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ROBINSON, O-SESG-GL, NAIROBI
FROM:  ONANGA-ANYANGA, BNUB, BUJUMBURA

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REFERENCE: CDN-037

SUBJECT: Reports of alleged distribution of weapons to the Imbonerakure

Summary: Informs on reports of alleged distribution of weapons ruling CNDD-youth wing and actions taken by BNUB.

1. This follows my cable CND-022 of 26 February in which informed of allegations of distribution of weapons to the ruling CNDD-FDD youth wing the "Imbonerakure".

2. Yesterday UN Chief Security Adviser (CSA) in Burundi conveyed the following message from the DSS daily sitrep;

"After information gathered from key informants, there was distribution of weapons and outfits military and police during the months of January and February for youth affiliated to the CNDD - FDD (IMBONERAKURE) party and the demobilized ex-AIMP Rumonge. An ad - hoc meeting was held in a hotel called KUKANYAMUNEZA belonging to a "General de Brigade" located in Nduwumunsi in Rumonge. A night training for the handling of these weapons would be located on the side of the central prison of Rumonge (KUMUREMBWE) and the surrounding population would have heard gunfire. These same activities (distribution of weapons) would be considered to take place in the commune of Nyanza-Lac, Kibago and Mabanda in Makamba province. Another fact which tends to confirm the news, these are the statements of people who participated in these meetings but refused to receive weapons.

Two generals originating in the province of BURURI ex-AIMP whose names follow: Bde General Nduwumunsi (currently Director General of former Combatants) and General - Major Niyungeko Juvenal aka KIROHO (currently head of Office of military Cooperation) would be supervisors of these activities (distributions of weapons and military and police uniforms). In this meeting they emphasized especially, that

the beneficiaries of these weapons must remain vigilant and that when there is a trigger that each take care of their opponents in their proximity/neighbourhood".

3. I have undertaken consultations with key embassies including United States, Belgium and the Netherlands, all involved in security sector support activities, to corroborate the information and plan to raise the matter with the relevant ministers. The ambassadors informed have confirmed the grave nature of the allegations which if confirmed may have implications for bi-lateral assistance programmes.

Observations

4. CSA in Burundi confirmed the reliability of the sources.

5. The *Imbonerakure* actions have been on the rise since the beginning of the year and are one of the major threats to peace in Burundi and to the credibility of the 2015 elections as they are responsible for most politically motivated violence against opposition. BNUB has documented 27 cases implicating the *Imbonerakure* so far in 2014, 23 of which have been politically motivated.

6. The *Imbonerakure* act in collusion with the local authorities and with total impunity. In the country side they have replaced the law enforcing agencies and act as a militia over and above the police, the army and the judiciary. Opposition parties have repeatedly complaint about the *Imbonerakure* violence.

7. One can only speculate about the purpose of the distribution of weapons and uniforms in Bururi which is a traditional stronghold of the UPRONA. However the last sentence of the message indicates a highly decentralised chain of command which is consistent with reliable information on *Imbonerakure* modus operandi on the ground.

8. In February BNUB had informed of the disappearance of 500 uniforms from military and police installations as well as the distribution of 9mm pistols. Although not confirmed there are indications that the weapons distributed this time can be AK-47 assault rifles. DSS has also informed in the past of radio messages for the population "to be ready".

9. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and keep you informed.

Best regards,

[Drafted by OSRSG]