INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL STUDY

THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN BURUNDI (ONUB) – POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC LESSONS LEARNED

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This discussion paper reflects the personal views of the author and does not necessarily represent the policies of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations or of the United Nations.

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**THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN BURUNDI (ONUB)**

*Political and Strategic Lessons Learned*

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**INTRODUCTION**

On 26 August 2005, President Pierre Nkurunziza was sworn in as Burundi’s first democratically elected leader in more than a decade. Between 1993 and 2005, several hundred thousand people died in bloody cycles of violence and reprisal. More than 500,000 were displaced and the country’s economy was decimated.

Burundi’s tentative return to peace and democracy is the culmination of a decade-long peace process whose success to date has resulted from a number of factors. First and foremost, key Burundian political parties were willing to strike unprecedented compromises in the interests of a peace deeply desired by an exhausted population. Second, in the latter part of the crisis, Burundi benefited from unusually determined and continuous regional engagement. Based on enlightened self-interest, pressure from the Organisation of African Unity/African Union (AU) and its membership, and particularly South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda, encouraged Burundian actors to stay the course. Pressure and donor support from the EU and its member states, from Canada and from the US also played a critical role. Third, alongside the regional political mediation and facilitation, Burundi benefited from two military experiments: a South African protection force for returning political leaders, followed by the AU’s first fully-fledged peace operation, AMIB – the African Mission in Burundi. Fourthly, Burundi benefited from energetic, behind-the-scenes and multi-track diplomacy on the part of a large number of international and local NGOs.1

Lastly, from early on, the United Nations provided support and encouragement for a return to peace. Between 1993 and 2004, that support was limited largely to attempts at quiet diplomacy – to mixed effect – through its political office, the United Nations Office in Burundi (UNOB). Then, acting under Security Council Resolution 1545 of 21 May 2004, the United Nations established a multi-dimensional peace operation: ONUB, the United Nations Operation in Burundi.

Burundi’s success is thus the outcome of a sustained process in which domestic, regional and international/multilateral actors were called upon to interact in complex and complementary ways. The United Nations, frequently not in the position of lead actor, was challenged at each stage to identify the most productive mode in which to be of assistance.

This paper presents findings from an independent lessons learned study conducted at the request of ONUB and the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Its intention is to extract lessons from the operation’s experience in building on the earlier engagements of other actors (concerned members states and the African Union) and how, to move the process forward, the UN
The UN will seldom be the sole actor in future, so learning how best to engage alongside others is a critical task.

This paper discusses Burundi’s crisis and peace process; examines ONUB’s political and strategic impact, and draws general lessons for future PKOs.

It was researched as the newly elected Burundian Government was pressuring the UN to wind down ONUB …

… a development leading some to overhasty revisions of ONUB’s legacy.

The study suggests that ONUB performed admirably against a range of transition benchmarks…

… including shepherding a new constitution and six electoral processes …

… and ensuring a measure of security…

… but that it was weaker in mission integration and in strategic analysis …

engaged with domestic and regional actors at the political and strategic level. The underlying hypothesis is that in more and more contexts of peace operations and peacebuilding the UN is unlikely to find itself the sole, or even the lead actor – the system must thus identify what role it can most productively play alongside regional organisations and member states also intensively engaged.

The research for this paper was undertaken at a moment of some interest for Burundi and the region. Conducted in November 2005, a matter of months after the new Burundian Government’s swearing in, it was already becoming clear that the election of the new Burundian government would radically alter the regional balance of political and economic relationships between Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and the DR Congo. At the national level, meanwhile, the research coincided with intense discussions between ONUB and the Government concerning the future shape of UN engagement, with the Government exerting strong pressure for the UN to terminate its peacekeeping presence forthwith and re-orient itself to priority areas like education and health.

This pressure was strongly resisted, and in the event, what first looked like an imminent departure for the mission has instead become a phased drawdown to be completed by December 2006, to be followed by an integrated mission of some kind, just a year-and-a-quarter after the inauguration of the new government.

But the pressure from the new government for ONUB to withdraw so precipitously caused, in UN and other quarters, a rapid and unjustified revision of the prevailing wisdom about ONUB’s success in Burundi. From being seen as a mission that had successfully shepherded the country through the final and difficult stages of its transition, it became seen as one that had made a political miscalculation in its relations with the new government.

This study rejects the latter view and advances instead a nuanced picture of the challenges of multi-dimensional peacekeeping in a rapidly changing political Burundian environment. Against a range of benchmarks ONUB performed admirably: with political adroitness it stewarded sceptical political parties and an understandably weary population through the elaboration and adoption of a new powersharing constitution followed by six separate elections in as many months. It sought for and found a modus operandi with powerful regional actors who, while engaged in support of the peace process, naturally had their own agendas. Given the limitations of its mandate, the forces available to it and the weaknesses of the Burundian armed forces, ONUB delivered a measure of security across the national territory. UN staff conduct and discipline were well handled, avoiding the grave problems that were bedevilling other UN missions at the same moment. Finally, and not inconsiderably, the mission was generally well managed and staff morale good. All this was accomplished – as will be discussed in greater detail below – against the pressure of a transition clock rapidly running out of time.

Against these successes, however, some negatives must also be registered: mission integration was weak; the critical delivery of strategic analysis to top mission managers was underserved; and the pressures of the transition timetable left little time to focus on how the United Nations should position itself for Burundi – and a new Burundian government – in the aftermath of elections. Indications suggest the new CNDD-FDD Government arrived determined to deal decisively with a UN mission it perceived as its principal rival. But there may have been more that ONUB could have done, and earlier,
to ease its relationship with the likely new government. This report tries to draw lessons for future missions trying to steer the tricky passage between support to a transitional government on the one hand, and, on the other hand, political forces which, like the CNDD-FDD, remain defiantly outside that government until they then replace it.

The paper begins with a discussion of the dynamics of Burundi’s crisis and its peace process. It continues with a discussion of ONUB’s impact at the political and strategic level, examined through: ONUB’s mandate; the role ONUB played with regard to Burundian political parties and armed groups in the closing stages of the transition; and its performance in electoral organisation, the security sector, conduct of UN staff and troops, the mission’s internal capacity for strategic analysis, and in mission integration. It concludes with some brief lessons for future peace operations.

This study draws on interviews with key players within the United Nations system, other international and regional actors, Burundian political circles, and analysts within civil society and the media. While it was prepared at the request of the United Nations, its opinions, analysis, conclusions and/or errors remain the author’s.2

**LONG ENGAGEMENT: REGIONAL PEACE-MAKING AND ONUB’S DEPLOYMENT**

Burundi’s peace comes after 12 years of war. The complex story narrated in this section underlines the vital role in peacemaking played by regional actors throughout that period and thus describes a complex political landscape into which ONUB would be deployed towards the end of a ‘very long engagement’. Since the discussion is lengthy, the busy reader may rely on the summary notes in the left-hand margin.

**The Origins of the Crisis**

The detonator for Burundi’s crisis was the 1993 assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye. Ndadaye had been leader of FRODEBU (Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi – the main non-armed party associated with the Hutu ethnic group) and Burundi’s first democratically elected President. But the wave of inter-ethnic massacres following his assassination built on ground already poisoned by decades of colonial divide-and-rule.

A new President strove to shore up the Government…

… and SG Boutros-Ghali established a small UN political office to assist …

… but the new President died in a 1994 plane crash …

… Government dissidents, displeased by concessions to the (mainly Tutsi) army, formed the CNDD …

Detonated by the 1993 assassination of Burundi’s first democratically elected FRODEBU (Hutu) President …

… the crisis built on colonial and post-colonial ethnic divide-and-rule.

Though requested by DPKO, this is an independent report and responsibility for its faults remains the author’s.
energetic and visible diplomacy during this period may well have averted a similar genocide in Burundi.

A third FRODEBU President, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, tried to maintain control. But in trying to accommodate the demands of the FAB he displeased radicals in his own party, who in 1994 split to form the rebel CNDD (Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie) led by Léonard Nyangoma, with its armed wing the FDD ( Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie) operating from the eastern DR Congo. Ntibantunganya was ousted in a 1996 military coup by former President Pierre Buyoya of the mainly Tutsi UPRONA (Union Nationale pour le Progrès) party.

Prior to the coup, in November 1995, the Presidents of Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zaire had announced the formation of a “Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi” (the “Regional Initiative” for short). The motive force behind this initiative was former President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, who persuaded Uganda to take on the chairing, leaving Nyerere free to assume the role of Envoy of the Region to Burundi.

Early successes were overturned by Buyoya’s 1996 coup; in response, at a Regional Summit in Arusha on 31 July 1996, the Regional Initiative adopted punitive sanctions against Burundi and Buyoya’s leadership.

The Road to Arusha

Buyoya responded to this pressure by lifting the ban on political parties and convening direct negotiations with the CNDD in September 1996. These had faltered by May 1997. However, his approaches to FRODEBU fared better and by May 1998 what remained of FRODEBU within the country (many of its members were in exile) re-entered the Government (forming with Buyoya what came to be known as the Partenariat Intérieur). Sensing the potential for progress, Secretary-General Kofi Annan first appointed Felix Mosha (from October 1997) and then Ayite Jean-Claude Kpakpo (from July 1998) as Senior United Nations Adviser to the Facilitator of the Burundi Peace process.

By June 1998, Nyerere considered circumstances propitious once more for negotiations and convened ‘Arusha II’, the first in a sequence of talks that was to lead to the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. Designed to be all-inclusive, the talks were attended by UPRONA, FRODEBU, and a variety of smaller parties who would collectively become known as the “Arusha parties” (there were 18 in total, underlining how challenging were the negotiations). However, the talks triggered splits in both the CNDD and PALIPEHUTU (Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu, which, together with its military wing the Forces Nationales de Libération or FNL constituted the longest standing and most radical of the Hutu-associated movements). Nyerere elected to proceed in the absence of PALIPEHUTU-FNL and CNDD-FDD (as the main factions resulting from the split would become known) and sought a political agreement between the “Arusha parties”, trusting that a broader ceasefire agreement with the rebel groups would follow after.

