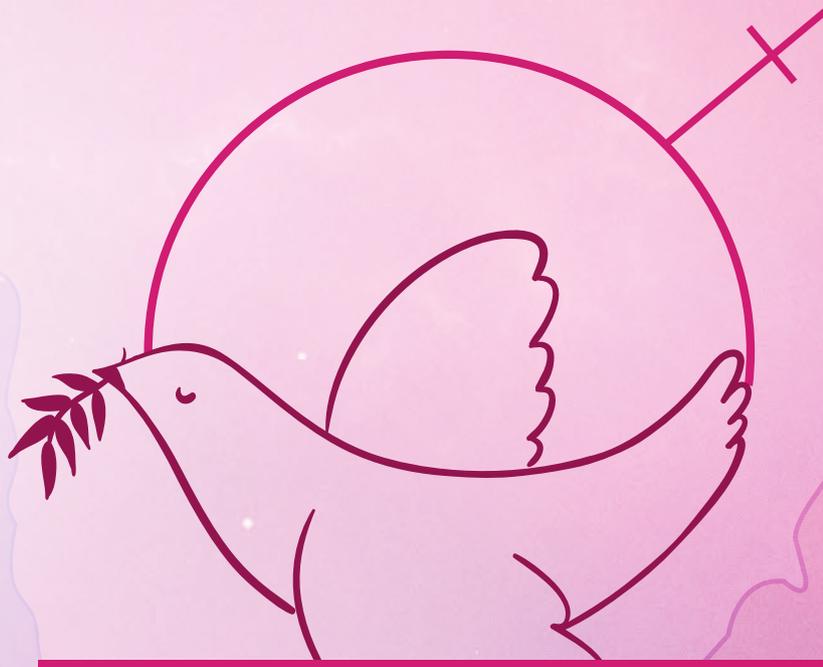




Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange
(Re)creating Peace Internationally



Centralising Women's Agency in Peace Building And Ending Conflict:

The Burundi Crisis

Isis Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE)

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Introduction

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The Burundi Women's Consultative meeting held in Entebbe, Uganda was yet another urgent action carried out in response to the escalating conflict in Burundi. It has been theorized that if the causes of conflicts are not addressed during peace negotiations and post conflict reconstruction, the conflict may reoccur after 5 to 10 years. This is exactly what happened in the case of Burundi. The Burundi conflict is one of the prominent intrastate conflicts threatening regional stability in the Great Lakes Region; it is characterized by high rates of civilian casualties and massive human rights violations.

As women and girls who want to see peace and calm restored in Burundi, the Barundikazi who were passionately interacting on media but had not met physically sought space to interact, connect, bond and chart out their collective course of action. A consultative meeting brought together the women's movement from the region (Rwanda, South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda) in solidarity with the Burundi women to strategize for their effective participation in the dialogue for restoration of peace and security in Burundi. The consultative meeting for the Burundi Women and Girls Movement for Peace and Security was held from the 14th to 18th December 2015 with technical support from the ICGLR CSO Forum for Uganda and financial support from Urgent Action Fund and ACCORD South Africa.

The consultative meeting was facilitated by inspirational women from the region, including Uganda's former Vice President Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe; Isis-WICCE Executive Director Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng; CECORE Executive Director Rose Othieno; Kenyan expert Florence Mpayeyi and Burundian expert Marie-Louise Baricako.



As women and girls who want to see peace, Barundikazi sought space to interact, connect, bond and chart out their collective course of action.

During this period, the women peace activists were energized and inspired. They engaged via tele-conference with a Peace and Security expert from the Institute of Strategic Studies, USA who participated in the Arusha Peace Process. He unpacked the provisions of the accord and provided insights into ways and means the women could ensure their effective participation in the peace dialogues and rehabilitating Burundi.

The organizers through Dr. Speciosa Kazibwe facilitated a meeting between the women and the Secretary General of the East African Community, serving as the Minister of Defense for Uganda and Chief Mediator of the Peace Talks.

1.1 Project Partners

Burundi Women and Girls Movement for Peace and Security (MFFPS)

The Burundi Women and Girls Movement for Peace and Security (MFFPS) was established by women and girls living in Burundi and the diaspora in May 2015, to advocate for the restoration of peace and security. The organization seeks to sensitize and draw the awareness of the national and international community on the continuing and deliberate human rights violations in Burundi, despite being party to international human rights instruments. MFFPS acts as a space of reflection, debate and advocacy to see Burundi on the path to sustainable development. MFFPS members share the conviction that Burundi must become a united nation, built by its sons and daughters, working together without any discrimination and exclusion. They seek a leadership of vision and integrity, whose main concern is the welfare and fulfillment of the people- the only guarantee of sustainable peace.

Isis Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE)

Isis-WICCE is a global action-oriented feminist organization that focuses on enhancing women's leadership in conflict and post conflict settings. As the lead partner in the project; the organization had major roles that included organizing and hosting the Kampala consultative meeting as well as providing technical and logistical support to Burundi women while in Addis Ababa for the GIMAC meeting and engaging key actors to influence the peace dialogue. Isis-WICCE also provided feedback and updates to all partners, and continue to support members of MFFPS in their quest for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Burundi.

