

Transitional Justice Mechanisms



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Lessons Learned from Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

Report on the international conference of the same title held in
Bujumbura, Burundi in August 2011

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About this report

This report gathers observations and recommendations from the 60 participants of the international conference, *Transitional Justice Mechanisms: Lessons Learned from Truth and Reconciliation Commissions*, held at the Safari Gate Hotel, Bujumbura, Burundi from August 24 to August 26, 2011. The information in this report was developed during the conference by all the participants assembled.

Conference panellists discussed issues of amnesty in truth commissions, experiences from community-based reconciliation initiatives in Burundi, and legislative issues in establishing commissions in places such as South Africa, East Timor, Liberia and Sierra Leone. A conference highlight was a session on best practices for a commission in Burundi. The panellists collaborated to make recommendations in terms of creation, organization, strategies to promote the participation and protection of victims and witnesses, all captured in the recommendations in this report.

Participants came from three categories of African and Latin American countries:

- 1) countries with completed TRCs,
- 2) countries currently implementing TRCs, and
- 3) countries who aim to establish same.

In addition, representatives from the United Nations, including the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Burundi, supported and participated in this event.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), an international Quaker non-governmental organization that works with local partners to address the root causes of conflict and build the potential for lasting peace, convened the conference and assembled this report. AFSC convenes several conferences such as this year, as part of its on-going Dialogue and Exchange Program.

Questions or comments about this report should be addressed to AFSC's Burundi office, as listed on the facing page.

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Introduction to Transitional Justice and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

Societies emerging from violent conflict or an oppressive regime often find it difficult to recover, build a better future, and prevent themselves from falling into the conflict trap. They are confronted with a huge dilemma: on the one hand, the victims and survivors feel the strong urge for justice to be rendered; and the perpetrators on the other hand, wish for clemency.

In the meantime, the country needs peace and stability. To create that peace, balance must be found between justice and pardon. Critical decisions must be made to limit the victims' frustration and despair while uncovering the truth of past events.

Transitional justice is a field that handles these sensitive issues. Conference participants raised the core pillars of transitional justice.

Transitional justice has four pillars:

- 1) Truth seeking;
- 2) Prosecution;
- 3) Reparations; and
- 4) Institutional reforms.

Issues of reconciliation, gender, memory and memorials cut across all four pillars. To accomplish their goal, transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth and reconciliation committees, need to be set up to adequately address each of these concerns.

When a society wants to repair relationships damaged at an earlier period of national history, transitional justice mechanisms can address massive human rights violations, widespread violence, gross structural inequalities, dictatorship and civil wars. These mechanisms can be used as tools toward establishing a just society and democratic participation in governance. They aim to both deal with human rights violations, as well as

resolve on-going disputes that pose challenges to sustainable peace and development.

TRCs are a non-judicial mechanism that have played an important part in addressing past human rights violations in post-conflict societies. Charles Villa-Vicencio of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, South Africa, suggests that, “*a TRC, as the name suggests is concerned with the restoration of truth. Through TRCs, the commissions try to document and analyse structures and methods used in perpetuating out illegal repression, while taking into account the socio-political and economic conditions in which these violations have been held.*”¹

Truth commissions are beneficial if they specify and officially recognize a complete and discussed version of the “truth”, if:

- widespread consultations are conducted with civil society organizations, the victims, and witnesses;
- reparation is offered;
- individual and institutional responsibilities for past violations are defined;
- forms of peaceful conflict resolution are encouraged at the grassroots level; and
- deep-rooted causes of conflict are analysed and specific preventive measures are recommended.

Context in Burundi

The Burundi Minister of National Solidarity, Human Rights, and Gender, officially opened the conference by reporting to the national and international community that the Burundian government holds very high expectations of the conference, especially at this critical period of the country's history.

Burundi's conflict period, which has run since independence, has seen numerous and repeated human rights violations of a massive scale. As a consequence, many crimes had the particularity of being collective and generalized. Victims were pushed to the limit at each and every step of the conflict, while hatred and resentment accumulated over time.

The use of transitional justice to address Burundi's conflict history was first addressed within the framework of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, signed between the Burundian conflict parties on August 28, 2000. The agreement provides for the implementation of a national TRC as a truth-seeking mechanism, along with an International Judicial Commission for Inquiry (IJCI) and an International Tribunal for Burundi, in case the inquiry commission reaches the conclusion of the existence of international crimes.² The United Nations Security Council, in its Resolution 1606 in 2005, also recommended the creation of a TRC, though it rejected the idea of an IJCI, which it found to be a duplication of the TRC.

