

**Burundi: Peace Sacrificed?** International Crisis Group 29 May 2015 Despite the failed coup attempt on 13 May, popular mobilisation against outgoing President Pierre Nkurunziza's third term has not abated, and confrontation between the government and the "Halte au troisième mandat" (Stop the Third Mandate) street movement is intensifying. Over 90,000 Burundians have fled and a cholera outbreak has been declared in the most populous place of refuge in western Tanzania. As international pressure on the president continues to fall on deaf ears and the government reiterates its intent to hold municipal and legislative polls on 5 June, and the presidential election on 26 June, all elements of an open conflict have fallen into place. Delayed elections are not sufficient to avoid a rapid escalation of violence, a political and security climate conducive to free and peaceful elections must be restored. The East African Community (EAC) summit on 31 May in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania is the perfect opportunity to reflect on, and react to, this reality.

The week following the attempted coup saw the government's radicalisation and attempted arrests of journalists and politicians. Protesters responded to the "Halte au troisième mandat" movement's call for a resumption of protests in Bujumbura on 18 May with fervour. Diplomatic initiatives meanwhile have not yielded any progress. The dialogue between the government and the opposition established by the UN special representative, which was suspended a few days after the assassination of opposition figure Zedi Feruzi in the Ngagara neighbourhood of Bujumbura on 23 May, remains fragile. The opposition has just announced that it will not participate in the elections.

In this climate of fear and uncertainty several scenarios are possible for Burundi's immediate future, ranging from the highly improbable withdrawal of President Nkurunziza's candidacy, to the significantly more dangerous path toward a more or less violent, and intractable, conflict. Nevertheless, peaceful resolution is still possible if the following measures – aimed at appeasing electoral tensions and improving security and political conditions – are taken as soon as possible:

(...)

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