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THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACTS  
OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON BURUNDI

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## PREFACE

We would like to offer several introductory observations about the genesis of this study, which covers the period from July 1996 through April 1997, and the larger initiative of which it is a part.

In 1995, three cooperating agencies—the Humanitarianism and War Project at Brown University's Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and the Fourth Freedom Forum of Goshen, Indiana—launched a multifaceted review of multilateral economic sanctions. The first product of our efforts was published in October 1997 by Rowman & Littlefield as *Civilian Pain and Political Gain: The Humanitarian Impacts of Economic Sanctions*. Based on individual case studies carried out by researchers on four major recent sanctions episodes—South Africa, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, and Haiti—we proposed a methodology for measuring the impacts of sanctions and some observations about their use.<sup>1</sup>

A second product of our collaboration is less wide-ranging. At the request of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), we have been assessing the capacity of the UN system to manage economic sanctions. In October 1997, after a year's work, we will provide the United Nations with a report, *Toward More Humane and Effective Sanctions Management: Enhancing the Capacity of the United Nations System*. A third product of the sanctions research that is also envisioned for publication early in 1998 is an occasional paper in the Watson Institute and Kroc Institute series that places the report's recommendations in their broader political context.

The present study, a fourth publication that grew out of our sanctions research, was not foreseen when we began. However, in our initial round of interviews, we were urged to do a detailed review of economic sanctions in Burundi. Imposed in July 1996, these measures represented the most recent in a series of efforts to

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bring about political change through economic coercion with, once again, significant human consequences. We arranged for two consultants to visit the region in early 1997, retaining the services of two Canadian physicians, Eric Hoskins, M.D., who had spent considerable time earlier in the decade in Iraq monitoring the impact of sanctions there, and Samantha Nutt, M.D., whose previous experience with civilians in hardship situations included frontline work in Somalia. More detailed information about their backgrounds is found on page 115.

Their study covers the eight-month period from the military coup in late July 1996 through March 1997, when the report was drafted. It is based on research conducted in the Great Lakes region between January 24 and February 21, 1997, supplemented by the monitoring of events from outside the region. During their month-long stay in Africa, Hoskins and Nutt interviewed personnel from more than 50 UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations, Burundian government offices, and foreign embassies. Their research in Burundi included interviews in rural areas as well as in the capital. (Appendix II contains a list of the persons Hoskins and Nutt interviewed.)

Because of the importance and urgency of the issues, we released their preliminary report in early March. It was circulated by DHA's Integrated Regional Information Network for the Great Lakes (IRIN) in mid-April, just before the April 16 regional summit meeting in Arusha of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at which, with Burundi's military leader Pierre Buyoya in attendance, the sanctions issue was reviewed. The preliminary report received much attention at that time, with some wire services referring to it erroneously as "a UN report." In fact, the report is an independent study that does not speak for the UN or reflect the views of its various component parts. It reflects the active cooperation, however, of UN organizations and officials, which we gratefully acknowledge.

The now-completed report goes well beyond the preliminary study in providing a more thorough review of the historical setting, a closer look at the political rationale and impacts of sanctions, a more detailed analysis of their impacts on the civilian

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population, and a set of recommendations. It also includes a helpful Chronology of Sanctions (Appendix I). We believe readers will find the study interesting for a number of reasons.

First, the sanctions against Burundi were undertaken at the initiative of and managed by the governments of the region. Although they were among a series of measures supported by the UN Security Council, Lakhdar Bahimi, UN under-secretary-general for the Secretary General's Preventive and Peacemaking Efforts, observed they were applied "neither by the Security Council, as had been the case with Iraq and Yugoslavia, nor by the established Organization of African Unity (OAU) as the prominent regional organization, as had been the case with sanctions against Haiti by the Organization of American States (OAS) that were later endorsed by the United Nations."<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness of such measures in their own terms, as well as their relationship to similar measures with a more direct UN connection, bear review.

Second, the sanctions, initially imposed without exemptions for humanitarian supplies, affected not only the health and welfare of civilians in Burundi but also the work of international humanitarian organizations. The evolution of humanitarian exemptions and the advocacy role played by the organizations in pressing for such measures are both of interest well beyond Burundi.

