



### INSIDE

Introduction	1
Demobilization, Integration and Professionalization	3
Training a National Defence Force	5
The FDN's Skills and Weaknesses	6
Management of the FDN	6
Popular Perceptions of the FDN	8
Moving Forward: Challenges to the Reform of the FDN	10
Works Cited	10

### INTRODUCTION

Previous editions of the *Security Sector Reform (SSR) Monitor* have explored police and justice reform, links between the police and the military, oversight of Burundi's security sector and corruption in the security and defence forces. This *SSR Monitor* looks more closely at the creation and development of Burundi's new army, the National Defence Forces (FDN), and the specific challenges it faces in managing its structure following demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) and professionalizing and training its members. It also looks at management and oversight, the army's relationship with the Burundian public and the specific challenges faced by Burundians in moving forward with FDN reform plans.

Sparked in October 1993 by the death of newly elected President Melchior Ndadaye and some of his closest associates, the Burundian armed conflict primarily pitted the Burundi Armed Forces (FAB) — largely populated by ethnic Tutsis — against a number of different Hutu rebel movements. One of the principal demands of these opposition groups was the reform of the armed forces, an institution that was perceived to be at the centre of the regime's hold on power. In June 1998, the combination of sanctions imposed by regional powers and the actions of the rebel groups pushed the government to enter peace negotiations with them in Arusha, Tanzania.

One of the main challenges of the Arusha negotiations was to address the question of security, particularly the reform of the security forces. In August 2000, despite the absence of some of the main rebel groups — notably, the CNDD-FDD (*Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie*) — a

ISSN 1920-1087

The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Centre for International Governance Innovation or its Board of Directors and/or Board of Governors.



Copyright © 2010, The Centre for International Governance Innovation. This work was carried out with the support of The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), Waterloo, Ontario, Canada ([www.cigionline.org](http://www.cigionline.org)). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution — Non-commercial — No Derivatives License. To view this license, visit ([www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/](http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)). For re-use or distribution, please include this copyright notice.



Financial support for the *Security Sector Reform Monitor* provided by The International Security Sector Advisory Team.

Photo: Burundian peacekeeper prepares for deployment to Somalia. Courtesy of US Army Africa photos.

## ABOUT THE SSR MONITOR

The *Security Sector Reform Monitor* is a quarterly publication that tracks developments and trends in the ongoing security sector reform (SSR) processes of five countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Timor-Leste and Southern Sudan. Every quarter, there will be separate editions for each case study country. Adopting a holistic definition of the security sector, the *SSR Monitor* will cover a wide range of actors, topics and themes, from reforms in the rule of law institutions and armed forces to demilitarization activities and the role of non-statutory security and justice actors.

Research for the *SSR Monitor* is field-based: a resident researcher in each case study country leads data collection and analysis, with support from desk-based analysts at The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). The same research guidelines are employed for each country. All editions of the *SSR Monitor* are subjected to an external peer review process in addition to our internal editorial review.

## STAFF

Mark Sedra	Managing Editor
Geoff Burt	Project Coordinator
Jennifer Salahub	Case Study Coordinator
NSI Staff Member	Field Researcher
Sarah Pinnington, NSI	Research Assistant
Geoff Burt	Layout & Production
Clare Hitchens	Copy Editor

peace agreement was signed among nineteen parties. Most of the signatory parties were grouped along ethno-political lines, with the Tutsi parties known as the G10 and the Hutu parties known as the G7. Reflecting these ethno-political divisions, the Arusha agreement also articulates power-sharing arrangements between the ethnic groups that are based on a system of quotas. Arusha further outlines a number of decisions about the reform of the armed forces.<sup>1</sup> It calls for, among other things, the creation of a new National Defence Force, and defines the missions, structure and composition of that force.

The Arusha agreement states that the FDN will be formed by members of the Burundian Armed Forces, former combatants affiliated with the rebellious armed political parties and movements (PMPA, *partis et mouvements politiques armés*) and other citizens who wish to join. It also clarifies the ethnic quota, noting that “the National Defence Force [shall] not be made up of more than 50 per cent of members of one particular ethnic group.” In creating and developing this new institution, particular emphasis was placed on accountability, transparency and respect for, as well as submission to, the authority of the central government and parliament. Arusha insists on the professionalization of the FDN, in particular with respect to politicization: the members of the new force are prohibited from taking part in any political activities or demonstrations. Lastly, the accord excludes those “who have committed genocide acts, coups d’état, and violations of the constitution and human rights as well as war crimes” from becoming members of the FDN or the national police.

