities.¹⁵² The same applies to girls. Unless access to education becomes equal for all, the exclusion or favoritism that is at the heart of Burundi's violence will remain and the Peace Agreement will be unsustainable. All groups from all regions, girls and boys, must benefit from equal access to education at all levels.

At this fragile stage of the peace process, improvements in equal access for all children from whatever region and of whatever ethnicity must be visible and implemented soon. Rather than redistribute current resources to achieve a better balance, which could be perceived as threatening by the more favored group, more investment needs to be made to provide the less favored with the same opportunities. This is money that can only come from international donors. The government allocates a very high percentage of its budget, approximately 21 percent, to education, and there would appear to be no room for expansion.¹⁵³ International donors cut aid to education by over 70 percent after the 1996 coup, having a disastrous impact on the education budget.¹⁵⁴ Education should now be a priority for donor funding. Some donors, such as the European Union, are now

planning to reinvest in education, and some international NGOs are already involved, but a significant injection of funding and support will be needed if it is to have the necessary and quick impact at this stage of the peace process.

It is not only a question of improved access to schools. Displacement has impaired effective study. Many children's attendance at school has been interrupted. In addition, the psychological effect of the conflict on their ability to learn also has to be taken into consideration. Many schools have been destroyed in the course of the conflict and need to be restored. Likewise there is a chronic shortage of qualified teachers, heightened by the violence and population movements. Teachers have fled, been killed or have chosen not to work in rural areas. Significant support must be given to teacher training, and emphasis should be both on quality and quantity.¹⁵⁵

Today the government aims to achieve universal primary education and to get more children into secondary school.¹⁵⁶ The international community should support universal free primary education for all ethnic groups and in all geographic areas. If fees continue to be charged, the poor and girls will continue to be adversely affected. The level of support required to cover fees for all primary school aged children is minimal although other support will also be required. Rebuilding schools, teacher training and access to educational materials are also education priorities. Action now on this issue will result in fewer problems following repatriation and during the reintegration phase, so contributing to a greater likelihood of securing peace.

VIII. Recommendations

To the government of Burundi

- Respect international humanitarian law and human rights law, with particular reference to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- Provide protection to the civilian population
- Provide protection to humanitarian aid agencies so they can carry out humanitarian assistance programs wherever they are required, in particular to the displaced population
- Continue to negotiate for a cease-fire
- Involve women more fully in the peace process
- Implement conditions of the Peace Agreement in a timely manner and in good faith
- Allow inhabitants of any remaining regroupment camps to leave if they so wish and provide protection for them if they do; allow any to stay who may not wish to return home
- Promote gender equality, including at governmental level
- Focus more on the issue of prevention of HIV/AIDS
- Improve communication and coordination with the UN
- Make efforts to ensure free education and access to all primary school aged children
- Intensify efforts to address land issues
- Encourage more debate on the issue of justice

To the rebel forces continuing to fight in Burundi

- Respect international humanitarian law and human rights law, with particular reference to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- Refrain from targeting and attacking civilians
- Allow humanitarian aid agencies to carry out humanitarian assistance programs in security wherever they are required, in particular to the displaced population
- Continue to negotiate for a cease-fire

To the United Nations

- Strengthen the UN presence in Burundi
- Provide strong, competent leadership for OCHA as a matter of the utmost priority
- Consider the appointment of a focal point for IDPs
- Disseminate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement widely and provide regular and repeated training sessions to UN, national and international workers

- Complete the inter-agency IDP survey currently underway as a matter of urgency; designate full-time staff to speed up its completion, coordinate its execution and the analysis of the data; seek greater coordination and involvement of international NGOs and governmental players
- Demand that IDPs receive protection from the government
- Continue to work with NGOs and the government to enhance security for aid workers
- Maintain a “go-slow” approach to repatriation of refugees from Tanzania
- Ensure inclusion of women in the repatriation plans and begin discussions with them at the earliest opportunity
- Develop more and stronger links and partnerships with local NGOs and national institutions
- Interpret humanitarian assistance in the broadest sense and put in place plans for the resumption of development aid, particularly in areas where fighting has ceased
- Provide more resources and pay greater attention to prevent and limit the spread of HIV/AIDS

To international donors

- Continue to provide support to the peace process, in particular supporting women-led initiatives that promote peace and reconciliation
- Continue to provide support for humanitarian assistance, permitting flexibility in its management to enable aid agencies to reach now inaccessible populations
- Interpret humanitarian assistance in the widest sense
- Put in place plans for the resumption of development aid
- Encourage the Burundi government and the rebels to provide greater protection to the civilian population and to those providing humanitarian assistance
- Encourage respect for international human rights and humanitarian law, with particular reference to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- Encourage the UN to assert greater leadership regarding IDPs, particularly in naming a strong director of the OCHA office and/or designating another lead agency for IDPs
- Reinforce that a “go-slow” approach to repatriation is in the interest of Burundi, host countries such as Tanzania and UNHCR

- Support free universal primary education now, with additional assistance for repair to damaged infrastructure, teacher training and educational materials

To international NGOs

- Interpret humanitarian assistance in the widest sense
- Continue to work with the UN and others to enhance security for civilians and aid workers
- Develop more and stronger links with local NGOs and national institutions
- Improve cross-border contact and collaboration with appropriate programs elsewhere

To the government of Tanzania

- Maintain open borders for Burundian refugees
- Continue to refrain from the forced return of refugees

