



## Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT-Burundi)

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### ***CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE 2025 ELECTORAL PROCESS IN BURUNDI***



*Partial view of participants in the June 2025 municipal and legislative elections in Makamba, including CNDD-FDD Secretary General Ndikuriyo Révérien, accompanied by his wife, both smiling and dressed in their party colors (see center), in Makamba in the province of Burunga.*

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## Table of Contents

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	3
0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
0.1. Structure of the work	4
0.2. Brief overview of chapter content	5
0.2.1. Chapter I.	5
0.2.2. Chapter II	6
0.2.3. Chapter III	6
1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	8
CHAPTER I. GENERAL FACTORS INFLUENCING ELECTORAL PROCESSES	10
<b>I.1. The socioeconomic conditions experienced by the population</b>	10
I.2. The environment of political and security governance or the mobilization of sentimental and passionate resources.	12
I.3. The legal framework governing the electoral process	16
CHAPTER II. ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTIONS: PROCESS, RESULTS, AND MANAGEMENT OF RESULTS	19
II.1. The conduct of the elections: polls that were competitive in appearance only.	19
i) Elections for deputies and municipal councilors	19
ii) Senatorial elections	21
iii) Elections for hill and neighborhood councilors	22
II.2. Summary presentation of results	23
i) Election of deputies	23
ii) Municipal elections	23
iii) Senatorial elections	24
iv) The Hill and Neighborhood Elections	24
<b>II.3. Results management</b>	24
CHAPTER III. ANALYSIS OF THE SIGNIFICANT TRENDS IN THE RESULTS OF THESE ELECTIONS	25
III.1. An administrative reorganization of the exclusionary territory	25
III.2. Towards political and institutional hegemony and an authoritarian, exclusionary system	25
III.3. Elections that pose enormous challenges for the country	25
<b>Conclusion</b>	29
All these high hopes were not fulfilled by the 2025 elections. However, without good overall governance promoting internal socio-political cohesion and without good relations at both the regional and international levels, the financing and success of the "2040-2060 vision" will be impossible.	30
<b>Recommendations</b>	30
<b>Bibliography</b>	32

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

- **AGL:** Great Lakes Africa
- **APDR:** Alliance for Peace, Development and Reconciliation
- **CDP:** Council of Patriots
- **CENI:** Independent National Electoral Commission
- **CNL:** National Congress for Liberty
- **CNDD-FDD:** National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy
- **FBU:** Burundian francs
- **FDLR:** Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
- **IMF:** International Monetary Fund
- **FPI:** Fraternité des Patriotes Ineza
- **HDI:** Human Development Index
- **NGO:** Non-Governmental Organization
- **GDP:** Gross Domestic Product
- **TFP:** Technical and Financial Partner
- **SNR:** National Intelligence Service
- **UPRONA:** Union for National Progress

## 0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout 2024 and early 2025, Burundi was preparing for elections. These took place between June and August 2025. As everywhere in Africa, elections are intense moments in life when those in power and those in opposition stake everything, with some experiencing scenarios of life or death, both physical and symbolic. It is this dimension that allows us to assess whether an electoral process heralds prospects for qualitative change, whether possible or impossible.

This analysis focuses on the 2025 electoral process in Burundi. Throughout 2025, Burundi was preparing for elections for deputies, municipal councilors, senators, and hill or neighborhood councilors, while presidential elections are scheduled for 2027. They took place between June and August 2025.

In order to grasp the key lessons to be learned from this electoral process, the analysis adopts a qualitative methodological approach with a predominantly socio-historical focus, divided into three stages.

### 0.1. Structure of the work

First, the analysis considers that voting consists primarily of a combination of electoral behaviors that result from political socialization. Consequently, this first stage, corresponding to the first chapter, reviews the elements that are generally used by electoral political science to understand what influences voters' choices.

In the second stage, corresponding to the second chapter, the analysis then focuses on the elections themselves, presenting the process, the results, and the management of the controversies that resulted from them.

Finally, the analysis concludes by emphasizing the major consequences of these election results, which led to the concentration of all institutional powers in the hands of a single party.

Preceded by an introduction and a methodological framework, the analysis concludes with a conclusion, bibliographical references, and recommendations.

## 0.2. Brief overview of the chapters

### 0.2.1. Chapter I.

Based on relevant studies and conclusions from the Michigan schools (Miller et al., *The Responsible Voter*, 1948 and 1992) and Columbia (Lazarsfeld et al., *The People Choose a President*, 1944 and 1992), the first chapter reviews the major factors that influence voters, some more decisive than others (Columbia).

To this end, it analyzes the objective and subjective, material and immaterial, experienced and simply perceived living conditions of the Burundian population. Thus, the first point of the chapter draws on the lessons of the Michigan studies to identify the socio-economic living conditions. Drawing on cross-referenced reports, it shows that the Burundian economy is in such a difficult state that the government is automatically doomed to inefficiency. If we add that in most cases this situation is linked to poor overall governance, we can conclude that it is a situation that leads to revolt among the governed and demands for change, provided that they are aware of this and are not victims of the misappropriation of their votes. It is this concern for popular awareness that leads the analysis to the second and third points of the first chapter.

Before refuting or confirming the first hypothesis, a second and third point discuss the conditions of life that are considered subjective but are no less objective than the first. These are the socio-political and security conditions.

The second aspect relating to political resources is also related to the idealistic and ideological dimensions that enable voters to make choices. These are conservative or revolutionary ideas that offer voters decisive choices. The point shows that in the case of Burundi, these ideologies played out more in the realm of emotions and passions linked to painful events experienced in the past. Hence, he speaks of the mobilization of sentimental representations. In the context of 2025, it was a matter of capitalizing on the emphasis placed on fears linked to the dominant ethno-nationalist ideologies in the region.

The actors reduced all of Burundi's problems to their ethno-nationalist ideological expressions, which were well exploited during the 2015-2020 crisis. But these emotional mobilizations poorly concealed the self-preservation strategies of outgoing actors who were guilty of criminalizing the state in both economic and financial terms and in terms of security. They did little to conceal collective security issues relating to massive violations of human rights and civil liberties, as regularly reported by national and international organizations specializing in this area. The section concludes by highlighting this important dimension of global governance.

Finally, the first chapter reviews the legal and regulatory provisions governing elections in order to determine whether this legal framework influenced the elections in any way. It should be noted that certain provisions of the 2018 Constitution and the 2024 Electoral Code constitute restrictions that exclude political actors, civil society, and the media considered by the government to be a potential "obstacle" to its triumph.

The chapter concludes by noting that while the first socio-economic determinant was the poor relation of the election campaign, most Burundian political actors invested in the second determinant.

This leads to the conclusion that, while the results of the 2025 elections were genuine, analysis suggests that Burundians vote more sentimentally than rationally!