Akina Mama WA Africa (AMwA)

Akina Mama wa Afrika is an international Pan-African non-governmental organization based in Kampala Uganda. AMwA is a training center and advocacy engine for the women's movement in Africa. It conducts African Women's Leadership Institutes designed by women leaders from Africa, for African

women activists aged 25-45 on themes such as gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive rights, anti-poverty efforts and peace building. AMWA's mission is to contribute to the full equality of all African women by strengthening their individual and collective leadership and by forming strategic partnerships to tackle patriarchy and promote a just and secure Africa.

ICGLR CSO Forum

The International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICLGR) is a regional institution that arose during the late 1990s as a result of the protracted war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which involved or affected most of the countries in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa. Member states include Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. The conference was geared towards enhancing a common security forum for the region, and has now developed into an institutional structure, with Heads of States and Governments meetings held every 2 years; a regional ministers forum for executive decisions; national coordinators and national level coordination mechanisms; and an executive secretariat based in Burundi. The sub-structures' role is to support the implementation of decisions from the summits, in particular, the 2006 ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

The ICLGR framework also involves the participation of parliaments, civil society organisations, and international actors such as the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), World Bank, and donor agencies. It is on this basis that the ICGLR CSO Forum was established with structures at country levels of civil society organizations working on different ICGLR thematic areas.

Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa)

UAF Africa is a pan-African and feminist fund, established in 2001 in Nairobi, Kenya. Using a rapid response grant making model, the Fund supports unanticipated, time-sensitive, innovative, and bold initiatives. The financial and technical resources the Fund provides enable African feminists and women's rights organisations to seize windows of opportunity, fracture patriarchy, amplify their voices, enhance their visibility, and become significant actors who can influence policy and law while shaping discourse. This way, UAF-Africa fills a unique grant making niche within the African feminist movement, providing stepping stones to activists as they use their agency and resilience to achieve social, economic, political and environmental justice.

UAF-Africa operates as a virtual organization with an imprint across four African sub-regions. The Fund has acquired the expertise, tools and resilience needed to thrive in her operating environment. Through her high-tech funding mechanisms, the Fund has supported over 700 women's strategic initiatives in 48 African countries to date.

Background

02

“this requires a thorough analysis from not only the African, but global perspective, including an understanding of masculinity and the fascination with sexuality and power”

The Burundi crisis began in April 2015 when President Nkurunziza announced he would seek a third term in office sparking protests by those opposed to this. The Supreme Court approved Nkurunziza’s right to run, despite alleged death threats to one of the judges, who fled the country. In May, there was a failed coup attempt that saw the arrest of the leaders and dismissal of some Ministers. This was followed by arrest and death of a prominent opposition leader resulting in the opposition breaking off negotiations with the government. Elections were held in July amidst violent protest, and President Nkurunziza was sworn in. Since the elections, the country has witnessed many killings of opposition leaders and senior military officials. Violence has escalated to unimaginable levels with killings, arrests, displacement and rape of women and girls.

Towards the end of December, the African Union approved a peacekeeping force to be sent to Burundi to stop the violence and protect civilians. This action was rejected by the government, proclaiming that the request was not approved and the force would be treated as enemies.

The Burundi crisis is unique and has many players within and outside of Africa with diverse intentions, particularly former colonial masters. This requires thorough analysis from not only the African but also the global perspective including an understanding of masculinity and its fascination with sexuality and power.

Concerned about possible civil war that could lead to genocide the IGAD agreed to peace talks between the government and opposition led by the President of Uganda. On December 28th 2015 the government of Uganda launched the peace talks in Kampala, stating that due to history, the talks would continue in Arusha.

The women of Burundi like women in most conflict situations refused to wait for the mostly male and highly patriarchal warmongers to agree to peace talks. They galvanized around the suffering of women and children to reflect on the situation in Burundi and develop strategies to bring the warring parties, including women, to talk. The women drew from the lessons of the 1995 peace process in Arusha and the prominent role they played in calling the attention of regional leaders and the world while advocating for women’s participation in planned peace talks.

The Uganda Think Tank therefore provided a platform for Burundi women from the diaspora, those in exile and those currently living in Burundi to meet and develop a vision and strategy.

Some of the early actions by women included a peace march in Burundi. Many of the women who planned the peace march were civil society actors and peace activists, who have had to leave the country following death threats, arrests and torture by members of government. Many of the civil society organizations were closed down by the government who was determined to crack down activities of most of these organizations. This action has put the women's movement in limbo as many had to hide or remain silent. However, for women in the diaspora the situation stimulated them to begin organizing since it was easier for them to influence international actors.

Despite government refusal to acknowledge an imminent civil war, women remained focused on bringing peace to Burundi. To this end, the Women and Girls Movement for Peace sought support from Isis-WICCE, AMWA and the ICGLR CSO Forum. Civil Society particularly the women's movement has the potential to work across differences to bring a lasting solution to Burundi. The Uganda Think Tank therefore provided a platform for Burundi women from the diaspora, those in exile and those currently living in Burundi to meet and develop a vision and strategy for the movement that will effectively contribute to the peace process.

Objectives of the Think Tank

- * *To develop a common vision and strategy for women's involvement in the Burundi peace process*
- * *To engage with strategic actors to advocate for women's effective participation in the peace process*



Defending the Peace in Burundi: Did women remain silent or act in defense of peace?

Historically, the women of Burundi have played active roles in conflict and peace building. Their actions during the Arusha peace talks were documented along with the numerous barriers they overcame to get to Arusha. However, their role was reduced to mere observers. A review of the Burundi Peace Accord revealed that it failed to address the root causes of the conflict, a key contributor to the non-implementation of the provisions of the Arusha Peace Agreement by all parties. The Arusha peace process was more of a quick fix with the peace agreement signed and shelved.