In order to establish these mechanisms, national consultations were carried out in 2009 and 2010. The report of the national consultations was published in November 2010. In May 2011, the Government of Burundi expressed its wish to establish a TRC in January 2012, appointing by Presidential decree, a seven-person Technical Committee to prepare the establishment of the TRC. Given a time frame of three months, the Technical Committee was tasked to propose a methodology for a future TRC, considering the results and recommendations of the national consultation and drawing from the experiences

2 Arusha Peace Accord. 2000, See pages 15-17. The Arusha peace accord was signed between Burundian conflict parties in Arusha, Tanzania.

of other countries. The Committee's final report proposed draft legislation for a TRC, spelling out the mandate, composition, selection criteria, and an operating budget of the commission.

The August 2011 conference that generated this report was organized so that concerned Burundians and the Technical Committee would have the opportunity to draw useful lessons from other countries which could in turn, inform their own processes.

Recommendations from the conference for Burundi's TRC

In lively and engaged conversations examining lessons learned from international experience, the conference participants generated the following recommendations for the TRC process in Burundi.

Creation of the truth and reconciliation commission:

- 1) The process of nominating commissioners should be largely transparent and civil society should be consulted.
- 2) A tripartite selection committee for the TRC commissioners should be created and be composed of representatives of the Burundi government, civil society, and the UN, with consideration taken for gender and ethnic balance.
- 3) This selection committee should prepare and publish the terms of reference for the selection of commissioners.
- 4) The final decision to appoint the TRC commissioners should be made by a designated authority (either the President of the Republic or the Parliament).
- 5) The commissioners should be mixed (international and national), preferably headed by a Burundian national.
- 6) The members of the commission should be selected by taking into account regional diversity, ethnic and gender balance and must reflect the integrity, competencies, and reputation of the commissioners.
- 7) Commissioners should have different (mixed) academic/professional backgrounds.

Recommendations on the organization of the TRC:

The TRC must be decentralized so as to reach grassroots communities. Within this decentralization, there should be different departments including: a research department, a reparations department, a communications department as well as an investigations/complaint department.

Strategies to promote the participation and protection of witnesses and victims:

- 1) The TRC should preferably identify participants only as “witnesses,” and the commission will classify them as either victims or perpetrators only after their testimony is given.
- 2) Victims associations must be fully sensitized and mobilized to participate.
- 3) The government must ensure that testimonies are well protected and preserved.
- 4) All witnesses and victims should be provided with psycho-social accompaniment throughout the process.
- 5) The TRC should avoid revealing the identities of witnesses.
- 6) The TRC should allow for private testimonies to be given when necessary.

An ideal law of the TRC in Burundi should:

- 1) Have a clear definition of the concept of victims.
- 2) Have powers to subpoena any person to testify and the power to seize any evidence, including archived or classified information.
- 3) Define the skills, experiences, and integrity necessary of members of the commission;
- 4) Define a clear mandate, including specifying the period of inquiry.
- 5) Have power to recommend amnesty for certain crimes except for international crimes.
- 6) Make provision for psycho-social assistance for witnesses.
- 7) Clearly specify the selection process of the commissioners with defined criteria that include gender, ethnicity, and regional balance.
- 8) Require that successful community reconciliation initiatives must be taken into account prior to launching an investigation.
- 9) Provide for the independence of the commission.
- 10) Have the right to publish and widely disseminate its report without any third-party interference.
- 11) Specify an initial period of preparation in addition to the

operational period.

- 12) Specify how the recommendations from the TRC report will be implemented, including possibly setting up a national committee for follow up.
- 13) Have the right to recommend prosecutions and/or reparations.

Lessons from experiences with truth and reconciliation commissions

Commissioners from TRCs shared technical knowledge and information on establishing and operating TRCs in South Africa, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Kenya. They addressed topics such as the creation, organisation, and administration of TRCs, as well as their successful and challenging experiences. The four commissioners participating were Bishop Joseph Humper, President of the Sierra Leonean TRC; Yasmin Sooka, a former commissioner of the South African TRC and also of the Sierra Leonean TRC; Ronald Slye, an American Law Professor, serving in the Kenyan TJRC; and John Stewart, journalist and Commissioner of the Liberian TRC. Yasmin Sooka and Ronald Slye had both served as foreign experts in the TRCs in Sierra Leone and Kenya respectively.

