POLICY PAPER
ON PREVENTION OF IDENTITY-BASED VIOLENCE
IN BURUNDI

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1.0   Background

This Policy Brief examines the historical context of the ethnic conflicts in Burundi, the existing fault lines for reoccurrence of conflict and provides recommendation for various actors to prevent identity-based conflict in the

country. Burundi is highly fragile with 11.8 million people, and the third most densely populated country in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) having an estimated 435 inhabitants per km2 in 2015. The country's rapidly rising population is expected to double as early as 2040. The population is composed of three ethnic groups: the overwhelming Hutu majority (85 per cent of the population), the Tutsi second largest group (14 per cent of the population) and a very small Twa minority (1 per cent)[1]. Since 2014, Burundi has three officially recognized languages: Kirundi, French, and English, of which only Kirundi is spoken by the vast majority of the population and recognized by the Burundian Constitution of 2005 as the official language.[2] It borders Rwanda to the north, Tanzania to the east and south, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. Its population is rising rapidly at above 3 per cent per year and it is expected to double as early as 2040.[3]

Burundi's history as an independent country is characterized by high political volatility and violence driven by ethnic polarization. Since the early days of independence, Burundians have mainly accessed and controlled political power through violence, by which the country has changed leadership 12 times and six of which were military coups. The 2005 elections marked a dramatic shift from the past, as it created real optimism and finally brought temporary stability to Burundi. However, political patronage and fragility continued to threaten the nation's development and over recent years, the ruling party has tried to rebalance in its favor the power-sharing mechanisms enshrined in the Arusha Accord[4].

1.1   Identity-Based Conflicts

Identity-based conflict occurs when identity (ethnicity, creed, race and religions) is used as a factor for mobilization to compete or fight over incompatible interests. To understand identity-based violence, several theoretical frameworks can be used. Social identity theory can be employed to understand the influence of identity on violence.[5] The social identity theory observes that identities are socially constructed in a group (collectivity) to which individuals belong, through their knowledge of belonging, the ties of solidarity developed and collective actions with the group. This produces a distinction between the "in-group" and the "out-group." Identity conflicts emerge with intensity when a community, in response to unmet basic needs for especially social and economic security, resolves to strengthen its collective influence and to struggle for political recognition[6] to access the power and resources needed to meet these needs.

1.2   Pre-Colonial History

From the sixteenth century, the region was organised as a kingdom, under the authority of a king (*mwami*) with both traditional and spiritual authority. Hutus, Tutsis and Batwa cohabited in this kingdom under a system of administration consisting of both Hutu and Tutsi chiefs. The two groups became homogenised and adopted the same language (Kirundi). There were territorial expansion and conquest, and the vanquished party was made to pay tribute to the King. The Batwa who lacked a centralized system of governance and were only organized at the family level were almost always on the receiving end of these conquests.[7] The power of the monarchy could be arbitrary, despite the existence of institutions for social regulation as the *Mwami,* and the King had absolute power on life of all people and their properties.

1.3   Colonial History

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[1]World Bank (2018). Republic of Burundi: Addressing Fragility and Democratic Challenges to reduce poverty and Boost Sustainable Growth. Systematic Country Diagnostic Report. IDA, June 15, 2018. http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/655671529960055982/pdf/Burundi-SCD-final-06212018.pdf
[2] See, Languages of Burundi, Wikipedia (accessed on March 9, 2017), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Burundi.
[3] The 2015 Revision (UNDESA 2015). Burundi's population projection assumes a medium fertility variant and is derived from the World Population Prospects
[4] See World Bank (2018)
[5]https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-polisci-042016-024408
[6]Lederach.J.P (1997). Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. United States Institute of Peace. Washington, DC.
[7] Lewis J, The Batwa Pygmies of the Great Lakes Region 5 (2000).

The first contact between *Barundi* and the Europeans was with explorers and missionaries. In 1890, the Germans brought Burundi (then called Urundi) under their control. Together with Rwanda (Ruanda) and Tanganyika (Tanzania), this region became known as German East Africa. Adopting a system of 'indirect rule', the impact of German colonisation was insignificant. After Germany's defeat in the First World War, the territory of Ruanda-Urundi was given to Belgium to administer under the League of Nations mandate system. From the outset of its administration in 1916, the Belgians continued a policy of indirect rule. From 1925, it converted the informal societal hierarchies into rigid structures of government[8].