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome
CAFOB	Collective of Burundian Women's Associations and NGOs (Collectif des Associations et ONGs Feminines du Burundi)
CNEB	Conseil National des Eglises du Burundi (Burundi National Council of Churches)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
FDD	Forces for the Defense of Democracy (Forces pour la défense de la démocratie)
FNL	PALIPEHUTU-FNL — National Force for Liberation (Forces nationales pour la liberation)
FRODEBU	Front of Burundi Democrats (Front des Démocrates du Burundi)
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV	Human immuno-deficiency virus
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IMC	Implementing Monitoring Committee
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UPRONA	National Unity and Progress Party (Parti de l'Union et du Progrès National)
WFP	World Food Program

Organizations and Individuals Met During Mission (Burundi, unless otherwise specified)

Administrator of Gatumba zone
 ADRA / Adventist Development and Relief Agency
 ABUBEF / Association Burundaise pour le Bien-être Familial (Burundian Association for the Family Well-being)
 American Embassy, the Ambassador and the Second Secretary
 AOVG / Assistance aux Orphelins et Veuves Victimes du Génocide (Assistance to Orphan and Widow Victims of Genocide)
 Association des Femmes Juristes (Association of Women Lawyers)
 Association des Veuves Pour Secourir les Orphelins (Association of Widows to Save Orphans)
 Association JAMAA
 Association Ronderamahoro
 Bavyeyi Turerere Uburundi (Parents, let's educate for Burundi)
 Governor of Bubanza province
 Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration, US Department of State, Washington
 CAFOB / Conseil des Associations et ONG Féminin du Burundi (The Collective of Burundian Women's Associations and Groups)
 Catholic Relief Services
 Center for the Study of Forced Migration, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
 Children's Aid Direct
 Comité Provincial Chargé de la Protection des Droits de l'Enfant à Bubanza (Provincial Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights in Bubanza)
 Concern Worldwide
 Concertation des Collectifs d'Associations Féminines de la Région des Grands-Lacs (Consultative Group of Great Lakes Women's Group Collectives)
 Conseil National des Eglises du Burundi (National Council of Churches of Burundi)
 Dushigikirane (Let's support each other)
 Dushirehamwe (Let's reconcile)
 Dutezimbere ubworozi (Let's advance husbandry)
 European Community Humanitarian Office, Bujumbura and Brussels
 European Union, Delegate
 FVS / La Famille Pour Vaincre le SIDA (A Family

for Defeating AIDS)
 Human Rights Watch
 IGGA / Ishirahamwe ryo Guteza imbere
 Abakenyezi n'Abana (Association for the Progress of Women and Children)
 International Medical Corps
 International Alert
 International Human Rights Law Group
 International Rescue Committee
 Jesuit Refugee Services
 Karinzi in Mutambu commune, Bujumbura Rural province, Local Administrator
 Ligue Iteka
 Libejeune
 Ministry of Home Affairs, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
 Ministry of Social Action and the Advancement of Women, Chef du Cabinet and Economic Advisor
 Ministry of Reintegration and Resettlement of Displaced and Repatriated Persons, Chef du Cabinet
 MUCO (light)
 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
 Office of Foreign Development Assistance, Washington and Bujumbura
 Refugees International
 Réseau Femmes Pour La Paix (Network Women for Peace)
 Reso / Rassemblement, Echange, et Solution entre ONG (network of international NGOs)
 Rumuri (torch)
 Search for Common Ground
 SASB / Solidarité Pour Aider les Sinistrés Burundais (Solidarity to Help Burundian Disaster Victims)
 Shirukubute (Be active!)
 UNDP, Resident Representative
 UNFPA, Representative and Assistant Representative
 UNHCR, Bujumbura (Representative and other staff) and Dar es Salaam (Senior Protection Officer)
 UNICEF, Assistant Project Officer Children in Need of Special Protection
 UNIFEM
 Women's Center for Peace
 WFP

Endnotes

¹ The names of some individuals or organizations have been withheld from publication in order to preserve their anonymity.

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³ United Nations System Emergency Plan for Burundi, *Without Development There Cannot Be Sustainable Peace, From Humanitarian Assistance to Development*, UN Country Team in Burundi, September 2000, p. 10; and UNHCR Briefing Notes: Caucasus, Colombia, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Burundi, October 13, 2000.

⁴ Women's Commission meeting with OCHA officials, New York, November 3, 2000. Regroupment camps are discussed in the section on Internally Displaced Persons below.

⁵ See Ministère de la Planification du Développement de la Reconstruction and UNDP, *Rapport Sur Le Développement Humain Du Burundi 1999*, La Pauvreté Au Burundi, Bujumbura, September 1999, p. 10 and Chapter II in general.

⁶ *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi*, Arusha, August 28, 2000, referred to as the "Peace Agreement" or "Arusha Peace Agreement" in this report.

⁷ UNHCR Briefing Notes: Caucasus, Colombia, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Burundi, October 13, 2000.

⁸ Women's Commission interview with Governor of Bubanza, Bubanza, October 5, 2000.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Women's Commission interview with representative of women's organization, Bubanza, October 5, 2000.

¹¹ Women's Commission interview with Governor of Bubanza, Bubanza, October 5, 2000.

¹² There are two other groups, the Twa and the Ganwa, which make up together less than 1 percent of the population and which do not play a significant role in the conflict at the national level.

¹³ Women's Commission interview with Catherine Mabobori, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Proxy Targets Civilians in the War in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 1998, p. 10.

¹⁵ Protocol 1, Chapter 1, Article 4, *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi*, Arusha, August 28, 2000.

¹⁶ Guichaoua, Andre, *Les Crises Politiques au Burundi et au Rwanda*, p. 341.

¹⁷ The Front of Burundi Democrats (Front des Démocrates du Burundi), a mainly Hutu party.

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 1994, p. 13.

¹⁹ Party of Union for National Progress (Parti de l'Union et du Progrès National), a mainly Tutsi party.