The women of Burundi saw the current conflict coming and organized a peaceful demonstration calling for implementation of the accord. This effort led to threats, arrest and closure of some of the women's organizations by the government. The unfavourable environment sent many into exile and those who could not leave either remained quiet or continued to specifically respond to humanitarian issues affecting women and children.

The Women and Girls Movement for Peace (MFFPS) was formed in response to the crisis and to provide an alternative platform for women peace activists and civil society actors to share ideas and develop strategies for peaceful conflict resolution. The movement, as Burundi women do, works across ethnic, political and ideological divides so that such crises or genocide do not occur – thus the idea of 'Never Again'.

“*“Never again will the people of Burundi be killed for speaking out; never again will Burundi women and children suffer for crimes they did not commit; never again would such political crisis result in ethnic cleansing, never again will Burundi be at the bottom of all development indicators.”*

The frustration of women over their inability to respond effectively to the crisis was significant. Women warned against the conflict but instead were threatened and no one listened. Even when women and other actors called on the international community for help their call was ignored, resulting in the massive casualties. This experience called for more in-depth analysis of the conflict and the key players.

The meeting fulfilled the aspirations of Burundi women, however with the region as a hub for conflicts, the support of African women was necessary. Conflict continues in DRC, South Sudan and Central African Republic along with electoral violence in Uganda and an unpredictable situation in Rwanda. To ensure sustained initiatives for Burundi, the region and Africa, more women need to be included to build a strong women's peace movement.

The recent review of the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 by the SG revealed that peace processes that include women and their needs are more sustainable. Women bring a unique perspective and consistency to the peace table and are more likely to address social development issues that benefit communities.

We are change makers

We want to nurture Burundi

We want to rebuild Burundi

We are change makers

We are not partisan

We are women of Burundi

We are women of Africa

We are change makers

We are mothers

*We give and nurture lives,
so*

We must preserve lives

We are change makers



03

Opening Remarks

Marie Claire Baricako – President

Madame Baricako started off by thanking HEDr. Speciosa Kazibwe, saying her presence was crucial since she had previously supported Burundi women during the 1995 peace talks. She reiterated that the meeting sought to allow women a space to reflect on the crisis and develop a vision for sustainable peace

that would benefit all Burundians. “Today Burundi is weeping and so are the women, we have moved ahead and jumped over our differences; we have the passion and ability to make the desired change” she said.

She decried the masculine nature of governance and leadership that has led to the conflict and called on women to look beyond positions or power and prepare to make the desired change. She expressed happiness that members of the movement worked hard to make sure the meeting happened, and thanked sisters from the diaspora who bought tickets to attend the meeting. ‘We the women of Burundi must grow this movement, to become a movement for women and girls, not only for Burundi but also for Africa. It is a movement for peace’ she ended.

Her Excellency Dr. Specioza Kazibwe

H.E Dr. Kazibwe expressed that as a member of the African Union Panel of the Wise who is working on peace and security in Africa, she was glad to facilitate meeting. She said the AU had been notified of the meeting, specifically the Chair of the African Union and the Peace and Security Council.

She described the Burundi crisis as similar to others in the region, highlighting the case of Uganda where women played prominent roles to call for an end to the conflict and facilitate warring parties to hold peace talks. She reminded all that the Burundi crisis is following the regional trend of conflict fueled by men more interested in power sharing. She encouraged Africa’s women to continue their work to ensure that communities benefit through the safeguarding of their human rights and provision of social services.



“we have moved ahead and jumped over our differences; we have the passion and ability to make the desired change”



H.E Dr. Kazibwe advised women to come out strongly and strategize. She expressed delight that the journey to Beijing was bearing fruit, highlighting that African women spearheaded the agenda that led to the Beijing Platform of Action outcome and further shaped the Millennium Development Goals, which are largely regarded as gender sensitive world development frameworks.

In tears, the former Vice President lamented the state of anarchy on the continent, saying, “I do not want to die before seeing positive change in the region”. She urged all young girls to love themselves first in order to nurture a continent of love and peace adding, “The solidarity you need starts where you are, know what you want and unite for it. Solidarity without roots can easily be washed away. Read and seek knowledge, equip yourself and make reference to relevant documents to advance your demands,” she advised. She concluded by encouraging the women’s movement to speak one language, making similar demands across the region.

04

If war impacts women differently then surely their experiences and perspective is important and valuable for a fruitful peace process.

Women's Experiences of the Burundi crisis

Over the years Isis-WICCE has documented the distinct impact of war on women to make the case for women's engagement in peace processes. If war impacts women differently then surely their experiences and perspective is important and valuable for a fruitful peace process. As such, women reflected on how they experience the ongoing crisis in Burundi.

Targets of violence as leaders of professional groups:

"We fought from the beginning and became targets; some of us were killed while some are in prison. As a leader I had to fight for the liberation of my colleagues, this led to my being a target so I fled".

Displacements:

Many fled the country due to threats to their lives and those of their family members. For many this is not the first time they have had to flee the country. However, life as refugees has been challenging in terms of language, health and education access, unemployment and discrimination.

Tough political terrain for women:

The political space is not favourable for women politicians as both those in the ruling party and in opposition who are against the presidential third term are attacked or killed.

