



**DOMINICANS**  
FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE



**Franciscans International**  
A voice at the United Nations

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afrika**

 **Caritas**  
Internationalis

## **HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 33<sup>rd</sup> Session** **Geneva – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

### **Item 10 – Interactive dialogue – Burundi**

Oral statement submitted by Dominicans for Justice and Peace, Franciscans International, Ökumenisches Netz Zentralafrika and Caritas Internationalis (tbc)

Mr. President,

Dominicans for Justice and Peace and three co-signatories welcome the report of the UN Independent Investigation in Burundi, the Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture and the engagement of the African Union and the European Union on Burundi. These all point to a bleak picture of the situation in the country and confirm once again our own observations on the ground. The denial of gross human rights violations by the Government is disconcerting.

To date, there are still cases of enforced disappearances and torture. Opposition members and civil society actors, including human rights defenders and journalists, continue to be targeted and threatened. Occasional acts of violence by armed groups and civilians are also worrying. Even if the level of widespread violence has declined, the climate of fear remains, particularly in the face of the lack of space for public freedoms. Impunity for gross human rights violations, which occur in a systematic way, remains a major concern. The administration of justice is highly deficient, especially when it comes to promptly and impartially investigating and prosecuting such violations.

Another area of concern is the possible constitutional amendments of decisions of the Arusha Agreement related to the number of successive mandates permitted to be Head of State as well as the regional, ethnic and gender balance in all structures and institutions of the State. Such amendments, which require a broad national consensus, would only aggravate the present social conflicts.

In the face of this serious crisis, besides an internal dialogue, we reiterate that it is crucial to ensure that the Inter-Burundian dialogue facilitated by mediators from the East African Community is inclusive and rapidly concluded. A peaceful resolution of the conflict can only be achieved if a climate of genuine human security and public freedoms prevails. The Human Rights Council must put in place a mechanism that will ensure accountability for human rights violations. In the face of such disregard for human rights, it would be a tragedy if the Human Rights Council and the African States in particular allow this to continue.

Thank you Mr. President.