



Burundi: A chronology

Land and conflict
1000-2024

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Research by Rick de Satge for the Land Portal 2024

Description	Start	End	Duration	Category	Notes
Hutu farmers arrive in the region	1000			Early history	
Burundi originated as a small kingdom in the African Great Lakes region	1600			Early history	One of the few countries in Africa which retained the boundaries of the kingdom
Tutsi pastoralists exert dominance over Hutu agriculturalists	1600			Early history	
Ntare 1 the Mwame expands Tutsi rule	1675	1705	31 yrs	Early history	
Ntare Rugaamba expands into now Southern Rwanda and Western Tanzania	1795	1852	58 yrs	Early history	
Under King Ntare IV Rutaganzwa Rugamba, the kingdom of Burundi doubled in size.	1796	1850	55 yrs	Early history	
European explorers and missionaries made brief visits to Burundi	1856			Colonial era	
Germany takes control of Rwanda and Burundi as part of its colonial holdings in German East Africa	1890			Colonial era	
Mwambutsa IV, the 16th king of Burundi, ruled from 1915 to 1966	1915	1966	52 yrs	Colonial era	
Belgium administers Burundi following Germany's defeat in World War 1.	1916			Colonial era	
Ruanda Urundi administered by the Belgians	1922	1962	41 yrs	Colonial era	
Belgian policy accentuates social difference and ethnic identities of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa groupings in Burundi	1933			Colonial era	
Burundi obtains independence as a constitutional monarchy ruled by a government with both Hutu and Tutsi representatives	1962			Independence	
King Mwambutsa IV flees country after coup attempt	Oct 1965			Coup/Coup attempt	

First coup attempt by Hutu members of the Army fails	Oct 19 1965			Coup/Coup attempt	An armed attack on the palace. Tutsi civilians attacked. In a clampdown 38 Hutu officers tried and shot and ten leading Hut politicians also tried and executed.
Captain Michel Micombero emerged as a key figure, directing efforts to restore order and becoming a prominent Tutsi extremist figure.	1966			Coup/Coup attempt	
Crown Prince Charles Ndzeye, who had assumed royal powers delegated by Mwambutsa, overthrew the pro-Mwambutsa government in July 1966.	Jul 1966			Coup/Coup attempt	
Ndzeye was delegated royal powers by the king. On July 8, 1966, forces loyal to Ndzeye overthrew the pro-Mwambutsa government, led by Prime Minister Léopold Biha. Ndzeye then declared himself the head of state of Burundi, suspending the constitution, dismissing Biha, and appointing Captain Michel Micombero, a Tutsi army officer, to form a new government	Jul 08 1966			Coup/Coup attempt	Ndzeye announced himself as the head of state, suspending the constitution and appointing Micombero to form a new government
Ndzeye crowned himself as Mwami Ntare V, promising strong leadership, anti-corruption measures, and a new constitution	Sep 01 1966			Coup/Coup attempt	
Micombero deposes Ndzeye in a coup and formally abolishes monarchy	Nov 28 1966	1982	16 yrs 1 mo 4 days	Coup/Coup attempt	Micombero to establish a military dictatorship with UPRONA as the sole legal party in Burundi
Tutsi Hima who form most of the army capture power.	Dec 1966			Tutsi Hima rule	Lemarchand notes the historical rivalry between Tutsi-Banyaruguru and the Tutsi-Hima: the former, considered to be closer to the court, were generally seen as ranking considerably higher in social standing. With the rise to power of the army, however, something of a reversal of status occurred in this hierarchy of rank and privilege. The real holders of power within the army and the government, including President Micombero, were Tutsi-Hima

Exclusion of Hutus from governance institutions contributes to rising social tensions	1967	1972	6 yrs	Ethno regional tensions	
More Hutu leaders are executed following rumours of coup	Sep 1969			Coup/Coup attempt	
Ethno-regional tensions as Banyaruguru Tutsi are accused of trying to restore monarchy fomenting a plot to bring back Ntare to the throne.	Jul 1971			Coup/Coup attempt	
Hutu uprising costs 800-1200 lives	Apr 29 1972			Hutu revolt	
The former King who had returned from exile assassinated	Apr 29 1972			Assassination	
Mass killing of Hutus following a Hutu revolt is followed by an exodus of refugees	May 1972			Hutu revolt	Estimates of the number of victims vary, but they range between 150,000 to 300,000
Jean Batiste Bagaza overthrows Micombero to assume presidency	1982	1987	6 yrs	Coup/Coup attempt	Bagaza is also Tutsi Hima from the same village in the Bururi region
Hutu revolts crushed in Northern Burundi	1987			Ethno regional tensions	More than 5000 people killed as revolts crushed
Pierre Buyoya overthrows Bagaza to become 3rd President of Burundi	Sep 09 1987	Jul 10 1993	5 yrs 10 mos 2 days	Coup/Coup attempt	Buyoya is the nephew of Micombero
Attempted transition to democracy	1991	1993	3 yrs	Democratic transition	This allowed for a multi-party system and a non-ethnic government
New constitution approved in a referendum	1992			Democratic transition	
Ndadaye appoints Sylvie Kinigi, a Tutsi economist as Prime Minister	Jul 1993			Reconciliation	
Melchior Ndadaye defeats Buyoya and is elected as the first Hutu President in the first multi-party elections for the presidency.	Jul 10 1993	Oct 21 1993	3 mos 12 days	Democratic transition	Ndadaye was the first Hutu president in the history of Burundi to be elected by universal suffrage. He won the election with 66% of the vote, defeating incumbent President Pierre Buyoya. This election marked a significant moment in Burundi's history, representing the end of the military-backed Tutsi-dominated state and the first peaceful transfer of power

