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ORAL STATEMENT

ITEM 4: Interactive Dialogue with Commission of Inquiry on Burundi

BURUNDI: SEIZE OPPORTUNITY TO END IMPUNITY

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-fifth session
14 September – 6 October 2020

Madam President,

Amnesty International thanks the Commission of Inquiry for its report, which underlines the severity of human rights violations taking place in Burundi and lays out clearly the actions needed to tackle them.

As the Commission has highlighted, the human rights situation in Burundi has not substantively improved since the new government came into office and risks further deterioration following numerous recent security incidents. Regrettably, the new government refuses to cooperate with the Commission. Rather than denying the challenges the country faces, we urge Burundi to restart its engagement with human rights mechanisms at all levels and to work towards concrete improvements.

Ten priority areas, if addressed by the new government, would go far in reducing serious human rights violations, ensuring accountability and rebuilding trust. They are: (1) ending impunity, (2) demobilizing the Imbonerakure youth wing, (3) revealing the fate or whereabouts of victims of enforced disappearances, (4) releasing prisoners of conscience, (5) prioritizing progress on women's rights, (6) creating a safe environment for refugee returns, (7) promoting effective dialogue, (8) working towards truth and justice, (9) guaranteeing the right to health, and (10) restarting engagement with the international community.

Some of these actions require resources and a long-term commitment to reform; others, such as releasing human rights defenders and journalists imprisoned solely on account of their work, could be enacted with immediate effect. This has not yet happened.

We urge this Council to continue to treat the situation in Burundi with the gravity it merits. We urge Burundi to seize this opportunity to reengage with the Council and work to end impunity in the country.

Thank you, Madam President.