1.4   Post-Colonial History

When Burundi became independent in 1962, it adopted a constitutional monarchy pitting the minority Tutsi's as the ruling class against the majority Hutu. This culminated into the declaration of a republic after a military coup d'état of 1966. Independence ushered in a period of serious destabilisation in the region, characterised by inter-ethnic strife. Large-scale massacres took place in 1965, 1972, 1988, and 1993. Thus, from the time of its accession to international sovereignty in 1962, Burundi experienced political and electoral turmoil marked by violence amplified by ethnic cleavages between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi.

In 1992, Burundi signed the Charter of National Unity, which launched the experiment with multiparty politics. Before this, the country was ruled by a single party dominated by the Tutsi, the Union for National Progress (UPRONA). After many years of turbulence, 1993 saw the holding of the first multi-party national elections based on a new constitution, which provided for an inclusive government under a presidential system. Ndadaye Melchior of the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) and a Hutu, won the Presidential elections, becoming the first member of his community to hold the highest office in the land[9].

Ndadaye's term of office was short-lived and he was killed 3 months after ascending office in a coup d'état, which plunged the country into civil war, anarchy and leading to the onset of large-scale massacres in which over 300,000 people died, and others fled into neighboring countries - Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda. Others became Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)[10]. His predecessor, Cyprien Ntaryamira, another Hutu, died in a plane crash with his Rwandan counterpart, Juvenal Habyarimana, which further ushered in a period of darkness in the two neighbouring countries.

Insecurity in Burundi continued until the military under Major Buyoya a Tutsi leader, took power in July 1996, a move that led to the birth of new Hutu rebel movements that contested Tutsi hegemony. But Burundi was rescued from further chaos through the intervention of regional and international actors who also placed sanctions on the Buyoya government. Through these initiatives, and under the leadership of former presidents Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela, Burundian parties signed the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation on August 20, 2000.

2.0   Legal and Institutional Frameworks for Addressing Identity-based Conflicts.

2.1   The Constitution

The March 2005 Constitution is the key reference point in the management of conflicts in Burundi. Constitutionally the executive power is exercised by a President of the Republic assisted in the execution of that

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[8]Lemarchand, R, Martin, D (1973) Selective genocide in Burundi. London: Minority Rights Group.
[9] Lemarchand, R (1994) Burundi. Ethnic Conflict and Genocide. Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

[10] http://www.bi.undp.org/content/burundi/fr/home/countryinfo/.

mandate by a Vice President, appointed by the Head of State after consultation of the National Assembly. The President and the Vice President should belong to different ethnic groups, political parties and coalitions of political parties, or are independents of different ethnicities.[11] Several articles in the Burundi constitution seek to promote ethnic harmony, equality and distribution of power between the different ethnic groups. The Arusha agreement is an integral part of the current constitution. The constitution guarantees a minimum of 30 per cent of women in all structures of government.

2.2 The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement

The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (APRA) of August 2000 is the key and fundamental pact that has brought a lot of changes in Burundi legal system and continue to guide peace and reconciliation policy[12]. It is the first settlement which introduced a sharing process of political power between the two main ethnic categories in Burundi by introducing quotas in the composition of the army, the government, the parliament and even in local administration and public services. Most of its provisions are mirrored in the current constitution.[13] In his analysis, Nkurunziza (2016) shows that the implementation has been selective, favouring provisions that are in the interest of the different ruling elites. Some of the most important provisions of the Agreement, such as the creation and facilitation of a credible National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, were never taken seriously[14]. A possible reason is that none of the successive regimes entrusted with the implementation of the Arusha Agreement had an interest in revisiting a past where their crimes might come to light. All the elites that have ruled the country seem to benefit from "historical silences". The decision of the ruling party in 2015 to field the same candidate for a third presidential term, which seems to violate the Arusha agreement, is another illustration of the selective approach to the implementation of the Arusha Agreement. An essential feature of the APRA was the use of ethnic quotas to allocate positions in the two chambers of the legislature, within in government, the security sector, and in state-owned companies.[15]

2.3 The Legislative

Burundi parliament is bicameral. The National Assembly together with the Senate undertakes the legislative function of the state.[16] They also control and monitor the Government's action.[17] However, Parliament's law-making function is not absolute. The President may on the advice of the constitutional Court issue a presidential decree which modifies an act of the legislative[18] The extent of the modification is however not clearly defined under the constitution. It leaves one to wonder if there exist the possibilities of a Presidential decree completely annulling the objects of legislation.