²⁰ World Bank Burundi page found at <http://www.worldbank.org/af/bi2.htm>.

²¹ World Refugee Survey 2000, US Committee for Refugees, p. 67.

²² *Report on the human rights situation in Burundi submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situa-*

tion in Burundi, Mrs. Marie-Thérèse A. Keita Bocoum, in accordance with Commission Resolution 1999/10, E/CN.4/2000/34, February 25, 2000, paragraph 30.

²³ 19 parties in all have signed the Arusha Peace Agreement at the time of writing. The two rebel groups which did not sign the Arusha Agreement were PALIPEHUTU-FNL (Forces nationales pour la libération) and FDD (Forces pour la défense de la démocratie).

²⁴ See for example IRIN-CEA report *Burundi: Some Optimism on cease-fire deadline day*, October 20, 2000; and IRIN-CEA Update 1,049, November 9, 2000 (paragraph on concern over peace accord).

²⁵ IRIN-CEA Update 1,052, *Burundi: Mandela to inaugurate implementation committee*, November 14, 2000 and IRIN-CEA Update 1,060, *Mandela launches committee to monitor peace deal*, November 27, 2000.

²⁶ See, for example, Pan African news Agency, *Nelson Mandela to Visit Tanzania and Burundi*, October 28, 2000; IRIN-CEA report *Burundi: Some Optimism on cease-fire deadline day*, October 20, 2000; IRIN-CEA Update 1,058, *Burundi: Violence Increases*, November 23, 2000.

²⁷ IRIN-CEA Update 1,053, *Burundi: Rebels accused of having foreign support*, November 15, 2000.

²⁸ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

²⁹ Agence France-Presse, *Burundi: Three parties from Burundi agreed Wednesday to sign a peace accord*, Johannesburg, September 13, 2000.

³⁰ Women's Commission interview with Perpétue Kankindi, Coordinator of the Women's Department, Conseil National des Eglises du Burundi (CNEB), Bujumbura, October 10, 2000.

³¹ Women's Commission interview with Governor of Bubanza, October 5, 2000.

³² Reported in Fondation Hirondelle, *Burundi/Négotiations: La Conférence des Femmes Burundaises Espère influencer l'Accord de Paix / Burundi Peace Talks, Women's Conference Hopes to Influence Burundi Peace Deal*, July 17, 2000.

³³ For a general discussion on how this is frequently the case, not just in Burundi, see Donna Ramsey Marshall, *Women in War and Peace, Grassroots Peacebuilding*, United States Institute of Peace, September 1999.

³⁴ Women's Commission telephone and e-mail communications, November 9, 2000 from New York with International Alert and Burundian member of parliament.

³⁵ Women's Commission interview, Gatumba, October 11, 2000.

³⁶ CAFOB, *A couer ouvert avec le Président de la République*, Place aux Femmes (Bulletin of CAFOB), No 2, May 2000, p. 3.

³⁷ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 2, 2000.

³⁸ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

³⁹ CAFOB, *Les femmes sont incontournables dans la préparation et la mise en application des accords d'Arusha*, Place aux Femmes (Bulletin of CAFOB), No 2, May 2000, p. 4.

⁴⁰ The conference was supported by UNIFEM and the Nyerere Foundation, in collaboration with International Alert.

⁴¹ The Executive Director of the Nyerere Foundation, Joseph Butiku, reportedly said at the opening of the conference: "We do not think it is impossible to influence the last draft of the agreement. The parties wanted you to be here, and I am sure they didn't want you here for nothing. ... You've missed a lot that has happened [during the peace talks], but we believe you know the problems inside your country and also the problems you have outside as refugees. It's some of these we want brought out in this kind of setting. We want contributions from all of you, on the way you think women should have a part, at this eleventh hour." Fondation Hirondelle, *Burundi Peace Talks Women's Conference Hopes to Influence Burundi Peace Deal*, Arusha, July 17, 2000.

⁴² *Final Declaration, All Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference, 17-20 July 2000*, Arusha, signed on July 20 in Arusha.

⁴³ Women's Commission interviews in Burundi with women who had attended the conference; Women's Commission interviews in New York with member of CAFOB involved in peace issues; All Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference, *Proposals to Engender the Draft Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi*, July 20, 2000; *Final Declaration, All Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference, 17-20 July 2000*, Arusha, signed on July 20 in Arusha. See also UN Department of Public Information, *Security Council Members Applaud Women's Role in Burundi Peace Process*, August 16, 2000; Fondation Hirondelle, *Burundi/Négotiations: La Conférence des Femmes Burundaises Espère Influencer l'Accord de Paix / Burundi Peace Talks, Women's Conference Hopes to Influence Burundi Peace Deal*, July 17, 2000; UN Department of Public Information, *UN Women's Fund Sponsors Peace Conference for Burundian Women*, July 18, 2000; Fondation Hirondelle, *Burundi Peace Talks, Burundi Women's Conference Calls for Affirmative Action*, July 21, 2000.

⁴⁴ Women's Commission interview with woman peace activist, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

⁴⁵ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

⁴⁶ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

⁴⁷ Women's Commission interviews Bujumbura, October 6, 2000, and New York, October 25, 2000.

⁴⁸ Women's Commission interview Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

⁴⁹ Women's Commission interview with Catherine Mabobori, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

⁵⁰ Women's Commission interview, Gatumba, October 11, 2000.

⁵¹ *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi*, Arusha, August 28, 2000, Protocol V, Article 3, paragraph 2(a)(III) and (iv); see also Great Lakes IRIN-CEA Update 1,052, *Burundi: Mandela to inaugurate implementation committee*, dated November 14, 2000.

