



Security Council

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Letter dated 1 December 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

By its resolution 2248 (2015), the Security Council requested me to update the Council on the situation in Burundi and to present options for the future presence of the United Nations in the country. On 18 November 2015, I dispatched my Special Adviser, Jamal Benomar, to conduct consultations with key interlocutors in the region and in Burundi. On the basis of those consultations, I have provided below a review of the situation in Burundi and proposed options for the consideration of the Council.

Situation in Burundi

Burundi has been a topic on the agenda of the Security Council ever since the tragic events surrounding the coup d'état in October 1993 that sparked a decade-long civil war in which hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives.

The United Nations has worked determinedly through different configurations to provide essential support to the Government and people of Burundi in order to help the country to fulfil its aspirations and turn the page definitively on the violence of much of its past.

During this time, an impressive array of achievements was registered in the areas of democratic process, human rights and security sector reform, although numerous challenges remained.

The United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) closed on 31 December 2014, following a request by the Government of Burundi. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2137 (2014), the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB) was established on 1 January 2015 to follow and report on the electoral process. The mandate of MENUB expires on 31 December 2015.

Political discord and violence erupted in April 2015 when President Pierre Nkurunziza announced his intention to run for another term. While the crisis crystallized around the elections, it has deeper political roots. Violence in Burundi has since reached alarming levels. Armed elements have been launching deadly attacks in urban neighbourhoods in Bujumbura that risk spreading. The attacks are being met with reprisals by the security forces. Serious human rights violations and abuses are being committed in this context. Burundi stands on the brink of another armed conflict that could unravel years of painstaking work to consolidate and preserve peace and have potentially disastrous effects in an already fragile region.



It is my firm conviction that politically motivated violence and human rights violations and abuses in Burundi will not be halted without the prospect of an inclusive political settlement and without accountability. However, until now, there has been very limited progress in launching a credible and transparent process that enjoys the confidence of all Burundian stakeholders and that would allow for political differences to be resolved through dialogue. Launching such a dialogue must be the absolute priority while we continue to find ways, with our partners in the region, to stop the deterioration of the security situation and prevent massive violence and a possible full-blown civil war.

Visit to Burundi and the region

My Special Adviser provided a detailed briefing to the Council on 30 November 2015 regarding the consultations he held in Addis Ababa, Kampala and Burundi between 19 and 27 November 2015. In Addis Ababa, interlocutors from the African Union highlighted the need for the United Nations and the African Union to join efforts to support the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Burundi. Given the role of President Yoweri Museveni as the facilitator mandated by the East African Community for the dialogue, my Special Adviser further discussed with senior Ugandan government officials the importance of a transparent, genuine and inclusive dialogue and United Nations support for their efforts.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Burundi for its cooperation with my Special Adviser and his delegation during their visit to Bujumbura. The mission met with key government representatives, including President Nkurunziza, and with a wide range of Burundian stakeholders, political parties and civil society organizations. My Special Adviser listened carefully with regard to their assessment of the current situation in Burundi, including how the United Nations can assist them in building a peaceful and stable society. The Government and other national stakeholders explored with my Special Adviser ways in which the United Nations could assist in supporting dialogue and disarmament. Mr. Benomar will continue to work closely with the Government and all other concerned stakeholders in providing support to national efforts to build and sustain peace.

The Special Adviser also used the opportunity of his visit to Burundi to hold detailed consultations with the United Nations country team and representatives of the African Union and the diplomatic community. All interlocutors provided constructive inputs on how the United Nations could best support Burundi in the current situation.

Options

During the extensive consultations, the options set out below were explored.

Option 1: a multidimensional integrated peacekeeping operation under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Subject to conducive political and security conditions, the United Nations could deploy a multidimensional integrated presence under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations peacekeeping operation would: (a) support the political process; (b) carry out security-related stabilization tasks; (c) provide support to the Government in its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform efforts; (d) protect civilians; (e) monitor and promote respect for human rights; and (f) create the conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced

persons and refugees. Pursuant to resolution 2248 (2015), the Security Council affirmed the importance of United Nations and African Union contingency planning. That planning would continue and deepen, based on different scenarios with various models of cooperation with the African Union and other relevant partners.

Option 2: a fully-fledged integrated special political mission. An integrated special political mission would focus on the following key areas: (a) good offices and support for an inclusive national dialogue process; (b) monitoring and promotion of respect for human rights; (c) support for the authorities in strengthening the areas of rule of law and security; (d) support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; (e) broader issues of governance; and (f) socioeconomic development. The Special Political Mission could operate in parallel with an African-led operation in the country. Contingency planning for a possible transition from a special political mission to a peacekeeping operation would also continue, as warranted by evolving conditions on the ground.

While these two options are being considered, I will proceed with the deployment of a support team to my Special Adviser, as mandated by the Security Council in paragraph 7 of resolution 2248 (2015). The team will pursue the following objectives: (a) work with the Government of Burundi and other stakeholders to support a credible and inclusive political dialogue process that is nationally owned; and (b) advise the Burundian authorities on strengthening security and rule of law institutions, as well as the design and implementation of a credible disarmament programme. The team will report to the Special Adviser, coordinate and develop partnerships with regional and subregional actors, namely, the African Union, the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, to promote coherent international responses to the situation in the country. The team will closely monitor the situation on the ground to provide reporting and situational analysis to facilitate United Nations planning efforts. The team will cooperate with the United Nations country team already on the ground, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Given the existing political realities and security conditions on the ground, I will proceed with the deployment of the team as soon as possible. I also recommend that the Council review the mandate of the United Nations presence as the situation on the ground evolves.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) **BAN Ki-moon**