2.4 National Councils

The APRA laid the ground for the creation of statutory bodies in Burundi that provide structural processes for prevention of identity-based violence and mass atrocities[19]. These have been entrenched in the countries' legal instruments[20] which created among others, the National Council for National Unity and Reconciliation; the National Observatory for the Prevention and the Eradication of Genocide, War crimes and Crimes against

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[11] Article 124 of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi (2018).
[12] Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (2000)
https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BI_000828_Arusha%20Peace%20and%20Reconciliation%20Agreement%20for%20Burundi.pdf
[13] One can refer to the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi (2005).
[14] Nkurunziza, J. (2016a). "Timing and Sequencing of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peacebuilding in Burundi", in Arnim Langer and Brown, Graham (eds), Building Sustainable Peace: Timing and Sequencing of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peacebuilding, Chapter 13, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 223-242.
[15] Estimated demographic proportions – not based on any post-colonial ethnic census but generally accepted among scholars and policy-makers – are 85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, and 1% Twa.
[16] Article 147 of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi (2005). Oversight of exercise of presidential power is another function of parliament.
[17] Article 158 of The Constitution of the Republic of Burundi (2005).
[18] Article 161 of The Constitution of the Republic of Burundi (2005).
[19] Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement Article 7
[20] Article 275 of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi (2018). Title XIII: Of the National Councils

Humanity (ONPGH); and the National Security Council. The constitution further mandates the government to guarantee these Councils the means necessary for their operations to work towards combating the impunity of crimes, promote prevention, suppression and eradication of acts of genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity, as well as violations of human rights, including those which are gender-based. These are implemented through a vast awareness and educational programme for national peace, unity and reconciliation.

2.5   The Human Rights Commission

Further, the government established the National Independent Human Rights Commission (CNIDH) in 2011. This raised expectations and optimism for all marginalized communities. The CNIDH is supposed to defend and promote human rights in Burundi independently, hitherto enjoyed "A" status, that is, the highest label of independence vis-à-vis the authorities in power conferred by the UN. However, in May 2016, the UN undertook a special review of the accreditation status of the CNIDH, at the request of the FIDH and its member organization in Burundi, the ITEKA League[21]. Since April 2015 the CNIDH was observed to minimize or even ignore the crimes committed by the regime in power which led to a campaign against the independent civil society, particularly to prevent the work of human rights defenders.

Consequently, the UN Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, in charge of assessing the effectiveness and independence of national human rights bodies downgraded its status, from "A" to "B," which meant the loss of the right to vote in international forums. This devaluation had deeper consequences including failure to attract financial support from international donors.

2.6   Promotion of Disadvantaged Groups

Burundi employers are required to respect ethnic quotas (60per cent Hutu, 40 per cent Tutsi) when offering jobs. The ethnic quota was adopted amidst fears of re-ethnicization of politics and society, enhanced control on civil society and tense relations between government and its development partners. The legal reforms have brought out a variety of other motivations and dominant party interests which account for the quota adoption and enforcement.

3.0   Fault lines for Ethnic Violence in Burundi

Several factors continue to demonstrate that identity-based violence is bound to re-occur in Burundi including the following:

3.1   Deficient democracy, governance, and rule of law

The existing legal and institutional framework notwithstanding, Burundi faces a situation of weak democracy, good governance and a political order based on a "social contract" between the ruler and the ruled providing a foundation for citizenship. The structures, institutions, regulatory frameworks and the culture of democracy and good governance are still weak. Consequently, there are few arenas for voicing political dissent and a lack of a culture of national and local power-sharing.

