

PRESIDENT NKURUNZIZA EXTENDS 2016 BEST WISHES IN A MESSAGE TO THE NATION

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Dear Compatriots,



Friends of Burundi ;

1. The year 2015 has come to an end. As the New Year 2016 starts, we are filled with hope to finish it in peace, in security and a great joy. I give thanks to God Almighty who has always remained on the side of Burundi and the people of Burundi, and I pray Him to continue to guide our steps. May glory and praise be given to Him now and forever.

2. I wish all Burundians and foreigners dwelling on our territory a year of peace, prosperity and unity that emanates from the Lord. May this year be for you a year of consolidation of democracy and national sovereignty, which are both the key to sustainable development.

3. Indeed, the 2016 New Year that we begin now will mainly be characterized by strengthening good practices inherited from our ancestors, which are to always emphasize dialogue and consultation while managing the affairs of the nation in accordance with the general interest and the welfare of the entire population.

^r 4. This is also what led us to choose the theme for this year that goes : "LET US

ENGAGE IN AN ALL INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE AND PUT THE GOOD OF OUR COUNTRY FIRST !"

Dear Compatriots,
Friends of Burundi ;

5. During the celebration of the 50th anniversary of independence of our country, we solemnly committed ourselves to a new beginning, to always put first the good of our

country, to establish a permanent framework for dialogue to discuss the issues of national life in all sectors.

6. Dialogue and consultation are not something new vis-à-vis of the people of Burundi. Indeed, Burundians have always discussed since time immemorial to find common grounds and reach agreement over any disputes arising within community members. Let us hold our heads high ; the dialogue takes place among Burundians.

7. We will never stand in a silent look while people are spoiling positive values of unity and courage that have always characterized people of Burundi. Never ! Let us always remember that we gained a deserved independence, that we are independent, and that it is up to us to manage the affairs of our country.

8. Therefore, at the end of each year, we must assess the achievements of the past year, to highlight significant positive changes that we have made and which we can even showcase beyond our borders.

I am not going to give an exhaustive list of the achievements of the past year, as Members of the Government exposed them sufficiently, each one in his own sector, but it is worth recalling some good and important actions that marked this outgoing year :

Elections were organized and well carried out from beginning to end ; they were transparent, inclusive and conducted in peace and security ;

Democratic institutions have been established and are functional ;

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights is at work ;

The Government has continued the implementation of the Strategic Paper for Growth and Poverty Reduction (CSLP II). During this year, resistant banana trees, cassava saplings resistant to mosaic, chemical fertilizers were distributed to the population ; while cows, pigs and a lot of improved goat breeds across the country were repopulated, etc. These programs will go on over the upcoming year.

I congratulate the 10 most performing Communes in terms of development work marking the 53rd anniversary of our independence. These Communes are : 1.Mwumba, 2.Makamba, 3.Matongo, 4.Musigati, 5.Gitaramuka, 6.Mutumba, 7.Ntahangwa, 8.Kabarore, 9.Gahombo and 10.Gatara. I encourage them to move forward, and be an example to other communes. The Government will reward their efforts.

Burundi also continued its efforts to send peacekeeping forces to Somalia, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan and Haiti ; we are ready to intervene

everywhere else we may be asked to by the United Nations or the African Union.

9. Here in Burundi and overseas, Burundi Defence and Security Forces have performed very well. Yet there are some of them who lost their lives on the battlefield.

I wish to take this opportunity to extend my deepest condolences to those who lost close friends or family members in the above mentioned circumstances, and I sympathize with all the families of the Defence and Security Forces, and all other people who have been plunged into mourning by the actions of murderers and terrorists that our country has gone through recently.

Dear Compatriots,
Friends of Burundi ;

10. No one can deny that despicable acts were committed in our country, especially during the year that is coming to an end. One can mention among others :

The insurrection that broke out in some neighbourhoods of the City of Bujumbura.

The slowdown in work and business in the City of Bujumbura due to the insurgency and subsequent killings and terrorism in the neighbourhoods where the uprising took place.

The armed attacks in some communes like Bukinanyana in Cibitoke Province, Kabarore in Kayanza Province and Giteranyi in Muyinga Province.

Groups of people who were arrested trying to carry out attacks to disrupt security in Gitega, Mwaro and Bururi.

The suicide attacks that were launched in December against 3 military camps in Bujumbura and another camp in Mugongo-Manga Commune of Bujumbura Rural Province.

The attempted coup aimed at overthrowing the democratically established institutions and resulting in casualties.

Citizens who fled their homes to seek refuge in relatively peaceful neighbourhoods of the City of Bujumbura, inside or outside the country, especially in neighbouring countries.