⁵² *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi*, Arusha, August 28, 2000, Protocol V, Article 3, paragraph 2(c).

⁵³ Supported by CECI, (le Centre Canadien d'Etude et de Coopération Internationale).

⁵⁴ Supported by CECI and NCOS (Nationaal Centrum voor

Ontwikkelingssamenwerking).

⁵⁵ Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000); Security Council Press Release SC/6942 4213th Meeting (PM) October 31, 2000.

⁵⁶ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

⁵⁷ Women's Commission interview with representative of women's organization, Bubanza, October 5, 2000.

⁵⁸ Women's Commission meeting with OCHA officials, New York, November 3, 2000.

⁵⁹ Women's Commission with UNDP Resident Representative, Georg Charpontier, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000.

⁶⁰ Women's Commission interviews with OCHA representative, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000 and with Representative and Assistant Representative of UNFPA, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

⁶¹ Women's Commission interview with Representative and Assistant Representative of UNFPA, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

⁶² This was the second regroupment exercise, the first being between 1996-8; see page 11.

⁶³ US Committee for Refugees, *World Refugee Survey 2000*, p. 69.

⁶⁴ Refugees International, *Burundian Regroupment Camps: A Man-made Humanitarian Emergency, an Impediment to Peace*, 01/20/00, and *Conditions in Burundian Camps Rapidly Deteriorating*, 03/01/00; Human Rights Watch, *Emptying the Hills, Regroupment in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, July 2000; Amnesty International, Medical Letter Writing Action, Conditions in "regroupment" camps, Burundi, December 22, 1999, AI Index: AFR 16/036/99.

⁶⁵ Women's Commission interviews with aid agencies, WFP and former camp residents during field visit.

⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Emptying the Hills, Regroupment in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, July 2000, pp. 18-20.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Emptying the Hills, Regroupment in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, July 2000, pp. 30 and 33-4

⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Emptying The Hills, Regroupment in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, July 2000, section X; and interviews in Burundi during field visit, October 3, 2000.

⁶⁹ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 7, 2000.

⁷⁰ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 10, 2000.

⁷¹ See IRIN Update for the Great Lakes 980, August 2, 2000 and IRIN-CEA Update 1,013, September 18, 2000. The Women's Commission was also told during the field visit by international aid workers and Burundians that they had received reports that some regroupment camps still existed, some voluntarily and some still by force, but that for the most part these are in inaccessible areas. Human Rights Watch reported that at the end of June 2000 only about a third of the total number forcibly displaced since September 1999 had been able to return home. See Human Rights Watch, *Emptying the Hills, Regroupment in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, July 2000, p. 31.

⁷² Human Rights Watch, *Emptying the Hills, Regroupment in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, July 2000, pp. 31-2.

⁷³ Women's Commission interview with Project Officer, Children in need of special protection, UNICEF, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000 and e-mail communication November 24, 2000.

⁷⁴ The Global IDP database, using figures from UNICEF, ONUSIDA and OHCDHB, asserts that in November 1999 and February 2000 the numbers of street children in Burundi was estimated at 3,000 and that in May 2000 it was estimated at 5,000. See www.idpproject.org, section population profile and figures, sub-section disaggregated figures.

⁷⁵ Women's Commission interview with representative of an international NGO, Bubanza, October 5, 2000.

⁷⁶ Women's Commission interview, Bubanza, October 6, 2000.

⁷⁷ The rationale behind this is that some roads close at 4:00 p.m., and no vehicles are permitted to travel on them; in addition, for security reasons, vehicles should be back within the city limits in reasonable time before nightfall. In order to meet that time frame, vehicles are required to be back by 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. so that, should there be a breakdown en route, there is adequate time to send a recovery vehicle to collect the team and return to Bujumbura by 4:00 p.m., or nightfall at the very latest.

⁷⁸ Brother Antonio had lived and worked in Burundi for 20 years.

⁷⁹ JRS Burundi Alert, October 13, 2000.

⁸⁰ Agence France-Presse, *Burundi army shells northern outskirts of capital*, October 11 2000; IRIN-CEA Weekly Round-Up number 40 covering the period September 30-October 6, 2000; Agence France-Presse, *Life for civilians around Burundi's capital 'shocking': top MP*, October 9, 2000.

⁸¹ See IRIN-CEA Weekly Round-ups covering the periods October 7-13, 14-20 and 21-27, 2000; Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Dispatches No 80 dated 16 October 2000 and JRS Burundi Alert October 13, 2000; UNHCR Briefing Notes, October 13, 2000.

⁸² See, for example, paragraphs 45 and 106, p. 10 generally, parts VI and VII, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, UNHCR, July 2000.

⁸³ Following the killing of the UN staff members in October 1999 in Rutana, the RESO (a group of 36 international NGOs working in Burundi) had contact with various parties concerned in the conflict. A seminar was arranged by the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva in February 2000 that brought representatives of the Burundian military, the rebel forces and the humanitarian community together. It focused on and requested that the parties involved apply the principles of International and Humanitarian law to the civil population and to those involved in humanitarian action in the field. The RESO is convinced that this initiative had a positive impact during the period following the meeting (March and April 2000) although it may have been limited in time. See press release by the RESO, *Call for support of cease-fire efforts*, Bujumbura, September 18, 2000.

⁸⁴ OCHA/InterAction meeting New York, 10.27, 2000 and

Women's Commission meeting with OCHA representatives, New York, November 3, 2000.

⁸⁵ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ UNHCR, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, July 2000, paragraph 93.

⁸⁸ Women's Commission interview with UNDP Resident Representative, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Women's Commission interviews with UNDP Resident Representative, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000, and with OCHA officials, New York, November 3, 2000.