Assassination of Melchior Ndadaye.	Oct 21 1993			Assassination	Ndadaye and six ministers of his government were killed by members of the Tutsi army
Sylvie Kinigi appointed as Acting President	Oct 27 1993	Feb 05 1994	3 mos 10 days	President	
Civil war breaks out	Nov 1993	2005	12 yrs 2 mos	Civil war	Two main armed formations represent Hutu rebels - the CNDD-FDD led by individuals such as Leonard Nyangoma, Pierre Nkurunziza, and Évariste Ndayishimiye. PALIPEHUTU-FNL (Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People-National Liberation Forces) led by figures like Kabora Kossan, Agathon Rwaswa, and Alain Mugabarabona. An estimated 300,000 people killed in this conflict.
Land of exiled Hutu reallocated during period of conflict	Dec 1993	2005	12 yrs 1 mo	Land appropriation	
13 out of 241 magistrates were Hutu	1994			Ethno regional tensions	
A Hutu politician Cyprien Ntaryamira elected by National Assembly as President of Burundi and forms a coalition government	Feb 05 1994	Apr 06 1994	2 mos 2 days	Assassination	Cyprien Ntaryamira in the plane with Rwandan President shot down as it approached Kigali airport. This event triggers the Rwandan genocide
President of the National Assembly Sylvestre Ntibantunganya succeeds Ntaryamira	Apr 06 1994	Jul 25 1996	2 yrs 3 mos 20 days	President	
Genocide in neighbouring Rwandan creates a regional refugee crisis	May 1994			Regional instability	
Pierre Buyoya overthrows Sylvestre Ntibantunganya	Jul 25 1996	Apr 30 2003	6 yrs 9 mos 6 days	Coup/Coup attempt	During his second presidency, Buyoya created an ethnically inclusive government by establishing a partnership with FROBEDU. This led to the 2000 Arusha Accords which introduced ethnic power sharing. He selected Domitien Ndayizeye, a Hutu as his vice-president, who succeeded him as president in 2003.
Peace negotiations begin in Arusha	1998			Peace process	
Peace Accord brings about power sharing	2001			Peace accord	The Constitution provided for an "ethnic" rotation of power

(presidency and vice-presidency) every 18 months between Tutsi and Hutu leaders.

Domitien Ndayzeze former Vice President succeeds Pierre Buyoya as President	Apr 30 2003	Aug 26 2005	2 yrs 3 mos 28 days	President	
New Constitution promulgated	2005			Democratic transition	Ethnic quotas reduce ethnopolitical tension
Interim National Commission for Land and Other Properties established to mediate and resolve land disputes related to refugees and internally displaced persons.	2006			Land dispute mediation	
Refugees return in large numbers	2006			Refugee returns	
Pilot projects to localise land administration.	2007			Land administration	
Land Policy Letter drafted	2008			Land policy and law	
Peace negotiations end	2009			Peace accord	FNL becomes a political party
Land Policy adopted	2010			Land policy and law	
Pierre Nkurunzira re-elected	2010			Elections	
Law No. 1/13 of August 9, 2011 on Revision of the Land Code of Burundi ("Land Code")	2011			Land policy and law	
Burundi marks 50 years of independence	Jul 01 2012			Independence	
Establishment of Burundian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)	2014			Human rights	Mandate from 1885-2008
The government of Burundi issued a decree to increase the authority of the CNTB.	2014			Land policy and law	
Constitutional amendment enabling President to seek a third term triggers protest and an attempted coup	2015			Constitutional crisis	
Economic sanctions imposed on Burundi by Western donors	2015			Sanctions	
Human Right Commission of Enquiry established	2015			Human rights abuse	The Commission was established by the UN Human Rights Council to conduct a

"thorough investigation into human rights violations and abuses in Burundi since April 2015".

