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Burundi: Insecurity that followed the release of former Hutu rebels of the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie, CNDD); occupations of these former rebels after being released

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According to the Paris magazine *Jeune Afrique*, political prisoners were released as part of the national reconciliation program announced by the government in 2005 (15 Jan. 2006). In January 2006, Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted that

[e]arly in 2005, the forces of the CNDD-FDD [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)] and the former Burundian Armed Forces were integrated into the new National Defense Force (FDN). There was no vetting to eliminate officers or soldiers implicated in past violations of human rights or international humanitarian law, some of whom continued in positions of responsibility. (18 Jan. 2006)

In January 2006, *Jeune Afrique* stated that a judge had authorized [translation] "the parole of 673 political prisoners, including former military members involved in the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye in 1993" (15 Jan. 2006). *Jeune Afrique* added that this ruling might affect a total of 8,000 detained Hutus and Tutsis (ibid.). According to HRW, "[m]ore than 16,000 former combatants have been demobilized but many of them rejoined the new army" (18 Jan. 2006). Other former combatants (soldiers, former rebel combatants and members of the Guardians of the Peace [Gardiens de la paix], a government-sponsored militia), having no prospects of employment when their military activities ended, turned to crime (HRW 18 Jan. 2006). According to the Burundian Human Rights League ITEKA (Ligue burundaise des droits de l'Homme ITEKA) as quoted in an article that appeared in the French newspaper *L'Humanité* on 3 January 2008, [translation] "acts of armed banditry are reported every day, and there is also wide circulation of weapons within the civilian population."

According to some sources, the main causes of the insecurity in Burundi are the conflict between the government and the Forces for National Liberation (Forces nationales de libération, FNL) [also known as the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People-Forces for National Liberation (Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération, PALIPEHUTU-FNL)] (Burundi Réalités 23 Jan. 2008a; *L'Humanité* 3 Jan. 2008; *Jeune Afrique* 29 July 2007) and [translation] "institutional deadlock," that is, the inability of President Pierre Nkurunziza to [translation] "form a government that includes representatives chosen by the opposition, as required by the Constitution" (ibid.). In his 2008 New Year's speech, President Pierre Nkurunziza also noted this [translation] "paralysis that has seized institutions" (Burundi Réalités 1 Jan. 2008).

In September 2006, the government signed cease-fire agreements with each of Burundi's rebel

groups, including the FNL (US 24 Jan. 2008; AP 20 Dec. 2007; HRW 11 Jan. 2007). According to the Associated Press (AP), no agreement was reached with the FNL on certain important issues, such as the release of prisoners and the political future of rebel officers in the government (20 Dec. 2007). HRW reports that, following the cease-fire, FNL combatants continued to [HRW English version] "rob and extort money and goods from civilians in and around the capital" (11 Jan. 2007).

In November 2007, the Burundi news agency (Agence burundaise de presse, ABP) reported a "resurgence of insecurity and the massive violation of human rights," while members of Parliament were calling on the government and the FNL to implement the peace agreements that had been signed (28 Nov. 2007). According to an article published by the Burundi Réalités news agency on 1 February 2008, [translation] "independent sources" stated that the national intelligence services had re-armed former CNDD-FDD combatants in order to [translation] "drive out PALIPEHUTU-FNL supporters and political opponents."

Further, according to Radio publique africaine as quoted by Burundi Réalités, [translation] "dissidents of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL movement had missions to eliminate all those who do not share the ideology of the party in power," the CNDD-FDD (25 Jan. 2008). According to an article published by Burundi Réalités, the leader of the Carama neighbourhood of Bujumbura stated that there is [translation] "an unhealthy climate among groups who do not share the same political allegiance" and that [translation] "lists of people to be killed may even be drawn up" (18 Jan. 2008). Another Burundi Réalités article notes that [translation] "there have been numerous targeted assassinations in the neighbourhoods of northern Bujumbura, despite a strong police presence" (23 Jan. 2008a). According to Burundi Réalités, in some Bujumbura neighbourhoods, such as Kamenge and Kinama, where [translation] "demobilized CNDD-FDD members, FNL members, ... regular criminals and the police" work side by side, a [translation] "low-level war" has begun; however, according to the same source, [translation] "it is rare for anyone to be arrested for these murders" (23 Jan. 2008b).

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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