

BURUNDIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS : Campaign "Halte au troisieme mandat".

DECLARATION OF BURUNDIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS FOLLOWING THE 3rd EMERGENCY SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATES OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) HELD IN DAR-ES-SALAAM ON July 6, 2015.

Consecutively to the Communiqué of the Third Emergency Summit of Heads of States of the East African Community (EAC) held in Dar es Salaam-Tanzania on July 6, 2015, Burundian civil society organizations would like to inform the public at both national and international levels the following:

1. Burundian Civil society organizations(CSOs) noted with interest the efforts of the international community including the East African Community and the African Union to assist the people of Burundi to find a solution to the crisis caused by President Nkurunziza who decided to seek a third term of office in violation of the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi;
2. Civil society organizations have noted with deep disappointment, the negligence and contempt of President Nkurunziza who boycotted twice the EAC emergency Summit and has proven to be committed to never participate to any international forum dedicated to Burundi since he prefers to run for his own interests by campaigning while Burundi's friends are struggling to find a solution to the crisis caused by his illegitimate ambitions;
3. Civil society organizations welcome the decision of the Summit to uphold the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and the Constitution of Burundi, especially with regards to term limits as enshrined in the said instruments;
4. However, the same organizations regret and find ironic that the Heads of State have avoided to emphasize that the violation of the constitutional principle of term limits by President Nkurunziza is currently the basis of the deep crisis in Burundi and the same constitutes a real threat to peace and stability throughout the Community;
5. The Civil society Organizations are disappointed by the regress made by the Summit of July 6, 2015 with regard to the resolutions of the EAC Summit of May 31, 2015 which decided that pool dates be postponed for at least 45 days, the disarmament of the militias and the continuation of the political dialogue; and also with the relevant decisions of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in particular with respect to the prior consensus on the electoral calendar before the elections;
6. Civil society organizations are particularly disappointed by the silence of the Summit with regard to the electoral forcing since municipal and parliamentary elections were on June 29, 2015 without pluralistic competition, in an insecure environment characterized by significant flows of Burundian refugees, without coverage of independent media, without a neutral observation; in a context marked by denunciations and exile of the Speaker and Vice-President of the Republic, and in violation of the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council that urged political consensus prior to the electoral calendar and the disarmament of militias;
7. Civil society organizations would like to recall that protests against the third term of President Nkurunziza is not a matter or the opportunity of fighting for political positions. It is above all a fight for the respect of the Arusha Agreement for peace and reconciliation and the Constitution, the very struggle for the consolidation of peace and democracy in Burundi;

8. In this respect, Civil society organizations strongly oppose the trick dedicated to offer a third term to President Nkurunziza by allowing him presidential elections held in total breach of core electoral standards including transparency, inclusivity and credibility; and the request for him to form a government of national unity;

9. Civil society organizations believe that the postponement of the elections of 15 to July 30, 2015 shall be meaningless if there is no cancellation of the legislative elections held on June 29, 2015 and it is obvious that two weeks can not allow the disarmament of the militia Imbonerakure;

10. Civil society organizations rather propose that the period from 15 to July 30, 2015 be used to effectively organize genuine dialogue between all stakeholders for the purpose to secure a consensual calendar for credible, democratic and peaceful elections;

11. Civil society organizations point out that the Emergency summit of the EAC Heads of State has always wanted to highlight the wish for dialogue that has yet to materialize and would like to clarify the preconditions for the success of the said dialogue, including a) release of the protesters and the commitment to refrain from continuing arrests, b) the cancellation of arrest warrants against protest leaders, c) reopening and restoration of independent media d) creation and insurance of safe conditions for party and organization leaders involved in the protest movement of the third term of Nkurunziza and e) a neutral venue that could house these negotiations;

12. It is important that the facilitator urgently consult different stakeholders in a secure venue outside Burundi, prior to the commencement of dialogue;

13. Civil society organizations finally reiterate that they will not support any solution leading to the third term of President Nkurunziza and remain open to discussing a solution that will allow proper organization of elections, the disarmament of the militia Imbonerakure, an independent investigation of human rights abuses during the period of protests and safe return of Burundians and political leaders in exile.

Done at Bujumbura on July 10, 2015

For the Campaign "Halte au troisième mandat"

Vital NSHIMIRIMANA



President of FORSC