3.2   Weak Governance Institutions

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[21] Burundi's local NGO and member organization of the International Federation for Human Rights that was banned 3rd January 2017

Underpinning Burundi's political fragility is the prevalent weak governance and associated institutions. Burundi ranks 44th out of 54 countries on the Mo Ibrahim Index of Governance in Africa (2019). Burundi has the largest deterioration in performance with 11% between 2010-2019 on Security and safety, rule of law and justice, accountability and transparency, public administration and anti-corruption.[22] There was the registered deterioration on inclusion and equality, participation and with warning signs on gender scores. The incomplete process of building their governance and leadership capacity is a key element of Burundi's fragility trap. Corruption abuses of the judicial system, lack of security and access to the judicial system, and criminality are all major concerns. Indeed, according to international indicators, Burundi is one of the countries with the biggest governance challenges in the world.[23]

3.3   Ethnic Divisions in Burundi

A key factor underlying the historical and contemporary social, political and economic challenge in Burundi are the deeply-rooted ethnic divisions and these account for the violent competition for power and resources. The enduring animosity between the Hutu and Tutsi manifests in a political struggle at all levels of society, characterized by pre-emptive outbreaks of ethnically and politically mobilized violence and countering attacks from targeted groups claiming self-defense. Extended periods of alienation of the youth from effective participation in political and economic processes and activities, and poor access to education, are enormous barriers that prevent or delay their self-advancement and transition into responsible citizens. It is alleged that the education system in the country is discriminatory, and before the war, it privileged the Tutsi until 2005. Despite efforts to implement free and universal primary education to redress such historical inequalities, high levels of poverty are failing both government and parents to meet the basic costs e.g. educational materials, uniforms etc.

3.4   The construction of frames, stereotypes and identities

A very significant source of conflict is the cognitive process where the histories, identities and interpretations of today's situation are constructed. A key process is a systematic manipulation by elites of uneducated and marginalized masses, setting off self-sustaining processes of the construction of identities built on fear, hate, dehumanization and stereotyping of the other. Perhaps the most complex knowledge construction in Burundi is "ethnicity" which of course is also a major source of mobilization of especially violence to counter and redress demeaning conflict frames. A prime conflict generator in the region is the interpretations of historical atrocities and the construction of frames, stereotypes and identities that legitimize retaliation on individuals and communities. Constructing of such histories so that blame can be attributed to a certain group constitutes a "legitimate" cause for retribution.

3.5   Structural Violence

Structural violence is at the center of conflicts in Burundi. This includes extreme – and increasing – poverty, exclusion or marginalization of the majority from economic, social, human and cultural rights, inequality in all respects, not the least of women, youths and children. This is a situation that creates widening frustration gaps both in the marginalized poor sections of the societies as among various elites. According to the 2014 survey, more than six out of ten Burundians (6.1 million people) are poor and nearly four out of ten (3.6 million) live in extreme poverty. Poverty is concentrated in the rural areas and the North and Center-East regions[24]. Although agriculture is the backbone of the economy, many Burundians face hunger and malnutrition.

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[22]Mo Ibrahim 2020 Index Report https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag/downloads
[23] See World Bank (2018).
[24] World Bank (2016) Burundi Poverty Assessment. Washington, DC

Domestic production does not meet the country's revenue or consumption needs, thereby requiring Burundi to import the deficit. Despite these imports, at 35.6, Burundi's score in the 2014 Global Hunger Index (GHI) was the highest out of 76 countries, nearly double the SSA average of 18.2. The level of hunger in the country was characterized as 'extremely alarming'. In 2014, almost 70 per cent of the population was reported to be undernourished, more than in Comoros and Eritrea (65.3 and 61.3 per cent respectively) and over three times the MDG target.[25] Even more concerning is the fact that the incidence of malnutrition has increased sharply since the early 1990s, when it was a relatively low 40 per cent, and is projected to rise to nearly 80 per cent by 2030, even before accounting for the emerging evidence of worsening food insecurity associated with the political unrest of the last couple of years[26].

3.6   Ethnicity in Political Party Formation and Elections

Burundi has a multi-party-political system, yet most parties are mobilized along ethnicity to represent different ethnic groups as shown in the table below.