Nyerere died suddenly in 1999. Though he had long been ill with leukaemia, this was not publicly known and even his closest collaborators were caught ill prepared. Former South African President Mandela Nelson Mandela was persuaded to take his place as Regional Facilitator. Bringing heavy international and regional pressure to bear, Mandela succeeded on August 28 2000 in persuading 13 of the Arusha parties (including UPRONA and FRODEBU, but excluding 6 Tutsi parties, who only ‘signed with reservations’) to sign the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. This envisaged a
transitional power-sharing period, with the Presidency alternating from UPRONA (Buyoya) to FRODEBU (who chose Domitien Ndayizeye), to be followed by fresh elections no later than October 31, 2004. A 29-member Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) was established to monitor progress in executing the steps envisaged by the peace process. Its membership included 18 “Arusha parties” (but, crucially, not those armed groups that had split away in 1998), civil society (including the Bashingantabo, Burundi’s traditional ‘notables’), the region, the OAU/AU, the donors and the international community. The IMC was to be chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Burundi, Berhanu Dinka (appointed to head UNOB in June 2002). Unfortunately, Dinka’s arrival in Burundi was delayed by a year and the IMC’s early effectiveness suffered, becoming in this period mostly a vehicle for those politicians and parties left outside the deal making at Arusha.

Mandela was also able to gain approval for a South African Protection Support Deployment (SAPSD) of two battalions deployed to ensure the physical security of politicians returning from exile to join the Transitional Government of Burundi (TGoB).

Mandela, through his appointed representative Jacob Zuma, continued efforts further to broaden the peace process to include those armed groups still absent. By late 2002, the main CNDD-FDD wing (led by Pierre Nkurunziza), a minority CNDD-FDD group (led by Jean-Bosco Ndikuekuriye) and one faction of the FNL (then led by Kossa Kabura, shortly replaced by Alain Mugabarabona) had all signed ceasefire agreements with the TGoB.

2003 – A Watershed Year
But continuing violence marred the implementation of these ceasefires. Moreover, a major FNL faction, led by Agathon Rwasa, remained outside the fold, maintaining its rebellion against the TGoB and asserting that nothing less than direct talks with what it considered the real powers in Burundi – the army and the Tutsi community – could lead to peace.

As 2003 unfolded, contradictory indicators of peace and war alternated. On January 27, 2003, Nkurunziza’s CNDD-FDD (and 3 other rebel groups) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the TGoB, stipulating, *inter alia*, their support for the creation of the Joint Ceasefire Commission (JCC) that had been envisaged in the Arusha Accord. The JCC would subsequently play a key role in the peace process. But in February, continuing confrontations between the CNDD-FDD and the FAB led to the breaking off of talks. Then, in April 2003, under the terms agreed at Arusha, the Presidency of Burundi’s Transitional Government passed peacefully from President Buyoya to President Ndayizeye of FRODEBU.

The Arusha Agreement had envisaged a request to the UN for an international peacekeeping force (under Article 8 of Protocol V). The December 2002 Ceasefire Agreement concluded with the CNDD-FDD and others, however, specified “verification and control of the ceasefire agreement … by an African Mission” (Article III) – perhaps an early indicator of the CNDD-FDD’s antipathy towards the United Nations which would later become so apparent. The Security Council’s ambivalence towards the prospect of a UN peace operation versus the enthusiasm of a newly invigorated African Union, pressured by the key regional actors on Burundi, meant that the African option won out. The African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was deployed in April 2003 with a mandate to oversee the implementation of ceasefire agreements,
Under AMIB, DDR began support demobilisation, disarmament and re-integration (DDR), prepare the ground for a fuller UN peacekeeping operation and promote political and economic stability.

AMIB was a pioneering mission for the new AU, signalling a willingness to put African lives on the line in the cause of peace in a country with no immediate strategic interest for its Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) – Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa, who contributed peace-keeping contingents, and Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Togo and Tunisia, who contributed military observers.9 The mission made valuable gains: it began work on DDR, reached agreement with the TGoB on a first pre-assembly and disarmament area (at Muyange), increased security in much of the country (though throughout 2003 the CNDD-FDD remained active across the country, notwithstanding its ceasefire, and Bujumbura Rural remained an FNL stronghold) and facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and others. Through the efforts of UNOB, the JCC also began to take shape at this time: the Secretary-General appointed Brigadier-General El Hadji Alioune Samba as Chair and two relatively important factions – the FNL (Mugabarabona) and FDD (Ndayikengurukiye) – began to participate along with those already participating.

However AMIB’s overall success was undercut by the continuing violence and the unwillingness of the international community to defray the mission’s costs.10 By July 2003, UN Secretariat staff, SRSG Dinka and South Africa were discussing with the AU the possibility of providing technical assistance to the AU and helping organise a donor conference to mobilize needed resources. But on July 7, FNL (Rwasa) launched a major offensive around and into Bujumbura. Hostilities between FDD (Nkurunziza) and the FAB also continued throughout the country, demonstrating a continuing capacity to threaten the TGoB and the peace process. In this turbulent context, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) expressed strong reservations within the UN Secretariat in New York about the wisdom of mounting a UN peacekeeping operation (or PKO) before certain conditions were met (meaningful security on the ground) or of trying to catalyze further resources in support of AMIB (which might provide a sense of false security to AMIB when member states were informally signalling that no more money would likely be forthcoming), suggesting that either course might prove dangerous. By September 2003, AMIB’s financial position was difficult, international support minimal.

Energetic regional diplomacy was successful in reversing the slide. Vice-President Jacob Zuma of South Africa and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda jointly held high-level meetings in Burundi and the region in July, emphasizing that the transitional clock, started in Arusha, was ticking down. On July 20, a mini-summit of the Regional Initiative in Dar es Salaam resulted in both the TGoB and CNDD-FDD (Nkurunziza) recommitting themselves to the December 2002 Ceasefire Agreement and the January 27 2003 MOU and agreeing to negotiate a Forces Technical Agreement (FTA) for endorsement by the JCC. The CNDD-FDD also confirmed that it would begin to participate in the JCC. After further consultations with President Museveni (as Chairman of the Regional Initiative), Vice-President Zuma indicated that he would seek to convene a meeting between President Ndayizeye and Pierre Nkurunziza in Pretoria to discuss the issues of power sharing and the FTA prior to a further regional summit.

That summit took place on September 15 and resulted in the second face-to-face talks between Ndayizeye and Nkurunziza. However, it quickly ended without agreement. Addressing the UN Security Council the following week, Ndayizeye spoke of forward
momentum in the peace process, but fighting that same week between FDD and FNL near Bujumbura forced an estimated 47,500 to flee their homes.

The final breakthrough came in two stages. First, on 8 October, Nkurunziza’s CNDD-FDD and the TGoB signed an agreement on implementation of the December 2002 ceasefire. Then on 16 November 1993 the two signed a Global Ceasefire Agreement in Dar es Salaam.

The October signing galvanized senior UN officials to revisit the question of mounting a UN PKO. Having urged caution just four months before, DPKO held internal discussions to consider whether the continued absence of the FNL from the peace process was enough of a reason to continue urging delay, should their views be sought by Security Council members. By November, the forward momentum generated by the second signing, together with the continuing financial difficulties AMIB was facing, made a strong case for an operation. UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Kieran Prendergast visited Burundi in November and took soundings with the TGoB, other parties and regional representatives. On 4 December 2003, Vice-President Zuma addressed the Security Council and, citing ‘tremendous progress over the last year’, suggested conditions were now conducive for the UN to “re-hat” the AU mission. A working-level mission from DPA and DPKO to Burundi followed. This mission consistently heard from Burundian stakeholders that the peace process was now on an irreversible course and that a UN peacekeeping operation would be welcomed.

Following discussions between the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council, on 22 December in Presidential Statement S/PRST/2003/30), the Security Council requested the Secretary General to undertake ‘appropriate preparatory work’ towards an operation. However, the Council agenda in early 2004 was also heavily laden with discussions of two other crises on the African continent – Côte d’Ivoire and Sudan. The scheduling of discussions concerning Burundi also became embroiled in the larger Council politics of impaired relations between the US and France over Iraq (with Burundi seen as France’s issue). Council deliberations therefore could only turn to Burundi by March 2004, the pretext being that the delay would permit the resolve of the Burundian parties to be further tested and informal preparations for an operation to be begun. Indeed, during this interregnum, the first face-to-face talks between President Ndayizeye and FNL (Rwasa) representatives took place in the Netherlands (in mid-January 2004), briefly raising optimism that the last remaining group outside the peace process might also now join.

Preparations for ONUB
In Dec 2003 discussions began towards the identification of a successor for Berhanu Dinka as SRSG and in January 2004 two missions visited Burundi: the first a joint AU/EU/UN mission to work with counterparts from AMIB TCCs to review financial and logistical arrangements to sustain AMIB until the UN could take over; the second a UN multi-dimensional reconnaissance mission to make recommendations on a possible UN PKO, including the re-hatting of AMIB.

Behroz Sadry, DSRSG of MONUC, led the latter mission. Its recommendations formed the substance of the Secretary-General’s March 2004 Report to the Security Council on Burundi and contributed to the shaping of the new operation’s eventual mandate. It recommended that a new operation immediately focus on helping establish the conditions conducive to bringing a peaceful end to the transition period, particularly the holding of the elections envisaged under the Arusha Agreement. This would be
done by assisting the TGOb in providing internal security, including for refugees along their routes of return; monitoring the various ceasefires (included, it was hoped, one that might eventuate with the FNL); protecting the civilian population; supporting the implementation of DDR; assisting in the integration of the army and creating a national police service; and providing direct assistance to the electoral process. Critical to this were the power-sharing negotiations required as the basis for the constitution, being facilitated by South African Deputy President Zuma.

Informal Security Council consultations on 22 March 2004 broadly supported the proposal to establish a PKO in Burundi as envisaged in the Secretary-General’s report. It should be noted that at this moment there were less than 8 months of Burundi’s transition process left to run.

Beginning in March, key appointments for the emerging operation began to be discussed. Carolyn McAskie was chosen as the new SRSG. At the time of her appointment, she was UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (in OCHA). But previously, within a long career in the Canadian Government, McAskie had assisted in the Burundi peace process, organizing the Canada-led donor conferences in support of the Arusha Process and serving as a member of President Nyerere’s Facilitation Team in Arusha (as one of the 8 internationals appointed to chair/vice chair the four negotiation commissions). More recently, her position in OCHA had meant McAskie had also been directly involved in supporting the situation on the ground and in discussions on Burundi in New York as the operation was taking shape. She began, therefore, with a considerable knowledge of the crisis and was also known to many of the principal Burundian actors.

A second key appointment concerned the Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (PDSRSG). Chosen to fill this role was Nureldin Satti who, since 2002 had been DSRSG to Dinka at the helm of the UN’s political office in Burundi, UNOB. A potential line of continuity was thus established with previous UN engagement in Burundi under DPA when line responsibility for the Burundi dossier within the UN Secretariat would pass from DPA to DPKO.12 Ibrahima D Fall, of UNICEF, was subsequently appointed the UN Resident Co-ordinator in Burundi and rounded out the team as the second DSRSG.

