

10 New Version

DOIREANN  
ANSBRO

UN Human Rights Council – Universal Periodic Review of Burundi

Oral Interventions from Ireland

Thank you Mr President

Ireland thanks the delegation of Burundi for the presentation of its national report. We acknowledge the progress made by the Government of Burundi in seeking to strengthen the protection and promotion of Human Rights since its first UPR in 2008. In particular, Ireland welcomes the creation of the National Independent Commission for Human Rights and the presidential grace for several categories of prisoners who were wrongfully incarcerated.

Ireland notes that since its first UPR, measures have been put in place by the Government of Burundi to prepare the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in particular the appointment of a tripartite technical committee. However, we regret that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has not been established before the end of 2012, as planned, and we regret that work towards the establishment of a Special Tribunal to ensure accountability for war crimes has reportedly stalled.

Ireland recommends Burundi to accelerate work to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to establish a Special Tribunal tasked with holding those responsible for war crimes to account, with both institutions conforming to international standards and drawing on national consultations.

Ireland welcomes the National Assembly's discussion of a new Press Act, which would see the decriminalisation of press offences. Peaceful protest, independent and truthful reporting, freedom of expression and freedom of association are all instrumental to a healthy democracy. However, Ireland notes concerns raised regarding increased reports of the intimidation of journalists and human rights ~~activists~~ <sup>defenders</sup>.

Ireland recommends that Burundi takes the necessary steps to ensure that its legal system and policies are in full compliance with its international obligations in respect of freedom of expression and that journalists <sup>and human rights defenders</sup> are guaranteed the freedom to carry out their work independently and without fear of prosecution or intimidation.