

## **WA 31/04 AFR 16/019/2004 Burundi (CS)**

### **Take action: Ratification of the Optional Protocol to Convention on the Rights of the Child**

#### **Target country: Burundi**

Dear Mr President,

I am deeply concerned by the fate of more than 300,000 children who are engaged in armed conflict worldwide, including in Burundi. Children who are used as soldiers are exposed to the worst dangers and the most horrible suffering, both psychological and physical. Many of these children have witnessed or taken part in acts of violence, often against their own families or communities.

On 25 May 2000 the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The Protocol, which entered into force on 12 February 2002, sends a clear message that any use of children in war is unacceptable. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which entered into force in November 1999 and has already been signed by your Government, prohibits the recruitment and use of children under 18 in both international and internal armed conflicts.

I hope that your government will:

- ratify without reservations the Optional Protocol to the (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as soon as possible;
- adopt a minimum age of at least eighteen for voluntary recruitment, and stipulate this age in the binding declaration to be made under article 3 of the Optional Protocol at the time of ratification;
- adopt whatever legislation is necessary to ensure that the international obligations arising from both treaties are implemented in the laws of your country;

Yours sincerely,

#### **Please send appeals to:**

**Head of State and President of the council of ministers**

Union pour le progrès national (UPRONA)

Son Excellence

Monsieur Domitien NDAYIZEYE  
Président de la République  
Présidence de la République  
BP 1870 Bujumbura  
République du Burundi  
Fax: 257 21 26 70