Heavily pressured by the Burundian army, on April 22 the FNL hinted at a possible cessation of hostilities and hopes again rose of negotiations. However, subsequent clashes left numbers of fighters dead and scuppered the brief optimism.

In late May, the operation was ready to unfold on the ground. An Advance Team led by Fabrizio Hochschild (then with UNHCR in Geneva, but formerly with UNTAET and with OCHA) was deployed to Burundi to begin preparing the terrain. Its first focus was on re-hatting the AMIB troops as “blue helmet” peacekeepers under a UN command and on absorbing UNOB staff and structures into a new UN PKO, to be named the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB, its French-language acronym). From within the Secretariat in New York, SRSG McAskie was able to keep the pressure on to fill key posts so that rollout was accomplished more quickly than has been usual.

Finally, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (a point with relevance for later discussion), on 21 May 2004 the Security Council adopted Resolution 1545, establishing ONUB. ONUB came into being on 1 June 2004 and the new SRSG

But by now, only 8 months of the transition period agreed at Arusha remained.

Key appointments were now made, including Carolyn McAskie as SRSG, who had had a long involvement in the Burundi peace process ...

... and Nureldin Satti as PDSRSG, who provided continuity with UNOB.

In April 2004, the FNL briefly offered a ceasefire, but new fighting scuppered it.

In May, an Advanced Team began “re-hatting” AMIB ...

... further senior mission posts were rapidly filled ...

... the Security Council approved a Chapter VII mandate for ONUB ...

... and in June, the SRSG arrived to begin her mission.
arrived in Bujumbura on 25 June 2004. The operation would soon grow to more than 5,500 military and civilian staff (including more than 1,000 civilians).

Lessons Learned Concerning the Run-Up to ONUB’s Deployment
A number of points emerge from this history with bearing on ONUB’s subsequent experience.

First, the long stop/start path of Burundi’s peace process – new agreements alternating with resumptions of violence and splits within factions and parties – made determining the propitious moment for deployment of a UN PKO challenging. If conventional wisdom suggests the UN should only try to keep the peace “where there is a peace to keep”, this criterion is never as clear in practice as it might seem in theory. One view of ONUB’s history – heard frequently within the Secretariat and the mission – is that the UN successfully resisted significant pressure to deploy a PKO until the peace process was all but irreversible (“ripe”) and the UN’s contribution could thus be effective.

The counter-argument, however, is that by waiting, ONUB arrived at almost literally “the last moment”. The timetable to complete the Transition, established by the Arusha Agreement, was a strict one and any deviation risked creating the impression of a crisis in the peace process. When ONUB finally deployed less than five months remained until the official end of the Transition on October 31st 2004. In the time remaining, a new constitution was to be established, no fewer than six electoral processes had to take place and DDR was to be accomplished. From arrival, therefore, ONUB’s urgent priority had to be managing domestic and regional perceptions concerning the inevitable extension of the transition period, placing ONUB under considerable time pressure of its own and risking that it would be seen as favouring those Burundian actors who wished for their own interests to extend the Transition.

Lessons Learned: while “having a peace to keep” is an important principle for peacekeeping, this needs to be balanced against the pressures introduced by intervention late in a peace process.

Second, the division of labour in the peace process (to the UN the relationship with the Arusha parties, to South Africa and Tanzania the relationship with the armed groups) reinforced the illusion of UN partisanship towards the Transition Government …
while ONUB was required to continue a close working relationship with the Transitional Government, it also became necessary to send signals and take actions towards the CNDD-FDD showing that it did not have an interest in who would take power.

ONUB’s leadership took a number of important steps in this regard. Frequent meetings were held with the CNDD-FDD leader, Pierre Nkurunziza, during which the message was repeated that whatever the outcome of the elections, the UN was aware that he would remain a key player and that it was important to find an effective way to work together. He was also regularly briefed on the measures ONUB was taking to keep pressure on the Transition partners to hold them to the established timetable.

But though there appeared to be a growing cordiality between Nkurunziza and ONUB’s leadership in this early period, some mistrust seems to have remained on the CNDD-FDD side. This may be accounted for by a number of factors, including: the continued, necessarily close working relationship between ONUB’s leadership and the TGoB leadership (particularly President Ndayizeye); events around the extension of the transition period and delays in the adoption of the new constitution, which the CNDD-FDD mistakenly interpreted as an attempt by ONUB to bolster the position of Ndadaye; some slowness within ONUB’s analytical sections (compared with other concerned actors) in picking up on the likely electoral strength of the CNDD-FDD, thus delaying crucial advice to senior management on recalibrating the UN’s relations with the various contenders; the difficulty of building a stable relationship with the CNDD-FDD, given the multiple splits and intrigues that had proliferated within it since 1998; and some inadvertent signals interpreted as disrespect towards the CNDD-FDD (such as in the timing of the announcement of the Burundi Partners Forum). Each of these factors will be discussed in more detail below.

Moreover, after the election the CNDD-FDD leadership seems to have been anxious to assert its sovereignty and reluctant to have a large and powerful UN mission rivalling it in governing the state and reminding them of their ongoing obligations to UPRONA and FRODEBU within the political powersharing arrangements. Cumulatively, all these factors came together in a demand almost immediately after the inauguration for the UN to draw ONUB down in favour of UN agency activities favouring relief and development.

This history points to the contradiction inherent in requiring PKOs to work closely in support of transitional administrations but also to preserve an image of political neutrality that is not just above reproach but, moreover, beyond the possibility of wilful political misinterpretation by other parties.

Lesson Learned: PKOs necessarily must work closely and visibly with transitional administrations; but they must take care that this necessary proximity does not damage their ability to work with successor administrations. A possible further recommendation – suggested by ONUB leaders themselves, drawing from this experience – is that when a transition comes to an end, it may be prudent to consider replacing the entire echelon of top UN mission management in order to promote the confidence of the post-transition government that it is dealing with an entirely new dispensation.

These caveats registered, the urgency of the transition timetable prompted an operation rollout very much in the spirit of the Brahimi Report’s call for “rapid and effective deployment”14 once the decision to deploy had been taken. By September the majority of key staff were already in place, proving that with the right combination of will and preparedness quick deployment is perfectly feasible. Key to this performance was
having an individual of at least Assistant Secretary-General rank within Headquarters – in this instance, soon-to-be SRSG McAskie – who could continuously push on recruitment and deployment matters.

**Lesson Learned:** since in the majority of cases SRSGs are brought in from outside the UN system, priority should be given to building up a cadre of potential DSRSGs within its structures who can be deployed to new missions at short notice and who already have the networks and knowledge to be able to “work the system” to guarantee rapid filling of posts and deployment of resources.

ONUB’s designers proved astute in finding ways to build existing relationships into the organisational structure. As touched upon above, integrating Ambassador Nureldin Satti into ONUB as the PDSRSG was important in ensuring continuity with the UN’s earlier political office in Burundi, UNOB. This appointment also helped to bridge between DPA’s (earlier) and DPKO’s (subsequent) work in Burundi – a key internal UN relationship that is all too frequently dogged by disruption – and he and the staff around him formed an important part of the organic process through which political analysis was made available to ONUB’s new SRSG.

In a similar vein, the choice of Welile Nhlapo to head ONUB’s Political Section provided the potential to build a two-way channel between the UN and the South African Facilitation directly into ONUB’s core (as did the continuation of South Africa’s AMIB Force Commander Major-General Derrick Mgwebi as ONUB’s Force Commander). Ambassador Nhlapo had been engaged on Burundi on South Africa’s behalf since the mid-1990s, closely shadowing the Arusha process. His secondment from the South African diplomatic corps was arranged at a high level between his Government and the United Nations.

**Lesson Learned:** these appointments suggest a useful example for other contexts in which the UN is only one of a number of actors engaged in making and keeping a peace: consciously and opportunistically building channels to other players into the organisational structure.

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**IMPACT AT THE POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC LEVEL**

**ONUB’s Mandate**

Under UN Security Council Resolution 1545, ONUB was mandated, *inter alia*, to

- **Ceasefire Monitoring and Implementation:** Monitor and ensure the implementation of the various ceasefire agreements
- **DDR:** Carry out the national DDR programme, collect and secure materiel, and provide security at disarmament sites
- **Human Rights:** Ensure the promotion and protection of human rights, with particular attention to women, children and vulnerable persons, and investigate human rights violations
- **Security Sector and Other Institutional Reforms:** Assist the Government in carrying out institutional reforms as well as constituting the new integrated national defence and internal security forces, police and judiciary
- **Arms Flow Monitoring:** Monitor the illegal flows of weapons across the national borders (in co-operation with the UN’s mission in the DR Congo, MONUC)
- **Elections:** Contribute to the successful completion of the electoral process through advice and assistance

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**… and key mission appointments ensured continuity from UNOB to ONUB.**

**Lesson Learned:** a cadre of potential DSRSGs should be developed within the UN system to speed mission deployment.

**Key mission appointments also provided a potential channel between the UN and key regional actors.**

**Lesson Learned:** building channels to other actors directly and opportunistically into UN missions merits repetition elsewhere.

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**ONUB’s mandate was multi-dimensional …**

**… but primarily concerned creating a political, security and human rights climate in which elections could be held.**

**In principle, ONUB’s mandate had two virtues: force and clarity.**
- **Humanitarian Access**: Create the security conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance
- **Civilian Protection**: And without prejudice to the responsibility of the transitional Government of Burundi, to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence

It is beyond the scope or intent of this study to evaluate ONUB’s performance across this range of activities. But some observations are appropriate concerning how these related to the political and strategic level by enlarging the political space in which the final steps of the peace process could be pursued. The mandate had, *a priori*, two virtues: force and clarity.

**The Mandate’s Force**

Concerning, first, its force, by 2004 there had been a considerable evolution in the Security Council’s assertiveness with regard to mission mandates. From the beginning, ONUB would enjoy a Chapter VII mandate, permitting, in principle, the use of deadly force to protect Burundians in imminent danger. In practice, however, Blue Helmet forces in Burundi interpreted the Chapter VII dimension as mainly a psychological rather than an actual deterrent – and with mixed effect. Both the UN’s own reporting and that of independent actors (such as the widely respected Burundian monitoring organisation Ligue Iteka15) confirm that 2004 saw a considerable improvement in the human rights situation across the country. But this may have had as much to do with the fact that by the end of 2003, the CNDD-FDD and FAB had finally enacted a meaningful ceasefire, dramatically decreasing the overall level of violence, as it had to do with UN peacekeeping *per se*. Reports suggest that the human rights situation worsened again in 2005.16 Indeed, significant violence continued at times under ONUB’s watch – most notoriously the Gatumba massacre of August 2004 (see below) – and the FNL, in particular, continued to act with apparent impunity, questioning how much “a dissuasive mission” (as many of those involved described it) was really dissuasive. From the perspective of the Burundian population the gap between what 5,000 highly visible peacekeepers (with an apparently strong Chapter VII mandate) seemed to promise and continued insecurity has been a source of some criticism.