A return to peace and the successful implementation of the Arusha agreement were not immediately possible, however, because some of the main parties to the conflict were not involved in the Arusha negotiations. Indeed, the

<sup>1</sup> The principal documents that establish a framework for military reform in Burundi are the Arusha agreement and the country’s constitution. The main points are further operationalized at a much higher level of detail in the Ministry of National Defence and Veterans’ 2006-10 Sectoral Policy.

country only saw a return to peace across the majority of its territory after a November 2003 ceasefire and subsequent technical agreement between the transitional government and the principal rebel movement, the CNDD-FDD. With this agreement, an opportunity for the reform of the armed forces was also created. The reform process began in January 2004 with the establishment of a General Staff for the new force (which integrated ex-FAB and ex-PMPA members) and the appointment of its leaders by two presidential decrees.<sup>2</sup>

The new General Staff falls under and derives its independence from the joint authority of the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Brigadier General Germain Niyoyankana (a former member of the FAB) and his deputy, Brigadier General Adolphe Nshimirimana, (a former member of the CNDD-FDD). Since its creation, the General Staff has been responsible for the establishment of the FDN, among other activities. Throughout 2004, discussions focused on preparatory technical issues such as the process of demobilization, reintegration (into society) and reinsertion (as Burundi's DDR program is known) of ex-combatants;<sup>3</sup> identifying combatants; the harmonization of ranks; and the ratios between officers, non-commissioned officers and troops. By the end of the year, however, a decree creating the new FDN had been signed, signalling the beginning of the process of integrating former rebels into the new military.

## DEMOBILIZATION, INTEGRATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION

On the eve of the official launch of the demobilization campaign, there were approximately 64,000 combatants

<sup>2</sup> Forty percent of the General Staff's leadership is composed of ex-FDD officers. The president appoints the most senior military staff; other high-ranking staff are appointed by the Minister of National Defence.

<sup>3</sup> Ex-combatants include those who demobilized directly into society (rather than joining the new army), those who took advantage of voluntary demobilization and those who were demobilized for a variety of reasons, including age and indiscipline.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

<b>Eveline de Bruijn</b>	United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)
<b>Mark Downes</b>	International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT)
<b>Rory Keane</b>	OECD International Network on Conflict and Fragility
<b>Alexander Mayer-Rieckh</b>	After Conflict Group
<b>Boubacar N'Diaye</b>	The College of Wooster and African Security Sector Network (ASSN)
<b>Nader Nadery</b>	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
<b>Gordon Peake</b>	Timor-Leste Police Development Program
<b>Robert Perito</b>	United States Institute of Peace (USIP)
<b>Edward Rees</b>	Peace Dividend Trust
<b>Serge Rumin</b>	After Conflict Group
<b>Yasmine Shamsie</b>	Wilfrid Laurier University
<b>Jake Sherman</b>	Center on International Cooperation (CIC)
<b>Graham Thompson</b>	UK Department for International Development (DFID)

in Burundi, of whom 43,000 were from the FAB regular force and 21,000 from the former armed political parties and movements. All combatants, save child soldiers, were initially integrated into the new security institutions.

Through that program, roughly 8,000 PMPA members were integrated into the FDN during 2005. During the integration process, the vast majority of the force still consisted of former FAB members. The second phase of demobilization was launched in October 2005<sup>4</sup> and targeted ex-combatants with disabilities, FAB soldiers who had reached the age of retirement and those who had served time in prison — the “undisciplined.” People who were eligible for and took advantage of voluntary demobilization were also discharged.

The demobilization process was initially supposed to reduce the FDN’s numbers to 25,000 over four years (by June 2008) in accordance with the requirements imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions and in line with the termination of Burundi’s DDR process through the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP)<sup>5</sup> planned for the end of 2008. The process was beset by technical and political problems, however, and only really got up to speed in mid-2005, thereby impacting the number of ex-combatants who were demobilized during that time. Nevertheless, from the end of 2004 to 2008, more than 25,000 combatants were demobilized and returned to civilian life,<sup>6</sup> which allowed the FDN to reduce its force size to below 30,000 during 2007. With the voluntary demobilization process completed, the FDN moved to compulsory demobilization in 2008 as a means to reduce its size even further. The accelerated compulsory demobilization allowed the last group of demobilized combatants to benefit from the reintegration allowance being offered by the demobilization program before the MDRP came to an end.<sup>7</sup> In March 2008, some 900 soldiers were forcibly demobilized. The program was not without problems, however; a recent protest by demobilized soldiers asking for a promised allowance turned violent (News24.com, 2010). This sort of consequence brought the FDN, with the approval of the Bretton Woods institutions

(Burundi’s principal donors and ones who advocated a reduction in military spending) to suspend the program ahead of schedule.