From their shared experience and the general discussion, the participants noted that for a TRC to be successful, the following are required:

- 1) **Political will:** There must be political will of the government in power. If there is weak or no political will, the recommendations of the TRC will rarely be implemented.
- 2) **National Consensus:** A national consensus should be built that a truth and reconciliation commission is appropriate. To build consensus, citizens should be involved in creating its mandate.
- 3) **Security:** Security for all must be assured. Victims and witnesses must feel that they will not incur danger by testifying.

In addition to the three above requirements, civil society involvement is critical to ensure that transitional justice processes are inclusive of vulnerable groups. All groups and stakeholders need to be informed and involved. In countries where TRCs

have already been implemented, civil society representatives gave inspiration.

At the conference, Feika Mambu from Sierra Leone presented on “The place and role of civil society before, during and after the TRC.” In his presentation, he insisted on the contribution of the civil society in the process of seeking the truth. After actively participating in the Sierra Leonean process, Mambu observed:

The setting up and implementation of the TRC in all countries where it has been implemented would have meant nothing without the active participation of civil society, and Burundi would not be the exception. The participation of civil society will ensure national ownership, gives the process national direction and a national colour.

Once the TRC in Burundi has been established, civil society organizations should be fully involved in designing and implementing programs, projects, and activities aimed at enhancing popular and informed participation. Other fundamental issues to be considered are gender equity and ethnic balance.

Lessons learned on composing a commission

How truth and reconciliation commissions will function is highly dependent on how commissioners are appointed. TRCs composed of members of only one political party are likely to be manipulated, and their recommendations are likely to be partial and contested. The nomination process should be open.

In South Africa, the process was open, transparent and participatory. The President appointed a committee that would oversee a public nomination, selection and interview process. The committee received 300 nominations from the general public and CSOs and after a long process including public screening, eventually 25 names were then forwarded to President Mandela, who chose 17 including some who had not been on the list.

— **Yasmin Sooka**, former Commissioner, South African and Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

A strong mandate and proper time is needed

The mandate includes the content and period addressed by the truth commission, specifies the time-period open for investigation, and defines the power given to the truth commission to summon witnesses, to search, and to make decisions.

The time allocated to the commission to accomplish its work must be proportional to its task. Otherwise, it may not be able to complete its work or be able to submit its report, as was the case for Uganda, the Philippines, and Bolivia.³

Times have varied. Guatemalan and South African truth commissions were tasked with the analysis of 34 years of conflict history. In Guatemala, the commissioners had a timeframe of 18 months, while in South Africa the commission's period was more than 30 months.

Proper scope and public reporting are essential

To come to a successful conclusion, TRCs should focus attention on the most horrendous human rights violations, as perceived by society in general and victims in particular. A common feature of the aforementioned commissions, beginning with the first in 1983 in Argentina, is that none addressed economic crimes, though social problems such as poverty and economic misappropriation are major challenges after conflict. In addition, the recommendations made by these commissions have infrequently been implemented by the government.

Some have never published their reports on the conclusions of the truth commissions, such as in the case of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Without recognition, it becomes possible that these two countries would be called to repeat their work.

3 See www.ictj.org for details.

Characteristics and goals of truth and reconciliation commissions

Notes on characteristics from recent experiences in Africa and Latin America with truth and reconciliation commissions (TRC).

- A. TRCs focus on a specific period of the country's history. While the events may have occurred in the recent past, a truth commission is not an on-going body akin to a human rights commission.
- B. TRCs investigate a pattern of abuse over a set period of time rather than a specific event. In its mandate, the truth commission is given the parameters of its investigation both in terms of the time period covered as well as the type of human rights violations to be explored.
- C. A TRC is a temporary body, usually operating over a period of six months to two years and completing its work by submitting a report. These parameters are established at the time of the commission's formation. An extension can be obtained to finish the work.
- D. TRCs are officially sanctioned, authorized, or empowered by the state. This, in principle, allows the commission to have greater access to information, greater security, and increased assurance that its findings will be taken under serious consideration. Official sanction from the government is crucial because it represents an acknowledgment of past wrongs and a commitment to address the issues and move on. Furthermore, governments may be more likely to implement recommended reforms if they have established the commission.
- E. There must be a significant change in the political environment to be successful.

- F. A TRC should not be seen as an option for avoiding or replacing criminal prosecutions.
- G. The context in each country is unique. You cannot just transplant a format from one country to another.

Truth and reconciliation commissions strive to achieve the following goals:

- To create an authoritative record of what happened;
- To provide a platform for victims to tell their stories and seek redress;
- To recommend legislative, structural, and other changes to avoid a repetition of past abuses;
- To provide a measure of justice by making perpetrators accountable for their crimes; and
- To support societal reconciliation.