Worthy of mention are also the torrential rains that caused landslides and destruction of homes, crops and infrastructures, etc.

11. There are also the phenomena of killings and robbery committed by armed groups and other types of crimes resulting from land disputes, drunkenness, drug consumption, settling of accounts, etc.

Such antisocial behaviours have been condemned by the people of Burundi and by the International Community.

12. Thanks to the good cooperation between the population, Defence and Security Forces, Justice and the Administration, many of those who tried to disrupt security and commit the irreparable using firearms were arrested and brought to justice,

while others have lost their lives.

13. Many weapons were seized, more than 6,000 criminals were arrested and brought to justice, and about 120 criminal groups were dismantled. Currently, in spite of some pig-headed people, peace and security reign throughout the national territory.

14. I appeal to everyone to remain vigilant, especially during the festive season. The Joint Committees for Security are requested to assist people in this perspective.

15. I also urge the High Command of the Defence and Security Forces to go ahead with capacity building for their personnel, to emphasize discipline within the troops and even punish, if necessary, any member of their personnel whose attitude and behaviour is likely to tarnish the image of the body and throw discredit on it.

Dear Compatriots,
Friends of Burundi ;

16. For the coming year 2016, the Government has developed Projects and Programmes that will allow moving and propelling the country into the road of sustainable development. I would like to briefly mention some of them :

We will continue the initiative of dialogue and consultation among all Burundians, and our goal is to reach definitive conclusions so that all pretexts for those who do not want peace may be void. This will be done through the ad hoc Commission newly established.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will continue its work.

We will continue the Patriotic Education and Training Program focusing on peaceful coexistence especially for the youth, and we will encourage the population to initiate and promote income generating activities to ensure their self-development.

We will continue the reform of the Judiciary and ensure that justice is rendered in accordance with the law.

We will continue revising and updating laws to get them consistent with current realities, and ensuring respect for ethnic and gender balance in all sectors of employment, in accordance with the Constitution of Burundi, the Arusha Agreement and the Comprehensive Cease-fire Agreement.

We will follow more closely the activities of non-governmental organizations, and we will call them to order if necessary, so that they work in accordance with the law and regulations governing their activities. These regulations will soon be improved in order to curb the disorder observed in that area recently.

We will continue to carry out research on minerals, hydrocarbons and other natural resources given that these domains are still significantly untapped despite the fact that they are among the main sectors that can lead us towards sustainable development for which we strive.

r We will further get down to community work and continue to build schools, health

centres, hospitals, stadiums and playgrounds, offices for local leaders, etc.

The policy of free medical care that we initiated in favour of children under five and mothers giving birth in public health facilities has continued and will continue even during the coming year.

We will also pursue prevention programs against diseases including vaccination campaigns, the distribution of mosquito nets, awareness-raising against HIV/AIDS, and distribution of antiretroviral for people infected by HIV/AIDS.

In order to enhance trade, National Road N15 (RN15) connecting Gitega to Nyangungu is its final stage, the RN3 linking Mugina and Nyanza-lac via Mabanda is under construction. The RN4 starting from the Chanic towards the border with the DRC is under construction and will be completed in early 2016, while the construction of the RN13 going from Makebuko to Butaganzwa and asphaltting of RN18 that goes from Nyakararo to Kibumbu will begin soon.

Civil Servants should not worry and not to listen to the propagators of lies who say that salaries will not always be available. I only ask them to stay at work and defeat corruption plans and those who want to disrupt peace and security around them. There is no fire on our house, the number of friends of Burundi goes constantly increasing, and our diplomatic relations go on normally, as many countries have understood that we are all complementary.

17. During the management of the 2016 budget, fiscal policy will focus on strengthening financial resources and the staff of the Burundi Revenue Authority (OBR) in order to substantially increase domestic revenue collection. I take this opportunity to congratulate the OBR, for it collected about 9 billion more on expected revenues later this month of December.

18. In order to increase revenues, the Burundi revenue Authority OBR will broaden the tax base, fight against fraud and tax evasion in cooperation with the Administration and law enforcers on borders ; proceed with the collection of arrears, revise the policy on exemptions, recruit additional staff at the OBR, and carry out campaigns on tax compliance and tax morality.

19. For more transparency in management of the national budget, all government expenditures must pass through a single account of the Government. Similarly, Government spending must pass through a single account which is in the Central Bank (BRB).

20. The Charroi Zero policy will be reviewed to improve its implementation ;

21. Within the framework of the decentralization policy, the Government will a grant a-five hundred million Burundi francs to every commune for the implementation of the activities contained in the Communal Community Development Plans (PCDC).

