

4. The situation in Burundi

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held four meetings and adopted one resolution in connection with the situation in Burundi. With a view to the elections scheduled for 2015, the Council centred its attention on progress and challenges in the peacebuilding process, discussing, *inter alia*, human rights violations, good governance, the fight against corruption, political violence, transitional justice and the socioeconomic situation.

In extending the mandate of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB)⁶⁴ for a period of one year,⁶⁵ the Council also discussed the eventual transition of the office from a special political mission to a United Nations country team presence.

Briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission

On 5 July 2012, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi and Head of BNUB briefed Council members on both the political and the socioeconomic situation in Burundi. She noted that the country had remained free of large-scale violence, and that the Government had strengthened security throughout the country. Looking ahead to the 2015 elections, she highlighted the need for political parties to function with full freedom and the importance of political dialogue with the extra-parliamentary opposition. While noting institutional progress on human rights, in particular the investigation of sensitive cases by the newly established National Independent Human Rights Commission and the reform of the justice sector — prioritizing the independence of the judiciary and the accountability of magistrates — she also reported patterns of pressure and intimidation of civil society organizations, extrajudicial killings and continuing impunity. On the strengthening of public administration in general, she underlined the improvements in the efficiency of tax collection by the Burundi Revenue Authority and the measures taken towards the implementation of the National Strategy on Good Governance and the Fight

against Corruption. Regarding the socioeconomic situation, she expressed concern over the persistence of food insecurity in many parts of the country and called for the development of alternative livelihoods beyond subsistence agriculture and for strengthening education.⁶⁶ In a similar vein, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission called on the Government of Burundi to engage in active and inclusive dialogue with all political actors with a view to the 2015 elections, and encouraged Burundi to take stronger measures against human rights violations, political violence and impunity, strengthen the National Independent Human Rights Commission, establish transitional justice mechanisms, intensify the fight against corruption, and implement the socioeconomic reintegration programme. He also expressed concern over the socioeconomic situation.⁶⁷ The representative of Burundi stated that his Government had made significant progress in virtually all sectors of the socioeconomic and political life of the country but that, among the remaining challenges, extreme poverty in particular threatened to undermine peace and brought with it the possibility of resurgence of armed conflict.⁶⁸

On 24 January 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General briefed the Council on further progress in consolidating peace and stability in Burundi, suggesting that never before had the country witnessed such a long and uninterrupted period of democratic experience and stability. He commended the Government for continued improvements in mechanisms to fight corruption and build accountability and reported on progress in promoting and protecting human rights, but also pointed to acts of intimidation and factional violence in the context of the political landscape in Burundi. He underlined the need for completing a process of transitional justice, in particular through setting up a truth and reconciliation commission that was viewed as independent, legitimate and credible in the eyes of all Burundians and by the country's international partners. On economic and social development, he reminded Council members that, despite progress, Burundi remained one of the poorest countries in the world and thus in need of

⁶⁴ For more information on BNUB, see part X, sect. II, "Political and peacebuilding missions".

⁶⁵ Resolution 2090 (2013).

⁶⁶ S/PV.6799, pp. 2-5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

significant budgetary support.⁶⁹ Briefing the Council on his recent visit to Burundi, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission identified the priorities in view of the 2015 elections, namely, transitional justice; widening the political space and the democratic culture; the rule of law, human rights and reform of the justice sector; and good governance, fighting corruption and promoting transparency.⁷⁰ The representative of Burundi highlighted the progress made by his country in the democratic processes; in the area of security and stability, where there had been successes in the framework of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the drafting of the National Security Strategy; and in the areas, inter alia, of good governance, the rule of law, human rights and regional integration. As major challenges still to be tackled, he named the socioeconomic situation and the troubling security situation in the subregion as a whole. In particular, he made reference to the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, expressing concern over the risk that it might inflame the entire region.⁷¹