### **0.2.2. Chapter II**

This second chapter analyzes the elections themselves. It focuses on how they unfolded both during the pre-election period and during the voting itself, emphasizing the issues prioritized by the actors involved and the conditions for the inclusion or exclusion of the parties involved. The chapter then moves on to the election results as announced by the CENI. The result is that all the seats in all the institutions concerned by the vote were allocated to the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD.

### **0.2.3. Chapter III**

This final chapter is primarily an analysis of the outcome of the 2025 electoral process. It focuses on the major trends and consequences or impacts of an electoral process that has resulted in the total monopolization of all institutional powers by a single political party. Beyond the implications that generally arise from elections in democracies that result in a landslide victory for one party, in Burundi it was nothing less than an attempt to create the conditions for preserving a conservative, single-party, exclusionary regime with the aim of using institutions to protect the collusion of political-civil, economic-financial, and military-financial oligarchies at the heart of a violent, monolithic power structure. Peripherally, it is a matter of imposing on everyone the "2040-2060 vision" desired by President Evariste Ndayishimiye.

The major consequences of this are the continued stagnation of overall governance on the political and economic fronts, the increasing drastic reduction in the space for the expression of freedoms and human rights, and the isolation of Burundi on the international stage.

Preceded by an introduction and methodology, the analysis concludes with a conclusion, a summary bibliography, and several recommendations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2005, Burundi has been holding elections as a mechanism identified in Arusha, Tanzania, by political leaders in negotiations to end cyclical crises dominated by ethno-political issues. These negotiations led to the signing of a Peace and Reconciliation Agreement on August 28, 2000. This Agreement, which had raised hopes for political stability and economic and social reconstruction, was first put to the test in 2015 with the candidacy of President Pierre NKURUNZIZA for a third term (prohibited by the Agreement and the 2005 Constitution), and then with the 2018 Constitution, which undermined the spirit of the consociational approach introduced by Arusha.

The elections in June, July, and August 2025 constitute a fifth round after those held in 2005, 2010, and 2020. In these last rounds, the popular consultations concerned the presidential, legislative, municipal, and collinary or neighborhood elections, sometimes staggered, sometimes grouped together.

To better analyze and understand the 2025 election process, which concerned only legislative, municipal, and neighborhood elections, while the presidential elections will take place in 2027 following the changes introduced in 2018 by the new Constitution, we propose to consider three levels: the level of general determinants of voting; the vote itself; and the consequences or impacts of the choices made on the resulting political system.

## 2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Like any analysis of electoral processes, this analysis is based on the fundamental premise that voting is not a manifestation of accidental feelings of the moment. It is an expression of feelings and evaluative assessments of government action or intentions that have been maturing long before the elections. Of course, certain contextual events can influence voter behavior. Such are the results of research conducted by the major individualist (rational choice) and holistic (global influences) traditions.<sup>1</sup>

This helps to explain the importance given to the first chapter, which is devoted to analyzing the general determinants of voting. We consider that the elements devoted to the socio-political living conditions of populations, the political and security environment experienced and perceived in terms of participatory inclusion, the rule of law, and human rights, historical events that have been remembered, and the legal and institutional framework established to guide choices have strongly influenced, some more than others, electoral behavior in 2025.

**The present methodology is therefore primarily heuristic and analytical**, as the analysis is informed by this epistemological perspective. It is then based on the

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/individualisme-et-holisme/>

**triangulation of** qualitative and quantitative **sources**. Indeed, from policy documents (speeches by key players, programs and projects advocated by parties, interviews given by players on various radio or television programs, direct observation of meetings and election campaigns) to data from various sources reporting on the state of the Burundian economy, the situation of human rights and freedoms, and political and economic governance at different times in the country's history.

This qualitative data was cross-referenced or triangulated with **statistical data** on political behaviors and attitudes that could influence the elections. Finally, it includes a compilation of election results stored on the CENI website, covering all elections since 2010.

## CHAPTER I. GENERAL FACTORS INFLUENCING ELECTORAL PROCESSES

The analysis of such factors, insofar as they have influenced political attitudes, actions, and behaviors during elections, would be best conducted through structural frameworks and situations, namely the socioeconomic conditions of the population: the perceived and experienced environment of political and security governance; and the legal framework governing the electoral process in question.

### I.1. The socioeconomic conditions experienced by the population

On the eve of the 2025 elections, Burundi's economic situation has hardly improved compared to previous crises; on the contrary, it has worsened. It seems that **the impacts of the 2015-2016 economic sanctions are even beginning to be felt seriously**, simply because the NDAYISHIMIYE government has not undertaken the necessary reforms, some of which were demanded by Burundi's financial partners.

According to data from the Ministry of Finance (MACMOD, 2024/2025), the Burundian economy is heavily dependent on the tertiary sector, which accounted for 49% of GDP in 2023/2024, compared with 22% for the secondary sector, which is growing slightly, and 29% for the primary sector, which has been in sharp decline since 2017. GDP growth is expected to be 5.4% in 2025, compared with 4.2%.

Beyond these sometimes optimistic government figures, the World Bank, cross-referencing several generally realistic data sets, made the following projections for Burundi<sup>2</sup>:

- Economic growth of 2.7% in 2023, slowing to 2.2% in 2024 due to persistent fuel and foreign currency shortages. The industrial sector (1.2% in 2024 compared to 2.7% in 2023) and services (2% in 2024 compared to 2.6% in 2023) are the most affected.
- Growth is expected to reach 3.9% between 2025 and 2026, supported by agriculture, mining, and public spending.
- Inflation reached 27.1% in 2023 due to soaring food and fuel prices, but is expected to fall to 22.1% in 2024.
- The current account deficit reached 16.1% of GDP in 2023 and is expected to improve to 15.9% in 2024 and 13.6% in 2026.
- The budget deficit was projected at 7.1% of GDP in 2024.
- Public debt is projected at 70.6% of GDP in 2024 but is expected to decline to 67% of GDP in 2026.

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<sup>2</sup>World Bank in Burundi; [worldbank.org/en/country/burundi/overview](http://worldbank.org/en/country/burundi/overview); updated on October 10, 2024

Based on this data, the World Bank estimated that Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world, with 87% of the population living on less than US\$1.9 per day and a GDP per capita of US\$245.8 in 2023 according to the IMF, compared to US\$311.0 in 2022. In 2022, the country was ranked<sup>187th</sup> out of 193 countries in terms of human development (HDI)<sup>3</sup>.

If we refer to the elements of "rational choice" that generally influence electoral processes, according to which voters vote based on their objective and personal social circumstances, a situation generally constitutes **a major source of discontent among the governed**, which translates concretely on the ground into **enormous shortages** for the population and **a dizzying increase in the prices of all basic necessities**, starting with food, not to mention imported products (in particular fuel and medicines) that require the availability of foreign currency, which is extremely rare at the moment. This was the case in Burundi during the 2025 elections.