Despite the repressive nature of the state, women human right defenders (WHRDs) have remained active in voicing their positions for peace. The May 10th women's led march demonstrates the power of WHRDs to mobilise and collectively push for peace and democracy in Burundi¹. A global review of the implementation of UNSCR1325 after 15 years found that the participation of women at all levels is key to operational effectiveness, success and sustainability of peace processes and peace building efforts. Therefore the participation of the women of Burundi in the ongoing efforts is important in order to achieve lasting peace.

1 Urgent Action Fund Africa (November, 2015) Synthesis Paper on the Crisis in Burundi



Understanding the Burundi Crisis

05

To better understand the crisis and develop a robust strategy the women worked in groups to identify the problems and underlying reasons.

There was consensus that the problem stems from bad governance, weak leadership, lack of development, exclusion, poverty, insecurity from political/ethnic massacres and impunity. These are a result of inadequate implementation of existing laws, a weak justice system, ineffective demobilization, an unhealthy political environment, no separation of power, corruption, lack of respect for the constitution, lack of political dialogue and non-implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement.

It was agreed that Burundi suffers from increasing insecurity that risks spreading to the whole country and the region if immediate action is not taken. The insecurity is characterized by the politico-ethnic massacres, abuse of power by members of the security forces, armed militia, rape, kidnapping, torture and high levels of human rights violations.

The fear of ethnicity-based confrontations requires dialogue among the different stakeholders to propel the country towards peace and sustainable development. By not addressing structural exclusions conflicts reoccur and the crisis was fuelled. The culture of impunity and a loss of values (ubuntu, dignity, and truth) have led to several crimes impoverishing most of the population.

The current Burundi leadership has failed to adhere to democratic principles such as the freedom of speech and association, political pluralism and good governance. With increased political intolerance, the space for dialogue is closed and those opposed to the 3rd term or the current government are persecuted.

The Arusha agreement calls for the respect of principles of accountability and responsibility, which have unfortunately not been a priority for leaders since the first post-transition elections. With the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the implementation of a series of reforms, the question of impunity should have been resolved along with the issue of accountability and responsibility. However, as in many peace processes the major issue for the parties was power sharing; which was not well thought through and caused dissatisfaction among different political groups. Going forward the Arusha Agreement should be the basis and the reference for future negotiations, as it includes essential elements of justice and dignity.

Women's Vision for Burundi

06

'I am on a long journey, the road ahead is long; longer than what we have covered, but I am determined to continue and complete this journey. I am in this revolution to rebuild Burundi for all and for the future generation.'

Women attending the meeting shared their vision for Burundi, why they were involved and what they want to achieve. This process was important to galvanize the different expectations and goals of individuals, for the group to enhance teamwork and to develop a common vision.

Women joined the movement to contribute to conflict resolution and ensure peaceful resolution of the conflict, in Burundi and all of Africa.

The current conflict has given Burundi a negative image globally and women want to renew Burundians' hope and work towards restoring the image of a beautiful country with beautiful people.

Members of the MFFPs are determined to change the perception that women do not have space at the peace table, building on the successes of diverse women's engagement in the Arusha peace process. Women resolved that their movement must be inclusive, and work across political, ethnic and religious boundaries towards a common vision, which is what distinguishes women from men.

Women resolved to develop and adopt a strategic, sustainable approach to conflict mitigation and not a reactionary approach.

Women need a new set of tools to effectively participate and engage with subjective parties to the conflict such as conflict analysis skills, confidence building, speaking politically, and communications skills that will enable the movement to present a common undiluted message.

The visioning and strategy development session resulted in the following medium and long-term priority areas

- * **Immediate cessation of hostilities** – Stop the violence by pushing for a rapid intervention force to restore calm and protect the population in line with UNSCR 1325.
- * **Inclusive dialogue in a neutral country** – with an equal representation of women and men equally and effectively participating in the peace making process.

- * **Putting in place provisional institutions with a mandate of transformation** – Affirmative institutions looking at the peace agreements in Arusha; restoration of the rule of law, immediate return of refugees and IDPs, re-establishment of media and CSOs, freedom of political and opinion prisoners; and launching of a national dialogue to restore the social fabric.
- * **Launch the Strategic Plan for Development** - including a call to review the land policy on management, appropriation, as a tool for development and to prevent misuse especially since land is a key element for reconciliation.

Logo :



Vision Statement:

A peaceful and prosperous nation where women and men take equal responsibility in governance and development

Mission Statement:

Contribute to effective integration of the Barundikazi in political, social and economic governance based on the ethics for durable peace.

