

The United Nations in Burundi: Peacekeeping Mission Completes its Mandate

(31 December 2006)



The United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) was established by the United Nations Security Council in May 2004 to support the efforts undertaken by Burundians to restore lasting peace and bring about national reconciliation, as provided under the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, signed in Arusha, Tanzania, on 28 August 2000. This agreement was meant to end a decade-long, ethnically-based civil war between the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority.

During its two-and-half-year presence in Burundi, ONUB completed its mandated tasks including assisting disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants; supporting elections which resulted in new democratic institutions at the communal, local and national level; monitoring ceasefire agreements; and promoting human rights, rule of law, economic development and social justice. This photo exhibit is intended to showcase some of the achievements of the Mission.

1. ONUB Assisted Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. (DDR)

ONUB played a key supportive role in the implementation of the national DDR programme since it was launched in December 2004. ONUB also provided security to ex-combatants at the demobilization centres. As of December 2006, a total of 21,769 ex-combatants including 3,015 children and 494 women were demobilized.



Members of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie/Force de défense de démocratie (CNDD-FDD) rebel forces surrender their weapons and ammunition to ONUB peacekeepers in Mbanda, southern Burundi. 3 February 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



Members of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie/Force de défense de démocratie (CNDD-FDD) rebel forces surrender their weapons and ammunition to ONUB peacekeepers in Mbanda, southern Burundi. 3 February 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



An ex-combatant waits in line to give back his weapon in Rugazi, Burundi, 18 April 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



Louise Niragira (right), a former member of the CNDD-FDD rebel forces, surrenders her weapon and ammunition to ONUB registration desk in Mbanda, southern Burundi. 3 February 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



Peacekeepers from Pakistan arrange weapons and ammunition for destruction. These weapons were collected from some of the 6,000 ex-combatants from the five armed movements arriving at the Rugazi cantonment site for training and reintegration into the new National Burundian Police. Rugazi, Burundi, 18 April 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret.

2. ONUB Supported Security Sector Reform

The United Nations was in charge of supporting the reform of the Burundian police force. A total of 2,445 police officers benefited from ONUB expertise. In addition to its traditional training activities, ONUB also worked with international donors to acquire equipment for the poorly-equipped security structure. The now 20,000-strong new National Burundian Force is fully integrated, active and present all over the country.



Ex-combatants wait to be airlifted by ONUB helicopters from Kibuye to Muyinga in Burundi to start their new police training. The week-long operation transported 3,922 ex-combatants, approximately 1,000 by helicopters and the rest by trucks. Kibuye, Burundi, 11 May 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



Ex-combatants wait to get onto buses to go to the Muramvya demobilization camp in Muramvya, Burundi, 1 December 2004. ONUB Photo/ Martine Perret



A UN police officer at a “Training of Trainers” session for new National Burundian Police officers in Bujumbura, Burundi, 4 April 2005. ONUB Photo/ Martine Perret



The first challenge for the Electoral Commission and its international partners was to ensure that the populations believed in the process and were ready to take an active part in it. At the end of the voter registration period in November 2004 and with the active support of ONUB, 3.2 million voters, representing more than 90% of the targeted voting population, were registered. Here, a potential voter registers in Bujumbura, Burundi, 22 November 2004. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



ONUB dedicated most of its logistical resources (trucks, helicopters, and generators) to support the electoral process. This support amounted to hundreds of hours of helicopter flights and thousands of kilometres driven to distribute 504 tonnes of electoral materials in the 17 provinces of the country. Three generators were installed at the data processing centre to ensure seven months of electricity. ONUB warehouses were also used as transit points for election materials. Here, ballot boxes for elections sent to Cankuzo from Bujumbura are being loaded onto a United Nations helicopters in Bujumbura, Burundi, 17 May 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



Peacekeepers from Pakistan weigh the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) boxes containing electoral rolls before being loaded inside the helicopter to be delivered to various provinces for the national Constitutional Referendum in February 2005. Bujumbura, Burundi, 18 February 2005. ONUB Photo/ Martine Perret



The public information unit of ONUB assisted in the design, printing and distribution of thousands of documents and leaflets and broadcast dozens of messages promoting peace and national dialogue and the elections. UNESCO conducted media training. With the majority of the population illiterate, however, ONUB had to come up with other means to convey the message. Here, the inter-active theatre troop TUBIYAGE in Kabezi demonstrates the voter registration process by means of a play in a public square in Kabezi, Burundi, 26 November 2004. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



ONUB forces were constantly mobilized to support the electoral field operations. As a number of the electoral teams were operating in areas declared to be insecure, movement had to be undertaken with escorts by ONUB soldiers. On polling day, ONUB military secured electoral convoys and deployed strategically in various areas of the country, establishing support for the Burundian Security Forces positioned at the polling stations. Here, a woman votes in Muhira in communal elections as a UN peacekeeper stands by. Bujumbura Rural, Burundi, 7 June 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