This situation causes even greater discontent and fuels the seeds of revolt resulting from poor economic governance in the country, where the level of responsibility is well known and established at the highest levels of government, meaning that the government is socio-economically inefficient. This is also the case in Burundi in 2025.

Indeed, the country's socioeconomic situation is catastrophic, placing it among the poorest in the world, according to various reliable reports. The 2025 elections took place at a time when Burundi was facing an unprecedented economic crisis characterized by a shortage of foreign currency, fuel, and essential imported medical products, skyrocketing inflation, and a general rise in commodity prices, while the population's purchasing power was rapidly declining<sup>4</sup>.

Due to successive political crises and poor economic governance that had plagued the country for several years, the country found itself without resources. As a result, the government is unable to undertake and successfully implement large-scale public policies. As a result, development infrastructure (roads, ports, airports, old businesses, etc.) and social infrastructure (schools, public institutions including universities and institutes, hospitals and health centers, etc.) are overwhelmed by demand and in a state of advanced disrepair. Furthermore, the state is unable to implement poverty reduction strategies, in particular by committing to stabilizing prices. The government's political inflexibility has prevented technical and financial partners from releasing budgetary support that would have helped cushion these economic shocks.

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<sup>3</sup>World Bank, 2024 Report, *Burundi. Driving Burundi's transformation through global financial architecture reform*.

<sup>4</sup>In November 2024, OLUCOME published a study showing the extraordinary "price surge" of most basic necessities, plunging Burundians into despair: OLUCOME, "Price surge leaves Burundians in despair," in Journal Iwacu, 11/26/2024.

**The crisis of socio-economic efficiency is dangerous both for democracy and for state power.** With regard to democracy, it has been shown that only people who have seen their standard of living decline trigger change. On the other hand, people who have remained in poverty for a long time sink into apathy, wait-and-see attitudes, and fatalism. The larger this latter category becomes and the longer it persists, the less likely there will be any possibility of revolt<sup>5</sup>. In other words, **impoverishment is inversely proportional to citizens' attitudes toward demanding rights and freedoms.** This is likely to be the case in Burundi.

With regard to the state itself, **the crisis of efficiency undermines its legitimacy by causing the governed to doubt the government's ability to lead.** This doubt leads to a crisis of confidence in leadership. This can be followed by the development of feelings of revolt or insurrection. The only way for leaders to remain in power is to resort to force.

However, in the long run, violence begets violence, and political instability quickly ensues, further aggravating the crisis of efficiency and thus the progress of democracy.

In the case of Burundi, the social projects and government programs of the stakeholders in the electoral process, particularly the ruling party, did not show that the 2025 elections would resolve the crisis of efficiency, which is the most dangerous of all. There was therefore reason to fear a chaotic evolution of the electoral process.

That is why, based on what we saw and heard during the election campaign, and if the election results are genuine, it would mean that **the majority of the Burundian people would vote outside the fundamental benchmarks that can be used for rational analysis of the elections, namely that the level of political satisfaction in Burundi is inversely proportional to that of socio-economic satisfaction.** The candidates in the elections would have quickly understood this, as most of them invest more in the emotional and passionate resources of Burundi's painful past and present than in undertaking projects to develop and improve the living conditions of the population.

## **I.2. The environment of political and security governance or the mobilization of sentimental and emotional resources.**

If we want to understand the political situation in Burundi on the eve of the 2025 elections, we must undoubtedly start with the highly structuring context of 2015 to 2020, as it is true that President Evariste NDAYISHIMIYE has not been able to effectively control the heavy trends left by Pierre NKURUNZIZA.

The political and institutional crisis of 2015 has shaped and influenced Burundi's political life and, consequently, its electoral processes. It erupted following the announcement of President Pierre NKURUNZIZA's third candidacy, followed by his

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<sup>5</sup> Acemoglu D., Robinson, JA, *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*, Cambridge University Press, 2006

election in July 2015. This called into question the August 2000 Arusha Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Burundi, as well as the 2005 Constitution that governed the institutions that emerged from it. The decision thus contributed not only to creating deep unease within the nation-state and major conflict between political actors, but also to isolating the country.

Politically, the country's relations with the international community remained tense. Faced with demands from its technical and financial partners for an immediate end to the crimes committed in the repression of demonstrations against the <sup>third</sup> term, improved conditions for good governance, the establishment of the rule of law, and respect for civil liberties, the government resorted to **a policy of concealment with a strong dose of ethno-nationalist populism.**

During the 2025 election campaign, the CNDD-FDD's rallies, slogans, and speeches were reminiscent of its 2015 demonstrations denouncing the imperialism of the "Bakoloni" (colonizers), accused of being responsible for ethnic divisions and supporting the ethnic minority in the region against the Hutu majority. Any opposition to the failure to respect the mandates was dismissed as a ploy by **certain foreign powers with hegemonic ambitions to support the return to power of the Tutsi minority.** The leaders developed **an ethnic and nationalist identity-based retreat. A resurgence of the strong exploitation of the Hutu-Tutsi ethnic divide was widely observed, in order to drown out the purely political and institutional issue of mandate management in an emotional, passionate, and sentimental bidding war.**

This ideological orientation was used during the 2025 election campaign and contributed to poisoning the internal and regional political climate, particularly relations with Rwanda.

**Strategies for extracting and extorting goods and funds from the population and civil servants** were skillfully and extensively developed in an attempt to compensate for the economic and financial losses suffered as a result of the cessation of external financial support. Carried out in a context of extreme poverty, these extractions fostered poor relations between leaders and their subjects. The latter resorted to resignation due to the administrative and police lockdown of the entire territory, a more or less violent lockdown organized since the 2025 elections and entrusted to the ruling party and its affiliated youth wing, with the blessing of a local administration, police force, and judiciary lacking independence.

**During this process in 2025, we saw the effects of spectacular collusion in the political arena between three oligarchies formed and strengthened by the crisis of 2015: the political-institutional oligarchy, the military-police oligarchy, and the economic-financial oligarchy.** This collusion influenced the electoral process, including the sponsorship of candidates for election and entry into government.

Taking advantage of the political crisis and its excesses, in particular an attempted coup on May 13, 2015, and an armed insurrection in December of the same year, **a group**

of "military and police oligarchs" imposed itself on the political scene, making itself indispensable for the protection of President Pierre Nkurunziza's power. Some of these military and police officers excelled in the campaign of repression and were accused of committing abuses and crimes of massive human rights violations.

The scarcity of resources also fostered the rise and structuring of another group: the "**economic and financial oligarchs**." In return for the generosity shown by the state in awarding public contracts and tax exemptions, as well as monopolies on the import and marketing of strategic products (oil, military and police equipment, chemical fertilizers, etc.), these traders financed the ruling party and senior civilian and military figures in the CNDD-FDD party.

