

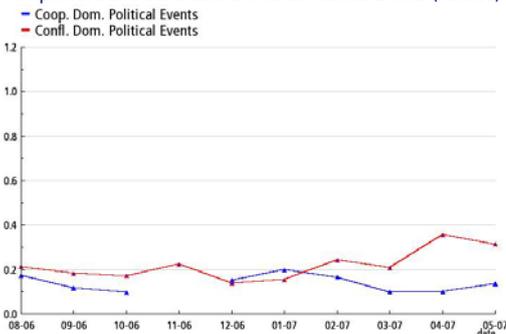
BURUNDI | Trends in Conflict and Cooperation

POLITICAL

During the period under review the political situation in Burundi remained tense (see graph). The government had to maneuver around the machinations of the CNDD-FDD's ex-President Hussein Radjabu, growing splits within and between the ruling party and the opposition, and the complexities of its power-sharing formula.

For the past two months Radjabu has been under surveillance and was questioned twice by the state prosecutor. On 27 April, parliament stripped him of his immunity and he was arrested on charges of planning a rebellion and distributing arms to demobilized soldiers. Radjabu continues to enjoy the loyalty of his former partisans, although they are exposed to harassment and discrimination. Around 200 persons demonstrated outside the High Court on 9 May when he appeared before the state prosecutor. The police forcefully dispersed the demonstration hurting at least two people. On 18 May, police temporarily imprisoned Radjabu's lawyer for objecting to the confiscation of the latter's cars. On 30 May, 68 CNDD-FDD members withdrew their party membership because they felt persecuted for not having

Cooperative and Conflictive Domestic Political Events (relative)



Source: FAST event data

rallied behind Radjabu's dismissal at the extraordinary congress in Ngozi on 7 February. Once the plot by Radjabu was foiled, the CNDD-FDD's powerful "axe Gitega" under the leadership of Senate President Gervais Ruyikiri also came under suspicion of planning to depose the head of state. This was related to a letter dated 13 March in which Ruyikiri had censured President Nkurunziza for violating the constitution. However, on 12 April, at a hastily called press conference Ruyikiri assured Nkurunziza of his absolute loyalty.

Like the ruling CNDD-FDD, the opposition UPRONA is affected by growing internal rifts. An initiative to reunify the party under the ideology of Prince Louis Rwagasore may lead to the formation of a third wing because of resistance from the two factions headed by Alois Rubuka and Gabriel Sinarinzi. On 20 April, the reunification proponents (including Professor Evariste Ngayimpenda) tried to organize a press conference against the will of Rubuka and Sinarinzi. The police intervened so the meeting was held secretly.

Also of importance are the struggle of the FRODEBU and the UPRONA for additional seats in the government and the disagreements between the CNDD-FDD and the

UPRONA on how to deal with the past abuses of human rights. All these issues, to a greater or lesser extent, affected the National Assembly's debates about the re-establishment of the gender balance, which had been disturbed since the replacement on 16 March of its president Immaculée Nahayo by Pie Ntavoyohanyuma, both former allies of Radjabu. Due to the one-month delay in reaching an agreement, the CNDD-FDD spokesman Karenga Ramadhan and Burundi's Observatory for the Fight against Corruption accused parliament of embezzling public funds.

Nonetheless, with the election of Alice Nzomukunda on 25 April to the first Vice-President of the National Assembly, one of the earliest and strongest critics of the abuses of Nkurunziza's regime under the influence of Radjabu re-entered Burundi's political arena. Moreover, she is the first representative of the CNDD-FDD who is well accepted by the opposition, which had strongly supported her nomination. Nzomukunda's predecessor, Onésime Nduwimana, an ally of the Gitega faction who initially refused to resign or leave his post, was appointed to head Burundi's insurance company SOCABU and was thus finally removed from the government.

SECURITY

The FNL is said to be taking advantage of the weakness of the ruling party in order to re-negotiate the September 2006 ceasefire agreement. When the peace accord was signed last year in Dar-es Salaam, the FNL leaders had been threatened and put under enormous pressure to do so. They were also told at the time that they could continue to negotiate key issues such as FNL representation in the government and the composition of the army once they had returned to Burundi. However, the South African mediation has since said that it is not mandated to continue such negotiations, while the Burundian government has staunchly refused to revisit talks. This caused the FNL to withdraw from the *Mécanisme Conjoint de Vérification et de Suivi* (MCVS) in late-April. While some accuse the rebel group of using delaying tactics in order to enhance its own chances in the 2010 elections, others put the blame for the deadlock on the government. They accuse Nkurunziza of trying to keep the FNL out of the government for fear of losing influence and power. Nkurunziza, in turn, insists that the constitution prevents him from giving FNL leaders senior government posts. The impression that the government is trying to undermine the peace process was enhanced when a delegation of three FNL representatives of the MCVS and their 20 security guards of the AU were arrested by elements of the Burundian army and national police in April and set free the next day. The incident was followed by the arrests and beatings of civilians from the surrounding area. Although Nkurunziza and exiled FNL leader Agathon Rwasa have been said to be ready to continue negotiations since the beginning of April and in spite of on-going efforts by South African mediator Charles Nqakula and his special envoy Kingsley Mamabolo, it took until 17 June before they finally met in Dar-es Salaam. However, Nqakula's meeting with Nkurunziza on 13 May and his promise that the two leaders would hold

talks soon have already raised some hope. Thus by the end of May, in a move that was much appreciated by the UN Security Council, the FNL decided to rejoin the MCVS.

