

# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A quarterly update from the International Refugee Rights Initiative  
January – March 2016

We hope you enjoy this update on our activities from January to March. Thank you for your continued interest and support of IRRI. We are extremely grateful and if you would like to make a donation to help us to continue our vital work, please [click here](#). In this newsletter you will find updates on our work on:

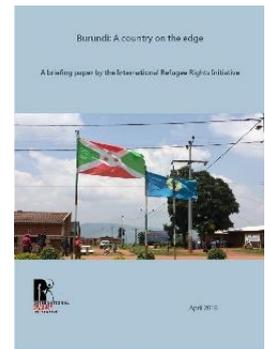
- [Understanding and responding to mass violence](#) including our work on Burundi, DRC, Sudan, international justice and the responsibility to protect
- [Protection of Refugees and internally displaced persons](#) including our work on rights in exile, post deportation monitoring and Israeli deportations
- [Citizenship and nationality rights](#) including our work with CRAI and a case from Uganda

Andie Lambe  
Executive Director

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## Understanding and Responding to Mass Violence

We have continued to follow and engage on the deteriorating situation in **Burundi**, including a field visit to Bujumbura and three provinces in the south of the country in January, and the publication in March of "[Burundi: a country on the edge](#)". Drawing on information collected during our visit as well as interviews with refugees who have fled to Uganda, the report highlights the increasingly repressive situation in Burundi, reflects on the policy context from the perspective of those on the ground and discusses the deployment of an international presence. In addition, we conducted a series of advocacy meetings with UN officials and government representatives to the UN around the paper and are continuing to engage, particularly on ongoing discussions about a possible UN police deployment.



We also published a [blog](#) on the situation in the **DRC**, where elections are due to be held this coming November. However, concern is already growing over the fact that the incumbent President Kabila, whilst constitutionally ineligible to stand for election again, is showing no signs of stepping down. With the number of deaths relating to

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the political situation growing, it is becoming increasingly tense, and a crackdown on civil society and the media is further fuelling insecurity.



Our **Sudan** programme has continued to monitor, document, and report on the ongoing conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. By the time this goes out we will have published a brief overview of the situation in 2015 and the human rights monitoring report for January and February, so please take a look at the [Sudan Consortium](#) website, and we will circulate the documents in the next quarterly update, along with the March human rights monitoring report which is due out soon.

As the secretariat of the [Sudan Consortium](#), we have also continued advocacy on the wider situation in Sudan on behalf of our partners. For example, with our partners [ACJPS](#) and [FIDH](#), we made a formal [submission](#) to the Human Rights Council in September 2015 in advance of Sudan's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) due to take place in May 2016. In advance of the UPR pre-session on 31 March, we also drafted a shorter [document](#) of advocacy points. The UPR is obviously a sensitive issue for the Sudan government as they prevented civil society activists from travelling to the pre-session and along with 45 other organisations and individuals, we signed onto a [letter](#) protesting this "blatant contempt not just for human rights defenders in Sudan, but to human rights standards and the UN Human Rights Council Sudan"

Along with ACJPS, we intervened as *amicus curiae* in the [ongoing case](#) brought by our partners, the Southern Africa Legal Centre in South Africa, regarding South Africa's failure to arrest Sudan's President Al Bashir on the outstanding ICC arrest warrant when he attended the African Union summit in June 2015. The Court recently ruled that the government's failure to arrest Bashir was "unlawful" and accused the government of "disgraceful conduct". Although the government is currently seeking leave to appeal the decision, the case may set important precedent on the issue and has resulted in a lot of interest in South Africa and our intervention was covered by the [Mail & Guardian](#) and on [BDLive](#).