	Political Party	Ethnic Association
1.	National Council for the Defense of Democracy (*Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie*, CNDD)	Smaller faction of the former main Hutu rebel group
2.	National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (*Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie*, CNDD-FDD)	Largest faction of the former main Hutu rebel group
3.	Front for Democracy in Burundi (*Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi*, FRODEBU)	A predominantly Hutu party that won the 1993 elections.
4.	Movement for the Rehabilitation of Citizens-Rurenzangemero (*Mouvement pour la Réhabilitation du Citoyen-Rurenzangemero*, MRC-Rurenzangemero)	A Predominantly Tutsi party
5.	Party for National Recovery (*Parti pour le redressement national*, PARENA)	A Predominantly Tutsi party
6.	Union for National Progress (*Union pour le Progrès national*, UPRONA)	A Predominantly Tutsi, former sole legal party

Elections and political party formation in Burundi have witnessed the manipulation of ethnicity by politicians who mobilise their followers along tribal lines. This was observable in 2005 when CNDD-FDD, headed by Pierre Nkurunziza, won the presidential elections; and in 2020 elections where the National Congress for Liberty selected Agathon Rwasa as their candidate.[27] Gaston Sindimwo, the First Vice President of Burundi run as the Union for National Progress nominee, Dieudonné Nahimana,[28] Léonce Ngendakumana, Francis Rohero and Domitien Ndayizeye also ran in the elections.

3.7   Regional Dimension and Refugees

The conflicts in Burundi have regional dimensions and concerns, including the threat of armed rebel groups that still operate in the DRC and tensions with Rwanda. The refugee problem has been hugely politicized as returnees are facing persistent reintegration challenges due to political differences, scarce resources and social pressures.

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[25] IFPRI Global Hunger Index 2014
[26] See World Bank (2018).
[27] Burundi opposition party picks Agathon Rwasa to run for president Al Jazeera, 16 February 2020
[28] *Griffin, Jo (2020-03-10). "'Not just where people kill each other': the man hoping to transform Burundi". The Guardian. ISSN 0261-3077. Retrieved 2020-03-10.*

Thus, most of the issues that led to previous identify based conflicts have never been redressed, contributing to existing fears and tensions that prevents healing for the majority of victims.

3.8   Corruption

There are still grievances over political corruption favoring ruling party members, and a discriminatory system of governance with the ethnically dominated or controlled military, judiciary, military and other public institutions. For instance, public institutions employ more than 75 per cent of the country's formal workers, and they account for almost one-third of overall non-farm wage employment. However, the evolution of the public sector has been driven to a significant extent by patronage and the need for the co-optation of former and potential, supporters rather than by meritocratic criteria. Nevertheless, political patronage remains, in practice, the main engine for resource allocation within the public sector and the main criteria for selecting public sector employees

4.0   Policy Recommendations

4.1   Central Government

a) Renew the confidence of the population in the government and its institutions as an essential character of an inclusive and participatory government. Related policy options should boost effectiveness and increase the capacity of the government to work with communities to define and develop strategies to implement delivery of public goods and services.

b) As a long-term goal, the government should focus on developing and enhancing appropriate incentive structures that enhance nation-building in which state and non-state actors across ethnic and other social divides participate and can claim ownership. Related policy strategies should help[craft a broad and participatory process of constructing a Burundian national identity backed by an ideology that links it to effective use of the authority of the state towards this goal. This also involves unifying the majority of the population within the state—despite ethnic, social, cultural, and/ or religious diversity—and fostering an all-inclusive national identity that reflects the character and authority of the desired state.

c) Develop a regional approach (within the great lakes region) to address enduring bottlenecks to national unity e.g. the refugee question. Related policy options should be considerate of regional implications which require regional co-ordination and engagement concerning development, peace and stability.

d) Adopt a balanced approach in the implementation of the Arusha agreement, which clearly maps out the history of the conflict in Burundi and strategies for its management and possible resolution. In consideration of the controversial context in which the Agreement was reached and the complexities of implementation, related policy options should seek to strike a constructive balance between respect for the Agreement and Constitution and need for pragmatism while managing the affairs of the state.

