



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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19 May 2005

### BDI 100039.FE

Burundi: Situation of members of the Tutsi ethnic group, including members of the Union for National Progress (Union nationale pour le progrès, UPRONA); the measures taken by the Tutsi government to ensure their protection against extremist Hutu militias (April 2002-May 2005)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Established in November 2001 under the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (*Political Parties of the World* 2005, 97; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, intro.; Fondation Hirondelle 5 Nov. 2001; AFP 16 Dec. 2001; *ibid.* 1 Nov. 2001), Burundi's current transitional government shares powers between the country's two ethnic groups (*Political Parties of the World* 2005, 97; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 3; Fondation Hirondelle 5 Nov. 2001; AFP 16 Dec. 2001; *ibid.* 1 Nov. 2001). In fact, 14 of the 26 cabinet ministers are members of predominantly Hutu parties and 12 ministers are from predominantly Tutsi parties (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 3; Fondation Hirondelle 5 Nov. 2001).

*Country Reports 2004* indicated that most transitional government positions are occupied by representatives of the Union for National Progress (Union nationale pour le progrès, UPRONA) and of the Front for Democracy in Burundi (Front pour la démocratie du Burundi, FRODEBU), the country's largest political parties (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 3). The UPRONA is the main Tutsi party (IRIN 27 Oct. 2003; *Afrique-Express* 29 Jan. 2003). However, Charles Mukasi, President of the UPRONA's radical wing, spent [translation] "nearly two months" in prison in late 2002 for insulting the Burundian president, and was arrested again in January 2003 and charged with [translation] "insulting the head of state" (*ibid.* ). A few months later, in October 2003, he was arrested a third time; the presidential police accused him of "sedition" and detained him for 10 days (IRIN 27 Oct. 2003).

The following information was provided by a journalist in Bujumbura working for Net Press, a Burundian news agency, during a 16 May 2005 telephone interview.

Two UPRONA factions exist today. The first consists mainly of Tutsis, but the president, Charles Mukasi, is Hutu. This radical wing opposed the Arusha Agreement that was signed between rival parties in 2000. This agreement was the basis for the transitional government and its respective institutions (National Assembly and Senate). However, members of this faction do not recognize the legitimacy of these institutions or the government authorities.

For their part, the government authorities describe members of the radical UPRONA faction as [translation] "troublemakers" who threaten national peace, unity and reconciliation. This has resulted in several conflicts between security forces and UPRONA members, particularly during demonstrations organized by the faction without police authorization.

The second UPRONA faction is headed by Jean-Baptiste Manwangari. Representatives of this faction occupy many influential positions in various institutions (government, National Assembly, Senate). Moreover, members of this faction are from various ethnic groups.

With regard to Tutsi security, since the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie - Forces pour la défense de la démocratie, CNDD-FDD) established the transitional institutions in November 2003, only the Hutu militia of the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People-National Liberation Front (Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération, PALIPEHUTU-FNL) has continued the armed struggle. However, attacks from this militia claim both Hutu and Tutsi victims.

The executive secretary of the Burundian Human Rights League (Ligue ITEKA), affiliated with the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), provided the following information during a 16 May 2005 telephone interview. The Tutsis are not the only people targeted by PALIPEHUTU-FNL attacks. This extremist Hutu militia is particularly active in the region surrounding the capital, Bujumbura (rural Bujumbura province) (see also IRIN 16 May 2005), and in the provinces of Cibitoke and Bubanza. Their attacks also target Bujumbura's peripheral neighbourhoods, such as Musaga, Kanyosha and Gihosha, which are inhabited by members of various ethnic groups.

In some regions of the country, most Tutsis still live in camps for displaced persons that were established in 1993 after the Tutsi massacres which followed the death of Melchior Ndadaye, the former Hutu president. These camps are guarded by soldiers and the [translation] "very traumatized" occupants still refuse to return to their homes, even though the conflict has been resolved in these areas.

According to *Country Reports 2004*, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that there were 145,034 long-term, internally displaced persons living in 170 sites by the end of 2004; the majority of these people were Tutsis who still depended on the protection of soldiers (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2d).

The ITEKA executive secretary said that, to his knowledge, UPRONA members are not ill-treated (Ligue ITEKA 16 May 2005). He explained that UPRONA members are very influential and that they occupy important positions in transitional institutions (ibid.). The ITEKA executive secretary said that certain leaders of the radical UPRONA faction led by Charles Mukasi are often arrested by security services for organizing unauthorized demonstrations or for making statements that the authorities consider [translation] "divisionist" (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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#### Additional Sources Consulted

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**Internet sites, including** : AllAfrica, Amnesty International, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group (ICG), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Ligue ITEKA, MISNA, ReliefWeb, United States Department of State.

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