

## Polity IV Country Report 2010: Burundi

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Polity:</b></td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Democ:</b></td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Autoc:</b></td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Durable:</b></td> <td></td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tentative:</b></td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	<b>Polity:</b>	6	6	0	<b>Democ:</b>	7	7	0	<b>Autoc:</b>	1	1	0	<b>Durable:</b>		5		<b>Tentative:</b>		Yes		
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SCODE	<b>BUI</b>	CCODE	<b>516</b>	Date of Report	<b>1 June 2011</b>																				
<b>Polity IV Component Variables</b>																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	2	4	6	3	4																				
<b>Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)</b>																									
End Date	31 October 2001		Begin Date	19 August 2005																					
<b>Polity Fragmentation: No</b>																									
<b>Constitution</b>	28 February 2005																								
<b>Executive(s)</b>	President Pierre Nkurunziza; elected by the parliament by a vote of 151 to 9, 26 August 2005, directly reelected unopposed 28 June 2010, 91.6%																								
<b>Legislature</b>	<p>Bicameral:</p> <p>National Assembly (minimum 100 seats – 60% Hutu and 40% Tutsi with at least 30% being women; additional seats appointed by a National Independent Electoral Commission to ensure ethnic representation; members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms; most recent elections, 23 July 2010)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD): 81</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Union for National Progress (UPRONA): 17</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU): 5</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Other parties: 3</p> <p>Senate (54 seats; 34 by indirect vote to serve five year terms, with remaining seats assigned to ethnic groups and former chiefs of state; most recent elections, 23 July 2010 – seat distribution to be determined)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">CNDD-FDD: 32</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">FRODEBU: 5</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">CNDD: 3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">UPRONA: 2</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Ethnic Twa Members: 3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Ex-presidents: 4</p>																								
<b>Judiciary</b>	Supreme Court																								

## **Narrative Description:<sup>1</sup>**

### **Executive Recruitment: Transitional or Restricted Elections (7)**

The ethnic apartheid system found in Burundi has effectively worked against the formation of democratic procedures and institutions in the post-colonial era. After a brief experiment with a multiethnic constitutional monarchy in the early 1960s, increasing ethnic tensions triggered the 1966 coup by Prime Minister Michel Micombero who subsequently declared Burundi a republic, reasserted Tutsi political hegemony and established a one-party military state. For the next two and one-half decades Burundi was run by a series of military-backed Tutsi leaders. President Micombero was ousted in a 1976 coup led by Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza who, in turn, was replaced by Major Pierre Buyoya in a 1987 coup. After a brief period of political liberalization in the early 1990s, President Buyoya was defeated by Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, in Burundi's first multiparty presidential election. Less than four months into his administration, President Ndadaye was assassinated by members of the Tutsi-dominated military. As the country slipped into civil war the Hutu Government appointed Cyprien Ntaryamira as president. Three months later, in April 1994, President Ntaryamira was killed as his airplane was shot down under mysterious circumstances. The speaker of the National Assembly, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, another Hutu, became acting president and was confirmed in that position in September 1994. Triggering a new round of ethnic violence, these events claimed more than 200,000 lives and resulted in the displacement of over 300,000 Hutus in neighboring Tanzania and approximately 500,000-800,000 in so-called "regroupment sites" within Burundi. As ethnic conflict escalated in Burundi in the mid-1990s, Buyoya returned to power in a bloodless coup in July 1996.

After seizing power, President Buyoya promulgated a transitional constitution in June 1998 that established a partnership between the Tutsi-led government and Hutu-led National Assembly. While political parties were permitted to operate in Burundi under this new arrangement, nonetheless, they were subject to significant restraints. The government continued to restrict freedom of assembly and speech and engaged in systematic harassment of members of opposition parties and organizations that were critical of its policies. Despite these shortcomings in democratic procedure, President Buyoya continued to work for a resolution to the country's deep-rooted ethnic strife. While a ceasefire was finally signed in Tanzania in late 2002 between the central government and three of the four major rebel forces, nevertheless, fighting continued to plague this poor central African state. Under the ceasefire agreement the Hutu rebel groups were to be gradually integrated into the Burundi armed forces. African Union peacekeepers arrived in the country in February 2003 to protect the fragile peace settlement.

The post-transition constitution was ratified by popular referendum on 28 February 2005 with 92% approval. Under the terms of the constitution, National Assembly elections were held on 4 July 2005; the legislature elected a new president on 19 August 2005. While the new constitution stipulates that the President is to be elected by popular vote to serve a five-year term, under Article 186 of the constitution the first president in the post-transition period was to be elected by a two-thirds majority in parliament. Pierre Nkurunziza (CNDD-FDD) won 93% of the vote within the legislature in the August 19 election.

Legislative and presidential elections were held in June and July 2010. Both of these elections were boycotted by all 12 opposition parties in the country and produced a significant consolidation of power by President Nkurunziza and his ruling CNDD-FDD party. The election commission reported that about 92% of the votes were in President Nkurunziza's favor in the 28 June ballot with a turnout of 76%. The decision by the opposition to boycott these elections came after the flawed local elections held in May 2010 produced a landslide victory for the CNDD-FDD. The opposition, claiming widespread fraud, took to the streets in protest. President Nkurunziza responded to this unrest by imposing a blanket ban on all opposition party meetings and activities. Several opposition members and journalists were arrested. Since that time, members of the opposition have gone into hiding as the government of Burundi has been accused of torture and political assassination. While the judiciary has shown some degree of independence and has begun to investigate some of these claims, in general, the political atmosphere has become increasingly restricted throughout 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

