

***Burundi International Peace  
Committee  
P.O. Box 64583  
Nairobi, Kenya***

November 18, 1995

Your Excellencies.

President Jimmy Carter  
President Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere  
President Tumaní Touré  
Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Your Excellencies,

On behalf of the Burundi International Peace Committee, we are happy to express our sincere gratitude to you for your love for Peace which is known by all, all over the world. It is because of such love that you have willingly accepted to take your precious time in order to bring peace in Burundi and Rwanda.

The people of Rurundi and Rwanda welcome this initiative. The Burundi International Peace Committee supports all efforts toward bringing solutions to the conflict in Burundi. In this understanding, the Peace Committee salutes and supports your efforts. we are hereby enclosing a document prepared by the committee to assist you come to terms with the real problems experienced by all Burundians along with proposed solutions.

We trust that you will be able to help all the Burundians come together and find ways to live together peacefully.

We remain yours faithfully, .....

  
**Bishop Ignace Nzeirimana  
Vice President**

  
**Rev. Dr. Elie Buzonyori  
General Secretary**

  
**Bishop J. Alfred Nduricimpa  
President**

# ***WILL HUTUS AND TUTSIS LIVE TOGETHER PEACEFULLY ?***

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## ***Introduction***

More than two years have passed since the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye of Burundi. Since then, many people have lost their lives and continue to die. One wonders whether it will be possible again for Hutus and Tutsis to live together peacefully. Different people or groups of people suggest various ways by which they think Burundi can be peaceful. Some of the suggested methods are simplistic in the approach and therefore treat the Hutu-Tutsi conflict very lightly. Other methods lack proper understanding of the real causes of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict.

Peace is the essence of living. In other words, without Peace there is no living. In this understanding, people who love living should be concerned about what is happening among the Hutus and the Tutsis. Those who try to seek for ways to bring Peace in Burundi deserve the support of all because peace is possible. This is why mindful and concerned Burundians who believe that peace can return in Burundi without having to kill one another, have come together and created the BURUNDI INTERNATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE on March 14, 1995 in order to work for the promotion of Peace in Burundi.

Peace is possible among Hutus and Tutsis. But, those who seek for this Peace must be honest in their approaches and be true to the past events in order to better understand the causes of the present crisis. Because of this, this document touches the past and proceeds to look at the present situation. Then it concludes with suggested proposals which, in our opinion, can facilitate the return of trust and Peace among Hutus and Tutsis of Burundi.

## *Historical Sketch*

Historians tell us that Twa were the first people to live in Burundi. followed by the Hutus and lastly the Tutsis in the 15th century. The Tutsis introduced a new value, the cow, to replace the former value, the land and its products. Since the cow was the most economic value and that only Tutsis had come with cows, it became obvious that the person who had cows was rich and powerful. Through the cow and cunning, the Tutsis managed to infiltrated slowly the ancient Burundi administration dominated by Hutu kings and princes. By 17th century the royal judiciary and army were dominated by the Tutsis. Then, the Tutsis killed all the Hutu kings and rulers and established their dynasty. The Tutsi dynasty was very oppressive against Hutus and Twas. They used their army to oppress and to kill any Hutu who could try to claim his/her rights.

It has been said that before the coming of the Europeans in Burundi that Hutus and Tutsis lived together peacefully. The truth of the matter is that the Tutsis were oppressive rulers who made Hutus to serve them as their slaves. The cow and the land were in the hands of the Tutsis. Most Hutus had to serve Tutsis in order to get a piece of land. Tutsis were free to take any property which belonged to a Hutu. So, a Hutu had to have a Tutsi to protect him. This protector had to be served for life. There was no justice for a Hutu. From childhood, Hutu parents had to teach their children how to exist in Burundi. Children were to obey Tutsis and refrain from showing any signs of disapproval of injustice done to them. Hutus had to show that they were happy even when they were mistreated by Tutsis. Failure to do so resulted in a more harsh punishment which could involve family members. Therefore, the Hutus had to accept to be quiet no matter how they suffered. Such a painful situation has been regarded as peaceful co-existence between Hutus and Tutsis.