Truth and reconciliation are linked

While the ultimate goal of the TRC is truth and national reconciliation, there can be no reconciliation without justice; and no justice if there is no truth. According to Ronald Slye, a commissioner of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (JTRC) in Kenya, the truth that is sought is not only about capturing experience of individuals and groups (narrative truth), but also about interrogating the political economy or historical injustices (analytical truth), such as socio-economic rights violations, land, corruption, and economic marginalization in Kenya.

During the discussions, a participant wondered if the TRC process can lead to reconciliation in a context where there is no consensual narrative of the past. Slye responded that it is exactly for this reason that TRCs are created. There is no need to have a common understanding of the history before setting up a TRC; this can be one of its roles.

and political dimension, it is much more at a societal level that people need the reconciliation. The main aim of reconciliation is restoring civil trust in national institutions and restoring the dignity of victims. Community reconciliation can be fostered by traditional leaders, before, during, and after a TRC.

Considerations for Burundi's commission

Louis-Marie Nindorera, one of the panel speakers from Burundi provided a memorable anecdote likening the Burundian Transitional Justice process to a bus trip with millions of passengers. He said:

Transitional justice in Burundi is like a bus, with eight million passengers, and several rotating drivers, going to the direction of truth, justice and reconciliation. The way is long and there are many hurdles including police check-points, slippery roads, traffic jams, etc. Among the passengers, some are ready to continue the journey and have put security belts, but others do not want the bus to reach the destination and are trying to disturb the driver, others want the bus to slow down. Among the rotating drivers, some are reluctant to reach the destination and so drive unwillingly. All this is happening when the time is limited.

For this speaker, the Burundian transitional justice has been subject to the lack of common vision since the Arusha Peace Accord in 2000. He found great value in this conference as a framework for knowledge sharing.

Now that the Technical Committee has submitted its report, it will be clear to what extent the lessons from the conference were heeded and will be considered in passing the legislation to establish the TRC. As stated earlier, the Burundi TRC was expected to be put in place in January 2012.

Conference dialogue drew attention to the fact that while TRCs deal with civil and political rights violations, in the African context, critical issues which cannot be overlooked are those of social, economic, and cultural rights. This has been a significant criticism of the South African TRC.

Another concern that was raised was about local reconciliation initiatives.

Pastor Elie Nahimana of a local Quaker NGO, Ministry for

Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross (MiPAREC), drew participants' attention to community-based reconciliation initiatives already underway. MiPAREC's work is mainly through peace committees, made up of about 20 men and women of all ethnic groups, young and elderly. These committees are voluntary structures in communities that help to create peaceful cohabitation and also help with humanitarian needs. Peace committees are entry points for MiPAREC to bring communities together, gather and share local security information. Applying conflict analysis and resolution techniques, they facilitate mediation in broken relationships and provide counseling to people with signs of intense trauma. Peace Committees have recorded cases of successful resolution of conflict and reconciliation in some of its host communities. Reparations in these communities tend to be in kind, such as manual labor exchange. However, with the setting up of the TRC, concerns are being raised regarding the consideration of community-based reconciliation initiatives.

Examples from recent experience in several countries

Throughout the conference, participants shared many lessons from research and hands-on experience. This section of the report highlights a few examples and specific lessons from other countries' experiences.

It was noted that each country's truth commission is unique, varying based on the nature of the conflict and human rights violations. One model cannot be simply transplanted into a new country. The prevailing context of the present and past conflicts, the mode of transition and other political forces in the country determine the characteristics of a truth commission. It is useful to look at other examples for ideas to see how each process was shaped to address its circumstances.

For instance, each commission can take different names to reflect their mandate and approach, as the list below attests:

- National Commission on Disappeared Persons in Argentina
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Chile, Peru, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor
- Commission on the Truth in El Salvador
- Historical Clarification Commission of Guatemala
- National Truth and Justice Commission in Haiti
- Commission of Inquiry into the Violations of Human Rights in Uganda since January 25, 1971
- Commission for the Investigation of the Situation of the Disappeared and Related Events in Uruguay.

Different examples of mandates

The commissions in Argentina and Chile were created by Executive Orders and Presidential decrees. These countries have similar characteristics as truth commissions were set up to ex-

amine the crimes and human rights violations perpetrated by dictatorial regimes.