A number of factors may have influenced the operation’s performance in the security area. First, the mandate carefully states that “without prejudice to the responsibility of the transitional Government of Burundi,” ONUB should take steps “to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence”. The mandate recognizes, therefore, that Blue Helmets would have to operate alongside Burundian armed forces controlled by a sovereign government (the TGoB) who retained the primary responsibility to protect the civilian population. Such joint operations would have involved a degree of reporting to, and information sharing with the FDN that would have likely proven unacceptable to UNHQ. ONUB Forces’ role was thus necessarily somewhat circumscribed, particularly in instances where the FDN itself was the perpetrator of attacks against civilians. Indeed, the relationship between Burundi’s army and ONUB forces remained difficult throughout the period of the mission (one indicator being the number of months it took finally to reach agreement on the Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA). But had ONUB attempted to implement the security dimensions of its mandate on its own it might have ended up in open confrontation with the army in areas such as Bujumbura Rural.

... and that anticipating the need to protect those in “imminent danger” would have required an intelligence capacity that ONUB did not possess.

Second, as already noted, the blue helmet force re-hatted and supplemented a contingent that had already been present in Burundi for some years at smaller troop
levels under the AMIB banner. Whether the 5,500 troop level of ONUB was sufficient for a more assertive civilian protection role – a debatable point – the previous AMIB contingents, both smaller and designed for different roles, were not, and they had set the pattern for a less assertive foreign troop presence.\textsuperscript{17} By the time the mandate demanded and troop levels permitted a more assertive stance – including ONUB deployment to the regions – precedents for how those deployments would then operate had already been set.

Third, to intervene on behalf of civilians in ‘imminent danger’ would require effective and immediate intelligence concerning where attacks were likely to take place. But from the beginning, ONUB’s intelligence capacity remained under-developed. At the time that the present study took place (i.e. nearly a year-and-a-half after the ONUB’s launch), the civilian positions in the Joint Mission Analysis Cell envisaged in the operation’s design remained unfilled and, despite good will on both sides, information sharing between civilian and military observers was not as effective as desirable. Indeed, to live up to the promise of such an apparently forceful mandate probably would have demanded a dedicated military intelligence capacity within the structure of ONUB.

That the JMAC remained underdeveloped may be representative of some ambivalence at UN HQ level about the idea of such cells in all missions. Provision was made in the original mission planning for ONUB to have a JMAC, but unbeknownst to the Office of Operations in DPKO, the budget office had cut it out of the mission budget before turning to the ACABQ committee in Sept 04 for its approval, apparently in the mistaken belief that ACABQ would turn it down. Provision for a JMAC was not then reinstated for months after that.

Overall, ONUB interpreted its security mandate correctly (in legal terms) and prudently (in operational ones). With only 5,500 troops, even with a very much more muscular stance on the ground, it seems unlikely that ONUB could have guaranteed security for the population across the country. And even with only 5,500 troops, ONUB at least represented a more credible protection force for the population than did the FDN with its 30,000 troops. Recognizing this, however, does not take away from the negative impact there has been on Burundian views of ONUB. As one UN staffer interviewed put it, “this is a small country and our combined military and civilian presence is very visible across the country: a white blanket, in effect. If we don’t appear to be delivering improved security then Burundians naturally will ask how we are spending our money and our time”. Certainly the inability to guarantee anticipated security for ordinary Burundians has added to the ease with which the new Government could make the argument for the rapid phase-down of the Blue Helmet presence.

\textit{Lessons Learned}: UN PKOs should be wary of the expectations built by strong mandates. Unless there is the political will and the military capacity to give such mandates full effect, their “dissuasive” impact may be limited and they may end up undermining the operation’s political credibility. Conversely, peacekeeping operations determined to make use of strong mandates need consciously to establish the precedent for using them from the outset.

\textbf{The Mandate’s Clarity}

The mandate delineated clear areas in which the UN should provide technical assistance to the TGoB, meeting the Brahimi Report’s call for “clear, credible and achievable mandates”.\textsuperscript{18} These included DDR and security sector reform, human rights and electoral preparations. In principle these played to core UN competences and provided benchmarks against which the forward progress of the peace process could be assessed.
ONUB’s mandate’s played to core UN competences and set clear benchmarks for operational success.

Notably, the mandate did not explicitly mention an overt political role for the UN. This role remained with South Africa, who had brokered the ceasefire agreements well before there was an SRSG or a mission in place. South Africa continue to play a key political role through the end of the transition, including negotiating the Pretoria Agreement that broke the logjam in the formulation of the new constitution.

Of course, all of the more technical arenas that the mandate did mark out as ONUB’s province were replete with political implications. Moreover, the UN had the task of monitoring the implementation of the various ceasefire agreements, particularly through the SRSG’s ongoing chairing of the IMC, a body that continued to play a key political role with respect to the Arusha Agreement signatories up to the end of the transition period. But beyond this, there was no clear role laid out for the UN as a mediator in the broader peace process, which would have to engage the various armed groups not included at Arusha.

The division of labour between the UN and the Regional Initiative and (South African) Facilitation thus had the virtue of clarity. At a July 30 2004 press conference, in response to a question about whether the UN risked “duplicating” the proper role of the mediator, PDSRSG Satti replied that “the mandate of ONUB is such that the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General is authorized to intervene in the name of the Security Council in the process of these negotiations. In her capacity as President of the Implementation Monitoring Committee of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accord, Ms. McAskie has plenty of power to act.”

The negotiations to which PDSRSG Satti referred were among various Burundian political parties still in disagreement about aspects of Arusha’s implementation. However, at an early moment, ONUB also became involved in direct and publicised talks with the FNL, the only major rebel force still not signatory to a ceasefire agreement. As will be discussed next, these talks caused some tensions with the regional actors.

ONUB’s Contacts with the FNL

While militarily small – estimated at just three thousand combatants – the FNL retained considerable capacity as a spoiler. Moreover, its goals remained hard to read: was it interested in an accommodation with the Government or should its often bellicose and extremist (anti-Tutsi) rhetoric be taken seriously?

Despite the FNL’s formal absence from the negotiating table, there had naturally been multiple attempts at engagement. The Tanzanian Government kept an open channel, as had Western governments (such as the Dutch, who brokered Ndayizeye’s meeting with FNL leaders in January 2004). At a quiet level, UNOB’s leadership had maintained discreet contacts too (including by Jean Arnault, during his period as SRSG in 2001).

Before SRSG McAskie’s June 2004 deployment from New York, strong signals were being sent from DPKO to ONUB that it should work actively towards a ceasefire between the TGoB/FAB and the FNL. In particular, it was suggested that the political and military elements of a ceasefire be de-linked from each other and that a ceasefire be pursued on security/humanitarian grounds, leaving the political aspects for future elaboration. It is unclear to what extent this idea for a new approach to the FNL had been discussed or coordinated with the Regional Initiative or the Facilitation.
In her first official press conference (5 July 2004) following her arrival in Bujumbura on 25 June 2004, SRSG McAskie confirmed that contacts between her and the FNL leadership had begun, that she had insisted upon the necessity of an FNL ceasefire and had accepted that first discussions between ONUB and the FNL could take place ‘at the highest possible level of the FNL’.

Such discussions took place in Nairobi in July and August 2004, involving both SRSG McAskie and PDSRSG Satti from the UN, and a senior FNL team. By mid August, after continued assurances from the FNL side that they wished to down arms, there was optimism of a breakthrough and work had begun on a draft ceasefire agreement. At a press conference on July 30, 2004, PDSRSG Satti reported that ONUB was now investigating how to plan an on the ground meeting between the two belligerents to follow a cessation of hostilities.

There may have been several factors at play in the FNL’s apparent opening of a channel to ONUB. One was their desire to tell their story to the highest possible international authority (FNL leaders frequently and mistakenly referred to SRSG McAskie as the Special Representative of the “Security Council”). Secondly, having cast themselves as the “protectors of the Hutu people”, the FNL negotiators seemed keen to explore if ONUB presence could in effect take on that role itself, providing an increasingly marginalized (though still deadly) rebellion a face saving way to go out of business.

However, the optimism generated by the new initiative was soon destroyed in a particularly vicious fashion. On the night of August 13th, 2004, an armed band massacred more than 150 Banyamulenge (Congolese Tutsi) refugees at the Gatumba camp. Officials of the FNL claimed responsibility for the attack shortly afterwards.

Not only did this outrage destroy the UN’s initiative towards the FNL; it raised questions about information gathering and exchange within ONUB, as well as between ONUB, the FAB and MONUC. The attack bore the hallmarks of long planning and its timing was almost certainly deliberately chosen to coincide with the visit of DRC Vice President Ruberwa (a Banyamulenge) to the camp on the same day. Yet ONUB only became aware of the incident in a phone call from the MONUC SRSG William Swing to SRSG McAskie the following morning, some 10 hours after the attack (it was, of course, Burundi’s army that was directly responsible for security at the camp, with the TGoB having consistently refused ONUB permission to patrol after curfew hours).

The Gatumba massacre also damaged ONUB’s political credibility at a very early moment and permitted a degree of Schadenfreude from regional actors. Senior ONUB leadership concur with a view held by senior actors within Burundi and the region that ONUB was effectively “set up” by the FNL to be damaged by Gatumba. There was some irritation among regional actors that ONUB, so recently arrived in Burundi, imagined an ability to deliver so immediately a breakthrough in negotiations with the FNL that had eluded others for several years. ONUB’s experience in July/August 2004 in fact closely paralleled that of the Regional Initiative and the Facilitation in earlier years – an enticing promise from the FNL, followed by betrayal. While any new approach from the FNL definitely merited exploration, regional diplomats confessed themselves frustrated by what they saw as a lack of consultation by ONUB before proceeding with the initiative and by the prospect of “parallel processes”.

