Burundi

Country Overview

Politics

Burundi is a presidential republic in the Great Lakes Region of East Africa, with a political history characterized by “high political instability and violence.” A period of relative stability and peace following the Arusha Peace Accord in 2000 ended in 2015, when the decision of President Pierre Nkurunziza to seek an extra-constitutional third term sparked political violence. The violence largely ended by 2016, but the political climate has remained unstable, and repression and persecution of those suspected of opposing the regime has continued in 2017.

Economy

Burundi is classified by the World Bank as a low-income economy. Post-conflict, landlocked, and resource-scarce, with a population that suffers from extreme poverty, Burundi has faced significant constraints on growth. Burundi’s main exports include gold, coffee, tea, soap, beer, wheat and cigars. For 2016, economic growth remained negative due to political conflict that impacted food production, given that nearly 90 percent of the population relies on subsistence agriculture and lower productivity levels led to decreased consumption. The gross national income (GNI) per capita for 2015 was USD 260, more than twice what it was in 2003 at USD 110 per capita. Over 85 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture.

Social/Human Development

Ongoing political conflict in 2015-17 has resulted in 300,000 deaths and the outward migration of 1.2 million people. The U.S. Department of State has reported that internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are under 18, are vulnerable to exploitation and that traffickers are enabled by the chaotic environment. The conflict has had a lasting impact on the development of the country; during the conflict life expectancy fell from 51 to 44 years and the poverty rate doubled from 33 percent to 67 percent. Today, almost half of all households are food insecure and in 2013 Burundi held the lowest position in the 2016 Global Hunger Index. Burundi ranks 180 out of 184 countries in terms of the Human Development Index.

U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 3

According to the *Trafficking in Persons Report*, trafficking risk may be found among Burundian children and young adults in export supply chains including agriculture, gold mining, fishing, and construction.

Read the full TIP Report at: [https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271157.htm](https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271157.htm)

Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

Burundi has positive net migration. About 2.6 percent of the population are migrants. The largest source country for migrants is the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other significant migrant source countries are Rwanda and Tanzania, with smaller migrant populations from Kenya, Uganda, Belgium and France.

There are approximately 84,399 persons of concern in Burundi, of whom 25,000 are internally displaced persons. An estimated 1,302 stateless persons are living in Burundi.
Migrants to Burundi

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: 167,768
- Rwanda: 64,363
- Tanzania: 28,008
- Kenya: 1,032
- Uganda: 891

Legend:
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Rwanda
- Tanzania
- Kenya
- Uganda
Migrants from Burundi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>87,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>64,501</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>45,345</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>39,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>7,474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exports and Trade

The top exports of Burundi in 2016 were coffee, gold, wheat, tobacco, spirits and soaps.\textsuperscript{16}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Commodity Exports (USD/Thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Machinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top importers of all goods from Burundi were Pakistan, Germany, Sweden and the United States of America.\textsuperscript{17}
Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers’ Rights

Freedom of Association

The constitution provides for freedom of association, but according to Freedom House, Burundi has a history of severely restricting this right. The law provides for the right of workers to form and join independent unions, but police, armed forces, magistrates and foreigners working in the public sector are excluded. Workers who wish to strike must comply with strict conditions, such as six days’ notice to the employer and Ministry of Labor, but only after all other means of resolution are carried out prior. The law prohibits retribution against workers participating in a legal strike, but the law does not explicitly provide for reinstatement of workers who are dismissed for union activity. The International Trade Union Confederation gave Burundi a score of four out of five, classifying it as a country with systematic violations of rights. Violence in the pre-election period of 2015 negatively impacted workers and trade unions, who became targets of police violence.

Working Conditions

More than 90 percent of the working population is employed in the informal economy. According to the Confederation of Burundian Labor Unions, virtually no informal sector workers have written employment contracts. In the capital city of Bujumbura, there is an informal minimum wage for unskilled workers of BIF 3,000 francs (USD 1.82) per day in 2015. However, in rural areas the minimum wage is BIF 1,000 (USD 0.61) per day, plus lunch.

The labor code provides an 8-hour work day and 40-hour work week, but there are exceptions in the national security, residential security and transport sectors. Foreign and migrant workers are subject to the same working conditions as Burundians.

Discrimination

The constitution recognizes workers’ right to decent work and equal pay for equal work, but the law does not explicitly prohibit discrimination against specific groups. Most of the country’s economic activity occurs in the informal sector where legal protections do not apply. There are some reports that suggest that membership in the ruling party is a prerequisite to formal employment in the public and private sectors. The Trade Union Confederation of Burundi has supported this view, by reporting that discriminatory recruitment practices have occurred in the education and health sectors based on a person’s political party membership.