Truth commissions can also be set up as a result of a peace agreement, under the aegis of an international body, as was the case of El Salvador and Guatemala. The United Nations High Commission for Human Rights was involved in the creation of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of the Lomé peace agreements. In addition, the South African TRC was created through legislation.

Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners from South Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Kenya participated as keynote speakers. They shared with the conference that TRCs were considered as instruments to recover from past national conflict and human rights abuses and promote reconciliation and recognition of human rights. In response to their presentations, the conference discussed international principles and standards in legislation governing TRCs. Particular attention was accorded to pre-empting and overcoming challenges facing TRCs such as relationships, administration, and finances.

While the conference addressed the participation and role of victims, witnesses, and civil society at the various stages of transitional justice, the conference's main interest was to address the process in Burundi. In this, participants reflected on the evolution, as well as projecting a plausible TRC legislation for the country. This session drew a lot of inspiration from a comparative analysis of laws establishing TRCs in South Africa, East Timor, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The lessons learned helped shape the recommendations earlier in this report.

Lessons learned from South Africa

Best practices from the TRC in South Africa include:

- government supported the process;
- strong civil society involvement in monitoring the legislative process led to the removal of secrecy clauses;
- a transparent process for selecting commissioners provided legitimacy for the commission;
- funding was available by the government for the work of the commission;
- a great innovation was the set-up of public hearings that in-

cluded victims, perpetrators, political parties, security forces, the legal sector, medical sector, religious sector, and thematic hearings; and

- the commission operated with great transparency in its work, held all sides accountable, including all political groups.

Lessons learned from Liberia

In 2003, after multiple peace agreements collapsed, civil society groups advocated for accountability for those implicated in the Liberian conflict. Many resisted prosecutions and a compromise was made to create the Liberian TRC. The commissioners' nomination process was open and transparent: 100 names were nominated and submitted to public vetting, United Nations vetting, and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) vetting, and eventually 15 names were submitted to the president. He appointed nine of them.

Lessons learned from Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, two mechanisms (the judicial and the non-judicial mechanisms) were established simultaneously. Funding for the truth and reconciliation commission was not adequate; the government provided less than 5% of the needed budget, and government commitment was lacking. Because the two mechanisms were operating at the same time, each one's scope of authority was unclear. Along with no clear division of authority, the allowable interaction between judicial and non-judicial procedures was ambiguous, causing confusion. At the end of the TRC, recommendations were made in four main categories: human rights and rule of law, security sector, mineral resources, and protection of women.

Best practices and lessons learned from Kenya

In the conference, participants often repeated the axiom that the more participatory the process of selecting the commissioners is, the more likely the commission will be supported by the people. In Kenya, the three internationals were chosen by eminent international figures, such as Kofi Anan. Regarding the national commissioners, a diverse CSO panel chose around

300 people and handed the list to a parliamentary commission which chose nine (9) and the President eventually choose six (6). The process was good, but the implementation was difficult.

Lessons learned from Latin America

From presentations about lessons from Latin American TRCs, the conference heard how truth seeking, reconciliation, and social integration are long processes. Every TRC has to take into account many dimensions in order to be successful: the need to uncover the past; establish a framework for victims' acknowledgement; work on reducing fear and encouraging witnesses to speak out; organize public debate (in some situations); encourage perpetrators to accept responsibility, especially the high ranking officials; propose realistic reparations; and strive towards restoring the dignity of the victims; find the whereabouts of relatives, and establish links between victims and relatives; resolve daily-life problems, e.g. fundamental issues such as access to land.

Founded in 2001, the TRC in Peru was formed by various members of civil society. It collected the testimonies of 16,985 people and held 21 public hearings with victims of violence. More than 9,500 people attended these hearings. The report of the Committee was presented to the President of the Republic on August 28, 2003.

In Chile, the TRC was the result of demands from civil society and particularly associations of victims and their families. Founded in 1990, the commission presented its report on the circumstances of the killings, but its skills were limited and its conclusions were not well-received.

Unlike the experiences of Chile and Argentina, the appointment of commissioners to the Truth Commission for El Salvador was the responsibility of the UN Secretary General. Composed of three foreign persons, the commission has made recommendations including the vetting of certain public officials involved in human rights violations as a prerequisite of any institutional reforms.