**Politically, the rise and triumph of the military and economic-financial oligarchs is the defining feature of this period of crisis from 2015 to 2020.** They have entered the political arena and are working alongside the "**political oligarchs**" to control the levers of economic and social development as well as political processes such as elections. They hold sway over political actors, which has the effect of blocking the dynamics of qualitative change that are conducive to democracy, good governance, the rule of law, and economic and social development.

**A political and economic system riddled with mafia influence and organized crime has taken root. As a result, such power can only survive physically, materially, and symbolically by resorting to protection from state institutions (administration, justice, army, and police) that it seeks to control.**

**On the eve of the 2025 elections**, although President NDAYISHIMIYE has attempted to reduce the power of certain individuals by promoting his own supporters, he has been unable to reverse the prevailing trends and gives the impression that he is even forced to cooperate, no doubt in order to "keep the peace."

Meanwhile, since the 2015 crisis, the internal and exiled opposition has been considerably weakened. It has sometimes been the victim of internal contradictions and often of the regime's strategies of destruction, threats, and continuous intimidation.

The controversial constitutional revision process, initiated by the government in 2017, finally led to the adoption of a new constitution by referendum in May 2018 and its promulgation in June of the same year.

**This constitution, drafted at a time of rising ethno-nationalist fervor, put an end to the "consociational" system established by the Arusha Accords, while maintaining ethnic quotas within public institutions and removing a number of checks and balances<sup>6</sup> .**

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<sup>6</sup>These agreements included three important mandatory clauses: a constitutional obligation for the Head of State to appoint a <sup>first</sup>Vice President from a party and ethnic group other than his own and proposed by his party; a

The 2020 elections also shaped political life until the 2025 elections. Indeed, **the entire institutional public sphere, from the highest levels of government to the hills and neighborhoods, was monopolized by a single party.**

This was a **notable setback for pluralistic democracy and seriously undermined the possibilities for the expression of citizens' freedoms and rights, especially in future electoral processes, including that of 2025.** With these results, the ruling party alone ensured overwhelming hegemony. **With no other space for expression and with a government that held all the powers of control over society, there was little room for maneuver for the opposition.**

What's more, with the new Constitution of 2018, all political and institutional powers are concentrated in the hands of the President, effectively enshrining in law **a single-centered presidential authoritarianism.** With a political culture **that confuses the party with the state, all the levers of administrative power are controlled by CNDD-FDD activists, creating frustration in society** due to the fact that all citizens are deprived of fairness and equality in access to public services.

- **Security: state of human rights and civil liberties**
- ❖ ***Human rights and security for all.***

**On the eve of the 2025 elections, in terms of the rule of law, the situation regarding freedoms and human rights** has not improved despite the change of government following the 2020 elections. And yet **this issue determined whether or not Burundian refugees would return to their country, a high-stakes issue** since not only did it contribute to the strong mobilization of the opposition during the May 2020 election campaign, but also the mass repatriation of refugees would have sent positive messages to the international community, encouraging the **resumption of cooperation.**

The major problem that persisted until the elections and that conditioned the existence of a secure state for all was the government's failure to establish an institutional culture conducive to the **rule of law.**

The principles of respect for institutional hierarchy and legal procedures were constantly violated.

From 2020 to 2025, various weekly and monthly reports from organizations specializing in this area, such as the ITEKA League, ACAT-Burundi, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and Human Rights Watch,

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constitutional obligation to compel the Head of State to appoint members of the Government from and proposed by opposition parties that obtained 5% in the legislative elections; blocking majorities in parliament allowing the opposition to influence the voting on organic laws.

Amnesty International<sup>7</sup> and local media reports<sup>8</sup> have systematically reported on allegations of violations, the main perpetrators of which were the police, the National Intelligence Service, young people affiliated with the ruling party (Imbonerakure), etc. All denounced **the lack of independence of the police and the judiciary**, which either acted as accomplices by charging innocent people or failed to investigate cases in order to uphold the law.

On August 30, 2024, on the International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the Forum for Conscience and Development (FOCODE) even pointed out **that "with less than a year to go before the 2025 elections, enforced disappearances have been increasing at an alarming rate"** since the end of December 2023 (120 people disappeared between January and July 2024 alone)<sup>9</sup>.

**The report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi presented in Geneva in September 2024, followed by the recent report presented in September 2025, addressed** the accusations in these terms: murders, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, , etc.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the security situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa became a topic of discussion in the 2025 election campaign and reignited political passions in Burundi. This is because the crises in the Great Lakes region are the result of a "contagion" phenomenon. They first broke out in Burundi in 1993, then in Rwanda in 1994, before spreading to Mobutu's Zaire in 1996. Waves of Hutu refugees from Rwanda joined those from Burundi who had settled a year earlier in eastern Zaire. **Ethno-nationalist ideologies charged with passion and communalist sentiments intertwined and animated the consciences of the leaders and activists of the nascent CNDD-FDD and FDLR.**

### I.3. The legal framework governing the electoral process

The general legal framework for elections is established by **the Constitution of June 7, 2018**, the spirit of which has been evolving since the early 2010s, when it took its first firm steps toward its determination to move away from the "Arusha model," which it felt was standing in the way of its goal of building an "absolute monocentric presidentialism."

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Ligue iteka, July 2025, No. 485, "A turbulent five-year term under the government of General Ndayishimiye Evariste"; ACAT, Report on the monitoring of human rights violations and abuses committed in Burundi recorded for July 2025 (murders, kidnappings, arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions, physical integrity violations); FIDH, World Report 2025 Burundi: Events of 2024.

<sup>8</sup> These are mainly Isanganiro, RPA, and Inzamba radio stations and the Iwacu newspaper. Government-owned or affiliated media outlets have not reported on this.

<sup>9</sup> FOCODE, FOCODE statement on the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, August 30, 2024

<sup>10</sup> <https://WWW.iwacu-burundi.org/rapport-au-vitriol.gitega-voit-rouge/>

The imposition of his third term in 2015, followed by protests and violent government counter-protests, as well as an attempted coup, only served to radicalize and strengthen the president's camp. The sanctions imposed by the international community accentuated the feeling of being a "wounded beast."

It is in this context that the drafting, voting and promulgation of the 2018 Constitution must be understood. First, it sets out the legal framework for elections. The Constitution proclaims that every citizen has the right to vote (Art. 19) and to do so on an equal footing with others, without discrimination (Art. 22). Secondly, it stipulates that "*elections shall be free, transparent and fair*" (Art. 88) and that to this end they must be "*organized impartially*" at all levels (Art. 89) by an independent commission "*composed of independent personalities*" (Art. 91) which "*guarantees the freedom, impartiality, and independence of the process*" (Art. 90).

