

# Adress to the Nation by HE Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic

Dear Burundians,  
Friends of Burundi,

Allow me, on the outset, to give thanks to Almighty God, Who is always guiding us in our efforts to strengthen peace, reconciliation and development of our country. Glory be to Him.

Dear compatriots,  
Friends of Burundi,

Since a few days, our country has been facing a particularly difficult time, and violence has been increasing since the day the CNDD-FDD party officially announced the name of their presidential candidate for the forthcoming elections ; this designation has then been the trigger for demonstrations because some thought that the candidacy was contrary to the Constitution.

Pursuant to Article 228 of the Constitution, the Senate referred the matter to the Constitutional Court, and the latter has rendered its ruling stating that the renewal of the current presidential term by direct universal suffrage is not contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi of 18 March 2005.

Dear compatriots,  
Friends of Burundi,

In line with good governance, respect for the law, principles of dialogue and consultation, respect for democracy and promotion of human rights must serve as leitmotifs.

With this conviction in mind, I wish to bring to the attention of the National and International Community the following :

I take fact of the ruling of the Constitutional Court in its entirety, and I am committed to respect it ;

I wish to inform the national and international opinion that , if re-elected, this will be the final term, as provided in the ruling of the Constitutional Court ;

I call on the partners and friends of Burundi to become more involved in strengthening peace and security, and to support us in our efforts to develop the country.

As far as I am concerned, I am committed to pursue the efforts of reconciling my people that started since the signing of the Arusha and the Global Ceasefire agreements on which the present Constitution is built ;

In order to consolidate peace in the country, I am requesting special protection for internally displaced persons still living in IDP sites.

I welcome the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for it will help Burundians to know the truth about all their painful past since the country achieved independence in 1962 ;

I call upon politicians, and some civil society organisations, to stop using the population, particularly children, as human shields in acts of violence : schoolchildren, pupils and students, all have to return to school without delay, their place is not in the streets. Therefore, I hereby order that children under 18 who were arrested during these illegal protests be released without delay.

All national examinations both at primary and secondary school levels must take place as scheduled. I call upon defence and security forces to ensure the safety of the places where

these examinations will take place.

The adults arrested and imprisoned because of these demonstrations may also be released if the movement stops.

I wish to emphasize that the protection of civilians is one of our priorities.

I call upon political party leaders to carry out field visits to mobilize their members to participate massively in the forthcoming elections. Indeed, no solution, other than the elections, is possible for the current situation.

Dear compatriots,

Friends of Burundi,

The demonstrations now taking place especially in the capital city of our country have caused enormous and multifaceted damage. I deeply regret the deaths that occurred since the start of violence, both on the civil side as well as in the ranks of the defence and security forces. I offer my condolences to the bereaved families.

I am happy to announce to all stakeholders involved in the forthcoming elections that necessary measures have been taken to ensure that the electoral process will be free, fair and peaceful. I wish to emphasize and reassure, once again, the National and International Community that the electoral process will be transparent, inclusive and peaceful.

Once again, I am calling upon the international community, the UN, the European Union, the African Union, the East African Community, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, etc. to come to Burundi to witness the electoral process in Burundi.

Moreover, I am calling upon men and women of the media to do their work in strict compliance with the code of ethics and the journalistic ethics.

I feel compelled to remind the National Media Council (CNC) to monitor on a daily basis the evolution of the situation. Journalists must keep in mind two important aspects of their duties : they must play a key role in the strengthening of peace, democracy and reconciliation in Burundi.

Dear compatriots,  
Friends of Burundi,

Finally, I would like to call all my fellow citizens for calm, asking them to comply with the laws of this country.

To the politicians who might have some claims to make, I am calling upon them to also comply with the law, to express them clearly to the judiciary, and to avoid resorting to anything that could undermine peace and security.

It is my pledge that if re-elected, I shall continue to work to consolidate peace and security, and to promote sustainable development.

I am calling upon all Burundians, and foreigners living in Burundi, to reject any action that could undermine peace and security that were recovered at a cost in this country.

Finally, I am calling for the ongoing protests to stop immediately so that Burundians can prepare for the elections in a peaceful atmosphere, so that they can continue to build a united, peaceful and prosperous BURUNDI.

**GOD BLESS BURUNDI AND BURUNDIANS**

I THANK YOU.