Third, the special circumstances of Burundi, a landlocked country with more than 90 percent of its population engaged in subsistence agriculture and functioning largely outside of the country's formal economy, raise interesting analytical issues about the results of sanctions in what appears to be a "best-case" setting.

Finally, when sanctions were imposed Burundi was a country already in severe humanitarian crisis. The question thus arises of the appropriateness of economic coercion, however impeccable its political objectives. Is there a threshold of human suffering, our consultants ask, beyond which sanctions should no longer be imposed?

We note at the outset that Drs. Hoskins and Nutt encountered several serious methodological problems. First was that of identifying the role played by economic sanctions in producing humanitarian hardship, on the one hand, and in promoting the desired

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political changes, on the other. As they indicate, Burundi's internal crisis and civil war already had far-reaching and devastating human consequences even before the imposition of sanctions. Although the researchers succeed in identifying elements of the observed humanitarian conditions that were the result of sanctions, they are careful to avoid sweeping generalizations that fail to take complex economic and political interactions fully into account.

They also identify a second and related difficulty: that of drawing conclusions concerning the humanitarian impact of sanctions in the absence of adequate and reliable data, both for a given baseline period and to describe changes over time. Our own research on other sanctions episodes confirms that whereas it is difficult to disaggregate the impacts of sanctions from other factors when adequate data is available, it is impossible to do so when such data is lacking. The researchers therefore recommend a series of improvements in data collection and methodology, a suggestion also featured in our own report to the United Nations.

A third extenuating circumstance also merits comment here. Our consultants conducted their interviews and reached their judgments based on the situation observed in February 1997. They concluded that the humanitarian costs of sanctions outweighed the political benefits. In the ensuing months, however, there have been changes on both the humanitarian and political fronts. In April 1997, the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee relaxed the sanctions to permit entry of a wide range of humanitarian essentials. In subsequent months, the Buyoya regime confirmed its involvement in peace talks, which have yet to bear fruit. The text of the report notes both developments in passing.

A UN review of the sanctions against Burundi was published in December 1997, based on a mission by two DHA officials to the region in October. It concluded that while sanctions had not been formally lifted, they no longer caused serious humanitarian distress among civilian populations or serious logistical impediments to aid operations. Many humanitarian essentials were exempted by the RSCC, although governments varied in the extent to which,

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if at all, they controlled shipments that crossed their borders into Burundi. As supplies became increasingly available within the country's local markets, whether through illicit or licensed commercial entry, many aid groups, particularly NGOs, simply procured them there, thus avoiding residual sanctions clearance procedures. Clearly, the evolution of sanctions-related issues will merit ongoing monitoring.<sup>3</sup>

In publishing this report, we wish to express gratitude for the resources that have made possible various aspects of our sanctions research. Funds have been provided by five UN organizations—DHA, the Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Development Program, United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme—and by the United States Institute of Peace and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Funds were also tapped from the resources of the three collaborating institutions, described in greater detail on page 117.

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We welcome comments from readers.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Thomas G. Weiss, David Cortright, George A. Lopez, and Larry Minear, eds. *Political Gain and Civilian Pain: Humanitarian Impacts of Economic Sanctions*, (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

<sup>2</sup>Weiss et al., *Political Gain*, xiv.

<sup>3</sup>UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, "DHA Report on Regional Sanctions against Burundi," (New York: DHA, December 1997).

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regional economic sanctions were imposed against Burundi in response to the July 25, 1996 military coup led by Major Pierre Buyoya. The sanctioning countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Ethiopia and Zaire) demanded the immediate restoration of Burundi's National Assembly, the reinstatement of political parties, and unconditional negotiations between all parties to the conflict.

Sanctions began as a total economic blockade. Over time, however, humanitarian concerns expressed primarily by the UN organizations and NGOs led to their gradual relaxation, permitting closely monitored importation to Burundi of limited quantities of essential humanitarian supplies. At the same time, intensive cross-border smuggling and profiteering diluted sanctions' impact.

The humanitarian effects of economic sanctions on Burundi must be measured against nearly four years of internal crisis, violence, and civil war. The scale of wartime destruction, with an estimated 100,000 civilians killed, nearly one million displaced, and immeasurable infrastructural and economic damage exceeds by massive proportions any particular impacts of the subsequent embargo.