The 2018 Constitution also identifies the main actors in elections, namely political parties. It recognizes that **Burundi has a multiparty system (Article 75)** and that a law guarantees the non-interference of public authorities in the functioning of approved parties (Article 80) in accordance with the terms set out in the law (Article 81). After reiterating that **members of the defense and security forces are not allowed to join political parties** (Art. 82), the same fundamental text specifies the framework for terms of office, stipulating that the President of the Republic is elected by direct universal suffrage for a seven-year term, renewable once (Art. 97), while parliamentarians (deputies and senators) whose mandate is national (Art. 154) and municipal councilors for hills/neighborhoods retain the five-year term contained in previous constitutions and specific voting methods: universal first-past-the-post voting (presidential elections), closed list proportional representation by constituency (for deputies and municipal councilors: Art. 173); indirect single-member voting by municipal councilors by constituency (senators: Art. 185), **direct universal suffrage and single-member majority voting outside of parties for hill/neighborhood councilors**.

The Constitution of June 2018 weighed heavily on the electoral process and influenced the campaign. It differed from that of 2005 in that it put an end to certain **mandatory principles that had emerged from the Arusha negotiations and introduced consociationalism**, i.e., power sharing on a political-ethnic basis. For example, the blocking minorities that existed in Parliament and forced the majority party to negotiate votes on organic laws were abolished. Furthermore, the President of the Republic was no longer obliged to negotiate with the parties on the political figures to be appointed, etc.

Ultimately, **ethnic reductionism** is enshrined to the detriment of political party participation, since ethnic affiliation is the only factor that counts (with the exception of the head of the executive branch, where the President and Vice President must be of different ethnicities and political parties).

In addition to the Constitution, the 2025 elections are covered by **Organic Law No. 1/12 of June 5, 2024, amending Organic Law No. 1/11 of May 20, 2019, on the electoral code**. Compared to the 2019 code, the new code introduces significant changes, notably **the deposits to be paid by candidates** for various positions (Art. 29):

200,000 Fbu for municipal councilors, per list of candidates from parties or coalitions of parties or per independent candidate; 2 million for parliamentary candidates (Art. 166) and 100 million for presidential candidates (Art. 104). **These deposits, which are exorbitant in relation to the resources of opposition actors, are a disguised mechanism, or a "hidden census" of exclusion from voting.**

For all these positions, candidates are declared "independent" if they have left their party at least one year prior, or two years if they were members of a governing body (Art. 28). **Such a provision seems sound on the surface. However, it poorly conceals the fact that it aims to exclude potential candidate Agathon Rwasa, who has been deprived of his leadership position in the CNL but has not resigned.** Finally, the same Code reserves the exclusive right to announce the results of the vote to the CENI, which means that **neither independent or political party representatives nor the media sent to the polling stations are authorized to publish what they see live. This also constituted an intention to encourage the distortion of the sincerity of the vote.**

It is clear that, beyond the principles of transparency and freedom of elections proclaimed in the Constitution, such an electoral framework imposed several restrictions on this path.

## CHAPTER II. ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTIONS: PROCESS, RESULTS, AND MANAGEMENT OF RESULTS

This chapter describes the conduct of the elections, provides a summary of the results for each ballot, and discusses how the controversies that arose from the announcement of the results were handled.

### II.1. The conduct of the elections: polls that were competitive in appearance only.

The elections for deputies and municipal councilors took place on the same day, June 5, 2025. They were all governed by the 2024 Electoral Code.

#### i) Elections for deputies and municipal councilors

##### a) *The election of deputies*

In general, both the campaign and the voting took place in relative calm.

Although there were reports **of intolerance and attacks against members of opposition parties before, during, and after the elections**, it can be said that **the high-intensity violence that might have been expected in the pre-election context did not occur**. There are several explanations for this:

- (i) The first explanation is that Burundians seem to have internalized the terrible negative cost of resorting to political violence after the events of 2015.
- (ii) The second explanation is the climate of fear that has prevailed since the 2020 elections resulted in the first monopoly of public space and political and administrative control of the territory.
- (iii) The third reason is linked to the speculation of certain opposition parties and leaders who did not have the courage to contest the elections, speculating instead on the possible dividends that the winning party would grant them. Even independent candidates who could have taken advantage of the context to assert themselves played the same game.
- (iv) The fourth reason lies in the ideologization achieved by the CNDD-FDD party's long-running campaign, which was carried out by the party's General Secretariat, to the exclusion of other parties. This ideologization played heavily on the emotional wounds of the past and the risks of falling back into them if the ruling power was not renewed. Another argument can be found in the seduction tactics used around certain popular public policies inherited from the Nkurunziza regime or those initiated as part of the promotion of employment through income-generating activities

PAEJ<sup>11</sup> and other projects financed by various Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs).

These various reasons also explain the high voter turnout (particularly in rural areas), despite **initial hesitation when voter registration began.**

The campaign continued in relative calm, thanks in particular to the conciliatory messages delivered at a rally organized in Gitega by the President of the Republic, which was attended by the leaders of the main parties to launch the electoral contest.

However, **irregularities of varying degrees, depending on the actors involved, were reported on election day.** All the main opposition political parties (UPRONA, CNL, the "Burundi Bwa Bose" coalition, CDP, FPI, etc.) denounced the same irregularities as the Episcopal Council of the Catholic Church: ballot box stuffing, intimidation at polling stations by young people from the ruling party, exclusion of opposition party representatives during the counting of votes, transcription of false results during the counting of votes, which distorted the sincerity of the vote, etc. While these parties contested the results and called for a re-run of the election, representatives of the Catholic Church concluded that there was a lack of depth in electoral democracy.

**With regard to the political and ideological forces that emerged,** it should first be noted that, ideologically speaking, Burundian actors (parties and independence figures) are characterized by a lack of clear positioning. However, upon closer examination, the following lines can be drawn **based on the themes that were heavily discussed** during the campaign: the "pro-regime" and **conservative camp, which focused on ethno-nationalist, sovereigntist, and security-oriented ideology** on the one hand (close to the ruling party), and **the "reformist change" movement, which focused its discourse more on issues of political governance (democracy, freedoms, and human rights) and economic issues (the fight against corruption, socio-economic efficiency, etc.)** on the opposition side. On the margins, there were other actors (parties and independents) who developed specific themes related to development (the fight against unemployment, the promotion of agriculture, the development of the digital economy, etc.).

These different forces are divided into **33 parties, one coalition, and 11 independents.** But in **the end, only nine political parties and one coalition were able to field candidates at the national level.** This serves as a reminder of the existence and importance of the famous "hidden census"<sup>12</sup> beyond the arguments and mere speculations of the various parties described above.

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<sup>11</sup> Economic Empowerment and Youth Employment Program

<sup>12</sup> According to Wikipedia, "The hidden census is a concept in political science and political sociology that refers to the *de facto* transformation of a universal suffrage system into a census suffrage system through the self-exclusion of the least culturally and politically skilled segments of the population. It was created by Daniel Gaxie in *Le Cens caché*."