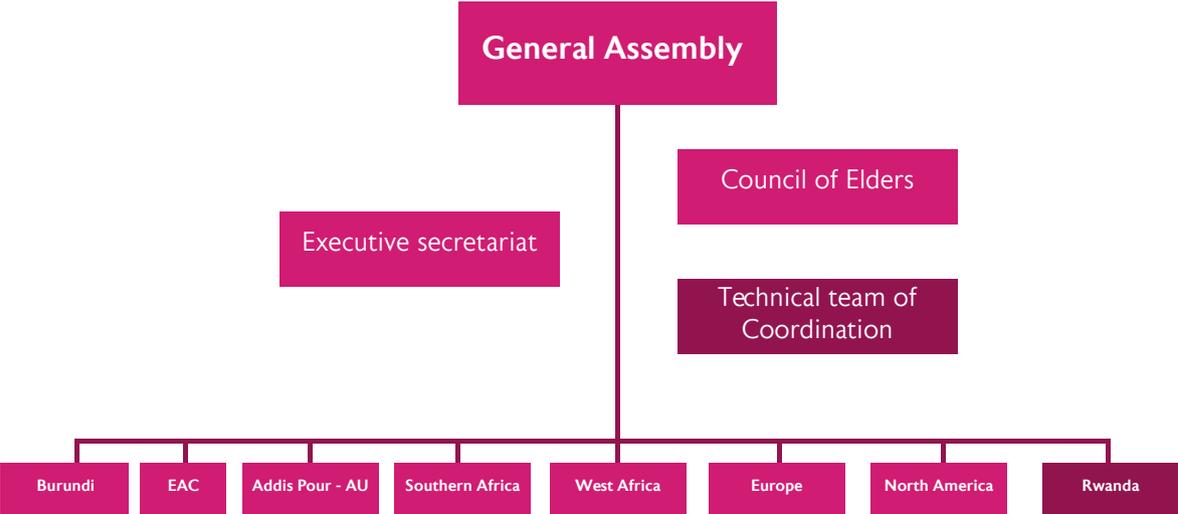
Goal:

Reinforce women and girls role in a peaceful and prosperous state

Objectives

- * *Contribute to the strengthening of lasting peace through conflicts prevention, conflict management and the protection of citizens.*
- * *Contribute to the social, political, economic, environmental and technological empowerment of girls and women of Burundi*
- * *Contribute to social change by promoting sociocultural values in favour of ethics, fairness and justice.*
- * *To influence policies and their application in line with the legal, political and international human rights frameworks through a Think-Tank operating at the national, regional and international levels.*

Proposed Organizational Structure



Strategic Interventions

- * *Advocacy and networking*
- * *Humanitarian assistance*
- * *Research and documentation to influence policy*
- * *Capacity building*

07

*“The Arusha
peace accord
provides a
framework
for moving
forward”*

A Critical Analysis of the Arusha Peace Agreement: Repositioning women’s engagement in the current peace process for Burundi African Center for Strategic Studies, USA

Women have always been active in resolving conflicts, in peace building processes and fighting for the rights of citizens. African women were very active in fighting colonialism, it is no surprise that the women of Burundi have braced up to begin the process of enabling a peace talk between the warring parties in the Burundi crisis. The Burundi women’s movement, represent the un-sung heroines that have fought to maintain peace in the country.

The current crisis in Burundi is a continuation of the crisis that started in the 1960s. The Burundi Peace Accord was strongly anchored in the spirit of previous peace agreements challenging the culture of impunity and violence guided by reputable Africans such as Joseph Butiku, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela, among others. Women were advised to look at the root causes of the conflict, look beyond the agreement to derive sound solutions and question their own ethics as leaders.

In conclusion, it was agreed that three key issues should be focused on, ethics, inclusion and demanding for accountable leadership. With no alternative to a negotiated settlement, the Arusha Peace Accord provides the framework for moving forward and it is therefore important to update the Arusha protocol and ensure safeguards that prevent abuse of rights.

08

Engagement with Regional Women Leaders in Peace and Security

The Burundi women interacted with women from Rwanda, Kenya, DRC and South Sudan over two days. Regional participants worked in groups with the Burundi women to review the structure of their organization and organizing; and to review identified problems, strategies and priorities in the outcome document for lobby advocacy.



What must we do to resolve the identified problems?

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
<p>1. Protection of the population against massacres and genocide : Deployment of a neutral power of the protection and the prevention for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a favourable environment for dialogue among Burundians • Dismantle militia groups and mercenaries • Contribute to the reform and professionalization of the defense and security entities <p>2. Begin inclusive negotiations in a neutral place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore the media and the civil society • Strengthen the participation of women and youth • Prioritise citizens' interests(no immunity for parties in conflict) <p>3. Setting up transitional institutions with vetted women and men led by a personality who is eligible to contest the next elections</p>	<p>1. Halt the violence by putting in place an intervention force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and observe the cases of rape, extra judiciary executions, kidnappings • Contribute to creating an environment suitable for citizens' protection • Contribute to the re-opening of a space for media and civil society • Contribute to the re-establishment of the state of law <p>2. No recognition of the elections by setting up an inclusive and frank dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of constitutional order • The re-organization and restructuring of the security power in accordance with the Arusha Agreement • The disarmament of militia • Reparation for refugees and displaced people • Psychological support of victims and survivors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application of Affirmative Action 2. Setting up the CVR 3. Setting up a group of experts 4. Before the elections, take the time to heal the wounds 5. Plead for a quick-release of intervention mission 6. Contracts of performance in the public services <p>Who will resolve the problem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Burundian population • Group of experts • Partnership • Alliance and friends of Burundi <p>What do we need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination • Engagement • Collaboration • Expertise • Reinforcement of technical and normative capabilities 	<p>1. Return to legality : Restoration of the Constitution and the Arusha Agreement</p> <p>Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to analyze the Arusha Accord • Sincere and inclusive dialogue • Setting up of an inclusive and neutral government • Partnership with the EAC, mediation team, AU and UN • Respect of the anti-corruption strategy • Respect of the separation between political and technical positions • The promotion of leadership • Promotion of a culture of accountability • Return to a State of Rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish rule of law • Ensure compliance with the Arusha Agreement • Revise the appointment's mechanism of the constitutional institutions • Guarantee freedom of the judiciary and press • Strengthen ethical leadership 	<p>3 Transitional Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technocratic transitional government led by a personality selected through a consensual, unifying and clear process who will be unable to present himself for election. • Effective inclusion of women <p>Long term actions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and improvement of all public and economic sectors • Re-defining skills and ethical leadership • Re-evaluation of the Arusha Peace Agreement • Setting up and strengthening the CVR • Reintegration and reparation of refugees • Revision of the land policy <p>How are we going to do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental renewal of mindsets • Civic education • Setting up mechanisms of mutual aid such as cooperatives 		<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put an end to impunity • Reopening of suspended media and CSO • Try and prosecute individuals behind the crimes • Dismantle militias • Restore unity within security forces • Restore trust between the security forces and the population by : • Campaign of disarmament • Moral chats • Advocacy for the resumption of cooperation • Partnership with friendly countries and international organizations • Freedom of the judiciary • Eradication of impunity • Separation of power • Restore unity and social cohesion

