



The Burundi Crisis:

The ICGLR Civil Society Call for Inclusive Dialogue and Commitment to Sustainable Peace in Burundi

PRESS STATEMENT

For immediate release 20th November, 2015

We, the undersigned, ICGLR National Civil Society Committee, Uganda Chapter, Women's rights groups and the wider civil society under the auspices of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, decry the deteriorating situation in Burundi where a number of lives have been lost while over 200,000 refugees have fled the country.

Bearing in mind of the violent past in Burundi, we are equally concerned that if the situation is not arrested, the Great Lakes Nation of Burundi is teetering dangerously on the brink of an all-out civil war or genocide degenerated from a low-intensity conflict rife with sporadic small- and heavy-arms fire to targeted assassinations, disappearances and torture of dissidents.

Although this mayhem has directly affected the entire resident population, we are particularly concerned with the impact that this has meted out on the most vulnerable sections of the population: women, children, the physically handicapped and the elderly. In the capital, the heartrending episode in which six markets were torched, with merchandise ranging from foodstuffs to clothes has obviously deprived women of their livelihood.

In the fog of war generally and anarchy specifically, the unending misfortunes of women and children transcend economic woes—it affects their social wellbeing and physical security. While water- and air-borne disease, pestilence and hunger wipe out scores of hopeless children, women have to contend with (gang) rape, sexual assault, molestation, all manner of abuse and systematic violence.

In this regard, the undersigned civil society groups working to advance peace and security reiterate their support for the efforts being undertaken under the leadership of the East African Community as well as the ICGLR and the African Union to ensure that the Arusha Peace Accord is adhered to.

We therefore make the following calls to the AU, the ICGLR, the EAC, the UN and Civil Society Organizations;

- The East African Community/ African Union jointly and urgently convene inclusive talks between the Burundian government, opposition groups, and civil society organizations;
- The Burundian government to protect the gains of peace and reconciliation that have been realized in the past decade ensure that law and order is restored in Burundi and the human rights of all citizens are respected;
- The International Community puts in place a humanitarian corridor and buffer zone to facilitate relief operations for the affected populations;
- The Africa Union Peace and Security Council to urgently deploy peace keepers to restore peace and order and protect human rights of all Burundians;
- The EAC Secretary General to prepare periodic reports on the situation in Burundi for EAC deliberative bodies;
- The Civil Society to monitor and advocate for full implementation of the commitments signed by the parties.

Issued by the ICGLR Uganda National Civil Society Committee:

1. Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA),
2. Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD),
3. ActionAid International, AAI
4. Action for Development (ACFODE),
5. CARE International in Uganda
6. Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE)
7. Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO)
8. East Africa Sub-Regional Support Initiative (EASSI)
9. GWED-G
10. HIAS
11. International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI),
12. Isis Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE),
13. Regional Associates for Community Initiatives (RACI),
14. Uganda National NGO Forum

For more information contact:

Akina Mama wa Afrika(AMwA)

Plot 30 Bukoto Street Kamwokya

Tel: +256 414 543 681| Mob: +256 772 429837

Email: amwa@akinamamawaafrika.org|