Under Article 55 of the Statute of Public Servants, women employed in the public sector are granted the right to maternity leave. However, the U.S. Department of State has reported that some employers
have suspended the salaries of women on maternity leave, whereas others refuse medical coverage to married female employees.33

**Forced Labor**

According to the U.S. Department of State, the law prohibits most forms of forced or compulsory labor, including by children, yet the government reportedly has not effectively enforced applicable laws.34

Burundians are compelled by law to carry out community service development work in order to promote social and economic development of municipalities.35 In addition to these work projects, the government has at times imposed travel restrictions on Burundians (foreign residents are exempt) such that those who wish to travel outside of their community are required to have a permit.36 Police have enforced restrictions on movement via roadblocks.37

**Child Labor**

16 is the minimum legal age for employment, but there are exceptions permitted by the Ministry of Labor. Included among these exceptions are light work or apprenticeships that do not damage children’s health, or interfere with their normal development or schooling.38 However, the Ministry does not effectively enforce the law due to insufficient labor inspectors and resources. Furthermore, fines issued in the discovery of violations have been found not to be sufficient to deter violations. For example, fines have ranged from BIF 5,000 to 20,000 (USD 3 to 12).39

In Burundi, education is free and compulsory from the age of seven through the secondary level.40 Students are responsible for covering the costs of books and uniforms, and while tuition is free, there have been reports throughout the country of provincial officials who have charged parents fees for schooling.41 According to the Education Policy Data Center, 62 percent of 15-24 year olds have not completed primary education in Burundi.42

According to the U.S. Department of State in 2016, child labor laws are not effectively enforced in practice as children are regularly engaged in agriculture or assisting family businesses in the informal sector performing tasks such as selling in the streets or working in local brickworks.43 In urban areas, it has been reported that children work as domestic servants.44

**Civil Society Organizations**

In Burundi, civil society organizations (CSOs) are required by law to register with the Ministry of Interior, yet the criteria are unclear and there is no legal recourse when authorities deny registration.45 Repeated government threats in 2015 pushed many civil society activists and journalists into exile for fear of arrest. In October 2016, the Interior Minister banned or suspended 10 civil society organizations that had spoken out against government abuses.46 In December 2016, the national assembly adopted two laws on national and foreign NGOs, imposing stricter controls on their work.47
Immigration Policies Limiting the Employment Options or Movements of Migrants

The law provides for the freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but the government has a history of restricting these rights. According to news sources, the government has repressed in-country movement through the use of “cahiers de ménage”, or booklets, which list the residents and domestic workers of each household in some neighborhoods of the capital. Neighborhood searches have been conducted where unregistered persons are arrested. Persons who fled the country in search of refugee camps were sometimes detained by police, the SNR or Imbonerakure members and forced to return home. There are approximately 60,000 IDPs in Burundi who are concentrated in the Rumonge and Makamba provinces, and fear of arrest likely means there is also a population of IDPs who remain in hiding.

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILO 29 Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 100 Equal Remuneration</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 111 Discrimination</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 138 Minimum Age</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 97 Migration for Employment</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

Burundi scored a 100.7 out of 120 on the 2016 Fragile States Index, which ranked it 15 out of 178. Increased political turmoil resulted in the outward migration of people numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Opposition parties, politicians and their supporters faced harassment, intimidation and violence throughout the course of 2015, most notably after a failed coup attempt which led to the increased surveillance of those suspected of involvement. After speaking out against the President’s decision to run for a third term, the leader of the opposition party was murdered, intimidating other opposition parties and groups into exile.

Level of Crime and Violence

The World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report scored Burundi at 3.3 and 3.3 out of seven for business costs of organized crime and business costs of crime and violence respectively. A score of seven indicates that business costs are not impacted at all. Violence between security forces and armed opposition groups increased after President Nkurunziza’s decision to serve for a third term. Security forces and members of Imbonerakure – the youth wing of the ruling party – were responsible for killings, disappearances, abductions, rape, torture and arbitrary arrests. Armed opposition groups targeted members of the Imbonerakure and it was reported by a member that 50 or more Imbonerakure have been killed since April 2015.

State Persecution

Members of the Imbonerakure reportedly abused and robbed refugees. It was reported that police and military officials were also responsible for abuse. Human Rights Watch reported that in 2016, police, military and Imbonerakure forced their way into houses and demanded that residents turn over clandestine young men and combatants, which was often accompanied by ethnic slurs targeted at Tutsi residents. Large-scale arbitrary arrests were committed, alongside mass killings in Nyakabiga and Musaga, which are evidenced by the discovery of mass graves.