At the end of 19th century, the Germans came to colonize Burundi. together with Rwanda and Tanganyika. They formed a new territory called Deutsche Ostafrika with Dar Es Salaam as the capital. At the defeat of the Germans during the First World War, the Belgians took over and occupied Burundi. The capital city shifted from Dar Es Salaam to Leopoldville in the Belgian

Congo. Both Germans and Belgians imposed a system of indirect rule on Burundi. This meant that Tutsi rulers continued to oppress Hutus.

During the 46 years of Belgian administration, new values were introduced including money and schools. Christian missions must be commended for their establishment of schools. Though at first, more Tutsis went to school than Hutus, schools provided rare opportunities for Tutsi and Hutu children to acquire knowledge and skills on equal footing.

While in schools, Hutus discovered that they were able to work as well as Tutsis. The myth that Tutsis were brighter, more skillful with divine wisdom, was challenged by the fact that Hutus did well like their fellow Tutsis and sometimes did even better : During late 1950's, the educated Hutus and Tutsis formed political parties in order to lead the country into independence. The UPRONA party which gathered together Hutus and Tutsis won general elections. During this time, Hutus believed that they were going to live in harmony with the Tutsis as equal partners. But the Tutsi rulers were not happy to rule with Hutus. They decided to eliminate all Hutu intellectuals in order to tell Hutus that they needed to remain as slaves for Tutsis. Since then, the Tutsi rulers have been trying to eliminate educated Hutus. Since independence, Hutus have been excluded from high leadership positions, military, judiciary and key economic sectors. Hutus have been excluded from secondary schools and University. Persecution and elimination of Hutus by Tutsi rulers have been perpetuated since independence to today. The following are a few of the many examples which serve as witnesses :

- January 19, 1962 - Jean Nduwabike with his three colleagues, unionist leaders (all Hutus) were executed in Kamenge, Bujumbura. Many other political leaders were buried alive after cruel torture and humiliation.
  
- December 14, 1964 - Gabriel Gihimbare, the first Roman Catholic Hutu Bishop who had been appointed to replace Archbishop Grauls, a Belgian bishop based at Gitega, was assassinated.

- January 15, 1965 - The hutu Prime Minister, Pierre Ngendandumwe was assassinated. All the twenty-four hutu members of Parliament were killed.
- December 18, 1965 - Paul Mirerekano, Gervais Nyangoma and many other hutu top leaders of the UPRONA Party were assassinated. Four months later, a massacre of Hutus was organized by the Tutsis and ten thousand (10.000) hutus were killed.
- In 1968, hutu Minister of Information, Martin Ndayahoze discovered a Tutsi genocidal plan of exterminating Hutus. The Minister informed president Michel Micombero in his political report No. 93/100/CAB/68. The Minister was executed in May 1972.
- December 1969, Charles Karorero, Mathias Bazayuwundi and many other Hutu officers (forty in total) were assassinated.
- In 1972, Tutsi rulers organized a successful genocide against Hutus. Within three months, they managed to kill more than 300,000 Hutus and forced more than 200.000 Hutus to seek refuge outside of Burundi.
- In 1988. in two northern districts of Ntega and Marangara, the Tutsi army killed more than 50,000 Hutus and thousands of Hutus fled to neighboring countries.
- In November 1991, the Tutsi army killed more than 20.000 Hutus in Cibitoke Province.

The Tutsi rulers have continued to persecute any person who tried to suggest that Hutus and Tutsis could share the power and opportunities as equal citizens. A few Tutsis who tried to do so were also killed like Hutus. These include :

- Prince Louis Rwagasore : Prince Rwagasore had Mwalimu Julius Nyerere as his political adviser. He was interested in building a society of justice for all Burundians. The Tutsis found that they could not kill Hutus if he existed. So. they assassinated him in 1961.

- King Ntare V, Charles Ndzizeye was killed in 1972. It has been believed that one of the reasons he was killed is that he was friendly to Hutus.
- Gilles Rimazubute, Vice-president of the Parliament and an advocate of justice, peace and equity was assassinated in the 21st October 1993 coup.

