

UPR Intervention for Burundi, 15th Session January 24, 2013
(JAN 23 PM)

The United States warmly welcomes **[head of delegation]** and the Burundian delegation.

We commend Burundi for adopting the National Strategy for Good Governance and establishing the Independent National Human Rights Commission. We further applaud the government for the commitments they made to strengthen human rights protections in their second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

However, we are concerned by the continuing use of violence by both the ruling and opposition parties to settle political scores and the impunity they enjoy for such score settling. . The root causes of the violence that erupted in 2010 and 2011 continue to threaten the stability of the nation. All citizens must be able to meet, campaign, and take part in the upcoming 2015 elections, without discrimination or unreasonable restrictions.

We are further concerned that the strong independent civil society and media in Burundi are sometimes harassed by members of the government for reporting corruption and human rights abuses. At times security forces intimidate those who expose torture and extrajudicial killings by those forces.

Finally, we recognize government efforts to raise awareness of trafficking in persons throughout the country. However, we remain concerned that although the government has begun efforts to prosecute trafficking offenders, it has in recent years failed to prosecute any offenders successfully.

The United States makes the following recommendations:

1. Create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to address the root causes of politically motivated violence;
2. Investigate, prosecute and, if convicted, punish perpetrators of human rights abuses, including those committed against civil society groups, members of the media, and LGBT individuals;
3. Finalize and enact anti-trafficking legislation and, in the interim, enforce existing trafficking provisions of the 2009 Criminal Code.

Osman Tat