In February 2005, a new FNL statement of readiness to negotiate with the TGoB divided opinions, with Tanzania avid to press ahead with new talks, Uganda and South
Africa deeply sceptical, and the TGoB itself divided on the issue – with President Ndayizeye seemingly anxious to have a success on his hands, but with the army equally unwilling, perhaps for the same reasons as discussed before. The FNL indicated once more that they would like the UN to play a mediating role and ONUB explored with New York supporting a new initiative, seeing in this an opportunity to fulfil a mediating role but this time in consort with the Regional Initiative. New York, however, advised against, citing scepticism about the genuineness of the initiative given past experience, the dangers of further dividing the region and the TGoB against themselves (which may, indeed, have been part of the FNL game plan), and the risks inherent in providing funding to the FNL to attend talks which might then be diverted to the purchase of weapons and ammunitions. Instead, it was recommended to continue providing support to Tanzania, who had been mandated by the Region to mediate with the FNL. Indeed, as this report was being finalised (in June 2006), the first direct talks between the FNL and the CNDD-FDD government have begun in Tanzania, with ONUB involvement and appear to be leading to an “Accord on Principle”.

ONUB’s experience with the FNL in 2004 points to some useful lessons, which can be learned by the UN for peace operations elsewhere where it finds itself far from the only actor working at the political level. Though the underlying contexts of a Côte d’Ivoire or a Darfur differ dramatically from Burundi’s, in both the UN is challenged to adopt the most constructive role it can in complement to the work of other actors more formally in the lead (President Mbeki’s mediation on Côte d’Ivoire together with the role of ECOWAS; the African Union’s lead on Darfur in both troops and mediation).

_Lessons Learned:_ the UN system needs to become more adept at the provision of behind-the-scenes technical assistance and political advice to mediation by other actors – this must be a key task for the new Mediation Support Unit in DPA. Also, when a UN presence rapidly multiplies – from a small and discreet political office to a large and visible peace operation – it should take care to avoid destabilizing effective and broadly accepted divisions of labour amongst other actors that have arisen over the course of a long peace process.

**Managing Perceptions of Extending the Transition**

As the first FNL talks were unfolding, ONUB was also obliged to work energetically on an extension to the transition timetable. At first, ONUB’s instinct had been to press actors to stick to the timetable as originally envisaged. But with the transition formally to end on October 31 2004, it soon became clear that there was little chance of accomplishing all the necessary tasks in that time. According to the letter of Arusha, a new constitution should have been drafted, passed by Parliament and then put to a referendum. But extending the transition timetable risked precipitating a crisis in the peace process; that it did not do so ranks as an early and impressive political achievement for the Operation. The approach was to identify what benchmarks could be achieved in the time remaining that would signal sufficient forward momentum to allay Burundian, regional and international nervousness and to ensure that any extension of the Transitional Period result from a consensus among the political partners.

A major controversy delaying progress concerned ethnic representation in a future parliament. There was general consensus that the new constitution should guarantee representation for both ethnic groups by setting out the share of posts they would have in parliament and government and the army, with 60% of assembly seats to go to Hutu representatives and 40% to Tutsi. However, there was disagreement about whether… 

... by quickly assessing what visible benchmarks could be achieved in the time left …

... and in particular by defusing arguments over the exact formula for power sharing in the new constitution.
these seats should belong to ethnicities or to ethnic parties. The “Tutsi” parties, fearing they would be wiped out at the polls, argued they should be guaranteed a certain proportion of the seats within the overall 40% of seats going to Tutsi. The “Hutu” parties argued they should be able to run Hutu candidates of their own and thus potentially avail of the full 40% quota. The South African Facilitation, in the person of President Mbeki, insisted that the constitution could guarantee ethnic protection, but certainly could not guarantee the survival of political parties. Calling a summit in Pretoria in July 2004 to resolve the issue, the Facilitation initially argued that it alone should handle discussions with the parties and SRSG McAskie was obliged to insist that ONUB be permitted to attend. Though a solution that ONUB devised to the impasse (a deal on the sidelines, through use of a certain number of non-elected seats to be decided by what the Burundians called “co-optation”) ultimately fell apart (in September, when the Tutsi parties withdrew their consent), ONUB’s near success with it and the fact that different parties in the negotiations were more and more frequently referring to their “discussions with McAskie” obliged the South African facilitation to take more note of ONUB. The Pretoria Summit was, thus, an early point in building trust between the Facilitation and ONUB. ONUB’s strategy became one of ensuring that the mission was not seen as a competitor to the South African Facilitation but as a useful counterpart.

Through intense, concerted pressure, President Ndayizeye, ONUB and the regional actors were able to ensure at least that a draft constitution had passed through Parliament by the end of October 2004 and had been agreed to by 5 out of the 6 parties associated with the Tutsi ethnic group. Ndayizeye deftly piloted the fledgling constitution through the National Assembly and Senate on the eve of a visit to New York. Once it had been voted on as the “Provisional Constitution” he was able to use his new powers to fire his Vice-President Kadege, UPRONA’s representative within the transitional executive, who had become an obstinate spoiler. Indeed, UPRONA’s brinksmanship – through the use of threats and boycotts – would ultimately cost it greatly as the transition process proceeded without it.

Similar unrelenting pressure on the TGoB finally achieved the long-delayed appointment of an Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) and the construction of a provisional electoral calendar by the end of August 2004. Together, these events permitted the transition extension to be sold on the basis that there was considerable forward momentum in the peace process and that only “logistical” difficulties now stood in the way of the constitutional referendum and the various elections. The transition calendar could thus acceptably be extended. Summits of the Regional Initiative in fact extended it twice, first to April 2005 and then to August 2005, in both cases using electoral logistics as the main pretext.

Unfortunately, the successful management of the extension was somewhat marred by attempts by UPRONA to draft a constitution permitting Transition President Ndayizeye of FRODEBU to run again for election – attempts towards which Ndayizeye was fully supportive. The Tutsi party’s logic was that if it could not hope for a candidate of its own to win, then better it should be a known candidate from FRODEBU who could be relied upon to understand the need to rule on the basis of consensus. Ndayizeye’s running again was, however, effectively ruled out under the terms of the Arusha Agreement. Moreover, it was strongly resented by other power blocs within FRODEBU and by other political parties. Not the least opposition came from CNDD-FDD, who saw their own rising chances at the polls threatened by a Ndayizeye campaign.
In the event, this combined opposition prevented Ndayizeye and his supporters from gaining a constitutional draft that would have permitted him to run again. But because of its necessarily close working relationship with the TGoB and Ndayizeye, and its technical role in assisting with the overall constitutional drafting, ONUB ended up unfairly accused of having assisted in Ndayizeye’s attempt, particularly in CNDD-FDD quarters. This perception lingered in some quarters and may have contributed to the difficulties ONUB experienced early in its relationship with the incoming CNDD-FDD government.

Lesson Learned: ONUB quickly and correctly optimised the solution to a tricky equation – what was the maximum achievable and minimally acceptable amount of progress that could provide an incontrovertible indicator that the transition was still moving forward? If then applied all its energies to realising that package (and consciously recognized the strategic necessity to “bend” the strict legal interpretation of Arusha and, indeed, of constitutional practice to the political imperative of transition politics). Finally, in undertaking “shuttle diplomacy” between the Arusha parties, ONUB identified a productive niche within the peace process as a whole.

Electoral Process
With the draft constitution through Parliament and the CENI in place, attention could turn to the daunting challenge of six separate electoral processes: the Constitutional Referendum, followed by Communal, Legislative, Senate, Presidential and Collinaıres (literally “hillside”, but equivalent to village-level) elections. In theory, all these needed to be preceded by the passage of new electoral law and communal law. But in order to avoid further delay, ONUB and the TGoB went ahead with the referendum on the basis of the pre-existing 1993 electoral law, with the new law passing only after the new constitution had been approved.

The electoral calendar also required close calibration with a number of key mission activities, including DDR and security sector reform. The former rebel movements needed to reach a point in the DDR process where they could qualify for formal recognition as political parties – i.e. they had to be fully disarmed. An electoral calendar that called for elections before the rebel movements had met the qualifications as political parties would have alienated all the former fighters and invalidated the election process.

Strong political pressures were applied by Burundian actors either to slow-down or speed-up this timetable. In resisting this pressure, the head of the Electoral Unit, Ahmedou Seck, and his team come in for particular praise. Their defence was the ostensibly “technical” nature of their role. When under pressure to speed up, combining the communal and legislative elections, their response was to plead lack of funds or to point out that basic equipment like ballot boxes would simply be too small to contain the ballot papers from two simultaneous rounds. Under pressure to delay, the response was that the electoral process, honed elsewhere in the world by the UN, was essentially machine-like and consisted of a set of steps that unfolded more or less automatically at their own pace.

The elections were rightly understood by ONUB leadership as a key element in what the UN could provide in Burundi in 2004/5. As a result, all available resources were employed to deliver election materials in all the provinces, to raise public awareness and reinforce civic education. ONUB helicopters were turned over to the task of airlifting
ballot boxes to remote hilltop polling stations and staff from other sections were pressed into service either at a logistical level or, just as importantly, as a visible international presence at locations where the elections risked disruption.

All six elections were held in a six-month period starting from the end of February 2005 – an incredibly tight timetable in which slippage in any element, logistical or political, would have demanded yet another extension to the transition. Turnouts were, on average, around 90%. The processes were mostly conducted without violence, with the FNL threatening the process in just two provinces around communal elections in June.

In the course of a large number of interviews for this study with a wide range of domestic and international actors, the single point of agreement from all was that ONUB’s role in the conduct of elections in Burundi has been “unimpeachable” and an “immeasurable contribution” to the cause of peace.

Lessons Learned: ONUB’s electoral team has already been broken up and redeployed within the operation or to other PKOs; before its successful experience is forgotten a more detailed study than the present one should be considered to capture the electoral lessons learned. In particular, the mission’s success in insulating elections organisation from political pressures provides useful lessons for future operations.

The Security Sector and the Joint Ceasefire Commission

The proliferation of armed groups in Burundi presented a clear obstacle to the establishment of a durable peace (indeed with the FNL still under arms today such a peace is far from guaranteed). ONUB was mandated – in support and follow-up of existing peace efforts – to support the disarmament and demobilisation part of DDR and to assist the transitional government and authorities with Security Sector Reform. AMIB deserves credit for beginning the DDR process, with combatants coming in from the bush being separated and fed. Upfront funding was available for DDR because downstream programming was assured by the World Bank MDRP (Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme).

A full evaluation of this component goes beyond the scope of the present study but some quick observations may be useful. First, as so often, disarmament and demobilization have gone ahead but the social and economic dimensions of reintegration have lagged behind, swelling the ranks of underemployed demobilisees that might too easily be lured back into armed struggle domestically or regionally.

Second, ONUB successfully coordinated in the DDR process with multiple stakeholders and international partners. To a large degree, that was due to the willingness of ONUB to integrate within its structures a variety of complementary competences. The core team comprised of two former senior army officers (a South African – thus providing a useful lateral connection to a key regional actor and troop contributor to the operation – and a Senegalese with long presence in Burundi), a development specialist and a World Bank staffer seconded from the Secretariat of the MDRP, the pilot regional DDR facility for Central Africa.