On 22 July 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported on advances in terms of political dialogue. With a view towards the 2015 elections, he referred to a workshop on electoral lessons learned with representatives of all political parties, including several opposition politicians who had been in exile since their boycott of the election of 2010 and who had returned to participate in the workshop. A follow-up workshop had discussed possible revisions to the electoral code. He expressed concern however about the behaviour of some members of the Imbonerakure, the youth league of the ruling party, who had reportedly harassed citizens and committed crimes, allegedly for political reasons. He noted the sensitivity of the question of land disputes arising from the unlawful seizing of land and other assets during the crisis of 1972, and the importance of promoting justice and reconciliation in handling those disputes. On the promulgation of the new press law on 4 June 2013, he expressed concern about the risk of a decline in the freedom of the press, and reported that the Secretary-General had called on the Government to

uphold freedom of expression.⁷² Echoing the Special Representative, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission elaborated on the challenges posed by the Imbonerakure, the new press law and the land question.⁷³ The representative of Burundi, while reporting significant progress in the consolidation of democracy and the resolution of political disputes through dialogue, said that poverty had become so dire that it had turned into a security issue.⁷⁴

Conference of Burundi's Development Partners

On 5 July 2012, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission briefed the Council on the preparations for the Conference of Burundi's Development Partners, to be held on 29 and 30 October 2012 in Geneva, and expressed the intention of the configuration to promote the conference and work to increase the number of partners. At the same time, he urged the Government of Burundi to demonstrate realism in its expectations for the conference in the face of the critical financial situation of many donor States. He also pointed out that without political and institutional progress there could be no socioeconomic progress.⁷⁵

On 24 January 2013, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission called the conference a success, saying that it marked a critical phase in the strengthening and institutionalization of the partnership between the Government of Burundi and its international partners. He said that the trust shown by the partners at the conference should encourage Burundi to continue its efforts to implement reforms in the political, institutional and socioeconomic spheres. At the same time, he asked all donors to honour their pledges and to continue to follow Burundi in its reform efforts.⁷⁶ The representative of Burundi also called the conference an undisputed success and expressed his satisfaction about pledges that had been higher than expected.⁷⁷

On 22 July 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General called the implementation of the promises made at the conference more essential than

⁶⁹ S/PV.6909, pp. 2-5.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 9-11.

⁷² S/PV.7006, pp. 2-6.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁵ S/PV.6799, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁶ S/PV.6909, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

ever.⁷⁸ Similarly, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission called for the implementation of the results of the conference by both the Government and the international community, in the light of the deteriorating financial situation.⁷⁹ The representative of Burundi regretted that the funds pledged at the conference were arriving only slowly, and that extreme poverty had begun to create tensions in Burundi. He therefore asked the Council to facilitate the realization of the pledges made at the conference.⁸⁰

Extension of BNUB and question of its replacement by a United Nations country team

On 5 July 2012, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General recalled that, in May 2012, the Secretary-General had communicated to the Council benchmarks for the eventual transition of BNUB from a special political mission to a regular United Nations country team,⁸¹ and added that BNUB anticipated providing baseline data within six months.⁸² The Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission deplored the fact that the configuration was not involved in or informed about the setting of criteria for the transition of BNUB into a country team.⁸³

On 24 January 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General assessed that sustained United Nations and international political engagement, combined with adequate backing of the country's development strategy, was still required, and that the Secretary-General therefore recommended that the mandate of BNUB be extended for one year. He announced the intention of the Secretary-General to field a strategic assessment mission regarding the future presence of the United Nations in Burundi.⁸⁴ The Chair of the Burundi configuration of the

Peacebuilding Commission argued for a sustained BNUB presence, ideally until 2015.⁸⁵ Conversely, the representative of Burundi argued that, in recognition of the progress made by Burundi, a new framework of cooperation with the United Nations could be achieved through the progressive transformation of BNUB into a United Nations country team in the following 12 months.⁸⁶

On 13 February 2013, the Council, by resolution [2090 \(2013\)](#), took note of the progress made by Burundi towards peace, stability and development, while expressing concern about the continued human rights violations and restrictions on civil liberties. In extending the mandate of BNUB until 15 February 2014, the Council requested the mission to focus on and to support the Government of Burundi in promoting and facilitating political dialogue in view of the 2015 elections; strengthening judicial and parliamentary institutions; supporting efforts to fight impunity; promoting and protecting human rights; supporting efforts for socioeconomic development and advocating for resource mobilization; and providing support to Burundi's regional integration.