About the conference

Participants

Name / Organization	Country
Miburo Marie Noëla <i>AVOD</i>	Burundi
Marie Claire Mapendo <i>PAIF</i>	RDC
Ahitungiye Floride <i>Search For Common Ground</i>	Burundi
Louis Marie Nindorera <i>Global Rights</i>	Burundi
Habyarimana Théogène <i>WFD / MIPAREC</i>	Burundi
Sizeli Marcellin <i>Friends Peace House</i>	Rwanda
Arzoumanian-Rumin Nairi <i>Consultante/Comité Technique</i>	Burundi
Haasen Bettina <i>EIRENE</i>	Burundi
Mathilde Renault <i>RCN Justice et Démocratie</i>	Burundi
Carlos Beristain <i>Expert TRC</i>	Spain
Léonidas Nijimbere <i>Ombudsman</i>	Burundi
Joseph C. Humper <i>TRC Sierra Leone</i>	Sierra Leone

Tshepo Madlingozi <i>Khulumani Support</i>	South Africa
Augustin Nzojibwambi <i>Initiatives et Changement</i>	Burundi
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Biha Edouard <i>Ligue Iteka</i>	Burundi
Ntazina Edmond <i>CN Bashingantahe</i>	Burundi
Mambu Samadu Feika <i>Prison Watch Sierra Leone</i>	Sierra Leone

Kanyugu Didace <i>TROCAIRE</i>	Burundi
Bigirimana Procès <i>Privé</i>	Burundi
Ntakarutimana Florence <i>HROC</i>	Burundi
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Komakech Lyandro <i>Senior Researcher, Advocacy officer Refugee Law Project Makerere University</i>	Uganda
Yasmin Sooka <i>Executive Director, Foundation for Human Rights</i>	South Africa
Kambala Wa Kambala Olivier <i>International Consultant, Transitional Justice</i>	South Africa
Stewart John <i>Former Commissioner/Liberia, Freelance Journalist</i>	Liberia
Batungwanayo Aloys <i>La Benevolencija</i>	Burundi
Sinabwiteye Joseph <i>CT CVR</i>	Burundi
Ndikumasabo Sonia <i>Commission Nationale Indépendante des Droits de l'Homme</i>	Burundi
Nahimana Elie <i>MIPAREC</i>	Burundi

Mbarushimana Pascasie <i>AFSC</i>	Burundi
Triphonie Habonimana <i>AFSC</i>	Burundi
Anna Crumley-Effinger <i>AFSC</i>	USA
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Olivier Bayisenge <i>AFSC</i>	Burundi
Stéphane Nkurunziza <i>AFSC</i>	Burundi
Ferdinand Niyongabo <i>Ministère de l'Intérieur</i>	Burundi
Eugène Ntaganda <i>ASF</i>	Burundi
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Désiré Niyondiko <i>EIRENE</i>	Burundi
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Kekenwa Jérémie <i>Sénat</i>	Burundi

Burundian representation came from the technical committee that was appointed to plan for a truth and reconciliation commission in Burundi, representatives of the government of Burundi, the United Nations office in Burundi, the Independent National Human Rights Commission, and staff of national and international NGOs.

Facilitators:

Olivier Kambala wa Kambala and Jeannine Nahigombeye

Olivier Kambala wa Kambala is a jurist and an international expert on transitional justice, with long working experience in Burundi. He has worked with a number of international organisations, including the International Centre for Transitional (ICTJ) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Jeannine Nahigombeye is an active member in the Burundi's civil society, particularly the Working Group on Transitional Justice.

From input provided by the participants at the conference, the facilitators, together with the Conference Rapporteur, Didace Kanyugu, helped craft the conference conclusion and recommendations. The report was edited and prepared for distribution by the staff of the American Friends Service Committee.

Conference Goal

To contribute to reconciliation and peacebuilding in Burundi and other participating countries.

Objectives

- Provide a framework for sharing technical knowledge on the establishment and functioning of different Truth Commissions;
- Allow/create a forum for exchange on truth and reconciliation commissions to identify and share lessons of success but also challenges of diverse countries;
- Refine civil society organizations' understanding of entry points in the implementation of TRCs;
- To raise awareness, and increase the understanding of politicians, experts and activists on the stakes, challenges and opportunities in implementing TRCs.

About the American Friends Service Committee

The American Friends Service Committee is an international non-governmental organization founded by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in 1917, as a conscientious objection against the First World War. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Our work is based on the principles of the Religious Society of Friends, the belief in the worth of every person, and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. An organization that strives for peace, AFSC works with communities in North America, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East to address the root causes of conflict, including economic and social injustice.

The AFSC was registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Burundi in 2005. It supports local organizations' initiatives in trauma healing, community recovery and reconciliation, as well as non-violence and humanitarian assistance.