

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 651

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Burundi is at risk of mass atrocities, and that the Government of Burundi should comply with constitutional limits on presidential terms and re-engage in regionally-brokered peace talks.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 7, 2017

Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. HULTGREN, and Ms. BASS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Burundi is at risk of mass atrocities, and that the Government of Burundi should comply with constitutional limits on presidential terms and re-engage in regionally-brokered peace talks.

Whereas President Nkurunziza of Burundi was elected for a third term in July 2015, which was regarded by many as violating the 2000 Arusha Peace Agreement, which ended a civil war that claimed over 300,000 lives between 1993 and 2005;

Whereas, on September 4, 2017, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi announced that it had reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed and continue to be committed by

individuals associated with the government in Burundi since April 2015;

Whereas since April 2015, more than 2,000 people have been killed in politically inspired violence while an unknown number of individuals have been the victim of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, gender-based violence, arbitrary arrests, and torture, which have left populations in Burundi at risk of mass atrocities and contributed to a pervasive climate of fear and insecurity;

Whereas opposition elements have been accused of perpetrating grenade attacks in Bujumbura and ruling party and opposition supporters have been engaged in a series of tit-for-tat assassinations;

Whereas, on April 18, 2017, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed deep alarm over hate speech and “grotesque rape chants” by members of the Imbonerakure, the youth militia of the ruling party, stating that “this type of organized incitement rings very loud alarm bells”;

Whereas President Nkurunziza has suggested he may run for a fourth term in 2020, and has appointed a 15-member commission to propose draft amendments to the constitution;

Whereas according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 420,000 Burundians are refugees in neighboring countries, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has estimated that nearly 210,000 Burundians are internally displaced; and

Whereas the government’s refusal to cooperate with the United Nations Security Council, African Union mon-

itors, and the United Nations Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry for Burundi is a disturbing indication of its unwillingness to work with the international community to resolve the political crisis peacefully: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) calls upon Government of Burundi to—

3 (A) accept the 228 unarmed United Na-
4 tions police authorized by UNSC Resolution
5 2303 (2016) to monitor the security and
6 human rights situation;

7 (B) disarm all those engaged in political vi-
8 olence and illegally possessing weapons includ-
9 ing youth wings of political parties such as the
10 Imbornerakure;

11 (C) investigate allegations of human rights
12 violations, including those attributed to state
13 security forces, and hold perpetrators account-
14 able;

15 (D) allow the full deployment of African
16 Union human rights observers and military ex-
17 perts and permit them to operate throughout
18 the country as mandated; and

19 (E) participate in the political dialogue led
20 by the East African Community without pre-

1 conditions, and ensure an atmosphere conducive
2 to free expression and civic space;

3 (2) calls on the political opposition in Burundi
4 to renounce violence and armed rebellion;

5 (3) calls on Burundian stakeholders to partici-
6 pate in the Inter-Burundian Dialogue under the
7 aegis of the East African Community (EAC) without
8 preconditions and to use this as a forum to peace-
9 fully resolve contentious issues relating to the situa-
10 tion in the country;

11 (4) calls on the East African Community to
12 guarantee the inclusiveness of the dialogue process
13 and issue an agenda for discussions aiming to deal
14 with the core issues of the Burundi crisis;

15 (5) calls on the African Union to impose tar-
16 geted sanctions on those perpetuating violence in
17 Burundi, as decided by its Peace and Security Coun-
18 cil on October 17, 2015;

19 (6) calls on the United Nations Security Coun-
20 cil to impose targeted sanctions against all persons
21 or entities who threaten the peace and security of
22 Burundi;

23 (7) calls on the President of the United States,
24 in coordination with regional and international part-
25 ners, to impose additional targeted sanctions under

1 Executive Order 13712, including against any indi-
2 viduals responsible for or complicit in—

3 (A) actions or policies that threaten the
4 peace, security, or stability of Burundi;

5 (B) actions or policies that undermine
6 democratic processes or institutions in Burundi;

7 (C) human rights abuses;

8 (D) the targeting of women, children, or
9 any civilians through the commission of acts of
10 violence, abduction, enforced displacement, or
11 attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or
12 locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or
13 through other conduct that may constitute a se-
14 rious abuse or violation of human rights or a
15 violation of international humanitarian law;

16 (E) actions or policies that prohibit, limit,
17 or penalize the exercise of freedom of expression
18 or freedom of peaceful assembly;

19 (F) the use or recruitment of children by
20 armed groups or armed forces;

21 (G) the obstruction of the delivery or dis-
22 tribution of, or access to, humanitarian assist-
23 ance; or

24 (H) attacks, attempted attacks, or threats
25 against United Nations missions, international

1 security presences, or other peacekeeping oper-
2 ations; and

3 (8) calls on the Secretary of State and the Ad-
4 ministrator of the United States Agency for Inter-
5 national Development to use funds authorized and
6 appropriated for—

7 (A) the continuance of United States hu-
8 manitarian assistance and food aid for Burun-
9 dians affected by the ongoing political and hu-
10 manitarian crisis;

11 (B) support to media, civil society, and
12 human rights actors on the ground, to create
13 opportunities for inclusive citizen participation
14 in political dialogue;

15 (C) the development of a strategy and pro-
16 gramming to address the medium-term risk of
17 political violence, with a particular focus on en-
18 gaging youth and supporting conflict resolution
19 actors; and

20 (D) to ensure that the United States Agen-
21 cy for International Development and State De-
22 partment are adequately staffed to monitor and
23 develop strategies to rapidly respond to contin-
24 gencies on the ground.

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