Speaking after the vote, the representative of Burundi called the inclusion of language on extrajudicial executions, politically motivated assassinations, lack of public freedoms and the International Criminal Court unfair, given the efforts his country had made in areas such as human rights and combating impunity. He furthermore expressed his disappointment that the official request of his Government to transform BNUB gradually into a country team over 12 months was not mentioned in the resolution.⁸⁷

On 22 July 2013, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission repeated his earlier recommendation for the continued presence of BNUB at least until the 2015 elections.⁸⁸

⁷⁸ [S/PV.7006](#), p. 2.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸¹ See [S/2012/310](#).

⁸² [S/PV.6799](#), p. 5.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁴ [S/PV.6909](#), pp. 5-6.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸⁷ [S/PV.6918](#), pp. 2-3.

⁸⁸ [S/PV.7006](#), p. 9.

Meetings: the situation in Burundi

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against- abstaining)</i>
S/PV.6799 5 July 2012			Burundi	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi and Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	All invitees	
S/PV.6909 24 January 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi (S/2013/36)		Burundi (Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation)	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	All invitees	
S/PV.6918 13 February 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi (S/2013/36)	Draft resolution submitted by Argentina, France, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, United States (S/2013/87)	Burundi		Burundi	Resolution 2090 (2013) (15-0-0)
S/PV.7006 22 July 2013			Burundi	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	All invitees	

5. The situation in Sierra Leone

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held nine meetings and adopted two resolutions and three presidential statements in connection with the situation in Sierra Leone. It received four briefings by the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) and four by the Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. The President and the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone also briefed the Council on the final stages of the work of the Court.

At its meetings, the Council discussed the preparations for the presidential, parliamentary and local elections of 17 November 2012. The Council also discussed the political and security situation as well as the peacebuilding support activities in Sierra Leone. The mandate of UNIPSIL⁸⁹ was extended twice, for one year each time, the final extension being until 31 March 2014.⁹⁰

In May 2012, the Security Council visited Sierra Leone among other countries during its mission to West Africa.⁹¹

Presidential, parliamentary and local elections

On 22 March 2012, the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNIPSIL briefed the Council on the developments in the country and stressed that, in order to consolidate the “exceptional successes” that Sierra Leone had had since its civil war, it was crucial that the international community and the Security Council continued their support and vigilance, focusing in particular on the presidential, parliamentary and local council elections to be held on 17 November 2012. On the preparation for the elections, he emphasized the importance of dialogue between the Government and opposition parties and encouraged senior politicians to meet and openly discuss controversial issues and strive to create an

atmosphere in which the elections were fair and the citizens were able to freely make their own choices without fear of retribution. He also underlined the need to implement the joint communiqué signed by the two main political parties on 2 April 2009, which included the establishment of an independent police complaints commission and support by all political parties of the country’s electoral management bodies. Commending the work of the All Political Parties Youth Association and the All Political Parties Women’s Association, he emphasized the role of cross-party initiatives in preventing violence from arising and raising awareness for a stronger role of women in politics.⁹²

Drawing on the findings of his visit to Sierra Leone in January 2012, the Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission focused in his briefing on the upcoming elections, regional challenges to peacebuilding, and the transition process in the country. He acknowledged that the technical and financial preparations for the elections were on schedule, but underlined that there was a need to foster more open dialogue with political parties and the national electoral institutions. He encouraged political leaders to demonstrate their commitment to free, fair and peaceful political competition and urged political parties to implement the joint communiqué of 2009. He added that the creation of an enabling and favourable political environment should be the immediate priority of UNIPSIL. He said that the Security Council had recently focused on transnational threats to peace and security but that more was needed. He also said that the United Nations Office for West Africa played a vital role in these issues and warranted continued strong support from the Council.⁹³

The representative of Sierra Leone highlighted his Government’s commitment to the consolidation of peace and its intention to engage with all stakeholders with a view to enhancing political dialogue and collective commitment to peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible elections. He stressed the Government’s commitment to democratic governance and the maintenance of the independence of the democratic institutions such as the National Electoral Commission, the Political Parties Registration

⁸⁹ For more information on UNIPSIL, see part X, sect. II, “Political and peacebuilding missions”.

⁹⁰ Resolutions 2065 (2012) and 2097 (2013).

⁹¹ For more information on the Security Council mission to West Africa, see part I, sect. 34, “Security Council mission”.

⁹² S/PV.6739, pp. 2-5.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 5-6.