Third, DDR and SSR (Security Sector Reform) processes are at once intensely technical and political. As the only ceasefire organ that brought together almost all groups, including those like the CNDD-FDD and other CNDD and FNL factions that had not signed the Arusha Agreement (but excluding the main FNL of Agathon Rwasa), the
Joint Ceasefire Commission (the JCC – a subsidiary organ of the Implementation Monitoring Committee or IMC) emerged as a key body through which disputes could be resolved. These were not limited to technical dimensions of military affairs. The JCC became a venue in which political struggles disguised as technical ones were frequently played out. Indeed, while the IMC appeared the more significant body, in reality the JCC did the bulk of the work in implementing the agreements, ensuring that solutions were reached on such issues as harmonization of ranks and pushing through the security sector legislation. With energetic work on the part of ONUB, the IMC did gradually become more effective and efficient, producing clearer recommendations, but as a body that included all the Arusha signatories, it remained more an extension of the Arusha debate than a forum through which to hold the TGoB to account.

The chairing of the JCC fell to the ONUB Force Commander and this politicization of his role often placed him in a difficult position. An example concerns rank harmonization: working out how a “General” from a small armed group should relate in the new combined army command structure to a similar rank drawn from the former armed forces. Given the Tutsi dominance of the old army’s command, this was a wedge issue for the peace process as a whole. Discussion was heated and a solution elusive, not least because smaller armed groups feared losing out. In the end the CNDD-FDD and ex-FAB reached a bilateral agreement on rank harmonization outside the JCC, establishing their own parallel command structure under the then Chief of Staff (now the Minister of Defence in the new Government) and ex-combatants in the new Government. The smaller groups were then forced to fall in behind the new arrangements, after a kind of ‘topping up’ deal brokered through the JCC by President Ndayizeye and ONUB’s leadership.

But overall, SSR has remained behind schedule. Control of the army was long the bedrock of Tutsi dominance in the country and so reform of the army has very major political implications which neither the TGoB nor the new CNDD-FDD administration have found easy to tackle.

Lessons Learned: While the JCC suggests a useful structure that might productively be reproduced in other contexts, more thought needs to be given to how its essentially political work can be reinforced. Is the Force Commander the right person to be chosen as Chair or does this expose him or her politically, potentially to the detriment of mainline peacekeeping responsibilities? If the Force Commander is considered the correct person to lead a JCC in the future, then a dedicated capacity for providing strategic/political advice to this role will be essential.

The Code of Conduct

If certain sectors of ONUB’s operation had the potential to expand the space within which the UN and other actors could work at the political level, the possibility of misconduct by mission staff would have had entirely the opposite effect. As MONUC, the UN’s mission in the DRC, learned to its disadvantage, multiple cases of sexual exploitation and misconduct by serving blue helmet forces and civilian staff, as well as being ethically repugnant, severely damage the UN’s credibility and drastically reduce its political efficacy.

MONUC’s misfortune was, to some extent, ONUB’s good luck. The sexual exploitation scandal in the DRC hit the international press in April of 2004, just a few months before ONUB deployed. SRSG McAskie was still in New York Headquarters at this time and was keenly aware of the political damage that even just a handful of cases could have for her new operation. She thus chose to put a heavy emphasis on the
enforcement of the new Code of Conduct in ONUB and received concomitantly strong support from senior DPKO management. From the mission’s beginning strong messages were sent that the issues were serious and that resources (including a senior officer in an active rather than an advisory one) and time would be devoted to them.

Senior management also devoted time to this issue on an ongoing basis. Monthly review meetings – chaired by the SRSG and involving the Chief Adviser, Chief of Staff, Force Commander, PDSRG (and often the DSRSG), Legal Adviser and Military Legal Adviser – reviewed a broad range of conduct issues. The operation also co-operated closely in this area with WFP and UNICEF, correctly gauging that along with the blue helmets, the specialised agencies represented a primary interface between the UN system and the ordinary population. And every individual joining ONUB received a compulsory one-on-one briefing (from ONUB’s Code of Conduct Officer) on the Code of Conduct – in which the language used was deliberately blunt.

ONUB’s original design did not include a senior dedicated internal function concerned with conduct issues and there was no specific budget for activities envisaged (though this position altered after the Special Resolution of the General Assembly on conduct issues which followed the March 2005 Report on the matter by Prince Zeid Ra’ad Zeid al-Hussein). This is, in fact, a broader problem relating to operation design; staff from Human Rights, Gender Promotion, Civil Affairs and other sections complained of the lack of a distinct budget line for their programming, meaning they were frequently obliged to make ‘creative’ applications to the Public Information Office budget in order to cover basics like modest per diems for Burundians attending workshops etc.

Lessons Learned: Issues of sexual and other misconduct are not just regrettable in themselves but also have the potential enormously to damage an operation at the political level. ONUB’s experience shows that it is possible to avoid these scandals, but that to do so demands significant senior management attention on an ongoing basis, consistent repetition (and enforcement, as necessary) of the ‘zero tolerance’ message and work with all of the UN’s points of primary interface with the population.

Lessons Learned: In this era of multi-dimensional PKOs the absence of a distinct budget for key activities outlined at the level of the operation mandate seems anomalous; it is to be hoped that this will be a priority area for address by the new Peacebuilding Support Office.

An Integrated Operation?
ONUB was conceived as an integrated operation – uniting the military and civilian components and enhancing cooperation with UN specialized agencies and organisations already present in Burundi. In practice, success at integration was low. At the military/civilian level cooperation was generally good (particularly as work in the DDR/SSR sector matured). However, the relationship between civilian functions within ONUB and other parts of the UN system in Burundi generally bears out Bruce Jones’s observation that “the theory of integrated operations has been replaced by parallel capacities, some of which are well integrated or well coordinated, others substantially less so.”

Because of the background of senior ONUB management either in development and humanitarians issues (SRSG McAskie’s work in OCHA and previously) and/or the agencies (DSRSGs Satti and Fall) there was some optimism within the UN Secretariat on their appointment that if integration might work anywhere it would work in ONUB. In the event, success at integration was uneven, working moderately well with UNICEF.
on DDR, with UNDP and UNOPS on elections, UNHCHR on Human Rights, and between WFP and ONUB on security and logistics, less so in other areas.

That integration was not an unqualified success in ONUB, however, stems from a number of factors. One concerns the composition of the assessment and start-up teams that preceded the establishment of the operation: though they included representation from other agencies and departments, they were dominated by DPKO staff. As one interviewee for the present study strongly put it, “you can’t integrate what was disintegrated at source!” Attempts at integration, ideally, should not start at the moment of the deployment of the PKO but rather from the moment the UN begins to play any kind of formal political part in addressing a conflict, such as through smaller political offices such as UNOB.

Unfortunately, with integration still a relatively new concept in 2004, there was relatively little in the way of “templates” or guidelines on how to make it an operational reality and mission management was somewhat obliged to work it out as they went along. Second, to overcome the entrenched positions that consistently inhibit UN inter-agency cooperation would have required significant and sustained senior management time and attention; given the high pressure environment and the highly compressed transition timetable, operation integration simply lost out to other more pressing imperatives – particularly to the labour-intensive organisation of elections. A third factor concerns the attitudes of the specialised agencies and country team themselves, who in some cases did not move beyond the view that ONUB was more something to be endured and outlived than to be embraced.

Though integration can be considered mainly an issue of operational coordination, it also touches on the political and strategic level. The lack of progress in integration in Burundi reinforced the bifurcated view of the UN that the new Government put forward in its demand for ONUB to depart precipitously. That the country team and the peacekeeping operation remained essentially un-integrated permitted the Government to see the two as quite distinct and unrelated – security versus development – and to insist on the strengthening of one versus the winding down of the other. The UN’s insistence that the two are vitally intertwined during the peacebuilding phase might have had more force if integration had been more successful in the UN’s own planning and actions.

### Lessons Learned

*Mission integration can be critical not least to strengthen the political argument to post-transition governments for a slow drawdown – rather than the abrupt departure – of peacekeeping.*

### Political and Strategic Analysis

The UN’s long engagement in Burundi equipped it with considerable contacts within Burundian political and military circles. In principle, then, ONUB had the basis from which to draw inferences at the strategic level and inform its operations accordingly. However, at key moments it experienced difficulty in transforming the detailed political intelligence it was regularly collecting into strategic analysis with which to advise top management.

A number of factors may account for this. First, despite efforts by HQ and the field, both the Political Section and the JMAC, designed to unite military and civilian political analysis, remained under-staffed from inception, with key posts never filled. For much of the life of the mission, the most active political officers were competent P2/P3s rather than P5/D1s – effective at gathering political intelligence but without regular
steer from above on how to transmute this into strategic advice. Given this, top mission management ended up taking on much of the political work themselves. The JMAC, particularly, never functioned as integrally as might have been hoped, with its civilian posts empty and with the military component regarding it largely as its own instrument rather than a combined function. Unsurprisingly, regular political reporting to New York was one casualty, but another was that diffuse political intelligence concerning a likely CNDD-FDD electoral victory was not captured and transformed into a clear message to senior management until comparatively late in the game. Second, as a result of these difficulties, the function of political intelligence gathering was not strongly centralized within the Political Section or JMAC but remained distributed across the operation, in part reflecting the degree to which some of UNOB’s staff (with considerable prior contacts) were incorporated into different parts of ONUB at start-up. Third, the break-neck pace of work at the operational level given the compressed transition timetable – particularly the heavy demands of continuing negotiations with the Arusha parties, DDR/SSR and electoral support – meant that little time was available to look up from the daily need for progress and take a longer view.

Unfortunately, these factors together caused ONUB and the UN in general to be slower than desirable in reading the signs of the impending elections. Following the late 2003 signing of the ceasefire agreement by the CNDD-FDD, regional actors rapidly realised that this group was likely win power in any free and fair election and they adjusted their strategies accordingly. The South African relationship with CNDD FDD, in particular, had become intimate from very early on, linked to the former’s rather idiosyncratic view that the CNDD-FDD was a “liberation movement”, somehow analogous to an ANC and waging a similar struggle against exclusion (in this case ethnic rather than racial). For its part, the CNDD-FDD recognized a powerful ally in South Africa and was strengthened in its determination to remain aloof from other Burundian actors, refusing, for example, to attend IMC meetings even as an observer or to enter any political negotiations not brokered by the South African facilitation.