Dear Compatriots,
Friends of Burundi ;

22. Before closing, I would like to inform Burundians and the International Community that I support the freedom of expression and freedom of the press. I ask
† Justice to speed up investigations over recent events and to establish responsibility

so that the innocent are acquitted and the guilty are punished in accordance with the law. Media that will be cleared by the Justice shall immediately resume their activities, but after making the commitment to respect the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi and the laws governing the press in Burundi.

23. As far as I am concerned, I will spare no effort to support the media, because I know that their role is of paramount importance in the life of a country.

24. To better achieve the goals that we set to achieve peace and security, here is a series of advice that I would like everyone to take heed :

Defence and Security Forces should continue and step up the disarmament process so that security is guaranteed across the country for each and everyone.

As writings tarnishing the image of Burundi and sowing division among the people of Burundi through the new information technologies are sharply increasing. I urge everyone to work together with the Police, Justice, the National Communication Council (CNC) and the Authority in charge of Regulating, Controlling and Monitoring the Telecommunications (ARCT) to vigorously combat this kind of "cyber crime".

I ask the Defence and Security Forces to help in the consolidation of the four-sided security strategy, the collaboration networking between the Police, Administration, Justice and the population, in order to ensure that security issues do not become a heavy burden on the shoulders of some people.

I ask the Anti-Corruption Brigade to track those who ask for bribes and those who use bribes. Work hard and selflessly to eradicate this bad habit in Burundi.

I ask all Burundians to get together to the fight against fraud, to ensure an improved revenue collection so that the National Treasury can grow to pave the way for implementation and increase of development projects.

I invite all Burundians to play a part in the protection and preservation of the environment. Thus, each commune is invited to plant at least 50 hectares of well maintained trees.

I ask parents to pay more attention to education and behaviour of their children, especially in the city of Bujumbura, and in natural regions of Mimirwa and Mugamba.

I urge religious leaders to teach the Word of God and its subsequent behaviour to their followers without leaving behind community development in their areas of activity.

To those who are still in refugee camps, both ancient and new ones, I ask them to return to their homeland, to contribute to its construction and to the Inter-Burundian Dialogue underway to that together we may engage in an all inclusive dialogue and put the good of our country first.

I appeal once again to young people, both in and out of school, to avoid being deceived, thereby jeopardizing their own future. Let them not continue to turn a deaf ear to the wise advice from their older siblings.

† Dear Compatriots,

Friends of Burundi ;

25. Finally, I wish to thank all those who put body and soul into the implementation of programs of the country, and I hereby extend special thanks to the International Community for its contribution to security, rule of law and good governance consolidation.

26. I would like to reiterate my thanks to the Defence and Security Forces and all who have played an active role in the electoral process. The results of the elections were accepted because these forces have helped in protecting democracy that was threatened by those who did not want elections to take place.

27. I thank Burundians who have shown exceptional courage during that time when many stories were told and who remained at their workstations, safeguarding peace and security. They have not listened to the propagators of lies who wanted to lead them in the insurgency movements and to rumourmongers who invited them to flee their country.

28. I once again wish to reassure the people of Burundi and the International Community that there are no massacres or genocide in preparation by the Government of Burundi. And I would like to reassure Burundians and the International Community : "Genocide will never be carried out in Burundi."

29. I would like to wish to all Burundians and foreigners living in Burundi a happy New Year 2016. May it be for you a year of peace and divine blessings, a year of strong solidarity and social cohesion. Celebrate the New Year in continuation of Christmas bliss ; and may your dreams for yourselves and for our dear and beloved country come true in 2016.

30. Always remember that no one will love Burundi better than the sons and daughters of Burundi, and the Almighty God who created it without consulting anyone.

31. I would like to conclude this Address by proclaiming presidential pardons to all prisoners whose judgment was rendered, with the exception of those whose the law does not grant such a favour. These are : (1) those that are guilty of rape, (2) armed robbery or gang, (3) illegal possession of weapons, and (4) breach of state security.

32. Let us strengthen discipline and positive values that have always characterized us, for they are the sure way to consolidate peace and security, our independence and genuine democracy. I wish to announce to Burundians and to the International Community that our morrows are reassuring (Imbere ni Heza). The year 2016 marks a new and good beginning for our country, Burundi, with God as my Witness.

Let us further ENGAGE IN AN ALL INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE AND PUT THE GOOD OF OUR COUNTRY FIRST. May God who gave Burundi to us protect and take care of it forever.

GOD BLESS BURUNDI AND THE PEOPLE OF BURUNDI,

THANK YOU