Launch of citizens campaign against a third term	Jan 2015	Constitutional crisis	
Rumour that Nkurunzira seeks a third Presidential term	Jan 2015	Constitutional crisis	
Ruling party officials sign a petition opposing a third term	Mar 2015	Constitutional crisis	All signatories dismissed from office
Clash between police and anti 3rd term demonstrators	Apr 2015	Constitutional crisis	
The Attorney General of the Republic establishes a commission to investigate the prevailing "insurgency" (the anti-3rd term protest movement).	Apr 2015	Constitutional crisis	
Armed clashes in capital city	May 2015	Coup/Coup attempt	
Attempted coup	May 2015	Coup/Coup attempt	
Constitutional Court rules in favour of third term bid	May 2015	Constitutional crisis	
Opposition leader Zedi Feruzi assassinated	May 2015	Assassination	
Third term elections postponed	Jun 2015	Constitutional crisis	
40,000 flee the country and 1000 killed in violent protests against Nkurunziza's plans to run for a third Presidential term	Jul 2015	Refugee outflow	In May 2015, the demonstrations had developed into a full-blown political crisis. A military coup attempt was quickly quashed. At the same time police and security forces cracked down on protesters and in return, government opponents attacked security officials
Defectors from Burundian military form rebel groups FPB and Red Tabara	Jul 2015	Conflict	In the wake of the failed 2015 coup, President Nkurunziza purged the army. This policy disproportionately targeted those who had served on the government side in the Burundian civil war (1993-2006)
Nkurunzira reelected for a third term	Jul 2015	Elections	Opposition parties boycott elections

Ugandan President mediates Burundi crisis	Jul 2015	Constitutional crisis	
Creation of National Council for the Respect of the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and the Rule of Law in Burundi (CNARED).	Aug 01 2015	Constitutional crisis	
Nkurunzira's right hand man assassinated	Aug 02 2015	Assassination	General Adolphe Nshirimana killed in a rocket attack on his car
Attempted assassination of human rights defender	Aug 03 2015	Assassination	
Commission of Enquiry report blames opposition for 'insurgency'	Aug 26 2015	Constitutional crisis	
Opposition spokesman assassinated	Sep 07 2015	Assassination	
Attempted assassination of Burundian Army Commander	Sep 11 2015	Assassination	
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, declares that since April 2015 his office had registered "134 killings	Sep 28 2015	Constitutional crisis	
EU imposes sanctions	Oct 01 2015	Constitutional crisis	
AU opens an enquiry in Human Rights Violations	Oct 17 2015	Constitutional crisis	
Government opponents attacked four military bases in Bujumbura. A day later, army troops descended on oppositional strongholds in the capital	Dec 2015	Conflict	
300 opposition members detained 154 executed	Dec 11 2015	Assassination	
The AU Peace and Security Council deploys a protection and prevention mission	Dec 17 2015	Peace process	400 people executed since April
Creation of FOREBU rebel group	Dec 23 2015	Conflict	
Negotiations between Burundian groupings in Uganda	Dec 28 2015	Peace process	
TRC starts work	2016	Human rights	

Negotiations suspended	Jan 06 2016			Peace process	
UN Human Rights Commissioner publishes report	Jan 15 2016			Human rights abuse	All the alarm signals, including the increasing ethnic dimension of the crisis, are flashing red
Five possible mass grave sites detected	Jan 29 2016			Human rights abuse	
Assassination of Burundian colonel	Mar 22 2016			Conflict	
200,000 refugees repatriated to Burundi	2017	2022	6 yrs	Refugee returns	
The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague opened an investigation into alleged crimes against humanity in Burundi	Nov 2017			Human rights	
Nkurunziza unexpectedly announced that he would not seek reelection in 2020	2018			Constitutional ammendment	
349,000 Burundian refugees in neighboring countries	Jan 2019			Refugee outflow	
Law N°1/05 of 20 February 2020 fixing the registration fees in land matters now makes it compulsory for any buyer of a certified landed property to transform the land certificate into a land titl	2020			Land policy and law	
UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi	2020			Human rights	Serious human rights violations during this year's elections, including summary executions, torture and sexual violence.
President Nkurunziza dies	Jun 08 2020			President	
Evariste Ndayishimiye sworn in as President	Jun 18 2020			President	Ndayishimiye is the former Hutu rebel leader
Division within ruling party CNDD-FDD. Prime Minister sacked by President after being accused of plotting a coup	2022			Coup/Coup attempt	
1000 Burundian soldiers reported to be in South Kivu province of the DRC to combat Red Tabara	May 2022			Regional instability	
250,000 Burundian refugees remain living in Tanzania, Rwanda, Congo and Uganda	Sep 2022			Refugee outflow	

Burundi closes the border with Rwanda	Jan 2024			Regional instability	300,000 Rwandans ultimately fled to Burundi, while approximately 180,000 Burundian exiles who had fled to Rwanda in October 1993 also returned
More than 30,000 people displaced due to flooding	Jan 2024	Apr 2024	4 mos	Flooding and displacement	In the provinces of Cibitoke, Bubanza, Bujumbura, Rumonge, and Makamba.

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