The UN, of course, was not and should not be in the business of picking winners and losers. It tried earnestly to work with all the parties and their representatives, and particularly made efforts to court Nkurunziza of the CNDD-FDD from February 2005 onwards (though like many, the UN found it harder to work with Hussein Rajabu, President of the CNDD-FDD political party and the real power within the movement according to many observers). Indeed, in July 2005, the CNDD-FDD quietly approached ONUB for advice on how to draft a government plan of action. But overall, the CNDD-FDD appears to have seen the UN’s approaches towards it as too little too late, coming only at the time of the referendum on the constitution and at the moment when Transition President Ndayizeye finally abandoned his ambitions to run again for the Presidency.

Moreover, because of the structure of the peace process and the division of labour within it (already discussed above), the CNDD-FDD had a mistaken impression of ONUB as “associated with the old guard” of FRODEBU and UPRONA. ONUB had a delicate dance to perform, trying to shore up its relationship with the rising power of CNDD-FDD as 2005 wore onwards, while not alienating FRODEBU’s leadership of the TGoB.

Together, these factors may have contributed to the new CNDD-FDD Government’s rapid calls for ONUB to be wound down. But it should be added that these calls might have come anyway. From the day of the Presidential inauguration, the CNDD-FDD
unilaterally shut down its regular contacts with ONUB. The directive for this seems to have come from Rajabu, but the example likely came from Rwanda. The CNDD-FDD openly admit to being inspired by the manner in which Paul Kagame’s Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) governs Rwanda. One of the RPF’s earliest acts was to expel a throng of international agencies and actors, only readmitting them slowly later once it had established its right and ability to negotiate from strength. The CNDD-FDD Government arrived eager to demonstrate its sovereignty and emboldened by what it interpreted as a crushing victory at the polls. Its executive clearly perceived ONUB’s leadership as competition, while the Minister of Defence (formerly the Army Chief of Staff) seems similarly to have felt that the continued presence of large numbers of foreign troops on his soil would curb his ability to fight a counter-insurgency against the FNL. Finally, as will be discussed below, the CNDD-FDD resented the creation of the Burundi Partners Forum, which they interpreted correctly as designed by the international community as a mechanism through which to continue to exert control in the post-transition period.

For all these reasons, then, a properly strengthened capacity for strategic analysis within ONUB from its inception could only ever have been a necessary but not sufficient condition for managing the politics of the post-transition. Without it, the mission was exposed: had ONUB’s leadership been advised much earlier about the likelihood of a CNDD-FDD victory, this would no doubt have redoubled already ongoing efforts at courting Burundi’s likely new government. But it cannot be said with certainty that such efforts would have avoided the difficulties that followed in late 2005 between the UN and a government that probably arrived determined to flex its muscles.

Lessons Learned: The Brahimi Report’s emphasis on information gathering, analysis and strategic planning capacity at the UN system-level is relevant at mission level also. Without a core capacity for strategic analysis, UN PKOs remain highly vulnerable to sudden shifts in the political context. Greater priority needs to be given to the design and implementation of strategic analysis functions within missions, particularly in aggregating political intelligence received from diverse sources and contacts within and without the mission and transforming them into strategic advice in a form relevant to time-constrained senior management.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Managing the political posture of a multi-dimensional UN peacekeeping operation is a highly complex balancing act. It involves careful attention to the recognized partners in a peace process (as recognized in prevailing peace agreements) while preserving an open channel to those not signed on to the process. It requires the provision of technical advice to governments of transition while remaining alert to the risks inherent in betting too much of the UN’s political and other capital on such ephemeral administrations. And in a world of proliferating mediators (multilateral, bilateral, national and, increasingly, non-governmental) it requires striking an effective modus vivendi with others, which builds on their successes and reinforces them rather than appearing to supplant them. All the while, of course, this calculus must be made in function of the directly operational demands of peacekeeping across multiple sectors.

Calibrating operation posture to such a crosscutting set of parameters must inevitably be a dynamic process. It is naive to imagine that the perfect operation could be designed in vacuo and dropped onto a given context. Inevitably there will be small missteps that, with the benefit of hindsight, take on the appearance of mistakes in political calculus.
What complicates this still further is the time pressure under which operations like ONUB must work. Almost every PKO arrives later than might be desirable. In ONUB’s case, the lateness had less to do with operation rollout (markedly rapid once a decision to proceed had been taken) and more to do with the reluctance of the Security Council and the UN Secretariat to countenance an operation until the peace process was very far along. Here, perhaps, is where two important peacekeeping imperatives collide: on the one hand, to mount a PKO only when peace is strongly in the offing; on the other, to ensure that the timetable for the peace process/transition leaves sufficient time for the UN to exert its influence in effective fashion.

With deployment beginning only in June 2004, with a scant five months left on the transition calendar, ONUB had to hit the ground sprinting and keep running hard. Given this, ONUB’s contribution to Burundi’s return to peace and democracy has been remarkable by any set of benchmarks. In less than 18 months (and in concert with key regional actors), ONUB played a key role in shepherding a disparate set of actors through the final hurdles of implementing a complex and multi-faceted political agreement; it successfully managed the political perceptions at home and abroad of two postponements to the transition calendar; it oversaw the drafting of a new and inclusive Constitution; it organised no fewer than six electoral processes that met with near universal acclaim; it took key steps towards providing Burundi with unified, coherent and multi-ethnic armed forces and police; and it oversaw the peaceful transition to government under a former rebel movement, led by Burundi’s second ever democratically elected President. ONUB’s performance stands as a model of what can be accomplished by the United Nations when mandate, resources, regional good will and the good faith of national actors align.

It is unfortunate, then, that the speed with which the new Burundian Government installed in 2005 sought ONUB’s departure has detracted a little from ONUB’s reputation. If, as seems likely at the time of writing, ONUB will have been phased out by December 2006, it may rank as one of the UN’s shortest ever PKOs.

Might steps have been taken (or avoided) to escape this result? As this report has detailed, the shortness of time, the division of labour within the peace process and the limitations of strategic analysis within the operation combined to leave ONUB’s relationship with the CNDD-FDD weakened. This has been exacerbated by some inadvertent signals interpreted as slights by the new Government – such as the September 2005 announcement of the new Burundi Partners Forum (an international support mechanism), coinciding with President Nkurunziza’s address to the UN General Assembly and interpreted in sensitive Burundian quarters as an attempt by the international community (and by the SRSG in particular) to undermine him. More might have been done, and earlier, to cultivate closer connections with the CNDD-FDD, particularly as the shift of electoral support to the movement became clear. However, it is also clear that the new Government arrived determined to forge its own way, with an overriding pride in its “crushing electoral victory” (as Government members gleefully describe the results) and in Burundian sovereignty, and the resolve to follow the example set by the Rwandan Government after 1994: insist upon sovereignty, and demand that most international actors leave, thereby signalling a determination to negotiate from a position of strength.

As a result, too much retrospective criticism of ONUB would be unjust. In some quarters – and not least in UN Headquarters – there was perhaps too rapid and emotive
a reversal of assessment of ONUB’s performance, from “the little mission that could” (as one informant described it) to a mission facing so sudden a demand for its departure. But ONUB has, in some sense, been the victim of its own success. Charged with the difficult task of guiding and supporting Burundi and the Burundians through the final stages of their peace process, it performed consummately, facilitating a transition to Burundi’s first democratically elected Government since the early 1990s, who arrived claiming they could manage the daunting task of peace consolidation without an operational peacekeeping presence or ongoing stewardship by the international community. While the direct negotiations between the Government and the FNL in Tanzania in June 2006 signal hope – tempered with some pessimism given the track record of earlier such efforts – there have been a number of disquieting recent political developments: the arrest of prominent opposition politicians, the growing fragility of FRODEBU’s support for the Government, the continuation of human rights abuses across the country by the new army and the curbs on freedom of speech within the media and civil society. Burundi’s journey back from the brink is far from over and it is vehemently to be hoped that its Government’s decision to demand the rapid drawdown of ONUB will not prove as premature and unwise as it seems at this moment.

ONUB’s short lifespan has revealed some overarching lessons about politics and strategy in peacekeeping operations. These include:

- That in choosing the moment at which to mount a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation, international stakeholders should consider not just the “ripeness” of the context for peace but also the countervailing time pressures that a “late in the day” operation will experience;
- That DPKO should energetically explore further options for regional pre-deployment and pre-mission planning and preparedness (including recruiting core staff) in the interim period when a mission seems imminent but is not yet confirmed;
- That UN PKOs will increasingly be challenged to play a supporting role alongside rejuvenated regional organisations and states leading peace processes; this demands close coordination with those actors (including by integrating functional channels to them into operation structures), providing necessary technical support to them as required, and, as the presence on the ground, exerting continuous pressure on the parties to implement the agreements they have signed;
- That weakness in a PKO’s ability to turn day-by-day political intelligence into strategic analysis can leave it critically exposed to dramatic shifts in the political terrain;
- That in contexts with a transitional government or one not fully legitimate, UN PKOs need to pay particular attention to developing relationships with other un-included domestic political parties or forces in the interests of long term peace and stability;
- But that given the necessity for missions to work closely in support of transitional administrations it may be wise to consider replacing a mission’s senior leadership after elections in order to signal a ‘fresh start’ with a new government;
- That thoroughly integrating an operation will provide a stronger basis from which to argue for a continued political and peacekeeping presence during the peace consolidation phase.

It is to be hoped future peace operations may benefit from some of these findings.

Annex 1:
Abbreviations and Acronyms
**AMIB** — The African Mission in Burundi – the pioneering African Union peacekeeping deployment in Burundi.

**CNDD** — Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie

**CNDD-FDD** — Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie - the principal rebel movement that stayed outside the Arusha process. Having signed the Global Ceasefire Agreement late in the day it then entered the Transitional Government and proceeded to win the Presidential elections held in August 2005.

**DDR** — Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

**FAB** — Forces Armées Burundaises, the former government army

**FDD** — Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie

**FDN** — Forces Nationales de la Défense, the new, integrated Burundian army

**FNL** — Forces Nationales de Libération – the major remaining armed group still fighting with the Burundian Government.

**FTA** — Forces Technical Agreement

**FRODEBU** — Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi – the long-standing non-armed party associated with the Hutu ethnic group and the winner of the elections of 1993 under President Melchior Ndadaye.

**JCC** — Joint Ceasefire Commission

**MDRP** — Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme

**IMC** — Implementation Monitoring Commission – led by the United Nations, this commission was charged with verifying the implementation of the Arusha Agreement.

**ONUB** — Opération des Nations Unies au Burundi

**PARENA** — Partie pour le Redressement National, the party for national redress, a predominantly Tutsi party led by former President Jean-Baptiste Bagaza.

