



## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: AFR 16/9097/2018  
17 September 2018

### **Amnesty International calls on the UN Human Rights Council to continue scrutiny of situation in Burundi amid ongoing violations and lack of cooperation**

*Statement delivered during the Interactive Dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights in Burundi at the 39th Session of the Human Rights Council*

Amnesty International thanks the Commission of Inquiry for their report and for highlighting the continuing human rights violations in Burundi.

The adverse impact of the political crisis on economic and social rights in Burundi is deeply worrying. The Commission has documented how increased taxes are impoverishing the population, while people have been ill-treated when unwilling or unable to pay their 'voluntary' contribution to the 2020 elections. This is consistent with Amnesty International's previous findings on the harassment of those who refused to contribute to the ruling party. Residents also complained of increased local taxes and were often unable to distinguish between official levies or simple acts of extortion.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission of Inquiry has recommended that Burundi, with the support of the international community, establish ad hoc mechanisms to investigate human rights violations and to prosecute perpetrators of international crimes that are not being investigated by the International Criminal Court. Amnesty International shares the Commission's goal of ensuring there are no gaps in accountability. Can the Commission provide more details on the proposed composition and functioning of such ad hoc mechanisms?

Finally, Amnesty International is disappointed to learn that Burundi has not only refused to cooperate with the Commission, but also the team of experts mandated with Burundi's support<sup>2</sup> – demonstrating once again the importance of continued scrutiny and Amnesty International urges the Council to renew the Commission's mandate.

## BACKGROUND

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, *Conform or flee: Repression and insecurity pushing Burundians into exile*, 29 September 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr16/7139/2017/en/>

<sup>2</sup> At the Human Rights Council's September 2017 session, Burundi voted in favour of resolution 36/2, which requested OHCHR to send a team of three experts to Burundi to engage with the Burundian authorities and all other stakeholders, to collect information concerning human rights violations, and to forward such information to the national judicial authorities to ensure accountability, and to make recommendations for technical assistance and capacity-building.

This statement is based on an oral statement delivered at the UN Human Rights Council on 17 September 2018 during an interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, following the presentation of its final report.