As mentioned above, not only did Arusha stipulate the creation of a new National Defence Force, it also prescribed ethnic quotas for that organization. Based on the numbers collected by the FDN, 15,633 ex-combatants self-identified as Tutsi, compared to 11,548 Hutu and 208 Twa. In order to maintain ethnic parity in the defence and other security institutions, the FAB soldiers to be demobilized needed to be almost entirely Tutsi; however, many combatants who had been identified for demobilization refused to participate due to a suspicion that the ethnic identification process had been manipulated.<sup>8</sup>

In this context of tension and contestation of the ethnic census process, Burundi’s Senate conducted an inquiry on the status of the ethnic balance required by the constitution within the defence and security corps (Senate of Burundi, 2008). The report of the inquiry, which was debated in parliament in July 2008, notes the persistence of important ethnic and regional inequalities at the command level and within most specialized units of the FDN. It further notes the extremely weak presence of women at all levels.<sup>9</sup> The report reveals that across the 17 provinces of Burundi, 31.1 percent of senior commanders originate from the Bururi region, leading to that territory’s over-representation in the FDN. The Hutu ethnic group is still too weakly represented in the higher levels of the force, with only 30.2 percent (162 out of 539) of senior commanders identifying as Hutu. In certain specialized units such as the armoured division, military aviation, the logistics brigade, the Higher Institute of Military Officers (*l’institut supérieur des cadres militaires*, ISCAM) or at the Gakumbu aerial defence camp in Bujumbura, Hutus represent less than 25 percent of the force. These imbalances have led the Senate Commission to recommend that the government better respect the equity between provinces and ethnicities, in particular within specialized units, notably through training programs and by initiating a policy encouraging women to join the FDN.<sup>10</sup>

4 In the initial stages of this phase, 17,459 ex-combatants were demobilized, including 3,007 child soldiers and 482 women. (United Nations Security Council, 2005)

5 Funded by multiple agencies, the MDRP was a DDR program that ran concurrently in the greater Great Lakes region of Africa from 2002 to 2009. For more information, see [www.mdrp.org](http://www.mdrp.org).

6 At the end of April 2008, 25,430 combatants had been demobilized; since that time the demobilization program has been suspended. (United Nations Security Council, 2008)

7 The allowance was equal to 18 months’ salary.

8 Opinion expressed by the Minister of National Defence in correspondence to the Civil Cabinet Chief of the President of the Republic, March 2008.

9 The report notes that of the 27,514-strong FDN at that time, 39 members were women.

10 Since the report’s publication and parliamentary debate, several nominations have been made to different posts in order to diminish the inequalities at the FDN command level.

After these processes were completed, an agreement between the FNL (the remaining Hutu rebel group) and the government in December 2008 (based on the implementation of a September 2006 ceasefire) brought about the integration of the FNL into state administrative and security institutions. As a result, some 2,250 ex-FNL rebels have joined the FDN since April 2009, bringing the size of the force once again to about 28,000. A census of the FDN staff is currently underway and should provide a definitive count of the total FDN membership soon.

Around the same time, the government abandoned the use of the word “demobilization” in favour of “rationalization” of FDN membership. Indeed, the intent is a progressive reduction of the size of the FDN in order to diminish its financial burden and ensure a more balanced force structure in terms of the quantity of officers and non-commissioned officers. The rationalization process should also contribute to the professionalization of the FDN. To this end, soldiers have been withdrawn from field positions and the vast majority of them stationed in barracks, a situation facilitated by the renovation of a number of military camps with the financial support of the UN Peace Building Fund and the government of the Netherlands. This return to living in barracks has helped to initiate a training series for all FDN members on a variety of subjects and has also led to more effective arms control. It will also allow better support to the troops, notably through creating space for facilitated dialogue among FDN members on issues of morality and the dissemination of a code of conduct. With the emphasis on professionalizing the FDN, efforts have also been made to strengthen or improve existing training programs, the management system and military tribunals.