### **The Socioeconomic Impacts of Sanctions**

Burundi is overwhelmingly rural and its economy almost wholly based on agriculture. To some extent, the rural subsistence economy has shielded rural families from sanctions' negative effects. Those most affected have been Burundi's urban population, as well as the displaced and other vulnerable families highly dependent on international humanitarian assistance.

Burundi historically generates more than \$100 million annually in exports, mostly coffee and tea. Much of this revenue has been lost due to the sanctions' ban on exports. However, Burundi

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continues to export, through smuggling, large quantities of coffee and tea by both air and land routes. The ban on imports to Burundi has resulted in acute shortages of fuel, spare parts, medicines, fertilizers, and other imported goods. Reduced stockpiles have led to dramatic price increases and inflation. A decline in raw materials, spare parts, and other inputs has paralyzed the commercial and industrial sectors, leading to high unemployment and loss of income.

Apart from the decline in export revenue, Burundi also lost most of its official development assistance, which stood at approximately \$250 million annually before the 1993 crisis. The World Bank announced in October 1996 suspension of nearly all support to Burundi. Foreign currency reserves, already low before sanctions, were rapidly depleted. The impact of these revenue losses was to make it increasingly difficult for the regime to finance its ongoing social and economic programs and to pay the salaries of civil servants and the army.

Sanctions resulted in clear and substantial inflationary effects, particularly for foodstuffs and imported goods. In some cases, prices more than doubled during the first six months of the embargo, although smuggling slowed the rate of increase for many items. The civil war, military coup, poor harvests, and the general insecurity also greatly contributed to observed inflationary tendencies. At the household level, increases in the price of foodstuffs and other essential items since the imposition of sanctions, combined with rising unemployment and poor harvests, further reduced families' ability to cope with the ongoing crisis.

Sanctions exacerbated the adverse effects of civil strife in Burundi, resulting in a further lowering of agricultural production. They resulted in a shortage of seeds, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs, as well as a higher cost of fuel. The outcome has been a reduction in planted areas, a reduction in food production (yields), problems in distributing food surplus to deficit areas, and higher transport costs leading to higher market prices for food. Commercial agriculture (for example, coffee and tea) was also affected by sanctions; the embargo on veterinary products threatened livestock production.

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Sanctions further weakened the health infrastructure already devastated by civil war. Despite exemptions for human medicines, emergency medical supplies, water purification agents, and other essential materials, these items remained in short supply. Since the government and private sector were in practice prohibited from importing medicines or health-related supplies, importation became restricted to international humanitarian agencies. However, these agencies lacked the financial and logistical capacity to supply Burundi's entire health care system.

Furthermore, long delays in obtaining sanctions approval for importing drugs and other supplies from neighboring countries led to the exhaustion of existing stockpiles. In government health facilities, essential medicines were often absent or in short supply. Private pharmacies began running out of stocks of medicines as early as late August 1996. Smuggled medicines were available only at high cost. The state company responsible for importing, manufacturing, and supplying medicines to the country's health services was unable to obtain raw materials, resulting in a rapid decline in production and only sporadic supplies.

Vaccination programs were also severely affected by sanctions. Supplies of polio vaccine ran out by August 22. A national vaccination campaign was canceled in August due to the high cost of fuel. A lack of disposable syringes, kerosene for refrigerators, and fuel for sterilization jeopardized vaccination efforts at rural health centers. UNICEF estimated that approximately 50 percent of 190,000 children under the age of one targeted for vaccination in 1996 would not get vaccinated as a result of the sanctions.

Water and sanitation programs were suspended due to inadequate supplies and equipment as well as the high cost of fuel. The largest outbreak of typhus recorded since World War II began in north and central Burundi in October 1996. Local response to the outbreak suffered due to difficulties obtaining medicines, pesticides, and other urgent inputs. It is likely that sanctions-related higher food costs, reduced harvests, and decreased household purchasing power led to a decline in nutritional intake by most families.

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### *Recommendations*

- There should be regular and reliable monitoring an assessment of the humanitarian impact of economic sanctions.
- Regional leaders, prior to the implementation of sanctions, should agree to an inclusive list of humanitarian exemptions, drafted in close consultation with the UN.
- There should be no restrictions on the quantities of essential humanitarian items permitted, such as food and medicine. Although quotas were removed in mid-April 1997, there was no reasonable justification for limiting the quantities of these essential humanitarian items.
- In light of their serious socioeconomic impacts, sanctions should be retargeted to better protect Burundi's vulnerable civilian population.