The other armed faction of the FNL under the command of Jean-Bosco Sindyigaya tried to engage in talks with the government on 13 April. On 2 June, however, Sindyigaya was arrested in Kinindo and is being detained in the dungeon of Burundi's notorious *Service National de Renseignement*. Sindyigaya was a marionette of Radjabu who orchestrated the break-up of the FNL in order to weaken Rwas. Furthermore, his recruitment activities were perceived as a move to mobilize combatants for Radjabu.

Both wings of the FNL have continued their criminal activities, especially in the western provinces of Bujumbura Rural, Bubanza and Cibitoke. At the same time the population has been subject to widespread armed banditry, as well as harassment from security forces hunting down people suspected of siding with the FNL. Overall human rights violations remain an issue of serious concern. This is illustrated by the case of Jan van Eck, a very well informed observer of Burundian affairs and an advisor to the peace process, who was declared persona non grata and denied entry into the country on 5 May.

Regional efforts to enhance peace and security in the Great Lakes include a meeting in the framework of the *Tripartite Plus* Joint Commission that brought together the chiefs of defense staff from Rwanda, Burundi, DRC and Uganda. They agreed on a joint military action plan to tackle negative forces, notably in eastern DRC. On 3 May, President Nkurunziza officially inaugurated the Executive Secretariat of the *Conférence Internationale pour la Région des Grands Lacs Africains* (CIRGL). The opening ceremony was attended by the foreign ministers of the 11 signatory countries of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, which was concluded last December in Nairobi at the second summit of the CIRGL.

After two failed rounds of discussions between Burundian officials and the UN, the government finally agreed to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a tribunal to prosecute those involved in large-scale violence during the civil war. The decision was made at the end of May against the background of the commemoration of the massacres of 1972, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour's visit to Burundi and a two day donor conference, at which donors pledged USD \$665 million for the rebuilding of Burundi. Both transitional justice mechanisms will be established after national consultations that will be led by a nine-member panel including three members each from the government, the United Nations, and civil society organizations.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC

Food security remained precarious for many households in the northern and central parts of the country after heavy floods during January and February damaged or destroyed most agricultural production. As part of on-going relief efforts, the WFP has distributed food assistance to more than 41,000 beneficiaries nationwide.

In early May Nkurunziza announced a 34 percent pay raise for all public sector workers. The impact this increase will have on the national budget has not yet been calculated, but Nkurunziza said it was in accordance with Burundi's 2006 economic growth. Eulalie Nibizi, the director of the largest trade union, claimed the increase was not enough when compared to the income of security forces and high officials, whose wages have tripled since the end of 2006. The employees of parastatals, on the other hand, fear losing their jobs as a result of the on-going privatization process. However, the privatization process is only making sluggish progress. This is especially true in regards to more lucrative companies controlled by powerful CNDD-FDD sympathizers since the elections.

Much more promising prospects for Burundi's work force are currently to be found in efforts for regional integration, such as the re-launch on 17 April of the *Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs*. The CEPGL, which includes Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC, will eventually allow for the free movement of people and goods between the countries and at the same time is considered a key step in restoring peace and stability in the region. Priority areas include peace and security; democracy and good governance; agriculture, energy and infrastructure; education; as well as research and investments. EU Commissioner Louis Michel enthusiastically welcomed the initiative and announced a 50 million Euro grant to support its implementation.

OUTLOOK

Given the weakness of both the CNDD-FDD and the UPRONA, the FRODEBU remains in an ideal position to assert more power. This situation will also be conducive to the objectives of Palipehutu-FNL, which has nothing to lose. At their meeting on 17 June in Dar es-Salaam, Nkurunziza and Rwas agreed to reactivate the September ceasefire agreement. The most crucial element is the announcement of the release of imprisoned FNL fighters according to a list of names to be submitted by the rebel movement. There is no news yet about the question of the FNL's participation in the state's key institutions. However, it is most likely that the CNDD-FDD will be forced to make major concessions and grant high-ranking positions to the FNL in the government and the security forces. This will lead to a further weakening of the ruling party and probably to the formation of an alliance between Frodebu, the FNL, the CNDD-Nyangoma and possibly also the Radjabu faction. Against the background of these political struggles and shifts, the strengthening of the peace and reconciliation process and on-going donor support to consolidate reconstruction are of major importance.

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