### ***The Present Situation***

After the June 1993 elections, all Hutus and Tutsis who love peace and justice were very happy. President Melchior Ndadaye who had won the presidential elections insisted that nobody should revenge. He preached peace, love, justice, equity and reconciliation. He and his group composed of Hutus and Tutsis committed themselves to rebuilding a new Burundi. According to Melchior Ndadaye, the new Burundi was a place where justice, peace and equal opportunities were assured for all. Those same Tutsis who had been killing anyone who tried to bring justice and equality among all Burundians, could not stand the new President and his team. On 21st October 1993, the Tutsis using their army murdered President Melchior Ndadaye just three months in office. On the same unfortunate day, the Speaker of the Parliament, Honorable Pontien Karibwami, Deputy Speaker, Honorable Gilles Bimazubute, Minister of Interior, Juvenal Ndayikeza, and many other key leaders of the new regime were killed.

After the killing of these leaders, Burundians were desperate. Then, the Tutsi army rampaged all over the country killing Hutus mercilessly in a bid to force them accept the old Tutsi domination again. But the angry population reacted by killing one another. Hutus killing Tutsis and Tutsis killing Hutus.

It is now more than two years since the ethnic violence resumed after the killing of the Hutu President, Melchior Ndadaye. It is believed that so far about 35,000 Tutsis have been killed while the Tutsi army has killed about 400,000 Hutus. This number is growing every day

throughout Burundi. Many other Hutus live in valleys, hills, bushes and refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania. They are suffering from cold, hunger, diseases and fear. Their houses have been burnt or demolished while their family members have been killed. There are also some Tutsis who live in centres inside Burundi. They are protected by the army. They too live in fear and misery. They would like to return to their villages.

In an attempt to come out of the crisis, political parties have agreed on a convention to govern Burundi. The government resulted from the convention has not solved the crisis. This government is composed of certain individuals suspected to be among the organizers and perpetrators of the crisis. It has failed to deal with the question of army, justice and police. In fact, the army, police and the judiciary are accused of helping to perpetuate the crisis. This has led many groups to buy guns and kill one another.

Today Hutus feel that they have been oppressed too long and it is more than enough. They are not ready to accept the Tutsi to rule them again by force. The Tutsis after losing power in the June 1993 elections, realized the tragedies and misery they have caused and yet they have continued to rule with impunity. This made them fear justice. Therefore, they are not willing to give in to democratic changes. They are busy buying arms and training their youth to kill and terrify Hutus. Because of this situation, Burundi society is disintegrating. It is urgent to do something and help Burundians come to their senses. It is urgent to stop the logic of war and cultivate the logic of peace and justice for all. Burundians need to be assisted to see that it is less expensive to live and help others live than to kill or cause others to die.

## ***Some Proposed Solutions***

Different people propose solutions to the crisis. Most of the proposed solutions are very simplistic in approach while others are egocentric.

1. Some people propose that Hutus and Tutsis should be separated into two states. This proposal is very weak because it does not indicate where the Twas will be. Also the proposal does not take into consideration the fact that land is connected to the spirits of the dead and the living. This will force them to fight again in order to regain the land of their ancestors.
2. Forced repatriation : Other people propose that countries who have received refugees should force them back. In this way they think they will control them and no other problems. This proposal ignores the fact that the houses of these refugees have been destroyed and that the army they fled is still chasing and killing them.

## ***Proposals of the Burundi International Committee***

The Burundi International Peace Committee believes that peace is possible in Burundi. Hutus and Tutsis can live together just as other tribes live together in other countries of the world. But to reach this goal, Burundians must be assisted to seek for tough solutions. Burundians must accept the truth that all patterns of humanness are God-given and none is greater than others in humanity. As such, each human being has right to exist. Therefore, structures that make it impossible for some to enjoy their existence should be removed. In Burundi such structures include the army the police. the judicial system and the mode of governance. There must be a way of controlling them in order to allow all Burundians feel confident about them.