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2016 scored Burundi 20 out of 100, where a 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and a 100 indicates “Very Clean.” Burundi ranked 159 out of 176 countries on that same index. Burundi has many legal provisions aimed at combating corrupt activities such as bribery, nepotism, preferential hiring, promotion and embezzlement. According to the U.S. Department of State, these measures are rarely enforced. Corruption is allegedly most pervasive in the government
procurement sector where the purchase and sale of government property takes place in a non-transparent environment.⁶⁴

Human Rights Watch has reported that the justice system is manipulated by the ruling party and intelligence officials, routinely causing judicial procedures to be contravened.⁶⁵

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

Burundi’s Human Development Index value for 2015 was 0.404, which placed the country in the low human development category. When adjusted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.276—a loss of 31.5 percent due to inequality.⁶⁶ Burundi’s HDI and IHDI are lower than its neighboring countries of Tanzania, Rwanda and DRC.⁶⁷

Level and Extent of Poverty

Poverty is pervasive in Burundi. The most recent data that was available for Burundi’s multidimensional poverty estimation refer to 2010. In Burundi, 81.8 percent of the population of the population are multidimensionally poor while an additional 12.0 percent live near multidimensional poverty. The breadth of deprivation, which is the average deprivation score experienced by people in multidimensional poverty, is 54.0 percent.⁶⁸ Nearly 65 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.⁶⁹ Burundians have limited access to necessities such as water and sanitation. The World Bank reported in 2016 that less than five percent of the population has access to electricity.⁷⁰

Degree of Gender Inequality

The UNDP Gender Inequality Index scores Burundi at 0.474, ranking it 108 out of 159 countries on the 2015 index.⁷¹ Amnesty International reported that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) expressed concern about the high levels of secondary school dropout rates among girls.⁷² For instance, at the age of 15, 35 percent of girls are out of school compared to 23 percent of boys.⁷³ By age 18, the disparity between genders almost doubles where 70 percent of girls and 46 percent of boys are out of school.⁷⁴

Additionally, CEDAW has voiced concern over women’s limited access to basic health care and sexual and reproductive health services, especially regarding the continued criminalization of abortion. Of all the women incarcerated in Burundi, 45 percent are serving sentences related to abortion and infanticide.⁷⁵
Under customary law, rural women cannot inherit land or non-land assets from their fathers or their husbands. Although the Arusha Agreement, which ended the 1993-2005 civil war, included reforms to alleviate discrimination against women in this respect, its implementation remains superficial. This occurrence of discrimination is intensified by the large number of men killed by conflict, and HIV/AIDS, both of which have led to the increased number of women-headed households. This is particularly problematic because women have limited access to non-agricultural resources.

Landlessness and Dispossession

Beginning in 2012, there have been cases arbitrated by the National Commission for Land and Other Possessions which have resulted in the restoration of property to returning refugees, but without compensation to the current property owners whom the returning refugees are displacing.

In 2008, CEDAW expressed concerns regarding the treatment of widows who face discrimination under customary inheritance practices. Widows are prohibited from inheriting land from their husbands and often their brothers are unwilling to welcome them back into their family homes, which leaves widows both landless and homeless.

Environmental Factors

Flooding followed by drought between September 2015 and May 2016 left some 600,000 people food insecure as they were unable to sustain agricultural production. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that an estimated 10,000 households from Ruyigi, Kirundo, Cankuzo and Rutana fled their homes due to food insecurity caused by drought.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Coffee

Coffee Overview

Coffee and tea exports in Burundi account for more than 60 percent of the country’s GDP from exports. Coffee is a volatile crop whose yields are largely dependent upon weather conditions, and whose profits are set by international markets. According to a 2013 report, approximately 55 percent of Burundi’s citizens earn their living from the growing and producing of Arabica coffee. Burundian coffee is primarily grown on smallholder plantations and is harvested between March and June annually.
Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Coffee

The U.S. Department of Labor has reported that Burundian children are engaged in child labor within the agriculture sector, including in coffee production.86 The Government of Burundi and the ILO collaborated to publish a study which found that child labor commonly occurs in cash crops like coffee.87 Forced labor also occurs in agriculture in Burundi.88

Gold

Gold Overview

Gold in Burundi is produced by artisanal and small-scale mining. Gold is produced throughout the country at various sites in Bujumbura, Cankuzo, Cibitoke, Muyinga, and Ruyigi Provinces.89 In 2014, the most recent year for which data is available, it was estimated that gold production in Burundi increased by 25 percent. In the same year, it was estimated that the gold sector employed between 4,000 and 6,500 workers who produced 400 kilograms of gold annually.90 In 2014, 11 artisanal mining cooperatives were authorized by Burundi’s government to mine gold.91 In 2013, the first government supported refinery opened in Bujumbura.92

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Gold

The U.S State Department has reported that children and young adults are coerced into forced labor in gold mines in Cibitoke.93 The U.S. Department of State has also reported that traffickers recruit their families, neighbors, and friends into forced labor within the country.94 The U.S. Department of Labor reported that there are instances of child labor within the country, including in artisanal gold mines.95

Gift of the United States Government

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Trafficking Risk in Sub-Saharan African Supply Chains
Endnotes