## TRAINING A NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

With the resumption of defence support by a number of key development partners — notably the UN Peace Building Fund, Belgium and the Netherlands — the FDN now has an extensive training program. As described below, coordination among

## SSR RESOURCE CENTRE

[www.ssrresourcecentre.org](http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org)

On April 28th 2010, the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) launched an exciting new initiative, the **SSR Resource Centre**. The Resource Centre is a website intended to serve as a hub and meeting place for SSR practitioners, analysts, policy makers and interested observers from across the world. It features:

- A blog highlighting recent developments in the SSR field;
- A calendar listing SSR-related events across the world;
- Country profiles for countries/regions undergoing SSR;
- Multimedia content, including video and audio interviews of SSR experts; and
- Access to CIGI’s SSR research, including the quarterly *SSR Monitor*.

The site will be dynamic — updated daily — and interactive — with all blog pages comment-enabled and external contributions welcomed.

To enter the SSR Resource Centre, please visit: [www.ssrresourcecentre.org](http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org)

donors of training programs does happen in some sectors but is certainly not systemic. Moreover, a methodical and sector-wide needs assessment was not conducted to determine training priorities; rather, needs are generally identified through bilateral discussions between the FDN and its major development partners. Despite these shortcomings, Burundi’s international partners are supporting the transformation of the FDN by providing strategic support for training and infrastructure investment.

Since the end of 2004, for example, members of formal rebel units and the former national armed forces have been eligible to take part in training programs designed to facilitate the formation of joint units tasked with protecting state institutions. Several hundred ex-combatants have been trained and make up the first integrated battalions of the new FDN. Within the framework of a January 2006 partnership agreement between the Burundian Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Belgian military, the Belgians provided training and strategic assistance to bring the capacity of ex-PMPA officers up to a level comparable with the ex-FAB personnel. The Belgian military also provided joint training courses for ex-PMPA and ex-FAB officers. Notably, the training program initiated by Belgium has seen three training sessions for battalion commanders, a “training of trainers,” three sessions at the platoon level, a session to harmonize tactical training methodology and a session for the heads of services working outside tactical command. It has further allowed technical training, such as staff training programs, as well as “normative training” on topics such as human rights and children’s rights. Belgium has also assisted in strengthening the Ministry of Defence through management training and through an audit of its administrative and human resource management capacities.

Responsibility for different topics under the normative training program is shared among the International Committee of the Red Cross (on international humanitarian law), the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB; on human rights, children’s rights and gender issues), the Burundi Leadership Training Program (on leadership), Lawyers Without Borders (on military courts), the Peace Building Commission (on moral standards) and the Netherlands through the Security Sector Development Program (DSS). The DSS was established in an April 2009 memorandum of understanding between Burundi and the Netherlands; it aims to provide targeted training activities such as management courses for army generals and courses on strategic planning for select Ministry of Defence staff officers. Further reinforcing this investment, the Netherlands has also provided funding for training FDN staff abroad.

Throughout Burundi’s military reform efforts, particular

emphasis has been placed on strengthening military ethics and discipline. Indeed, improving discipline was the impetus for a UN Peace Building Fund project targeting the moral standards of military personnel. The US\$500,000 “moralization” project aims to improve relations between the FDN and the general public by improving the morality — and through morality, the behaviour — of FDN members.

Although traditional Western donors still provide the lion’s share of support for military reform in Burundi, China has also resumed its military cooperation with Burundi. Through this arrangement, China not only supplies materiel but also assists in training FDN officers. In addition to increased Chinese involvement, Russia has also continued to welcome Burundian soldiers for training, and a number of African countries are also making modest but important contributions. Sudan, South Africa, Rwanda and Egypt have each supplied training to a small number of FDN officers.

## THE FDN’S SKILLS AND WEAKNESSES

One of the many challenges facing the FDN is that it has not yet evaluated the external and internal threats it faces — information and analysis that is crucial to adjusting its structure, its performance and, consequently, its training requirements. There is a need to develop a clearly articulated National Defence white paper. Such a policy document would provide strategic guidance for the continued development of the FDN that is responsive to the national and regional context. It would also allow the FDN to consolidate and build on the benefits of its increasing educational exchanges with other countries and on the technical and strategic support provided by certain donors. To this end, a technical commission of six National Defence officers was established early in 2010 to consult and reflect on what this document should cover. Though it has not yet initiated its work, a delegation from the commission is scheduled to visit Uganda to learn from their experience developing a similar white paper.