### **The Impacts of Sanctions on Humanitarian Assistance Activities**

Economic sanctions created serious difficulties for humanitarian agencies operating in Burundi. The near-total lack of exemptions during the first months of the embargo placed many UN and NGO programs at risk. Fuel shortages prevented the delivery of supplies, limited access to vulnerable groups, and undermined program supervision. With government capacity to provide basic services to its citizens severely compromised, humanitarian agencies were asked to fill program gaps. At the same time, humanitarian need was growing due to increasing insecurity and the reduced availability of essential items, including food and medicine. Despite this growing need, the lack of relief supplies caused by sanctions forced many agencies to cut back activities and limit caseloads.

Eventual exemptions for certain humanitarian items resulted in somewhat improved operational conditions, although considerable difficulties remained. Shipments of exempted humanitarian items, including many tons of medicines, seeds, and fertilizers,

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were blocked in neighboring countries for months. Confusion regarding procedures for obtaining approval from sanctioning countries led to long delays in obtaining exempted humanitarian supplies. Case-by-case authorization was required for each item to be imported. The requirement that all air shipments come via Nairobi and all road transport through Tanzania slowed and complicated the delivery of emergency items and added to their cost.

Despite many obstacles remaining, most agencies managed to adapt to the sanctions regulations and some improvement in the flow of relief materials had occurred by March 1997. By mid-April, most UN and NGO requests for exemptions had been granted by the sanctioning countries. Although sanctions no longer jeopardized humanitarian activities, they remained a serious constraint on agency response to the crisis.

### *Recommendations*

- More detailed, consistent, and timely information regarding sanctions policy and procedures should be made available to operational agencies by sanctioning countries and the UN.
- Improved collaboration between the UN and NGOs and the sanctioning countries (as, for example, through the provision of policy and technical advice to the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee) might have resulted in faster processing of exemption requests, better streamlining of procedures, and improved coordination.
- With the exception of the FAO and WFP agricultural reports and the impressive documentation work carried out by IRIN, there was a serious lack of reliable information concerning the humanitarian situation in Burundi. UN and NGO information systems need to be strengthened since such information is vital to agency programs and advocacy.
- Humanitarian agencies should organize and implement an effective sanctions impact assessment and monitoring system within weeks of the imposition of sanctions. Such

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a system can be successful only if accurate baseline information on a given country is available.

- Following the imposition of sanctions, a sanctions expert should be recruited to liaise with sanctioning countries, UN agencies, and NGOs. Such an expert, with previous experience in sanctioned countries, could have provided much-needed guidance, technical and policy support.

### **The Political Impacts of Sanctions**

Sanctions were intended to force the Burundi regime to comply with regional demands for a return to constitutional rule, as well as to engage in the peace process already initiated by former Tanzanian President Nyerere. How much coup leaders complied with these demands is subject to interpretation and debate. As of mid-April 1997, the regime had failed to engage the opposition in unconditional negotiations. The National Assembly had been restored yet lacked real constitutional authority or power. Political parties were tolerated, although demonstrations and rallies were not permitted and intimidation and arrests still occurred.

As of this writing, it was unclear whether sanctions had brought Burundi any closer to peace. Despite statements by the regime regarding secret talks in Rome, there was no direct evidence that talks between the armed opposition and the Bujumbura regime had taken place. Within Burundi itself, there was little evidence of significant moves towards constitutional rule or democracy. Indeed, reports indicated further escalation of violence and human rights abuses by all parties since the July 1996 coup.

At the same time, sanctions provided the regime with a useful propaganda tool. In an effort to garner domestic support, the Burundi regime accused neighboring countries of harboring secret agendas against the Burundi people. Sanctions also were used to deflect attention away from the regime's own inadequacies and from well-documented human rights concerns. By most accounts, sanctions did put pressure on the Buyoya regime, although not in the manner intended. By attempting to force early

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concessions, the international community may have increased Buyoya's vulnerability, weakened his support base, and strengthened the hand of extremist factions not interested in democratic change.