Advocacy Engagements

09

During the meeting a number of key leaders were identified for further engagement to advocate for women's participation and call for the cessation of hostilities. Two crucial meetings were then organized with the EAC General Secretary and the Chief Mediator. In addition a press conference was held to spread the message of peace and speak about women's position on the conflict and the need for their inclusion in the proposed peace process.

Meeting with the Ambassador Sezibera, General Secretary of the EAC

The meeting with the General Secretary was aimed at creating an entry point for the women to engage with the EAC. During the meeting women shared their vision, objectives, priorities and the need for the peace dialogue to involve women. Amb. Sezibera appreciated efforts of women to put forward strategies to address the Burundi crisis. He described the pain of watching the terrible evolution of the Burundi crisis when only two years ago, he had warned the region of the imminence of the situation. He also regretted the slow procedures of intervention by the EAC but reassured participants of future engagement to end the crisis. He called on Burundians to take the lead in proposing solutions to the crisis and congratulated women for setting the pace in this direction.



Concerning the participation of women in the negotiations, he committed to ensure their inclusion and advised women to expand their membership to all categories of women to avoid potential protests. During the meeting, news on the AU decision to send an intervention force made up of 5000 men and women to Burundi was received and this greatly uplifted women's spirits.

Meeting with Hon. Kiyonga, Minister of Defense and Chief Mediator

After introductions the president of the group presented the position paper and the priorities of the Barundikazi regarding the Burundi crisis and women's will to fully participate in the negotiations. The Mediator commended women's timely initiative and informed of the evolution of the peace process, the planned meetings in Bujumbura with the representatives of 14 groups, and in Kampala with representatives of opposition groups. He explained that the talks had delayed due to lack of political will to hold the dialogue under the pretext that most of opposition leaders could be associated with the coup d'état. He revealed the dates for the start of the dialogue (28th of December 2015) and



committed to guarantee the participation of women, sending the invitations to MFFPS.

Press Conference Calling For Women's Participation in the Burundi Peace Talks

Following the meeting with the Mediator a press conference was held to present the outcome. The main requests were directed at the government of Burundi, the AU, EAC and international community. Women highlighted the fact that demobilization, reintegration and reconciliation never happened after the previous crisis and neither did security sector reform, leaving significant gaps in the post conflict era. The call drew its mandate from international and regional frameworks such as the African Protocol and the UNSCR1325 to demand for women's participation in all processes for peace in Burundi and for the UN and the AU to provide protection to civilians and stop the mass atrocities.

The press conference was featured on different news outlets including

NTV: - English: <https://youtu.be/pG83e4i53I0>

Luganda: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m39EFGFz4_M

BBC :-<http://bbc.in/1NGvcuu>



Outcome of the Meetings

The following areas of intervention were identified;

- * *Engage with the African Union during the AU HoS summit in January 2016 through the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign.*
- * *Build regional capacity to respond to crisis, by establishing or re-energizing a women's think tank on peace and security.*
- * *Galvanize women in the East African Community to support Burundi women to bring the warring parties to participate in the peace talks through a regional women's summit that issues a strong statement.*

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Beyond the Kampala Meeting

After the Kampala meeting the leadership of MFFPS continued to engage at different levels and to ensure the implementation of their short-term plan.

- * ***Launch of the Peace talks in Kampala:*** Six members of the group were invited to the launch of the Peace Dialogue in Kampala by Hon. Kiyonga. The leader of the group made a presentation based on the outcomes of the meeting, mainly demanding for the dialogue to be inclusive

- * **The African Union Heads of State Summit:** In January, one of the women was supported to participate and present the outcome from the December meeting. This was during the Gender is My Agenda Campaign meeting of women's rights organizations. The presentation called for the protection of civilians and demanded the African Union and East African Community to send a standby force to Burundi to protect civilians. As a result, the final recommendations of the GIMAC to the Head of States reiterated the need to ensure the inclusion of women in peace processes in Africa; and called for the protection of civilians. Specifically called on 'the African Union to accelerate the implementation of the Communiqué of the 565th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council to immediately intervene in response to the grave circumstances and crimes against humanity inflicted on the Burundian population'.

During the Heads of State Summit, the women were able to meet with key leaders attending the AU Summit including; the Special Envoy to the AU Chair on Women, Peace and Security; the Special Envoy to the United States on the Great Lakes Region; the Ambassador of France to the AU, the Australia envoy to the AU in Burundi, and the United Kingdom Ambassador to the AU. Through the Special Envoy to the AU Chair on Women, Peace and Security the women were able to meet with the AU Chair to lobby her to support sending of a standby force to Burundi.