⁹¹ The Guiding Principles in all official UN languages are available from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with English and French booklet versions available from OCHA-New York's IDP unit. English and French versions are also posted on the web site of OCHCHR (www.unhcr.com).

⁹² UNHCR stated that it intends to carry out training on gender and protection issues with NGOs and the government towards the end of 2000. Women's Commission interview with Representative of UNHCR, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000.

⁹³ Women's Commission interviews, Karinzi, Mutambu commune, Bujumbura Rural province, October 2, 2000; and Refugees International, *Provide Full Access by International Community to Burundian Regroupment Camps*, July 13, 2000.

⁹⁴ Meeting of food distribution committee, WFP, Concern Worldwide and local administration authorities, at which a Women's Commission delegate was present, Karinzi, Mutambu commune, Bujumbura Rural province, October 2, 2000.

⁹⁵ Women's Commission interview with Geoffrey Rudd, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

⁹⁶ UNAIDS Epidemiological Fact Sheet for Burundi, 2000 Update, downloaded from www.unaids.org.

⁹⁷ Women's Commission interview with group of women, Gatumba, October 11, 2000.

⁹⁸ US Committee for Refugees, World Refugee Survey 2000, p. 70.

⁹⁹ Women's Commission interview with Chef de Cabinet, Ministry Reintegration and Resettlement of Displaced and Repatriated Persons, October 6, 2000 and October 9, 2000; and various meetings with international organizations and agencies.

¹⁰⁰ UNHCR Briefing Notes: Caucasus, Colombia, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Burundi October 13, 2000.

¹⁰¹ UNHCR, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, July 2000, paragraph 34.

¹⁰² The four provinces are: Muyinga and Kirundo provinces in the north, Ruyigi province in the east and Makamba province. Most new refugees in 1999 fled from Makamba province, Gitega province in the center and Kirundo province. US Committee for Refugees, World Refugee Survey 2000, p. 68. See also UNHCR, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, July 2000, paragraph 32.

¹⁰³ UNHCR Briefing Notes: Caucasus, Colombia,

Afghanistan/Pakistan, Burundi, October 13, 2000.

¹⁰⁴ Women's Commission interview with head of UNHCR, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000; see also UNHCR, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, July 2000, paragraph 59.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations System Emergency Plan for Burundi, *Without Development There Cannot Be Sustainable Peace, From Humanitarian Assistance to Development*, UN Country Team in Burundi, September, 2000, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, July 2000, paragraphs 32-3.

¹⁰⁷ Table II.2 Indicative refugee population and major changes by origin, found on UNHCR website, www.unhcr.org, under Refugees and Others of Concern to UNHCR, 1999 Statistical Overview. See also Tables II.3 Prima facie refugee arrivals by origin and county/territory of asylum, 1998 and 1999, and Table II.4, Repatriation of refugees by origin and country/territory of asylum, 1997-1999.

¹⁰⁸ Over 200,000 refugees returned since 1996, although some of these fled again; UNHCR, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, July 2000, paragraphs 32 and 33.

¹⁰⁹ Women's Commission interviews with representatives of UNHCR and the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, October 2, 2000; Women's Commission interview with head of UNHCR, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000; also UNHCR, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, July 2000, paragraphs 89-90.

¹¹⁰ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000.

¹¹¹ See www.jesref.org/inf/alert/bilatest.htm September 27, 2000.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ UNHCR indicated to the Women's Commission in an interview on October 4, 2000 that in fact it is likely that the cut in rations would amount only to 20 percent.

¹¹⁴ Women's Commission interview with Representative of UNHCR, Dar es Salaam, 10/02/00.

¹¹⁵ Women's Commission interviews with Representative of UNHCR, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000 and with Representative and Assistant Representative of UNFPA, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

¹¹⁶ International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, p. 30, and Women's Commission interviews with Representative of UNHCR, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000, and with Libejeune (a children's right organization), Bujumbura, October 7, 2000.

¹¹⁷ Women's Commission interview with Representative of UNHCR, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000 and with Representative and Assistant Representative of UNFPA, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

¹¹⁸ Women's Commission interview with Catherine Mabobori, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000, and with International Alert, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000.

¹¹⁹ Refugees International Press Release, September 15, 2000.

¹²⁰ Women's Commission interview with international NGO, October 5, 2000.

¹²¹ Women's Commission interview with UNHCR Representative, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000.

¹²² A survey was carried out by UNHCR on this caseload but only original heads of households were interviewed, not their now adult children. Therefore, their finding that 84 percent claimed that they wanted to return home and would accept land or compensation in lieu of land is not reliable. Women's Commission interview with Representative of UNHCR, Bujumbura, October 4, 2000.

¹²³ UNHCR, *Strategic Framework for the Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Burundi*, July 2000, paragraphs 51 and 91.

¹²⁴ *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi*, Protocol IV, Chapter 1, Article 8; Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 9, 2000.

¹²⁵ Women's Commission meeting with representatives of the Women's Center for Peace and Search for Common Ground, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

¹²⁶ Women's Commission meeting with representatives of the Women's Center for Peace and Search for Common Ground, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

¹²⁷ Women's Commission interview with representative of an international NGO, Buzanza, October 5, 2000.

¹²⁸ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

¹²⁹ *Lenga lenga* is a local vegetable.

¹³⁰ Human Rights Watch also observed the need some women felt to turn to prostitution for the survival of themselves and their children. See Human Rights Watch, *Emptying the Hills, Regroupment in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, July 2000, p. 20.

¹³¹ The exchange rate on the street is approximately 1,000 Burundian Francs to US\$1. Women's Commission interview with Caritas Habonimana, president of FVS (La Famille pour vaincre le SIDA (FVS — A Family for Defeating AIDS), Bujumbura, October 9, 2000.