**TGoB** — Transitional Government of Burundi

**UNOB** — The UN Office in Burundi – ONUB’s predecessor, a political office active from the early 1990s.

**UPRONA** — Union Nationale pour le Progrès – the main non-armed political party associated with the Tutsi ethnic group.
## Annex 2:
### People Interviewed for this Study

#### Burundian Political Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position and Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pancrace Cimpaye</td>
<td>Former Spokesperson for former President of Burundi Domitien Ndayizeye, FRODEBU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramadani Karenga</td>
<td>Minister of Communications and Government Spokesman, CNDD-FDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Domitien Ndayizeye</td>
<td>Former President of Burundi, FRODEBU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerard Nduwayo</td>
<td>Spokesman for UPRNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Marie Ngendahayo</td>
<td>Former Foreign Minister and Minister of the Interior, CNDD-FDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya</td>
<td>Former President of Burundi, FRODEBU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Léonard Nyangoma</td>
<td>President, CNDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphonse Rugamburara</td>
<td>Secretary-General, INKINZO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique Rutamucero</td>
<td>President, PA AMASEKANYA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thérence Sinungura</td>
<td>Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, UPRNA</td>
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#### Burundian Civil Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venant Bamboneye</td>
<td>President, A.C Génocide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Marie Gasana</td>
<td>Institute of Strategic Studies (in Nairobi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Marie Vianney Kavumbagu</td>
<td>President, Ligue ITEKA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Paul Kimonyo</td>
<td>Political Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathias Manirakiza</td>
<td>Director, Radio ISANGANIRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocent Muborgi</td>
<td>Director, Radio Renaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thérence Nabimana</td>
<td>President, CIVIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julien Nimbona</td>
<td>Political Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willy Nindorera</td>
<td>International Crisis Group, Burundi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chantal Nyokindi</td>
<td>Executive-Secretary, Ligue ITEKA</td>
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</tbody>
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#### United Nations in Burundi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position and Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahmedou Bal</td>
<td>Legal Adviser, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Bardoux</td>
<td>Political Affairs Officer, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>André Bessières</td>
<td>Ngozi Regional Office Coordinator, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nene Bab-Bogna</td>
<td>Special Assistant to the SRSG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonius Broek</td>
<td>UNDP Country Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberto Cabaia</td>
<td>O.I.C, UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxanna Carillo</td>
<td>Code of Conduct Officer, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahima Fall</td>
<td>Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, ONUB/UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waldemar Very</td>
<td>SSR/DDR Officer, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Gavigan</td>
<td>Chief, Rule of Law and Civil Affairs Section, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando Hiraldo del Castillo</td>
<td>Special Assistant to DSRSG Fall, ONUB/UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boubacar Kane</td>
<td>Special Assistant to DSRSG Satti, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camino Kavanagh</td>
<td>Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayite Kpakpo</td>
<td>O.I.C. Public Information Office, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillian Kitley</td>
<td>O.I.C, Human Rights Division, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingrid Koeck</td>
<td>Former Political Affairs Officer, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France Lau</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damian Mama</td>
<td>Special Assistant, DSRSG Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn McAAskie</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General, ONUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natacha Meden</td>
<td>Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme, World Bank/ONUB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And Members of the November 2005 Security Council Mission to the Central Africa, during their visit to Burundi

Diplomatic Community in Burundi

Ambassador Georges-Marc André  Chief of Delegation, European Union
Ambassador Mdu Lembede  Embassy of the Republic of South Africa, Burundi
Minister Edward Kadiri  Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Tanzania, Burundi

United Nations in New York

Gerry Bennett  Political Affairs Officer, Africa Division I, Department of Political Affairs
Welile Nhlapo  Director, Africa Division I, Department of Political Affairs
Fabienne Hara  Political Affairs Officer, Africa Division II, Department of Political Affairs
Kathy Jones  Central Africa Team Leader, Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Amin Mohsen  Political Affairs Officer, Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Steve O’Malley  Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
Endnotes

1 For a detailed discussion of the successes and challenges of the non-governmental role in peacemaking in Burundi, see Fabienne Hara, “Burundi: A Case of Parallel Diplomacy”, in *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, United States Institute for Peace, 1999. Hara correctly identifies the weakness inherent in the proliferation of non-governmental mediators: “the political independence and the flexibility enjoyed by agents of parallel diplomacy are their strengths but also their Achilles’ heel” and suggests that this proliferation may represent an erosion of states’ responsibility to intervene to prevent or resolve foreign conflicts.

2 However, the author would like to acknowledge the able assistance and advice of Willy Nindorera, Aimé Banyeyizako and Charles Mugraneza in the conduct of the research and the writing of the report, as well as insightful comments and input from Heather Aldersey, Bushra Asif, Susanna Campbell, Laura Frost, David Harland, Bill Jackson, Bruce Jones, Carolyn McAskie, Amin Mohsen, Sumie Nakaya, Chris O’Donnell, Barnett Rubin, Nureldin Satti, Teresa Whitfield and Fatemeh Ziai. This report also owes a significant debt to the management and staff of ONUB – whose frankness and intelligent self-criticism go some way to explaining the successes the mission has had.

3 What was the origin of an enduring polarisation between population groups in Rwanda and Burundi? As Pottier notes in a recent incisive and pugnacious intervention, ‘for the period up to 1860, it is correct to say that historians know next to nothing about how the terms ‘Twa’ [the minority pygmyoid population], ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’ were used in social discourse’. (Johan Pottier. *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2002:12-13). Pottier himself favours the ‘popular thesis’ that the ‘Twa arrived first, followed by the Hutu… Then came the Tutsi pastoralists’ in successive waves, ‘possibly from about the fifteenth century’, originating from next-door Uganda (12). Other analysts see a gradual pre-colonial ‘enlargement of the scale of ‘ethnic’ awareness among Hutu through realization of common oppression’ (Filip Reyntjens, “A Dubious Discourse on Rwanda”, *African Affairs* 98, no. 390 (1999):120, drawing on Catharine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960*, Columbia University Press, 1993:11), particularly under the Tutsi monarch Rwabugiri in the late nineteenth century. Others still, such as Didier Goyvaerts, take the strong view that ‘ethnicity in Rwanda, as in much of the rest of Africa, was created by the colonizer’ (Didier Goyvaerts, “Conflict and Ethnicity in Pre-Colonial Rwanda” in *Conflict and Ethnicity in Central Africa*, edited by Didier Goyvaerts, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2000:157). These disagreements have been, and remain, heated. But the disagreement reduces essentially to the date at which a politico-ethnic distinction between local populations emerges in Rwanda/Burundi. All three positions strongly reject a racialized distinction between Hutu and Tutsi. Notwithstanding, a belief in an absolute racial dichotomy between Hutu and Tutsi locally, Bantu and Nilotic regionally, tragically endures in much of the Great Lakes.

4 Mr. Ould-Abdallah had served as Mauritania’s Minister for Foreign Affairs before joining the United Nations, and would go on to serve as Special Co-ordinator for New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy Issues before becoming the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa.

5 Then still known as Zaire.

6 Other possible candidates considered were former President of Mali Amadou Toumani Toure and former US President Jimmy Carter.

7 Excluding PARENA, which refused to sign the ‘Acte d’Engagement.

8 A former diplomat in the Ethiopian Foreign Service, Mr. Dinka had been the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and Regional Humanitarian Adviser for the Great Lakes Region. Prior to that, he had served as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Sierra Leone.


10 The slogan of ‘African solutions for African problems’ in mounting peace operations overlooks a fundamental and structural inequality. While PKOs mounted by the United Nations with a Security Council mandate can avail of assessed contributions from member states, those mounted by the AU or other regional organizations can only avail of voluntary contributions from western donors. Experience of AMIB and more recently of AMIS in Darfur has demonstrated that western governments are more than happy to leave difficult peace operations to African governments, but are consistently unwilling to defray their full costs.

11 The term of art in peacekeeping for the absorption of troops on the ground previously under national or regional command into a UN peace operation. Literally it refers to the change in their headgear to the UN’s familiar blue helmets or berets.

12 Though as has been said, the Mission roll-out was more than usually efficient, the handover from DPA to DPKO as lead department suffered from what unfortunately must be described as the customary inter-departmental distance.
That it also closely coincided with President Nkurunziza’s deliberate signal that the international community intended to preserve strong leverage over Burundi’s leadership.

New York, some elements in the session in New York of the UN General Assembly. Logical as it was to take advantage of these leaders’ presence in

position subsequently mellowed.

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it.

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communicated to ONUB its view that any such attempt by Ndayizeye would constitute a direct breach of Arusha’s

response, ONUB reminded Ndayizeye of the need to stick with the principles established by the Arusha Accord and

in doing so he was responding to “popular demand” and

concerning his desire to seek an amendment to the constitution so that he could run again. Ndayizeye suggested that

attempts to form a regional alliance with the FDLR, the Congolese-based remnants of the former Rwandan Génocidaires, the Interahamwe. Yet another suggests that the FNL’s only involvement was to ‘fix’ the army in its barracks while others (the FDLR?) committed the massacre, and that the army knew in advance about the attacks. Burundi’s Government has refused to publish its own report into the massacre, claiming that it does not wish to embarrass the DRC Government (and thus strongly implying that they were complicit in it). The truth may never be known.

In December 2004, Ndayizeye represented to ONUB management that he sought their “friendly advice” concerning his desire to seek an amendment to the constitution so that he could run again. Ndayizeye suggested that in doing so he was responding to “popular demand” and “the necessity to listen to the voice of the people”. In response, ONUB reminded Ndayizeye of the need to stick with the principles established by the Arusha Accord and do nothing without the consensus of the Burundian political class and the Region. DPKO in New York further communicated to ONUB its view that any such attempt by Ndayizeye would constitute a direct breach of Arusha’s terms as well as imperiling the transition by reopening the constitution right on the eve of the referendum to approve it.

This is always a thorny issue, but one that had already had to be addressed in the neighboring context of Rwanda. See Bruce Jones, Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2001.

Bruce Jones, with Feryal Cherif, “Evolving Models of Peacekeeping, Policy Implications & Responses”, Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations,

A point confirmed in multiple interviews for this paper and also discussed in Kristina A Bentley and Roger Southall, An African Peace Process: Mandela, South Africa and Burundi, op. cit.

A Summit on Burundi was held between the UN and key regional leaders on the margins of the 60th Anniversary session in New York of the UN General Assembly. Logical as it was to take advantage of these leaders’ presence in New York, some elements in the new Burundian Government took the announcement of a ‘support mechanism’ as a deliberate signal that the international community intended to preserve strong leverage over Burundi’s leadership. That it also closely coincided with President Nkurunziza’s maiden speech to the world body was received as a slight.
In interview, government representatives were happy to confirm to the author that they feel there is much that can be learnt from the example set by the RPF.