Meanwhile, we continued our activities as steering committee members of the [International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect](#), and as members of Uganda's National Committee on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and Mass Atrocities. In our role as steering committee members and thematic lead for Uganda's ICGLR national civil society forum, we attended the regional ICGLR Civil Society Forum meeting ahead of the ICGLR Heads of State (HoS) Summit. Although the summit has since been postponed with no new date scheduled, we were able to submit an overview of the situation with regards to the implementation of the [Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great lakes Region](#) and Uganda's civil society engagement with the ICGLR with a specific focus on humanitarian and social issues.



We attended and presented at the second meeting of the [Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes](#) (GAAMAC), an inclusive, state-led network created in 2013 providing a platform for exchange, dialogue, and the dissemination of learning and good practice in the prevention of mass atrocity crimes. IRRI

spoke at the final plenary session on strengthening partnership and cooperation between states and civil society to leverage good practice, address needs and contribute to preventing atrocities. The meeting's [outcome document](#) is now available online.

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## Protection of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons



We continued to publish our monthly [newsletter](#), including original content on issues such as [the situation in Rwanda as it relates to cessation](#), [India's new domestic asylum bill](#), and [UK immigration tribunals](#). And have also started a new section on statelessness in the newsletter recognising the critical need to address this issue and the extent to which issues related to status determination in this area are relation to refugee status determination.

Our [Post-Deportation Monitoring](#) project coordinator has been confirmed as a speaker on the panel entitled “Where we live: safe asylum space for youth” at UNHCR’s NGO Consultations in June. This is a positive step forward as it is the first time UNHCR has accepted formal representation at the consultations on post deportation risks.

In March, we launched the newly renamed “Rights in Exile Refugee Assistance” listserv on google groups. If you would like to be added to this listserv, please [click here](#).

We are also working on the global roll-out of UNHCR’s, Department of International Protection, Refugee Status Determination Unit’s new Legal Aid guidance in their procedural manual. This roll out, designed in collaboration with a number of concerned partner organisations, will be initially consist primarily of webinars and support for “pilot” countries, and we will circulate more information as it becomes available.

Our report [“I was left with nothing”](#) on the alleged “voluntary” deportation of African asylum seekers from Israel to unknown third countries, has continued to receive coverage. A German newspaper, Taz.de, covered the issue extensively [here \(in German\)](#). The issue was also covered in the [East African](#) in an article that seemed to confirm that there was in fact a deal with Rwanda but that it was still “in discussion” and the [Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat](#). The court case in Israel, challenging the deportations is continuing and becoming increasingly Kafkaesque – the most recent hearing took place in March with another hearing scheduled for April/May with the government of Israel being asked to submit more (no doubt, confidential) information.

We were also interviewed for a [piece by Vice News](#) on the difficulties Sudanese refugees in Germany have in receiving refugee status; and we contributed to a [piece published by UN Tribune](#) looking at the challenges facing the newly appointed head of UNHCR, Filippo Grandi.

Finally, we have been working with the [Migration Policy Institute](#) on a piece of research on forced migration to and from Uganda, looking at national, regional and international protection frameworks affecting refugees and other displaced people. Our research will inform a comprehensive report on forced migration in and from five focus countries.

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## Citizenship and nationality rights



Our work on citizenship and nationality rights has primarily focused on activities as part of the Citizenship Rights in Africa (CRAI) coalition – including maintaining the [CRAI website](#), publishing weekly updates to the CRAI mailing list, engaging on social media via @CRAIAfrica and Facebook. We are ramping up our engagement with members through our [new blog](#) and since the

blog was launched in February, we have published four blogs including a blog written by IRRI on a [recent case in Uganda](#) that was looking at the possibility and eligibility of refugees for naturalisation.

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So 2016 has started off at a fast pace and it doesn't look likely to slow down – in the next three months we will be initiating four pieces of research (in Darfur, Burundi, Sudan's Blue Nile State and Somalia), we will continue to advocate on issues and push the recommendations that have come out of our recent publications and respond to ongoing and emerging situations. But like we said last time, this important work would not be possible without your ongoing support and for that we are grateful.