



LIGUE BURUNDAISE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

"ITEKA" association sans but lucratif

Agréée par l'ordonnance ministérielle n°530/0273 du 10 novembre 1994 revoyant l'ordonnance 550/029 du 6 février 1991

Membre affilié de la fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (F.I.D.H)

LBDH/005/2025

Kampala, 21/02/ 2025

Declaration by Ligue Iteka on the militarization of the ruling party's youth: a call to action to prevent mass crimes with genocidal overtones.

Ligue Iteka is outraged by the widespread paramilitary mobilization of the ruling party's youth and expresses its concerns regarding the recruitment of the ruling party's youth into the Burundian armed forces, irrespective the country's legislative texts. The Government of Burundi no longer considers ethnic balance within the security forces as a priority. Ligue Iteka recalls that Burundi has experienced ethnic tensions between the Hutu and the Tutsi, entailing massacres and violence in the past that ended with the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreements and Reconciliation of 2000.

Currently, the country is facing political and security tensions due to its involvement in the internal conflict of the Democratic Republic of Congo, intensified by the capture of some cities in North and South Kivu by the AFC/M23 armed groups and since February 17, 2025, thousands of refugees have been crossing into Burundi for safety.

Ligue Iteka is concerned about the consequences of war in eastern DRC, which could generate instability and insecurity in Burundi, particularly in the border provinces and inside the country. The presence of Congolese refugees, including elements in FARDC uniform, as well as Wazalendo and FDLR genocidal groups, reported in Burundi, could cause social tensions like those observed in eastern DRC.

As a reminder, some Burundian refugees in Rwanda played an important role in the Rwandan genocide against Tutsi in 1994, according to a recent statement by the Rwandan authority.

Ligue Iteka highlights that the media and social media play a crucial role to spread information and messages. Currently, some people are fearlessly spreading messages of hatred and ethnic division, and following the statements of the Burundian president criticizing Rwanda's role in the war in eastern DRC and the inaction of the international community, several meetings have



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been organized between different authorities to raise awareness among the population on a possible attack on Burundi by Rwanda and Uganda. Paramilitary trainings of the Imbonerakure, the ruling party's youth, are accelerating day and night across the country.

Ligue Iteka observes that these speeches are causing ethnic tensions, with messages spread by members of the ruling party inciting hatred and systematic ethnic cleansing within the security forces and in society. These divisions and fragmentations within Burundian society complicate cohesion and reconciliation, risking leading to massive human rights violations that could lead to genocide.

For all of the above, Ligue Iteka recommends:

- **To the President of the Republic of Burundi:** to stop all preparations for the elimination of any person considered to be an opponent, particularly the Tutsi, and the cleansing of the latter in security institutions, while ensuring respect for the Constitution and the Arusha Agreements for peace and reconciliation in this regard;
- **To the Minister of Defense of the Burundi Armed Forces and the Minister of Interior, Community Development and Security:** to fully undertake their role in guaranteeing peace and security for all while protecting territorial integrity;
- **To the Churches:** to continue their commitment and act in synergy for peace and unity for all;
- **To the ruling party:** to rule for all and avoid compromising the future of young people by taking them into conflicts instead of guiding them towards development and peacebuilding activities for a better future;
- **To the opposition parties:** to overcome provocation and advocate for peace, unity, justice and development, which are the only ways to a better future for Burundians;
- **To the entire Burundian community abroad:** to adopt a realistic approach and promote peace and reconciliation rather than continuing to fuel discord with divisive messages that could



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lead the country into a cycle of violence. No ethnic group can eliminate the other and Burundi's problems are not linked to ethnicity;

- **To the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues:** to remain vigilant on the situation in Burundi;
- **To the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide:** to strengthen monitoring and alert to detect warning signs of genocide and work closely with international organizations and civil society to prevent genocide and protect vulnerable populations.
- **To the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi :** to closely monitor the unstable situation in Burundi in this pre-election period and during tensions with neighboring countries, including the DRC and Rwanda;
- **To countries accredited to Burundi:** not to act for their strategic interests, but to use their influence to promote peace and justice for all.

Done in Kampala, 21/02/2025

For Ligue Iteka



Anschaire NIKOYAGIZE

President and Legal Representative