e) Commit to rigorous democratization both at national and sub-national levels by expanding the institutions of political participation and inclusion in national and community-level decision-making regardless of ethnicity. Related policy options should support building a rigorous democratic infrastructure to improve livelihood conditions and lessen the isolation of minority groups at the borders and reducing opposition[29].

f) Provide compulsory free and quality basic education for all to narrow the illiteracy gap, build a skilled and employable population regardless of ethnic background and across the regions of the country. Also, through schooling, related policy options should emphasize instruction and sensitization of young generation towards an appropriate and inclusive socio-political ideology. A national curriculum for nation-building should be developed and implemented, providing a more inclusive perspective of the country's history and a future oriented around peace, stability and development.

g) Expanding opportunities for vocational training of, especially, the youth in the formal and non-formal sectors through skilling programs to improve the employability of the youth and facilitate the pursuit of

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[29] Rosemarijn Hoefte & Wouter Veenendaal (2019) The Challenges of Nation-Building and Nation Branding in Multi-Ethnic Suriname, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 25:2, 173-190, DOI: 10.1080/13537113.2019.1602371

entrepreneurship. Related policy strategies should blend the building of a democratic culture in Burundi with the empowerment of the country's youthful majority towards self-advancement.

h) Enhance the role of the media in creating communities and building national unity through spreading images and massages of awareness across communities by promoting nationalist sentiments.[30] Related policy options should help to foment a sense of collective belonging and benefit from the state while de-emphasizing or eradicate divisive identities that contradict this goals.

i) Provide a mechanism and channels to improve and build confidence in the state among citizens by accessing information to educate the public on inclusive opportunities provided by government and how they help to improve livelihoods. Related policy strategies should support implementation of actual programs that deliver on local needs and interests regardless of age, gender, locations or ethnic group. This may also involve decentralizing information collection and reporting centres across regions of the country to help deal with hate speech, violent crimes, gender-based violence, and irregularities that undermine service delivery at the local levels.

j) Government and state actors should support existing structures like the ONPGH and CNIDH to protect and promote human rights and prevention of violent ethnic conflicts, genocide and mass atrocities in Burundi, in particular by documenting, reporting and taking an independent stand against serious violations that may be committed in the country. Related policy strategies should support improving human rights protection systems and institutions to become more effective, and ensure rule of law and its enforcement to protect especially vulnerable and marginalized communities. This also includes ensuring the return and protection of political refugees currently residing in neighbouring states from reprisals, and pardon and release from prisons human rights defenders.

k) Institutionalize facilitated community dialogue to help the management of local level and group-based grievances. Related policy strategies should ensure complementarity and strengthening the work of local governments, conducted in local languages, and supported by media houses to sensitize the public about various alternative forms to dispute resolution to help reduce identity-based violence, crime and hate speech.

l) Build an empowered community of CSO actors with the capacity to deal with the threat and effects of the identity-dimension of Burundian politics in governing the country. Related policy options should ensure that the work of CSOs extends beyond the traditional role of advocacy to promoting effective representation of citizens in government and directly engage communities across ethnic divides to participation in local government projects and programs.

m) Provide incentives for the prevention of ethnic-based violence, where related policy strategies should support: i) the creation of sanction and deterrence institutions which reduce the preference for violent behavior by increasing the cost of violence; ii) establishment of power-sharing institutions which, by balancing, dividing and sharing power, reduce the incentives to engage in violence through increasing the benefits of peace and security; iii) creation of redistributive institutions with regard to growth and development opportunities, and iv) strengthening especially alternative dispute resolution institutions and mechanisms as a critical incentives for and drivers of non-violence.

4.2   Civil Society Organisations

a) Constructively advocate for and engage the government to open up space for CSOs to function as partners in the service of communities. Related policy strategies should highlight the importance of civil society in building stable societies, developing and promoting democratic values, a civic culture, and increasing social, political, and economic equality and human development, which should be seen as significant in preventing IBV in Burundi. Such contribution is key for successful long-term democratic nation-building[31].