Even if sanctions prove to have been successful in encouraging democratic change in Burundi—and the case is not a compelling one—the unintended political and humanitarian effects should be acknowledged and contained where possible. Acknowledgment can best be accomplished through detailed and ongoing analysis of current political, humanitarian, and economic realities, and contained through adjusting sanctions to encourage positive change while minimizing the potential for political instability and harm.

Sanctions were further eased on April 16, 1997 to allow for the importation by humanitarian organizations of “all food and food products, all items relating to education and construction materials, as well as all types of medicines, and all agricultural items and inputs in order to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Burundi.”<sup>1</sup> On May 13, Buyoya publicly acknowledged that his government had been meeting secretly with CNDD in Rome.<sup>2</sup>

### *Recommendations*

- Regional and international leaders should meet to review current political realities in Burundi, the socioeconomic situation, and the role currently being played by sanctions, which should be reworked to reflect these realities and retargeted to support the forces of democratic changes and put pressure on the regime.
- Concessions by the coup leaders should be acknowledged and rewarded with appropriate political, but not humanitarian benefits. Humanitarian requirements have their own logic and imperative quite apart from political considerations and should be divorced from political rewards and punishments.
- The United Nations should take a public position either in favor of, or against, regional sanctions targeting Burundi.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Statement of the Heads of State and Leaders attending the Arusha IV Regional Summit, Arusha, Tanzania, April 15, 1997.

<sup>2</sup>IRIN, DHA/Humanitarian Coordination Unit, *Burundi Humanitarian Situation Report*, May 6-13, 1997.

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## INTRODUCTION

Recent experience with economic sanctions has demonstrated that such measures have harmful consequences for civilian populations. This observation has prompted efforts, both within and outside the UN system, to seek ways to reduce sanctions' negative humanitarian impacts. In September 1996, researchers from Brown University, the University of Notre Dame, and the Fourth Freedom Forum began a thorough review of the UN's capacity to predict and respond to sanctions' ill effects. This process was undertaken at the request of the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee and draws on funds from a number of UN organizations.

During a preliminary round of discussions in October 1996, the researchers were encouraged to review the Burundi sanctions as the most recent and evolving example of sanctions as a policy tool. Eric Hoskins and Samantha Nutt, both medical doctors, were asked to conduct a field study and analysis of the humanitarian dimensions of economic sanctions imposed by neighboring countries against Burundi since July 1996. Hoskins and Nutt brought to this study extensive experience in international health issues. In addition, Hoskins has considerable expertise in the humanitarian impacts of sanctions and several years of field experience researching sanctions in post-war Iraq.

Apart from being part of the above-mentioned larger UN-commissioned study on sanctions, there were several important reasons why sanctions against Burundi deserved separate and detailed study. First, the Burundi sanctions are a regional initiative and, although recognized, are not mandated or enforced by the international community. It was therefore important to examine, for example, whether established UN norms and sanctions principles would be practiced by regional sanctioning authorities. Second, the process through which the various humanitarian exemptions were negotiated, and the advocacy role played by the international humanitarian community, made the Burundi sanctions an important case study. Third, at the time sanctions were

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imposed, Burundi was a country already in severe humanitarian crisis. Is there a threshold of human suffering, beyond which sanctions should no longer be imposed? Finally, more than 90 percent of Burundi's population engages in subsistence agriculture, and functions to a large extent outside of the country's formal economy. Might this characteristic of the Burundi economy partially insulate civilians from the harmful effects of sanctions?

The research by Doctors Hoskins and Nutt was also designed for use by policymakers and practitioners, while sanctions were still evolving. A preliminary report was issued by the authors in March 1997 to make initial findings and recommendations immediately available to those concerned with the Burundi sanctions.

## Methodology

This report is based on field research conducted by the authors in Burundi and Kenya between January 24 and February 21, 1997. Research included interviews with personnel from more than fifty United Nations agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), Burundian government offices and foreign embassies. Interviews and field visits were supplemented by an extensive review of all available documentation and related publications. The review was facilitated by the Nairobi-based UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), which compiles and disseminates extensive and useful documentation related to the humanitarian situation throughout the Great Lakes Region.