- * **The East African Community Summit:** Two representatives of the group visited the EAC legislative assembly demanding for their intervention in the Burundi situation. During the period the women discovered that Burundi was not on the EAC agenda. Subsequently they held a press conference demanding that the issue of Burundi is discussed during the summit. As a result Burundi was included in the agenda, it was during the discussions that the leadership of the mediation was taken from Uganda to Tanzania and former President Mkapa assigned as the Mediator.
- * **United Nations Security Council:** In April representative of the Women and Girls Movement for Peace and Security in Burundi addressed the UNSG on the UNSCR 2279. The aim was to lobby the SG to keep focus on the need for the protection of the population and propose strong actions to that effect. The statement noted the efforts of the UNSC and called for more effort towards deploying on ground.
- * **Dialogue with President Mkapa, Mediator:** In May two group representatives were invited by President Mkapa to Arusha as he was consulting different groups to inform the peace dialogue. The women continue to advocate for women's participation and the protection of civilians, including prosecution of crimes against humanity. There are no fixed dates for the actual dialogue. However, President Mkapa has expressed commitment to include women in the dialogue.



Conclusion

The meeting of the Burundi women achieved the set objectives of enabling women to meet and develop a common vision and a strategy for engagement in the proposed peace process for Burundi. Women were energized as the space enabled them to reflect on their experiences and perspectives on the conflict also helping to address some of the traumas. Special yoga sessions helped to deal with the stress and tensions associated with conflict and fleeing from difficult situations. While we cannot claim to have healed everyone, the process has contributed to an extent in dealing with post conflict trauma as exhibited in the energies among the women at the end of the meeting.



Experience has shown that the journey to have the women of Burundi participate in the peace process would be long and accompanied with a number of challenges. Challenges of the responsible systems and structures; lack of understanding of the need to engage with women who are often viewed as not party to the conflict; a lack of understanding that those affected by conflict have important roles to play in building the peace; and of regional and national institutions not respecting international human rights frameworks calling for women's participation.

In these early stages we need to continue to support Burundi women to ensure they achieve the set objectives and the desired goal of peace for all as well as a return to normalcy for all institutions to sustainably start national reconstruction.

“In these early stages we need to continue to support Burundi women to ensure they achieve the desired goal of peace for all”

Annexes

Burundi Women for Peace - Agenda

#	Activity	Objective	Deadline	Lead	Input from
1	Acquire a temporary office in Kigali	Provide a secure space for women leaders in exile in Rwanda to continue their work	1-Jan	Peggy Kagwire	Marie Louise BARICAKO and Immaculee Hunja
2	Lobby for the inclusion of women in political dialogue	Concerns of women taken into consideration during the dialogue and improve the participation of women in the search of peace and security	January 2016	Marie Louise BARICAKO	MABOBORI Catherine and Natacha Songore
3	Undertake advocacy mission to the EAC leaders	Sensitize the EAC leaders on their collective responsibility to find a solution to the Burundi crisis	January 2016	Marie Louise BARICAKO	Catherine MABOBORI and Peggy Kwagire
4	Solidarity visits to the refugees camps in Rwanda, DRC and Tanzania	Enquire about the concerns of refugees, especially women and children and advocate for assistance	February 2016	Marie Claire NAHIMANA	Immaculate Hunja et Justine NKURUNZIZA
5	Follow up of recommendations and decisions of partners committed in finding solutions to the Burundi Crisis	Encourage the UNPSC and the AU and other partners to implement their decisions on Burundi to end the circle of violence and the return of the state of law in Burundi	Permanent	Marie Louise	Juliette NIJIMBERE and Justine NKURUNZIZA
6	Undertake missions of mobilization political, civil society and women from the Parliament in countries hosting Burundian refugees	Encourage women of the region to play a positive role in finding a lasting solution for the crisis in Burundi and to seek support for the actions of our movement	March 2016	Marie Louise	Hunja et Justine
7	Put in place a Think Tank Group to serve as support to the delegates of the dialogue	To ensure that women concerns are well documented	January 2016	Marie Louise	Vestine MBUNDAGU, Immaculate Hunja

#	Activity	Objective	Deadline	Lead	Input from
8	Organize meetings of Burundian women of all categories on the strategies of sustainability of peace and security in Burundi and of trainings on the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership and governance on peace and security, • lobbying and advocacy, • preventive diplomacy • mediation and negotiation, etc... 	To ensure lasting peace for all	February 2016	Marie Louise	Catherine MABOBORI and NDACAYISABA Goretì
9	Constitute and strengthen a pool of women experts in terms of lobbying, preventive diplomacy, mediation and negotiation, etc	To participate in conflict mediation and conflict resolution	March 2016	Catherine MABOBORI	JUSTINE et Jeanne Bitsure
10.	Follow-up the dialogue and regularly publish women's report on its development, eventual blockades and proposals of settlement if need be,	To inform women and implement gender integration	Permanent	Natacha SONGORE	Agnes NINDORERA



H.E. Ban Ki Moon,
UN Secretary General
New York

April 7th, 2016

Your Excellency,

Following the adoption of the Resolution 2279 by the Security Council on the alarming situation prevailing in Burundi, the Burundi *Women and Girls Movement for Peace and Security (MFFPS)* has the honor to draw your kind attention to the following.