¹³² Women's Commission interview with UNDP Resident Representative, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000; he told the Women's Commission that 6 percent is an extrapolation from what it was in the past but there has been no substantial blood screening, particularly in the provinces outside the capital city and those particularly affected by displacement and/or regroupment, to verify the figures. There was a 15-20 percent rate of HIV seroprevalence among the population; 70-80 percent of hospital patients in the internal medicine wing of King Khaled Hospital and 50 percent of patients at Prince Regent Charles Hospital were AIDS sufferers according to the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi earlier this year. *Report on the human rights situation in Burundi submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi*, Mrs. Marie-Thérèse A. Keita Bocoum, in accordance with Commission Resolution 1999/10, E/CN.4/2000/34, February 25, 2000, paragraph 47.

¹³³ UNAIDS claim from 1985-87 to 1995 HIV seroprevalence among antenatal women increased from 15 percent to 28 percent in Bujumbura; in 1998, 19 percent of antenatal clinic women tested were HIV-positive and 30 percent of 25-29 year olds were HIV-positive. UNAIDS figures — UNAIDS/WHO Epidemiological Fact Sheet for Burundi, 2000 Update, downloaded from www.unaids.org.

¹³⁴ Women's Commission interview with UNFPA

Representative and Assistant Representative, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

¹³⁵ Women's Commission interview, Bujumbura, October 12, 2000.

¹³⁶ Women's Commission interviews with UNFPA Representative and Assistant Representative, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000, with Libejeune (a children's right organization), Bujumbura, October 7, 2000, and with a group of women from various women's organizations, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

¹³⁷ Women's Commission interview with UNFPA Representative and Assistant Representative, Bujumbura, October 6, 2000.

¹³⁸ Women's Commission interview with UNDP Resident Representative, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000.

¹³⁹ Women's Commission interview with UNICEF, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000; also quoted in International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, p. 11; from *Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique, Cas du Burundi*, Ministry of Education, Burundi, April 1999, p. 16 and p. 46.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, p. 18; from *Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique, Cas du Burundi*, Ministry of Education, Burundi, April 1999, pp. 24-28.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, p. 21; from *Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique, Cas du Burundi*, Ministry of Education, Burundi, April 1999, p. 40.

¹⁴² Quoted in International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, p. 32; from *Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique, Cas du Burundi*, Ministry of Education, Burundi, April 1999, p. 82.

¹⁴³ UNESCO, *Early Childhood Care and Education: Basic Indicators on Young Children; Young child and family indicators*, 1995, found at www.unesco.org/education/educprog/ecf/html/chart/aafstat.htm.

¹⁴⁴ International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, p. 29.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16 and p. 29.

¹⁴⁶ Women's Commission interview with representative of women's organization, Bubanza, October 5, 2000.

¹⁴⁷ Women's Commission interview with UNICEF representatives, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000.

¹⁴⁸ Women's Commission interview in Bubanza, October 5, 2000.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, and in Gatumba, October 11, 2000.

¹⁵⁰ Women's Commission interview with OCHA official, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

¹⁵¹ Women's Commission interview with Catherine Mabobori, Bujumbura, October 5, 2000.

¹⁵² For example, to enter the army a primary school education is required; for officers a secondary education is required.

¹⁵³ Quoted in International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, p. 32; from *Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique, Cas du Burundi*, Ministry of Education, Burundi, April 1999, p. 82.

¹⁵⁴ International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, p. 34.

¹⁵⁵ Women's Commission interview with UNICEF officials, Bujumbura, October 11, 2000.

¹⁵⁶ See International Alert, *Equal Access to Education, a peace imperative for Burundi*, London, 2000, and Arusha Peace Agreement, Protocol IV, Chapter III, Article 15(a).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

INTRODUCTION: SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1. These Guiding Principles address the specific needs of internally displaced persons worldwide. They identify rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of persons from forced displacement and to their protection and assistance during displacement as well as during return or resettlement and reintegration.
2. For the purposes of these Principles, internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.
3. These Principles reflect and are consistent with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. They provide guidance to:
 - (a) The Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons in carrying out his mandate;
 - (b) States when faced with the phenomenon of internal displacement;
 - (c) All other authorities, groups and persons in their relations with internally displaced persons; and
 - (d) Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations when addressing internal displacement.
4. These Guiding Principles should be disseminated and applied as widely as possible.

SECTION I—GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Principle 1

1. Internally displaced persons shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country. They shall not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms on the ground that they are internally displaced.
2. These Principles are without prejudice to individual criminal responsibility under international law, in particular relating to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Principle 2

1. These Principles shall be observed by all authorities, groups and persons irrespective of their legal status and applied without any adverse distinction. The observance of these Principles shall not affect the legal status of any authorities, groups or persons involved.
2. These Principles shall not be interpreted as restricting, modifying or impairing the provisions of any international human rights or international humanitarian law instrument or rights granted to persons under domestic law. In particular, these Principles are without prejudice to the right to seek and enjoy asylum in other countries.

Principle 3

1. National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction.
2. Internally displaced persons have the right to request and to

receive protection and humanitarian assistance from these authorities. They shall not be persecuted or punished for making such a request.

Principle 4

1. These Principles shall be applied without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, legal or social status, age, disability, property, birth, or on any other similar criteria.
2. Certain internally displaced persons, such as children, especially unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, female heads of household, persons with disabilities and elderly persons, shall be entitled to protection and assistance required by their condition and to treatment which takes into account their special needs.