On 7 June 2005, ONUB deployed more than 100 teams to problematic polling stations, thereby encouraging the local population to turn out and vote. The presence of ONUB civilian staff deployed throughout the country created an atmosphere of mutual trust between the mission and national actors. The most sensitive area for monitoring elections was in the western part of the country, especially Bubanza and Bujumbura Rural provinces where Palipehutu-FNL/Rwasa was still active. Here, a woman votes in Muhira for communal elections as a United Nations worker looks on. Bujumbura Rural, Burundi, 7 June 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



During the elections, United Nations police closely supported the national police and the then gendarmerie in their deployment plans and strategies. UN police were in charge of supporting the reform of the police as a whole, but more importantly for training and advising the national police corps in the field. Here, electoral workers count votes after polls closed for the Constitutional Referendum. Bujumbura, Burundi, 28 February 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



A Burundian woman suffering malaria during the national Constitutional Referendum is being evacuated by the medical team from the Jordanian level II hospital in Gitega, Burundi, 28 February 2005. ONUB Photo/ Martine Perret



Former armed group leader, Pierre Nkurunziza, was elected President of the Republic of Burundi on 19 August 2005. He is seen here showered with flowers by supporters at the swearing-in ceremony, Bujumbura, Burundi, 26 August 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret

4. ONUB Supported Negotiations of Peace Agreements, including the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement Signed on 7 September 2006.



ONUB played a constructive role in promoting dialogue among the major political actors, in particular during tense periods, and maintained good relations with the Government, the Parliament and opposition parties located inside as well as outside Burundi. Here, Pierre Nkurunziza (right), President of the Republic of Burundi, and Agathon Rwasa (left) of the Palipehutu-Forces nationales de libération (FNL), sign the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Burundi and the last armed group of FNL. The signing of the agreement formally brought an end to over a decade of violent conflict in the country, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, 7 September 2006. ONUB Photo/ Penangnini Toure

5. ONUB Promoted Human Rights, Rule Of Law, Economic Development and Social Justice.





ONUB helped establish a country-wide human rights monitoring system and national human rights institutions. Here, an ONUB human rights team from Bujumbura and Ngozi regional office investigates human rights violations of the Batwa people in Kirundo province. The Batwas are roughly 1% of the population of Burundi. Kirundo, Burundi, 31 March 2005. ONUB Photo/ Martine Perret



Local fishermen and members of the ONUB's South African contingent test a boat engine. As part of the peacebuilding process in Burundi, ONUB initiated a fishing project in collaboration with one of its international partners -- the local representation of Yamaha Company, Burundi Auto Parts sa (B.A.P sa). The project was part of a larger initiative intended to empower ex-combatants and support long-term economic prosperity in the area of Nyanza-Lac, a small fishing town in Makamba. The engines were donated by the Burundi Yamaha Company and transported to the village by the South African contingent to an ex-combatant who started a fishing business after his demobilization and has since recruited some 15 other fishermen to work under his supervision. Makamba, southern Burundi, 24 June 2006. ONUB Photo/Mario Rizzolio

6. ONUB Created the Necessary Security Conditions for the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance



ONUB assists the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in relocating Banyamulenge refugees from a camp in Cibitoke to Mwaro in the center of Burundi, 19 October 2004. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret.



Children at the new Gatumba refugee camp. Gatumba, Burundi, 26 August 2004. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



A local woman receives food at the Gasorwe Refugee Camp in the Muyinga Province of Burundi. Although peace had been restored in 16 of the country's 17 provinces before the signing of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement on 7 September 2006, ONUB faced many challenges, including the provision of assistance to hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons who fled their homes during the decade of civil war. At the Gasorwe commune in the Muyinga Province, a camp for internally displaced persons, ONUB distributes food from the World Food Program (WFP) to about 10,000 camp residents, 21 January 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret.



A UN police officer oversees the distribution of food from WFP to about 10,000 camp residents. Gasorwe, Muyinga Province, Burundi, 21 January 2005. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



Food distribution in Kabezi was organized by WFP and security ensured by ONUB military forces. Kabezi, Burundi, 3 November 2004. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret



Refugees at a transit centre in Mugani, Burundi, 24 December 2004. ONUB Photo/Martine Perret

7. ONUB carried out joint tasks with neighbouring United Nations missions.



ONUB monitored the illegal flow of arms across the national borders in cooperation with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Here, UN patrol boats head to the Tanzanian border and pass fishermen as they check for illegal boats on Lake Tanganyika. 22 March 2005. ONUB Photo/ Martine Perret



ONUB provided logistical support to MONUC during the country's national elections in 2006 -- the first democratic elections in more than 40 years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Here, a Nepalese peacekeeper loads ballot boxes into an airplane bound for Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In total, 8,000 ballot boxes were transferred to the Congolese capital from the Bujumbura International Airport in Burundi, 28 July 2006. ONUB Photo/ Mario Rizzolio



ONUB peacekeepers load ballot boxes into an airplane to be shipped to Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In total, 8,000 ballot boxes were transferred to the Congolese capital from the Bujumbura International Airport, Burundi, 28 July 2006. ONUB Photo/ Mario Rizzolio

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