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[30] See, for example, Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995)

[31] Stephenson, Carolyn . "Nation Building." *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: January 2005 http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/nation-building

b) Increase the role of CSOs in the political process by establishing partnerships between community-based organizations and local government. Related policy strategies should foster more participatory approaches to community-level decision making, and improve political representation across most marginalized segments of the society, including women, children, the poor, and the vulnerable.

c) Invest in building civic agency of citizens in Burundi, which is instrumental in building the legitimacy of democratic institutions, build and improve civic participation and engagement in democratic processes, and enhance the ability of citizens to demand accountability. Related policy strategies should ensure that civic agency among citizens improves their capacity to work collaboratively across identity differences, partisan ideologies, differing faith traditions, income, and geography to address common challenges, solve problems and create common ground.

d) Support local citizen forums, community-based and other local organizations and processes involving different identity groups to effectively participate in democratic and nation-building processes, while effectively representing their communities.

e) Constructive engagement of the traditional and new media to build appropriate narratives to improve relationships within and between ethnic groups and the state, and build shared positive images of the desired and inclusive society.

4.3 Political Parties

a) Ensure that political party formation and activities mirror the national character of a unitary state as opposed to augmenting divisive ethnic enclaves. Related policy options should enhance political participation of all citizens and contestability during electoral process, to reduce inequalities in accessing political power and improve political accountability. The policies should further help to demonstrate effective political representation of all citizens within government, and expand social and economic inclusion to help improve relationships within and between different ethnic groups and the state. This is especially among the youth from marginalized communities and geographical areas. This also includes applying and extending the 30% constitutional requirement of government appointments to be females beyond cabinet to cover all sectors of government.

b) Policies developed by political parties to guide political activities and development programs should, among other priorities, converge around the common goal of fundamentally eradicating discrimination and mainstreaming inclusion of all ethnic groups. Related strategies, terms and conditions for accessing membership and participating in party activities should be distinctively conflict-sensitive and complementary in how members sustainably collaborate with government and other stakeholders to create and support opportunities for peace and development in the country.

c) Develop youth-centered policies with legal and operational guidelines to promote both socio-advancement and self-advancement of the youth, as a strategy to reduce the preference for violence to meet their specific needs. As a matter of policy, for example, create a *Youth Capital Venture fund* to support deliberate programs that involve youth in critical sectors of government e.g. health, trade and investment, education, tourism, etc., and ensuring that well performing youth-based companies and organizations effectively compete for government contracts. The fund should further facilitate the formalization of youth-based programs and activities in the informal sector to be able to access support services offered by government, create new employment opportunities, and attend to youth-specific concerns in that sector.

d) Through a signed commitment across members of political parties, mainstream mandatory training on prevention of identity-based violence, conflict sensitivity in policy development and implementation, resilience and relationship building, among others. Related policy strategies should seek to eradicate mobilization of political constituencies to win elections along ethnic lines, promote respect for social and political differences, while empowering party candidates to compete effectively and peacefully.

4.4   Cultural or traditional Institutions

a) The revitalization of the *Bashingantahe*, a traditional body of village elders elected on their virtue of integrity, to utilize their influence to build relationships across communities and provide alternative means of dispute resolution as the local level. They used to play a very important role as an informal conflict resolution mechanism and although they only offer advice, a lot of local conflicts are resolved at this level. In some localities, rivalry exists between the *Bashingantahe* and appointed local government representatives due to a lack of clear separation of roles. Related policies should facilitate the interaction of both as an important opportunity to improve social cohesion, conflict resolution, and service delivery.

4.5   International Actors

a) Provide expertise in form of sharing best practices, lessons learned and facilitate internal processes for conflict prevention and peacebuilding that target sub-regional and community level representatives.
b) Facilitate multi-stakeholder processes and citizen forums to help localize prevention of IBV in their local contexts, organize working groups and scholarship programs that contribute to management of specific identity-based issues.

5.   CONCLUSION

Burundi's ethnic conflict can be prevented through proactive and long-term nation-building strategies. More work is required by policymakers if Burundi is to be peaceful, prosperous, and secure. By contrast, these conflict prevention efforts should focus on building credible democratic institutions and a homegrown democratic culture (that allows equal participation and representation), strict implementation of established laws and policies, free and compulsory education for all to enable vertical and horizontal mobility of labour, poverty reduction interventions and equal distribution of public goods and provision of quality social services, particularly in more rural and distant locations.