SECTION II—PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROTECTION FROM DISPLACEMENT

Principle 5

All authorities and international actors shall respect and ensure respect for their obligations under international law, including human rights and humanitarian law, in all circumstances, so as to prevent and avoid conditions that might lead to displacement of persons.

Principle 6

1. Every human being shall have the right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home or place of habitual residence.

2. The prohibition of arbitrary displacement includes displacement:

- (a) When it is based on policies of apartheid, “ethnic cleansing” or similar practices aimed at/or resulting in altering the ethnic, religious or racial composition of the affected population;
- (b) In situations of armed conflict, unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand;
- (c) In cases of large-scale development projects, which are not justified by compelling and overriding public interests;
- (d) In cases of disasters, unless the safety and health of those affected requires their evacuation; and
- (e) When it is used as a collective punishment.

3. Displacement shall last no longer than required by the circumstances.

Principle 7

1. Prior to any decision requiring the displacement of persons, the authorities concerned shall ensure that all feasible alternatives are explored in order to avoid displacement altogether. Where no alternatives exist, all measures shall be taken to minimize displacement and its adverse effects.

2. The authorities undertaking such displacement shall ensure, to the greatest practicable extent, that proper accommodation is provided to the displaced persons, that such displacements are effected in satisfactory conditions of safety, nutrition, health and hygiene, and that members of the same family are not separated.

3. If displacement occurs in situations other than during the

emergency stages of armed conflicts and disasters, the following guarantees shall be complied with:

- (a) A specific decision shall be taken by a State authority empowered by law to order such measures;
- (b) Adequate measures shall be taken to guarantee to those to be displaced full information on the reasons and procedures for their displacement and, where applicable, on compensation and relocation;
- (c) The free and informed consent of those to be displaced shall be sought;
- (d) The authorities concerned shall endeavour to involve those affected, particularly women, in the planning and management of their relocation;
- (e) Law enforcement measures, where required, shall be carried out by competent legal authorities; and
- (f) The right to an effective remedy, including the review of such decisions by appropriate judicial authorities, shall be respected.

Principle 8

Displacement shall not be carried out in a manner that violates the rights to life, dignity, liberty and security of those affected.

Principle 9

States are under a particular obligation to protect against the displacement of indigenous peoples, minorities, peasants, pastoralists and other groups with a special dependency on and attachment to their lands.

SECTION III-PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROTECTION DURING DISPLACEMENT

Principle 10

1. Every human being has the inherent right to life which shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life. Internally displaced persons shall be protected in particular against:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Murder;
- (c) Summary or arbitrary executions; and
- (d) Enforced disappearances, including abduction or unacknowledged detention, threatening or resulting in death.

Threats and incitement to commit any of the foregoing acts shall be prohibited.

2. Attacks or other acts of violence against internally displaced persons who do not or no longer participate in hostilities are prohibited in all circumstances. Internally displaced persons shall be protected, in particular, against:

- (a) Direct or indiscriminate attacks or other acts of violence, including the creation of areas wherein attacks on civilians are permitted;
- (b) Starvation as a method of combat;
- (c) Their use to shield military objectives from attack or to shield, favour or impede military operations;
- (d) Attacks against their camps or settlements; and
- (e) The use of anti-personnel landmines.

Principle 11

1. Every human being has the right to dignity and physical, mental and moral integrity.

2. Internally displaced persons, whether or not their liberty has been restricted, shall be protected in particular against:

(a) Rape, mutilation, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and other outrages upon personal dignity, such as acts of gender-specific violence, forced prostitution and any form of indecent assault;

(b) Slavery or any contemporary form of slavery, such as sale into marriage, sexual exploitation, or forced labour of children; and

(c) Acts of violence intended to spread terror among internally displaced persons.

Threats and incitement to commit any of the foregoing acts shall be prohibited.

Principle 12

1. Every human being has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.

2. To give effect to this right for internally displaced persons, they shall not be interned in or confined to a camp. If in exceptional circumstances such internment or confinement is absolutely necessary, it shall not last longer than required by the circumstances.

3. Internally displaced persons shall be protected from discriminatory arrest and detention as a result of their displacement.

4. In no case shall internally displaced persons be taken hostage.

Principle 13

1. In no circumstances shall displaced children be recruited nor be required or permitted to take part in hostilities.

2. Internally displaced persons shall be protected against discriminatory practices of recruitment into any armed forces or groups as a result of their displacement. In particular any cruel, inhuman or degrading practices that compel compliance or punish non-compliance with recruitment are prohibited in all circumstances.

Principle 14

1. Every internally displaced person has the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his or her residence.

2. In particular, internally displaced persons have the right to move freely in and out of camps or other settlements.

Principle 15

Internally displaced persons have:

- (a) The right to seek safety in another part of the country;
- (b) The right to leave their country;
- (c) The right to seek asylum in another country; and
- (d) The right to be protected against forcible return to or resettlement in any place where their life, safety, liberty and/or health would be at risk.

Principle 16

1. All internally displaced persons have the right to know the fate and whereabouts of missing relatives.

2. The authorities concerned shall endeavour to establish the fate and whereabouts of internally displaced persons reported missing, and cooperate with relevant international organizations engaged in this task. They shall inform the next of kin on

the progress of the investigation and notify them of any result.

3. The authorities concerned shall endeavour to collect and identify the mortal remains of those deceased, prevent their despoliation or mutilation, and facilitate the return of those remains to the next of kin or dispose of them respectfully.

4. Grave sites of internally displaced persons should be protected and respected in all circumstances. Internally displaced persons should have the right of access to the grave sites of their deceased relatives.

Principle 17

1. Every human being has the right to respect of his or her family life.

2. To give effect to this right for internally displaced persons, family members who wish to remain together shall be allowed to do so.