Field visits to Bujumbura Rural and the northern provinces of Ngozi and Muyinga provided the researchers with additional firsthand information on civilian conditions and the impact of sanctions. The majority of time spent, however, was in Burundi's capital Bujumbura, interviewing UN, NGO, and government personnel to benefit from their insight and experience regarding the economic sanctions.

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## Adequacy and reliability of existing data

It immediately became apparent in conducting this study that Burundi's internal crisis and civil war have had far-reaching and devastating human consequences. For this reason, it is exceptionally difficult to ascertain whether the observed humanitarian condition is the result of sanctions, the ongoing crisis, or a combination of factors. Although every effort is made to distinguish between the two events (armed conflict and sanctions), the authors are careful to avoid sweeping statements and generalizations ascribing causation.

Similarly, the ability to draw conclusions concerning the humanitarian impact of sanctions hinges on the presence of adequate and reliable baseline and ongoing data that describe civilian health and well-being. Even allowing for the serious methodological, logistical, and security constraints, the absence of reliable data on the condition of Burundi's civilian population is highly problematic. In many cases, the authors found that little or no data was available with which to describe the humanitarian status of the Burundi population. Although the authors were still able to describe the condition of the civilian population in some detail, there remains in Burundi a great need to rehabilitate in-country humanitarian information systems.



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## ACRONYMS

AFP	Agence France Presse
CNDD	Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FDD	Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie
FRODEBU	Front Démocratique du Burundi
FROLINA	Front de Libération National
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network for the Great Lakes (UN)
MRG	Minority Rights Group
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization for African Unity
OCIBU	Burundi Coffee Bureau
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ONAPHA	National Pharmaceutical Company
OTB	Burundi Tea Bureau
PALIPEHUTU	Parti de la Libération du Peuple Hutu
PANA	Pan-African News Agency
PARENA	Parti de la Rédressement National
REGIDESO	State Company for Production and Distribution of Water and Electricity
RSCC	Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

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UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPRONA	Union pour le Progrès National
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)
WHO	World Health Organization (UN)

## MAP OF BURUNDI



*United Nations Map No. 3753 Rev. 1, July 1995, Department of Public Information, Cartographic Section*



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## CHAPTER 1

### THE CONTEXT OF SANCTIONS

For the past four years, Burundi has been in severe crisis. The October 1993 assassination of the country's first democratically-elected president resulted in violent massacres and prolonged social upheaval that has claimed many tens of thousands of lives.<sup>1</sup> In 1997, nearly one million Burundians remain forcibly displaced from their homes. The internal crisis has fractured the country's economy, resulting in widespread and prolonged deprivation. Insecurity has made cultivation difficult, reducing domestic production of food. Social programs are in collapse, while traditional safety nets are lacking due to the separation of families and disruption of community life. Civil war, regional conflict, and the effects of the recent military-led coup are sustaining a human crisis in Burundi that has already caused irreparable damage and suffering.

It is against this backdrop of continuing violence and social upheaval that the effects of economic sanctions, described later in this chapter, must be measured.

#### Basic Indicators

Burundi is a small, densely populated, landlocked country in east-central Africa. The mid-1997 population is estimated at 5.9 million.<sup>2</sup> Only 10,740 square miles in size, Burundi's population density (570 persons per square mile) is second in Africa only to neighboring Rwanda. Ninety-two percent of the population reside in rural areas (the African average is 30 percent), on small plots of land, engaged primarily in subsistence farming.

Historically, agriculture has produced over half of Burundi's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the country remained self-sufficient in food until 1993. Commercial agriculture makes up most of Burundi's exports. Coffee normally accounts for between 75-85 percent of export earnings, followed by tea and cotton.

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Most exports transit through neighboring countries and the ports of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Mombassa (Kenya)—some 2,000 kilometers to the east. In 1994, Burundi's Gross National Product (GNP) was estimated at only \$160 per capita, making it among the world's poorest countries according to World Bank statistics. It ranks 166 out of 174 nations on UNDP's 1996 Human Development Index. Burundi has a consistently high trade deficit (\$50-\$100 million annually) and a foreign debt in excess of \$1 billion. Foreign debt servicing amounts to 25-35 percent of annual export earnings.