### **Executive Constraints: Near Parity (6)**

Political power in post-coup Burundi has historically been vested in a strong executive. President Buyoya, who had the backing of moderate elements within the Tutsi-controlled military, has dominated the political agenda of this country since his seizure of power in July 1996. While the Transitional Constitutional Act of 6 June 1998 legitimized the political authority of the President and established the institutional foundations for a civilian-based transitional government, Burundi remained a de facto military regime. However, the power of the President was not unlimited. President Buyoya, in an attempt to co-opt moderate Hutu elements, chose to work with members of the Hutu-dominated opposition party FRODEBU and, in the process, limited the extent of his own power. While pro-Government ethnic Tutsi members continued to dominate the security and judicial branches of government and held most of the key ministries within President Buyoya's cabinet, nevertheless, FRODEBU members held approximately one-half of the cabinet portfolios and controlled the Transitional National Assembly. While the powers of the FRODEBU-dominated Transitional National Assembly were marginal at best, this institution continued to serve as a constitutional mechanism for resolving the country's deeply entrenched political factionalism.

Buyoya, with the support of moderate elements within the Tutsi-dominated military, has actively sought to negotiate an end to the civil unrest in Burundi and establish a framework for redressing the fundamental ethnic inequities within the political arena. Working with the Hutu-dominated Transitional National Assembly, President Buyoya agreed to the formation of a Transitional Government that was installed in November 2001. Buyoya served as President of the Transitional Government for the first 18 months and then handed executive authority over to his Hutu Vice President, Domitien Ndayizeye, on 30 April 2003, for the remaining 18 months of the transitional term. The post-transition constitution, ratified in 2005, established a stronger parliament that elected the first post-transition president, Nkurunziza (CNDD-FDD) on 19 August 2005. No significant changes in executive constraints occurred in 2006; the degree to which the parliament can constrain President Nkurunziza remains to be seen.

### **Political Participation: Political Liberalization: Persistent Overt Coercion (8)**

The Burundi polity is deeply divided along ethnic lines between the majority Hutu population and the Tutsi minority. While the Hutu constitute over 85% of the total population, historically the Tutsi population have been politically and economically dominant. Prior to the arrival of German and Belgian colonists at the turn of the 20th century, Burundi (formally known as Urundi) was a semi-feudal Tutsi kingdom. Seeking to legitimize their rule through the use of indigenous political networks and institutions, Belgian colonists supported Tutsi hegemony and, in the process, reinforced ethnic inequities within Burundi. While both groups speak a common language (Kirundi) and intermarriage is common, these long-standing inequalities underlie the chronic political violence that has plagued this country since its independence from Belgium in 1962. The social and political dominance of the Tutsi minority has triggered repeated episodes of intensely violent political competition in this country over the past four decades. Following an unsuccessful Hutu-led coup against the Tutsi-led Government in 1965, virtually all members of the Hutu political elite were killed. The ethnic cleansing of Hutu politicians, intellectuals and dissidents has been repeated many times since 1965. Fears of Hutu militancy during the 1970s and '80s, for example, were temporarily quelled with the mass extermination of over 100,000 Hutus in 1972 and over 20,000 Hutus in 1988.

In a positive development at the end of 2003, the leader of the former rebel CNDD-FDD, Pierre Nkurunziza, arrived in the capital for the first time since the war broke out in 1993. Nkurunziza was appointed Minister of State for Good Governance in the transitional government of President Domitien Ndayizeye after a cabinet reshuffle in November. He arrived accompanied by CNDD-FDD secretary-general Hussein Radjabu and ten other officers who were to take up positions in the army and the police. The cabinet reshuffle to accommodate the CNDD-FDD was in accordance with a power-sharing agreement signed by the transitional government and the rebel group in Dar el Salaam in October 2003 (two smaller factions of the CNDD-FDD and the FLN signed a power-sharing agreement with the government in May 2003). Under the agreement the CNDD-FDD would have received 40% of the posts in the army staff and 35% in the police. Moreover, it was also allocated two posts in the bureau of the parliament and 15 slots in parliament. In May 2004, however, the CNDD-FDD suspended its participation in the government to protest what it said were delays in the implementation of the ceasefire and power-sharing accord it signed on 16 November 2003.

Despite these problems, in the summer of 2004 UN troops were deployed in the country and a five-member National Independent Electoral Commission was appointed in preparation for the upcoming elections. Unable to meet the deadline for the establishment of a new constitution, an interim constitution

was adopted in November 2004, which was succeeded by a finalized constitution in February 2005. The CNDD-FDD won fifty-nine of 118 National Assembly seats in the country's first elections under the new constitution, held 4 July 2005. Although this peaceful transfer of power raises hopes for the future, Burundi has a long way to go to solve the problems of ethnic divisions and political instability by which it has been plagued for the last forty years.

Agathon Rwasa, leader of the National Liberation Forces (FNL), has gone into hiding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwasa, who signed a peace deal in 2009 to lay down his arms, was seen as the primary political challenger to President Nkurunziza. Both President Nkurunziza and Rwasa led the mainly Hutu rebel groups fight against the Tutsi-dominated army during the country's civil war. Rwasa had refused to end the armed struggle when other rebel groups set up a power-sharing government in 2005. When Rwasa disarmed the FNL in April 2009 he became the main electoral rival of the President. In August 2010 the ruling party used its power to influence a "coup" within the opposition FNL. At a party congress organized by the CNDD-FDD, the FNL leadership was voted out and replaced by members more sympathetic to the government.