Despite the lack of strategic policy guidance, the FDN seems able to respond to internal threats, such as the April/May 2008 clash with the FNL, which the FDN successfully quashed in a matter of weeks. Although there has been an improvement in the comportment of the FDN during such military operations, violations of international human rights norms and humanitarian law nonetheless persist during periods of confrontation.<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to evaluate the FDN's capacities with respect to external threats; however, the joint military exercises in which the FDN participated in September 2009 under the auspices of the East African Community allowed it to take stock of its weaknesses, notably those pertaining to technological development and advancement<sup>12</sup> (generally, the FDN has a reputation of being strong in more traditional military activities). Moreover, the FDN is engaged in several international peacekeeping operations, notably in Somalia. With its 2,250 troops currently deployed to the mission, Burundi, with Uganda, constitutes the main military contingent of the African Union mission, AMISOM (*Réseau francophone de recherché sur les opérations de paix*, 2010). Burundi's commitment to maintaining its commitment to AMISOM despite threats from Somali insurgent group Al-Shabbab is encouraging (Newstime Africa, 2010).

A major weakness of the FDN remains the disparity in training and skills of its troops, non-commissioned officers and officers. Many officers are insufficiently qualified to do their jobs in a satisfactory manner despite important training programs currently in place that are meant to correct such discrepancies. Moreover, the FDN faces significant obstacles, in terms of resources and infrastructure, that handicap its operational effectiveness. Combined, these problems negatively affect the level of professionalism within the FDN, which even high-ranking officials openly admit is still far from where they would like it to be.<sup>13</sup>

## MANAGEMENT OF THE FDN

Responsibility for management of the FDN within the Ministry of Defence falls under the purview of the Ministry's Office of Procurement and Management. Unsurprisingly, the leadership of this office is a particularly coveted position due to the office's accounting and procurement functions and the associated ample scope for embezzlement. Indeed, with its US\$35.7 million budget, Burundi spends more on its armed forces as a percentage of GDP than its regional neighbours do (Oluoch, 2010). The ministerial budget proposal is also drafted by the Office of Procurement and Management with input from other ministry departments and the military general staff. The MOD budget undergoes the same budgetary oversight and review processes as other Burundian government ministries: The budget proposal is submitted to the Finance Ministry during the week dedicated to budget discussions, where it is meticulously examined and generally undergoes extensive cuts depending on the national fiscal constraints of the moment. The budget is then examined by the government, and from there it moves to the National Assembly for approval before being promulgated.

The expenses of the Ministry of Defence are also controlled at a number of different levels. Notably, the Audit Court, the body charged with regulating public finances, ensures that budget implementation and spending conform to Burundian law and the directives of the national General Inspectorate. Only purchases made through ministerial or presidential discretionary line items, such as special initiatives, are beyond the control of these two bodies and therefore could be used to any end, not just those specified in the budget. FDN supply purchases are also subject to public procurement regulations such as open tender.

Because of the large number of mechanisms for controlling public spending and the attention being paid by media outlets and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to corruption and the abuse of public funds, the upper echelons of the Ministry of Defence are rigorous in their budget management. According to the Audit Court, the Ministry of Defence is one of the public institutions that regularly passes on budget

<sup>11</sup> Interviews with representatives of local and international human rights organizations, Bujumbura, April and May 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with an FDN representative who participated in those joint exercises, Bujumbura, May 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Presentation by the Minister of National Defence on the national concept of the FDN, Bujumbura, March 30, 2010.

decisions for approval by the court; nevertheless, the MOD has been criticized by OLUCOME (*l'organisation de lutte contre la corruption et les malversations économiques*), a local anti-corruption NGO, for irregularities in the awarding of procurement contracts.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the FDN has been accused of delays and various failures in supplying food to military outposts across the country, which was a contributing factor to troop discontent in late 2009 and early 2010.<sup>15</sup>

## INTERNAL OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS

The FDN and the Ministry of National Defence have taken a number of steps to improve the discipline of the army, such as creating a General Inspectorate responsible for auditing within the ministry. Furthermore, when members of the military are accused of crimes, military courts are responsible for laying charges against them; disciplinary matters are dealt with through the chain of command. Due to both human and material resource scarcity, however, the military courts have not been fully functioning for some time. Recently, measures have been taken toward improving the capacity and work of these courts.

Through an initiative of the Auditor General, for example, regional military councils staffed with poorly trained personnel (either from the General Staff or the MOD) have been replaced with a roaming council. The council is headed by a president who centrally organizes its services and manages its staff, allowing it to be decoupled from the central military authority and ensuring that staff members are adequately trained, including through on-the-job training. Most importantly, the council's creation has allowed its staff to better understand particular human rights norms, such as the right to defence (previously, the accused were not assisted by a lawyer), the right to a speedy trial and allowing human rights defenders to attend

proceedings. With these changes, the service is now more efficient and has led to more case hearings, both at the initial level and at the level of appeal.