The elections for deputies were held in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Code, which provides for five constituencies corresponding to the five new provinces, with 100 seats to be shared at the national level. Seats are allocated according to the d'Hondt method<sup>13</sup> to all parties that have passed the electoral threshold of 2% of the votes cast.

The same Code stipulates that a variable number of additional deputies shall be added to this total so that the final distribution of members of the National Assembly corresponds to a 60-40 ratio between Hutu and Tutsi, to which is added a quota of 30% women.

All co-opted members are chosen by the CENI from among the unelected candidates on the lists of parties that have won at least one seat in the direct election, in consultation with the latter.

Finally, the Code specifies that *three members of the Twa ethnic group are co-opted* by the CENI on the basis of lists submitted by recognized representative organizations, taking into account gender and geographical distribution.

### **b) The election of municipal councilors**

These were also held in accordance with the same Electoral Code and on the same day as the elections for deputies (June 5, 2025). However, these elections are special in that they determine the election of senators and municipal administrators. Municipal elections are conducted in the same way as the previous ones, on the basis of closed lists of proportional representation presented by political parties in accordance with the same constitutional quotas mentioned above.

#### **ii) Senatorial elections**

These were held on July 23, 2025. Following the implementation of the new territorial redistribution, the Senate was to be composed of 10 members elected at the rate of two per electoral district corresponding to each province, plus three others from the Twa ethnic group who are co-opted by the CENI.

This is provided for in Article 142 of the Electoral Code: "*The Senate shall be composed of two delegates from each province, elected by an electoral college composed of members of the municipal councils of the province in question, from different ethnic communities and elected in separate ballots based on candidates presented by political parties, coalitions of political parties or as independents.*"

The same provision specifies that there are three members of the Twa ethnic group co-opted by the CENI and coming from different provinces, and that a minimum of 30% of members must be women.

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<sup>13</sup>*The D'Hondt method is based on the principle of proportional distribution, which aims to allocate seats to parties according to their level of popular support. The process involves dividing the total number of votes received by each party by a series of divisors. Seats are then allocated to parties based on the results of these calculations. Source: <https://tutorax.com/blogue/quest-ce-que-le-systeme-dhondt/>*

### iii) Hill and neighborhood council elections

In accordance with the provisions of the 2024 Electoral Code, *hill and neighborhood elections were held on August 25, 2025*. Five councilors were to be chosen for each of the country's 3,044 hills and neighborhoods after an election campaign that was supposed to be non-partisan, i.e., conducted outside of party affiliations.

According to Article 176 of the Electoral Code, voters write three names on the back of the ballot, choosing from among the candidates, at least one of whom must be a woman in order to meet the 30% requirement for other institutions.

The voting system is a first-past-the-post system, and the candidate who receives the most votes becomes the head of the hill or district. He or she will be supported by the next four candidates in order of the number of votes obtained.

In practice, since the 2020 elections, these 2025 hill and neighborhood elections have been held under strong partisan influence. Since the CNDD-FDD party established and installed all its structures down to the hills and neighborhoods, and especially since significant development funds have been allocated for management at the hill and neighborhood levels, local authorities have become a key factor in the political and administrative control and lockdown of the territory.

In 2025, the new challenge for President Evariste Ndayishimiye and the CNDD-FDD was to achieve partisan homogeneity throughout the country in order to implement "Vision 2040 and 2060." This was the key message of the election campaign. That is why, across all hills and neighborhoods, candidates had to be endorsed by the party leadership. And if a dissident or ghost candidate declared themselves to be from the CNDD-FDD, they were immediately excluded and sanctioned. As for candidates from other parties, in many cases they were simply victims of maneuvers to exclude them, either through intimidation and threats or through manipulation by the CENI.

## II.2. Summary of results

### i) The election of deputies

In total, *the following results were announced on June 10, 2025, by the CENI* and then validated on June 20, 2025, by the Constitutional Court:

Votes cast: 5,859,238, or 98.54%

Blank votes: 44,514, or 0.75%

Invalid votes: 42,117, or 0.71%

Total: 5,945,869, or 100%, representing a 12% decrease compared to 2020

Abstentions: 67,629, or 1.12%

Registered voters/participants: 6,013,968, or

98.88% Turnout: 98.8%

#### **Ranking according to the top three parties, including those that lost seats compared to the 2020 elections:**

**1<sup>st</sup>:** **CNDD-FDD:** 96.51%, up 25.5% compared to the 2020 elections; 100% of seats, up 14% compared to 2020.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** **UPRONA:** 1.38% of seats, down 1.2% from the 2020 election; 0% of seats and a loss of 2 seats compared to the previous election.

**3<sup>rd</sup>:** **CNL:** 0.58%, or 0 seats and a decrease of 22.8% in seats compared to the 2020 election.

### ii) The Municipal Elections

The results published on June 11, 2025, by the CEN are as follows:

**Buhumuza:** out of 175 seats up for grabs, the CNDD-FDD won 168, leaving 6 to PRONA and 1 to CNL.

**Bujumbura:** out of 275 seats, the CNDD-FDD won 272, the UPRONA won 2, and the CNL won 1.

**Burunga:** Out of a total of 176 seats, the CNDD-FDD won 174, the UPRONA won 1, and the CNL won 1.

**Butanyerera:** 207 seats were up for grabs. The CNDD-FDD won 207, the CNDD-FDD won 206 seats, and only one seat went to a Twa.

**Gitega:** The CNDD-FDD won 217 out of 225 seats, the UPRONA won 7, and the CNL won 1. These elections will determine the senatorial elections that will follow.

### iii) Senatorial elections

The final results of the senatorial elections are as follows:

The CNDD-FDD won all the seats in each constituency, i.e., two men and two women. In total, the ruling party has 10 senators with gender parity, plus three senators from the Twa community, making a total of 13 senators.

As mentioned above, these results were known in advance. From the moment the CNDD-FDD party won the overwhelming majority of seats in the country's 42 municipalities, and given the provisions of the Electoral Code and the very strong effect of the party's instructions, which were to "win all seats in order to implement the Government's Vision" for very docile activists, a knock-on effect was inevitable. It is surprising, to say the least, that parties such as UPRONA and APDR had the courage to participate in the Senate elections.

### iv) The Collinaires and Quartiers

As these were not competitive elections between parties, there is no point in giving results other than those corresponding to 3,044 hills and neighborhoods \* 5 councilors, or 15,220 councilors, including 3,044 chiefs.

## II.3. Management of results

The opposition parties denounced what they called an "electoral masquerade" and threatened not to recognize the results. But the response from the government was scathing. While the legal procedure stipulates that any appeal must be addressed to the municipal (CECI), provincial (CEPI), and national (CENI) authorities, depending on the type of dispute, the President of the Republic countered the protesting parties by stating that he was the first point of appeal, before threatening severe sanctions against those who continued to stand in the way of the decisions of the CENI and the Constitutional Court.