The MFFPS welcomes the above mentioned resolution 2279 and the request made to the Secretary-General to present options for a strengthened United Nations presence in Burundi within 15 days.

The MFFPS also welcomes the Resolution's objectives which are to:

- Support African efforts to facilitate emergence from the crisis in Burundi. In doing so, the Council would help to forge a genuine and inclusive dialogue among Burundians;
- Bolster the United Nations presence in the country and strengthen the Special Adviser's team who stated "We need the United Nations to be more present on the ground", adding that "the Council should be able to follow the situation closely" ; and
- Preserve and consolidate the gains of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, and do everything possible to help Burundians resume their journey to peace.

The MFFPS thanks the Security Council for its continued interest in the Burundi situation and welcomes its efforts to support the United Nations, the African Union, the Last African Community and other regional partners to engage in a process that will help resolving the crisis in Burundi. It is in that spirit that the MFFPS awaits eagerly the launch of an inclusive negotiation between all concerned national stakeholders under the mediation of H.E. K. Museveni with the facilitation of H.E. Mkapa both mandated by the Last African Community and endorsed by the African Union.

The MFFPS hopes that the content of the unanimously adopted UN Security Council Resolution 2279 will be heard by the Government of burundi and that the latter will uphold its national and international obligations. The MFFPS hopes to see it participate in a genuine and inclusive externally facilitated dialogue with all parties.

The MFFPS takes note with satisfaction of the Security Council's own account in its preamble to Resolution 2279 and welcomes the commitment of the UN to consult with all concerned parties as it increases its presence in Burundi. The MFFPS wishes to make sure that every opportunity is used to push for the quick end of the indiscriminate attacks against civilians, the gross human rights violations, particularly, sexual violence committed against women, men and children as well as the continued extra judiciary executions of opponents and all the other numerous atrocities committed against the population.

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**H. E. President John Pombe Magufuli
President of the United Republic of Tanzania**

April 2016

Dear Sir,

RE: The Leadership and Support of the Government of Tanzania in Finding a Lasting Solution to the Situation in Burundi.

We, the undersigned, hereby congratulate Your Excellency on the extension of your term as the Chairperson of the East African Community (EAC) following the conclusion of the 17th ordinary summit of the EAC Heads of State Summit in Arusha, and we look forward to Your Excellency's leadership in the advancement of the region in the coming year.

Your Excellency, we call to your attention our concerns around the ongoing crisis in the Republic of Burundi. We warmly welcome the appointment of Former President H.E. Benjamin Mkapa as facilitator of the mediation process and are hopeful that this will complement ongoing mediation efforts to end the crisis. With this, we appeal for much needed confidence building measures to prevent the deterioration of the situation on the ground, and alleviate the suffering of Burundian citizens. Your Excellency, we are gravely concerned that the recent escalation of politically motivated attacks and mounting civilian, police and army casualties jeopardizes the search for a lasting solution to the crisis, as called for by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on March 9, 2016.

Your Excellency, Burundi is now on the brink of a humanitarian and economic crisis, which may further exacerbate the already tense situation in the country. An inclusive dialogue process to find a political solution to the crisis is urgently needed to prevent the suffering of civilians from political violence and women/girls from sexual violence, the deterioration of the economic situation in the country which may have negative long-term repercussions considering the huge number of the displaced, and the spread of the crisis across the region. We therefore urgently appeal to Your Excellency as the Chairperson of the EAC, and in coordination with the African Union and the International Community to create a conducive environment for an Inclusive Dialogue process by;

- **Urging the Government of Burundi**, as a confidence building measure, to fulfil goodwill gestures committed to in February 2016, including but not limited to: the release of detainees, lifting restrictions on the operations of the media and the withdrawal of arrest warrants against civil society representatives;
- **Requesting a commitment from the Government of Burundi to guarantee the safety and security of all stakeholders who wish to participate in inclusive dialogue - throughout the process and thereafter;**

- **Encouraging the Government of Burundi to accept an international protection force** with a mandate to monitor the security situation, the promotion of respect for human rights, and advance rule of law;
- **For the peace dialogue to generate consensus**, it is important to involve all the actors showing interest and ability to contribute to a lasting solution. Including women, Burundi Youths, Civil Society Organizations and Trade Unions to ensure the process bring to light the issues at the heart of the current situation.
- Urging all stakeholders of the ongoing Burundian crisis – both in and outside the country – to participate in, and commit to a clear timeline for an inclusive and peaceful dialogue grounded in the spirit and principles of the Arusha Accord, and at an agreed neutral location conducive for the full participation of all stakeholders;
- **Reiterating that the inclusive dialogue addresses the root causes of the crisis** including but not limited to matters relating to the human rights violations, accountability of perpetrators, freedom of the press and civil society engagement space, land ownership, reform of public institutions, strengthening the rule of law and longer-term reconciliation initiatives;
- **Commissioning the establishment of an independent verification mechanism**, led by the EAC, **to monitor the progress of all parties in fulfilling their obligations as agreed**, with a clear procedure to resolve any breaches of agreements.

Your Excellency, it is our sincere hope that under your stewardship, the EAC will deliver a lasting political situation to restore peace in Burundi and in our beloved region, East Africa.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.
Signed:

Cc:
H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
H.E. Benjamin Mkapa
H.E Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma



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