Because of this, the Burundi International Peace Committee proposes that Burundians should be encouraged to dialogue in a "Conference for Peace Negotiation". Participants in the conference should include : the present government representatives, the registered and unregistered political parties, religious leaders, warring groups, international observers and consultants and representative of the Burundi International Peace Committee for consultancy purposes. During the dialogue, the conference would discuss on the following :

### ***1. The International transitional government***

According to Burundi culture, when two people are in conflict, a third party is needed to help reconcile the antagonists. The conference should discuss and find a mode of governance which may allow international figures to administer the country for a period of 3 to 5 years. The mission of such a government would be to reorganize the army, the police, the judiciary, the provincial administration, etc. It would facilitate the return and the resettlement of refugees in their properties. One year before the end of the mission, that government would hold general elections. During the last year, members of the international government would serve as an advisory body.

### ***2. Reunification of Burundi and Tanzania***

For five centuries, relationships between Hutus and Tutsis have been those of cheating, deception, injustice and killing. The community of other human beings should assist so that these people do not continue in this way. Hutus and Tutsis need to live in a country where there are many tribes. Many tribes can swallow them and assist them to lose their pride of superiority. The Peace Committee suggests Tanzania to be such a country. It should be remembered that Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi were once part of one administration, The Deutsche Ostafrika. It is also true that culturally, Burundians are more linked to the peoples of Tanzania.

### ***3. Others***

During the conference, the participants could discuss other possibilities for bringing peace if they find that neither of the two above can help bring lasting solutions.

The Burundi International Peace Committee reiterates its stand that Hutus and Tutsis can live together peacefully if simplistic solutions are replaced by the will to seek for hard and sometimes painful solutions.

For the Burundi International Peace Committee

Bishop Noah Nzeyimana  
Vice President

Bishop J. Alfred Ndoricimpa  
President

Rev. Dr. Elie Buconyori  
General Secretary

Appendix 1

**KEY LEADERS ASSASSINATED BECAUSE OF VIOLENCE AND INJUSTICE**

OCCUPATION	NAME	ETHNIC GROUP	YEAR
KING	NTARE V Charles NDIZEYE	Tutsi	1972
PRESIDENT	Melchior NDADAYE	Hutu	1993
	Cyprien NTARYAMIRA	Hutu	1994
SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT VICE SPEAKER	Paul MIREREKANO	Hutu	1965
	Potien KARIBWAMI	Hutu	1993
	Gilles BIMAZUBUTE	Tutsi	1993
PRIME MINISTER	Joseph CIMPAYE	Hutu	1965
	Louis RWAGASORE	Tutsi	1961
	Paul NGENDANDUMWE	Hutu	1965
	Joseph BAMINA	Hutu	1965
MINISTER	E. NIGANE	Hutu	1965
	Ignace NDIMANYA	Hutu	1965
	Andre BAREMERA	Hutu	1965
	Emile BENYUJE	Hutu	1965
	Pascal BUBIRIZA	Hutu	1972
	Ferdinand BITARIHO	Hutu	1965
	Zacharie NTIRYICA	Hutu	1965
	Andre RURAMUSURA	Hutu	1965
	Marc NDAYIZIGA	Hutu	1972
	J.C. BANDYAMBONA	Hutu	1972
	Juvenal NDAYIKEZA	Hutu	1993
	Ernest KABUSHEMEYE	Hutu	1995
	Cyriaque SIMBIZI	Tutsi	1994
	Bernard CIZA	Hutu	1994
Barnabe KANYARUGURU	Hutu	1972	
PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS	Joachim NURWAKERA	Hutu	1993
	Anglebert SENTAMO	Tutsi	1993
	Evariste (Governor of BUBANZA Province)	Hutu	1993
	Fidele MUHIZI	Hutu	1993
	Malachie SURWAVUBA	Hutu	1995
	Deo (Governor of KIRUNDO Province)	Hutu	1995

N.B. There are many other important Hutu people who were killed whose names are not mentioned. For example, among many people who lost their lives during the 1972 genocide committed by Burundi army include :

- 7 Medical Doctors
- 3 Army Commandants
- 1200 Secondary School Teachers
- 2500 Primary School Teachers.