This way of handling an electoral dispute reveals, if nothing else, a political unease, if not a crisis with no definitive answer.

In the specific case of the hill and neighborhood elections, politicization went so far as to divert the votes of elected chiefs, except that at this level, resistance from the CNDD-CDD's militant supporters forced the CENI and the party leadership to restore their preferred candidates' rights.

**But what are the major trends in terms of the consequences of the CNDD-FDD occupying all seats at all institutional levels?**

## CHAPTER III. ANALYSIS OF THE SIGNIFICANT TRENDS RESULTING FROM THESE ELECTIONS

This section focuses on two major consequences, namely the exclusionary impacts of the administrative reorganization that preceded the elections and the drift of the political system toward a hegemonic, single-party, exclusionary system. Thirdly, it addresses the challenges that these elections pose for Burundi, as they failed to meet the high expectations in terms of overall governance.

### III.1. An exclusionary administrative reorganization of the territory

The results show that the regrouping of provinces and municipalities, and therefore of electoral districts (15 provinces and one mayoralty to five provinces, 119 municipalities to 44), had the initial effect of reducing opportunities for social and political advancement among party activists. This is because the reduction in the number of districts was not accompanied by a corresponding reduction in the number of seats. Secondly, the reduction in the number of constituencies, which reduced the number of seats, increased political competition. In addition to the absence of a culture of power sharing, these factors could help to explain in part the monopolistic tendencies of the CNDD-FDD, which is trying to compensate for the reduction in seats by occupying as many as possible.

### III.2. Towards political and institutional hegemony and an exclusionary authoritarian system

**As a result of all these elections**, the CNDD-FDD occupies **the entire institutional space** in the country. Given the partisan nature of the hill and neighborhood elections, even though this is not provided for by law, this institutional hegemony could extend to the entire country, from top to bottom. What is more, the temptation for the ruling party to merge with the state could then turn into a monopolization of the political space, and the entire political system would experience the **political and institutional hegemony of a single party and an exclusionary system at all levels**. The absence of a developed democratic and institutional culture could then lead the country into **political intolerance and violations of individual rights and freedoms**. **This would create a crisis of confidence in leadership and government at both the national and international levels, which would block investment flows and thus the resources needed to combat underdevelopment.**

### III.3. Elections that pose enormous challenges for the country

The major trends in terms of challenges, risks, and short-, medium-, and long-term consequences observed before the elections weigh heavily on both the elections and the post-election period.

All in all, these trends concern **issues of major political importance, namely democracy, good governance, the rule of law, security for all, and human rights.**

In a report analyzing governance in Burundi in 2024<sup>14</sup>, the Moi Ibrahim Foundation gives the country a score of 41.4%, placing it 43rd out of 54 African countries. In detail, the report covers four areas, assigning a score to each: 1) Security and the rule of law (35.7%); 2) Participation, rights, and inclusion (39%); 3) Foundations of economic opportunity (44.4%); 4) Human development (46.4%).

This report corroborated several others, namely: "*Global Peace Index, 2024*," which ranked Burundi 129th out of 154 countries in terms of peace and security; "*Global State of Democracy Initiative, 2024*," which ranked the country 138th out of 154 countries in terms of democracy; "*Freedom House, 2024*," which gave the country a score of 4/40 for political rights and 10/60 for civil liberties; "*Corruption Perception Index (CPI), 2024*," which ranked the country<sup>15</sup> 162<sup>nd</sup> out of 182 countries in terms of corruption; *The Africa CEO Forum, 2020*, ranked Burundi last in terms of attractiveness to investors<sup>15</sup>.

These various reports clearly highlight the major challenges facing Burundi on the eve of the 2025 elections. These challenges, which persist today after the elections, can be summed up in a single phrase: **deficits in overall governance, i.e., political, economic, and social.**

It should be remembered that **the first major problem** posed by the 2025 election results is political in nature and relates to democracy. Indeed, **the overwhelming "victory" of the CNDD-FDD leaves the opposition with no room for institutional expression. The space for political freedom of expression has been considerably reduced. Neither opposition political parties nor truly independent civil society organizations could find places for free civic engagement.** The risk is that these actors could be tempted to resort to violence.

In fact, the country was facing the **maturation of an authoritarian, single-party political system reinforced by the military's sudden emergence and control of power.** However, **militarized authoritarian powers have never accepted democracy, let alone democratic change and free expression.** As a result, it was to be expected that **the 2025 and 2027 elections would be the scene of a clash between two political cultures.** One was a civilian culture that was essentially democratic and based on tolerance, and the other was a military-civilian culture of a certain military-civilian oligarchy within the CNDD-FDD, based on the protection of interests through violence and the rejection of change.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibrahim Index of Africa Governance, 2004

<sup>15</sup> In André Nikwigize, "Burundi. The existential crises of the state," in burundidaily.net/post/y-a-t-il-.., 11/21/2024

**This oligarchy enjoys the support of a mass of people duped by the historical ethno-political divide that plays on the passions and emotional feelings of wounded memories.**

**The second major problem with significant political, economic, and social implications relates to good economic governance.** This is the problem of **corruption**.

According to the international NGO Transparency International, Burundi was ranked<sup>16</sup> out of 180 countries in 2019 and was the<sup>second</sup> most corrupt country in East Africa<sup>16</sup>. At the end of 2023, the same organization noted that the country had only improved by 3 points (since 2022), rising from 20 points/100 to<sup>162nd</sup> place out of 180 countries<sup>17</sup>. According to the Organization for the Fight against Economic Malpractice (OLUCOME), a local NGO, corruption particularly affects the public procurement sector, where public authorities engage in favoritism and influence peddling<sup>18</sup>. During the celebration of the African Day Against Corruption and Economic Malpractice on July 11, 2023, OLUCOME concluded that "*Burundi's level of anti-corruption efforts has fallen significantly*," noting that in 2022, the country ranked 171st out of 180 countries with only 17%<sup>(19)</sup>.

While corruption has been rampant in Burundi for a long time, it exploded with the crisis of 2015. **Impunity for crimes, the crisis of state authority, the lack of independence of the judiciary, etc. have encouraged the corrupt and those who corrupt. But what is new between 2015 and 2020 is the strong economic and financial criminalization of the state.**

Under the pretext of sustaining a state deprived of external resources, the government and the ruling party saw fit to **rely on financial contributions from groups of traders who, in return, benefited from enormous and illegal largesse in the areas of public procurement and various monopolies in the import, export, and marketing of products of strategic interest to the country** (oil, agricultural inputs, construction materials, medicines, foreign currency, etc.). Another new development was **the penetration of the economic and financial sector by generals and senior political and administrative authorities, thus creating a link between the state and the mafia**. Meanwhile, growing poverty forced civil servants at all levels to "monetize" public services, including access to employment.