Military justice still encounters pressure in the management of certain files, however. A notable example is that of an event in Muyinga province in 2006; in that instance 20 people were killed in an incident in which the local military commander was implicated. The military auditor has since been pressured by the National Intelligence Service not to prosecute this commander (Nindorera, 2007). A similar case is a failed rebellion that took place in January 2010 and resulted in the arrest of roughly ten soldiers. The suspected rebels were charged with attempting a military coup, but several security officials — mostly former FDD members — pushed the military prosecutor to pursue the lesser charge of attempting a coup against institutions.<sup>16</sup>

## EXTERNAL OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS

At the parliamentary level, commissions on defence and security issues have been established in both houses of Burundi's parliament; they are intended to oversee and control the activities of the FDN. As may be anticipated, there is room for improvement in the way these commissions function. Because of their political membership and because they are composed mainly of members of the ruling party, the commissions are not particularly active and do not perform their function of supervising the FDN and other security institutions. Moreover, the commissions — particularly those in the National Assembly — are characterized by members with low levels of training and capacity, which further contributes to their inaction. The Permanent Senate Commission responsible for political, diplomatic, defence and security issues has nevertheless managed to call several security officials to testify before the Senate and account for their actions.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with the president of OLUCOME, November 2009.

<sup>15</sup> For example, in November 2009, leaflets mentioning issues with food distribution to the FDN were found in Gitega, Burundi's second largest city.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with FDN source, Bujumbura, April 2010.



As noted above, this Senate Commission has also published an evaluation report on the integration of the PMPA into the FDN and the resulting ethnic balance within the armed forces. This enquiry was motivated by one of the commission's constitutional prerogatives, which gives it the responsibility for overseeing the ethnic and gender balances in national defence and security institutions. Further implementing its mandate, in 2010, at the request of the National Assembly, the Senate Commission developed proposals to revise the law on the status of non-commissioned officers within the FDN, following evidence of their dissatisfaction with working conditions. Changes to the relevant laws have since been made that address the non-commissioned officers' concerns.

Civil society and the media also act as external sources of oversight of the FDN. Radio stations, for example, play an important role in denouncing abuses attributed to the armed forces, although at times their zeal can be excessive. Actions in this realm by non-governmental organizations have contributed to the creation of an FDN spokesperson position. Although civil society organizations are actively documenting human rights violations and cases of corruption and embezzlement attributed to the FDN, they are not very deeply involved in FDN reform processes. One exception is the *Centre d'alerte et de prévention des conflits* (CENAP), which is researching security sector reform issues and producing reports on the topic (see Nindorera, 2007; 2010). In addition, the *Dushirehamwe* women's organization works in cooperation with Ministry of Defence management to develop training modules related to issues of gender sensitivity and violence against women.<sup>17</sup>

## POPULAR PERCEPTIONS OF THE FDN

In general, the Burundian public has a good image of the FDN; at least, it is viewed more favourably than other security and justice institutions, such as the police, the National Intelligence Service or the Ministry of Justice. This positive perception has been demonstrated by several opinion surveys about the state of security in Burundi and the services provided by security and defence institutions. In August and November 2006, an enquiry jointly conducted by CENAP and The North-South Institute (Nindorera, 2007) on popular perceptions of the defence and security institutions showed that 50 percent of respondents trusted the FDN, compared to 36 percent for the Burundi National Police (PNB). Conversely, only about 10 percent of respondents said that they did not trust the FDN at all, compared to 16 percent who said the same for the PNB. An October 2008 study on the theme of transitional justice<sup>18</sup> revealed that 77 percent of respondents trusted the FDN, as compared to 59 percent for the PNB.

During preparations for securing the Burundi general elections of 2010, a process initially monopolized by the police, several local and international actors requested more involvement from the FDN to assure security during the elections. Although this request was officially motivated by fears of an insufficient number of police officers to cover all the polling stations, it also illustrates the greater trust that the FDN inspires compared to the PNB, which has often been accused of being instrumentalized by political powers.

<sup>17</sup> Other oversight mechanisms, such as the Ombudsperson and the role of human rights NGOs, are discussed in the third edition of the *SSR Monitor: Burundi*.

<sup>18</sup> The survey sampled 1648 people in 10 of Burundi's 17 provinces (Crawford and Pauker, 2008).