3. Families which are separated by displacement should be reunited as quickly as possible. All appropriate steps shall be taken to expedite the reunion of such families, particularly when children are involved. The responsible authorities shall facilitate inquiries made by family members and encourage and cooperate with the work of humanitarian organizations engaged in the task of family reunification.

4. Members of internally displaced families whose personal liberty has been restricted by internment or confinement in camps shall have the right to remain together.

Principle 18

1. All internally displaced persons have the right to an adequate standard of living.

2. At the minimum, regardless of the circumstances, and without discrimination, competent authorities shall provide internally displaced persons with and ensure safe access to:

- (a) Essential food and potable water;
- (b) Basic shelter and housing;
- (c) Appropriate clothing; and
- (d) Essential medical services and sanitation.

3. Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of women in the planning and distribution of these basic supplies.

Principle 19

1. All wounded and sick internally displaced persons as well as those with disabilities shall receive to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention they require, without distinction on any grounds other than medical ones. When necessary, internally displaced persons shall have access to psychological and social services.

2. Special attention should be paid to the health needs of women, including access to female health care providers and services, such as reproductive health care, as well as appropriate counselling for victims of sexual and other abuses.

3. Special attention should also be given to the prevention of contagious and infectious diseases, including AIDS, among internally displaced persons.

Principle 20

1. Every human being has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

2. To give effect to this right for internally displaced persons, the authorities concerned shall issue to them all documents necessary for the enjoyment and exercise of their legal rights, such as passports, personal identification documents, birth certificates and marriage certificates. In particular, the authorities shall facilitate the issuance of new documents or the replacement of documents lost in the course of displacement, without imposing unreasonable conditions, such as requiring the return to one's area of habitual residence in order to obtain these or other required documents.

3. Women and men shall have equal rights to obtain such necessary documents and shall have the right to have such documentation issued in their own names.

Principle 21

1. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of property and possessions.

2. The property and possessions of internally displaced persons shall in all circumstances be protected, in particular, against the following acts:

- (a) Pillage;
- (b) Direct or indiscriminate attacks or other acts of violence;
- (c) Being used to shield military operations or objectives;
- (d) Being made the object of reprisal; and
- (e) Being destroyed or appropriated as a form of collective punishment.

3. Property and possessions left behind by internally displaced persons should be protected against destruction and arbitrary and illegal appropriation, occupation or use.

Principle 22

1. Internally displaced persons, whether or not they are living in camps, shall not be discriminated against as a result of their displacement in the enjoyment of the following rights:

- (a) The rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, opinion and expression;
- (b) The right to seek freely opportunities for employment and to participate in economic activities;
- (c) The right to associate freely and participate equally in community affairs;
- (d) The right to vote and to participate in governmental and public affairs, including the right to have access to the means necessary to exercise this right; and
- (e) The right to communicate in a language they understand.

Principle 23

1. Every human being has the right to education.

2. To give effect to this right for internally displaced persons, the authorities concerned shall ensure that such persons, in particular displaced children, receive education which shall be free and compulsory at the primary level. Education should respect their cultural identity, language and religion.

3. Special efforts should be made to ensure the full and equal participation of women and girls in educational programmes.

4. Education and training facilities shall be made available to internally displaced persons, in particular adolescents and women, whether or not living in camps, as soon as conditions permit.

SECTION IV—PRINCIPLES RELATING TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Principle 24

1. All humanitarian assistance shall be carried out in accordance with the principles of humanity and impartiality and without discrimination.
2. Humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons shall not be diverted, in particular for political or military reasons.

Principle 25

1. The primary duty and responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons lies with national authorities.
2. International humanitarian organizations and other appropriate actors have the right to offer their services in support of the internally displaced. Such an offer shall not be regarded as an unfriendly act or an interference in a State's internal affairs and shall be considered in good faith. Consent thereto shall not be arbitrarily withheld, particularly when authorities concerned are unable or unwilling to provide the required humanitarian assistance.
3. All authorities concerned shall grant and facilitate the free passage of humanitarian assistance and grant persons engaged in the provision of such assistance rapid and unimpeded access to the internally displaced.

Principle 26

Persons engaged in humanitarian assistance, their transport and supplies shall be respected and protected. They shall not be the object of attack or other acts of violence.

Principle 27

1. International humanitarian organizations and other appropriate actors when providing assistance should give due regard to the protection needs and human rights of internally displaced persons and take appropriate measures in this regard. In so doing, these organizations and actors should respect relevant international standards and codes of conduct.
2. The preceding paragraph is without prejudice to the protection responsibilities of international organizations mandated for this purpose, whose services may be offered or requested by States.

SECTION V—PRINCIPLES RELATING TO RETURN, RESETTLEMENT AND REINTEGRATION

Principle 28

1. Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Such authorities shall endeavour to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons.
2. Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration.

Principle 29

1. Internally displaced persons who have returned to their homes or places of habitual residence or who have resettled in

another part of the country shall not be discriminated against as a result of their having been displaced. They shall have the right to participate fully and equally in public affairs at all levels and have equal access to public services.

2. Competent authorities have the duty and responsibility to assist returned and/or resettled internally displaced persons to recover, to the extent possible, their property and possessions which they left behind or were dispossessed of upon their displacement. When recovery of such property and possessions is not possible, competent authorities shall provide or assist these persons in obtaining appropriate compensation or another form of just reparation.

Principle 30

All authorities concerned shall grant and facilitate for international humanitarian organizations and other appropriate actors, in the exercise of their respective mandates, rapid and unimpeded access to internally displaced persons to assist in their return or resettlement and reintegration.

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