**Combined with threats of extreme violence, this impoverishment had the effect of breaking the spirit of the nascent middle class, the usual cradle of opposition. This condemned social forces (trade unions, civil society organizations, media, executives**

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.yaga-Burundi.com/2020>, 7/30/2020

<sup>17</sup> Transparency International, Report 2023

<sup>18</sup> OLUCOME, Letter to the President of the Republic, 7/3/2020

<sup>19</sup> Iwacu newspaper, November 22, 2023; OLUCOME/UNCA-Coalition; Civil Society Report on the Implementation of Chapter II (Prevention) and Chapter V (Asset Recovery) of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in Burundi, undated, end of 2023.

**of liberal professions) to silence, "disciplinarization" or "corporatization," and worse, to vertical allegiance/obedience to power.**

Today, on the eve and in the aftermath of the 2025 elections, even though the Evariste NDAYISHIMIYE government has repeatedly declared its intention to wage "war" on corruption and concrete steps have been taken (with the imprisonment of General BUNYONI, the dismissal of certain high-ranking state officials, numerous speeches publicly denouncing the corrupt, etc.), **the problem remains unresolved, given that the phenomenon plagues all levels of the administration and, above all, the ruling party and the "big barons" who finance the party and political, civil, and military figures.** Finally, corruption fuels conflict within the political sphere and, above all, is **one of the main factors deterring investment, particularly foreign investment**, which the country greatly needs to revive its economy and finance its vision of "Burundi as an emerging country in 2040 and a developed country in 2060 "<sup>20</sup>.

The immediate consequence is that the country finds itself in a very difficult **socio-economic situationeconomic situation, and the enormous state deficits and its inefficiency in responding to the pressing demands of the governed in relation to basic needs are creating panic among those in power, who will undoubtedly reinforce mechanisms of self-defense and self-protection against any change, including the massive electoral fraud of which they were accused during the 2025 elections.**

**All in all, on the eve and in the aftermath of the 2025 elections, Burundi faces four major but closely linked crises: a crisis of the nation-state; a criminalized state; a socio-economically ineffective state; and a crisis of governance. These three crises combined have enormous potential to prevent free democratic expression. Those in power are strongly tempted to preserve the existing order, while the opposition is determined to bring about change. The risk of violent confrontation is immense.**

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<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that the government is organizing a roundtable of foreign partners in Bujumbura in early December 2024 to finance the GAP for this vision. 2040–2060.

## ➤ Conclusion

One of the major issues at stake in the 2025 elections was qualitative and quantitative change in terms of overall governance.

In terms of **political and institutional governance**, we must first point out that elections in **Burundi are still determined more by emotional and sentimental choices (albeit with relative rationality) than by rational choices based on government plans or the proven efficiency of leaders**. The first chapter, devoted to analyzing the general factors that influence voting, has sufficiently demonstrated this.

**On the same level**, and if we consider it as infrastructure, the aim was to encourage the emergence of new elites with a **new culture of managing the state as a public and common good**. It was also **a question of moving away from an authoritarian, exclusionary, single-party, and militarized system in which unelected mandarins (military and police) controlled a supposedly multiparty political life whose actors were supposed to be the emanation of the sovereign people**.

To achieve these first two objectives, elections had to be free, fair, and transparent, conducted under well-designed voting systems so as to bring forth new elites capable of transforming the system<sup>21</sup>. This would have made it possible to overcome considerations of social and ethno-political origins in the selection of leaders. Finally, it was a question of **promoting the triumph of ideas and strategic options aimed at ending impunity for crimes so that the rule of law could finally prevail**.

In terms of **economic and social governance**, the 2025 elections were intended to secure victory for the advocates of good economic governance. The election results were expected to deal a heavy blow to corruption and economic malpractice. These evils are the cause of potential violence that could erupt if the desire for democratic change were to be thwarted. **It is on this condition that the state would regain its monopoly on legitimate physical violence, its fiscal monopoly, and its sovereignty, which would restore its regulatory, extractive, distributive, and responsive capacities, and consequently its socio-economic efficiency and legitimacy**. The establishment of good governance is also one of the factors that could encourage foreign investors to come, but also the confidence of development partners.

In terms of **regional and international relations**, good global governance promoting the arrival of a new elite with a new culture would have made it possible to break free from the distractions of populist ethno-nationalist ideology, which is damaging good relations in the Great Lakes region of Africa, while at the same time restoring the country's credibility in the eyes of

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<sup>21</sup> The closed list proportional representation voting system is simply an extraordinary way of perpetuating the existing order.

development partners. This would have encouraged them to resume full cooperation.

**All these hopes were not fulfilled by the 2025 elections. However, without good global governance promoting internal socio-political cohesion and without good relations at both the regional and international levels, the financing and success of the "Vision 2040-2060" will be impossible.**

## ➤ **Recommendations**

### ❖ **To state and non-state political actors**

1. *A return to and improvement of the Arusha Agreement, which had enabled the significant initiation of the process of inclusion and brought about pacification and stabilization of the political system. Without this stabilization, no socio-economic development can be envisaged. The consociational philosophy it promoted then allowed for the mixing, renewal, and mutual assimilation of elites, which had, among other impacts, reduced the oligarchization and militarization of the political system that had trapped democracy.*
2. *Become aware of the consequences that can result from the high concentration of power and take measures to prevent a rift between political elites and the masses by promoting and organizing open dialogue frameworks and, if necessary, requiring political actors at all levels to engage in dialogue on the new global good governance pact and then negotiate the applicable terms. This dialogue and these negotiations would be a prerequisite for avoiding a predictable violent confrontation. They should be one of the preconditions for ending such a long crisis, which today risks pitting the oligarchic and corrupt elites on one side against the impoverished masses on the other, beyond ethno-political divisions.*
3. *In the event of a proven tendency towards the establishment of a monopolistic and exclusionary political system, the opposition parties should consider forming a joint organization capable of offering the country a political alternative.*

### ❖ **To Burundi's partners**

1. *Be aware of the challenges and risks facing Burundi with a political system established following the institutional exclusion of other national political actors, and act accordingly. The first strategy would be to document certain indicators of this monopolistic concentration of power,*

, in particular violations of fundamental rights and freedoms as provided for in the Constitution.

2. *With this in mind, PTFs should vigorously support civil society organizations and, if necessary, take action to help establish new organizations.*

#### ❖ **To civil society organizations**

1. *The first consequence of the monopolistic concentration of power is the restriction of space for expression. Civil society must therefore fight harder than ever to document indicators of these violations of individual and collective rights and freedoms in general. It must therefore adopt consistent strategies to ensure the protection of human rights and freedoms.*
2. *Civil society organizations should strengthen, rebuild, and even restructure themselves in order to better meet the challenges of the present day.*

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