## MOVING FORWARD: CHALLENGES TO THE REFORM OF THE FDN

According to some of the highest authorities in the Ministry of Defence, one of the principal challenges to the reform of the FDN lies in the attitudes of its members. Some parts of the FDN resist the reform process because they are not prepared to accept some of the reforms outlined above — for example, rationalization of numbers, improved discipline or greater accountability — or the implications of those reforms for them and their roles in the armed forces. Others lack the required skills or the willingness to comply with the reform’s multiple demands, such as capacity building or the improvement of command and control systems. Still others lack the basic prerequisite skills, such as literacy, or are reluctant to take part in the training that will help them fulfil their roles in a reformed FDN. Some special interest groups within the FDN, often originating from the unit they were a part of, feel that their interests could be threatened by the reform process and subsequently attempt to undermine it from within.

Despite the willingness of its leadership, the FDN is still confronted with the interests of politicians, and some of its members are tempted to exercise influence in the realm of politics; however, the FDN as a whole attempts to remain neutral. They saw considerable success in securing the recent elections without favouring, for the first time, one party or another. Lastly, a persistent, negative culture of solidarity<sup>19</sup> and impunity colours most of the FDN’s activities and remains a significant, long-term challenge for the force.

Beyond challenges at the level of human resources and training mentioned above (including low levels of training

and disparities in skills within certain ranks), the FDN has had to manage the process of its transformation in a tenuous socioeconomic environment. This is one of the reasons why the process of rationalization of troop numbers has been delayed. The FDN itself has very limited financial, logistic and material resources. It has also seen its infrastructure damaged and in some cases destroyed during the prolonged civil war. This lack of resources is exacerbated by a context in which the FDN is forced to manage multiple demands from the troops and non-commissioned officers, notably regarding housing and food. Despite substantial salary increases, living conditions for soldiers and their families — many of whom were previously lodged in camps — have decreased. This situation has bred discontent among the ranks of the FDN and probably had a negative impact on efforts to improve the discipline within the ranks. A priority should be improving the living conditions of the soldiers of the FDN in order to create an environment that is receptive to available training so that the output and performance of the troops is changed for the better.

## WORKS CITED

Crawford, Julia and Ed Pauker (2008). *Ready to Talk about the Past: A Survey of Knowledge and Attitudes toward Transitional Justice in Burundi*. London: BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground.

*News24.com* (2010). “Burundi Protest Turns Violent.” April 20. Available at: <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Burundi-protest-turns-violent-20100420>.

*Newstime Africa* (2010). “Burundi Will Not Withdraw Peacekeepers from Somalia.” July 14. Available at: <http://www.newstimeafrica.com/archives/13149>.

<sup>19</sup> In this case, solidarity involves protecting fellow FDN members rather than upholding the rule of law or human rights norms.

Nindorera, Willy (2007). "Security Sector Reform in Burundi: Issues and Challenges for Improving Civilian Protection." CENAP/NSI working paper. Bujumbura and Ottawa: Centre d'alerte et de prévention des conflits and The North-South Institute.

——— (2010). Des principaux défis de la Police Nationale pour une meilleure sécurité publique et le renforcement démocratique. Bujumbura: Centre d'alerte et de prévention des conflits.

