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MEDIA ADVISORY

Appeal to protect civilians in Burundi

Amnesty International is releasing today, on Africa Human Rights Day, the enclosed public appeal to protect the civilian population in Burundi.

In the three-page document, Amnesty International is appealing to the military leaders of the government security forces and all the Burundian armed opposition groups to “urgently meet in a neutral environment to discuss ways of protecting the lives of civilians.”

This appeal is also directed to the international community to assist “in providing greater protection for civilians and in sending a strong message to military leaders on all sides that they can and will be held accountable for human rights abuses.”

This document is sent on the 6th anniversary of the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi's first and only democratically-elected head of state, which triggered the massive human rights crisis and cycle of violence from which Burundi has yet to emerge.

END.../

For more information or to arrange an interview, call the press office at Amnesty International in London on + 44 171 413 5566. You can also visit Amnesty International's website: <http://www.amnesty.org>