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ORAL STATEMENT

ITEM 4: Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi

BURUNDI: WITH CONTINUING REPRESSION, RENEWAL OF COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ESSENTIAL

UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-sixth session
11-29 September 2017

Mr. President,

Amnesty International thanks the Commission of Inquiry for their report. As the Commission has documented, serious human rights violations, which may amount to crimes against humanity, continue to be committed over two years since the start of the crisis.

The pervasive climate of fear revealed by the Commission's interviews has also been strikingly clear among refugees interviewed by Amnesty International over the past two years. There is a sense of heightened insecurity throughout the country, caused in large part by the abuses committed by the *Imbonerakure*, the youth wing of the CNDD-FDD, who often work together with the security forces. Many of those interviewed by Amnesty International had witnessed or experienced these abuses first hand. Their testimonies also revealed that belonging to an opposition political party, associating with political opposition members, refusing to join the ruling party or simply trying to leave the country can be enough to create suspicion and provoke serious, and at times deadly, repercussions. One woman described being raped by *Imbonerakure* members near the border. She said: "They asked me: between killing you and raping you, what do you choose? I told them I didn't want to be killed."

Independent civil society also continues to be targeted, and we are deeply concerned by the continued detention of human rights defender Germain Rukuki for his work defending human rights.

In light of the gravity of the Commission's findings, the crackdown on independent human rights monitors and the absence of other mechanisms to report publicly on the human rights situation in Burundi, Amnesty International urges this Council to renew the Commission of Inquiry's mandate and to explore all options to ensure accountability.

We call on the Government of Burundi to put a stop to and ensure accountability for violations committed by its security forces and the *Imbonerakure* and ensure that the rights of **all** Burundians are respected.

Thank you.