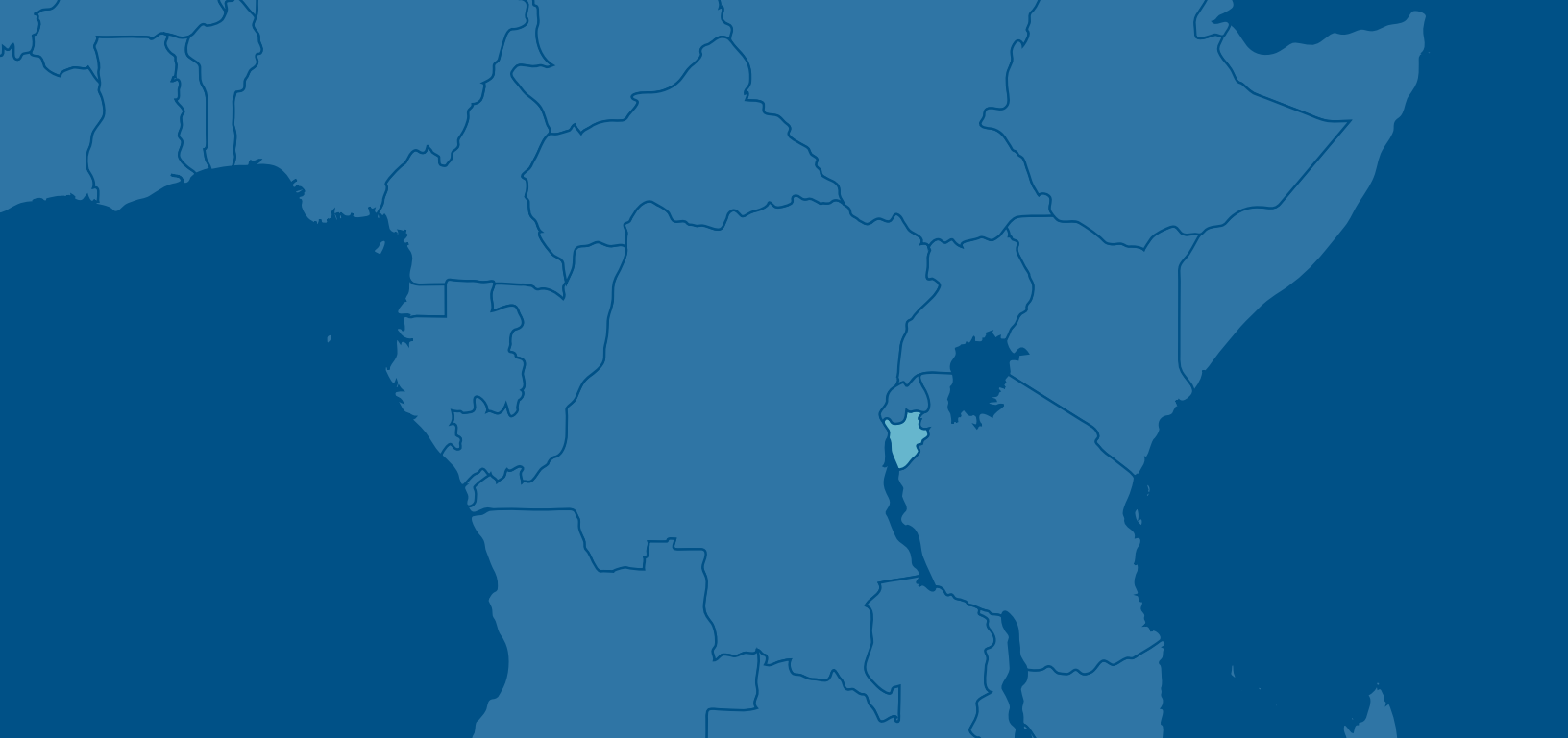
Oluoch, Fred (2010). "Burundi's 'Smallest' Military Budget Highest as Fraction of GDP in Region." *AllAfrica.com*. April 12. Available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004130823.html>.

Réseau francophone de recherché sur les opérations de paix (2010). "AMISOM." Available at: <http://www.operationspaix.net/AMISOM>.

Senate of Burundi (2008). *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the State of Inequalities as Required by the Constitution in the Defence and Security Forces Adopted by Resolution*. SNB/CP/01. Bujumbura: Republic of Burundi.

United Nations Security Council (2005). *Fifth Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Operations in Burundi*. S/2005/728. New York: United Nations.

——— (2008). *Third Report of the Secretary General on the Integrated Office of the United Nations*. S/2008/330. New York: United Nations.



The Centre for International Governance Innovation is an independent, nonpartisan think tank that addresses international governance challenges. Led by a group of experienced practitioners and distinguished academics, CIGI supports research, forms networks, advances policy debate, builds capacity, and generates ideas for multilateral governance improvements. Conducting an active agenda of research, events, and publications, CIGI's interdisciplinary work includes collaboration with policy, business and academic communities around the world.

CIGI conducts in-depth research and engages experts and partners worldwide from its extensive networks to craft policy proposals and recommendations that promote change in international public policy. Current research interests focus on international economic and financial governance both for the long-term and in the wake of the 2008-2009 financial crisis; the role of the G20 and the newly emerging powers in the evolution of global diplomacy; Africa and climate change, and other issues related to food and human security.

CIGI was founded in 2001 by Jim Balsillie, co-CEO of RIM (Research In Motion) and collaborates with and gratefully acknowledges support from a number of strategic partners, in particular the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

Le CIGI a été fondé en 2001 par Jim Balsillie, co-chef de la direction de RIM (Research In Motion). Il collabore avec de nombreux partenaires stratégiques et leur exprime toute sa reconnaissance pour leur soutien. Il remercie tout particulièrement le gouvernement du Canada, de même que le gouvernement de l'Ontario.

To learn more about CIGI please visit [www.cigionline.org](http://www.cigionline.org)



The Centre for International  
Governance Innovation  
Centre pour l'innovation dans  
la gouvernance internationale

57 Erb Street West, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6C2, Canada  
tel +1 519 885 2444 fax +1 519 885 5450  
[www.cigionline.org](http://www.cigionline.org)