Burundi's impoverishment is reflected in all basic indicators measuring socioeconomic status (Table 1.1). Life expectancy is only 51 years. Eighty-five percent of rural residents live below the poverty level. One-third of children under five are malnourished, and nearly 20 percent of all children die before reaching 5 years of age. Government expenditure on health is only \$0.75 per person per year, one-tenth the amount allocated in the 1997 budget to defense. Adult literacy, already at low levels, continues to decline, with a full 50 percent of males and 75 percent of Burundian women unable to read or write.

Burundi is comprised of three population groups—the Twa (1 percent), Tutsi (15-20 percent), and Hutu (80-85 percent). It has been the perceived differences between the Tutsi and Hutu and the political manipulation of these perceptions by power-seeking elites that has formed the deep-rooted ideological basis for Burundi's struggle since independence, obtained from Belgium in 1962.

The recent violence in Burundi, according to the Minority Rights Group (MRG) and other analysts, has been political rather than ethnic in nature. The events of October 1993 and subsequent years have been aimed by elites at "recapturing political power and privileges, lost or jeopardized after the June [1993] elections."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, although the conflict in Burundi is generally perceived as between Hutu and Tutsi—and there can be no question that these differences have been exploited by elites in their political strategies—the historical basis for this argument is not certain. Even less certain is the precise historical origin of Hutu and Tutsi—and

Table 1.1: Basic Socioeconomic Indicators

Indicator	Burundi	Burundi Sub-Saharan Africa
	1991	1995
<b>Demographic Indicators</b>		
Population (millions)	5.7	6.4
Life expectancy (years)	48.0	51.0
% Population urbanized	5.0	8.0
<b>Economic Indicators</b>		
GNP per capita (U.S. \$)	210.0	160.0
% below urban poverty level	55.0	55.0
% below rural poverty level	85.0	85.0
<b>Health</b>		
Infant mortality rate	108.0	106.0
Under-5 mortality rate	181.0	176.0
% urban with access to safe water	100.0	93.0
% rural with access to safe water	34.0	54.0
% urban with access to health services	—	100.0
% rural with access to health services	—	79.0
% of 1-year-olds vaccinated against measles	75.0	50.0
<b>Nutrition</b>		
% of under-five, underweight (moderate and severe) children	38.0	37.0
calorie supply as % of requirements	84.0	80.0
<b>Education</b>		
Male adult literacy rate (%)	61.0	49.0
Female adult literacy rate (%)	40.0	23.0
% of males enrolled in primary school	77.0	76.0
% of females enrolled in primary school	60.0	62.0

Source: UNICEF, State of the World's Children 1997 (New York: Oxford University Press),  
UNICEF, State of the World's Children 1993 (New York: Oxford University Press),  
World Bank, World Development Report 1994 (New York: Oxford University Press).

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whether distinctions between the two groups pertain more to ethnicity or to class.

### **Crisis and Conflict (1993-1996)**

The first 30 years of Burundian independence were characterized by frequent power struggles that resulted in violent upheavals, thousands of civilian deaths, and large population displacements. Perceived ethnic differences between Hutu and Tutsi were regularly manipulated by ruling elites to maintain control. Monopolization of both political and military power in the hands of primarily Tutsi elites continued from 1966 until 1993. By the early 1990s, however, democratic reforms introduced by Burundi's military leader Major Pierre Buyoya culminated in June 1993 multiparty elections. The result was a dramatic shift in power to majority rule, legislative dominance by the opposition Front Democratique du Burundi (FRODEBU), and a strong majority (65 percent) in presidential elections for FRODEBU party leader and Hutu, Melchior Ndadaye.

Less than six months later, Ndadaye, Burundi's first democratically-elected president, was assassinated by the military during a coup attempt in Bujumbura. His assassination sparked nationwide violence between Hutu and Tutsi, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 50,000 or more civilians. An estimated 700,000 refugees, primarily Hutu, fled to Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zaire. An additional 600,000 persons (both Tutsi and Hutu) became internally displaced within Burundi. As a result, nearly one-quarter of the entire population were refugees or internally displaced persons.<sup>4</sup>

In January 1994, Burundi's National Assembly elected Cyprien Ntaryamira as Burundi's new president. Three months later, President Ntaryamira and Rwanda President Juvenal Habyarimana were killed in a plane crash near Kigali. In September 1994, a Convention of Government prescribed a coalition government with power-sharing, dramatically reducing the authority of the elected National Assembly. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, a Hutu, was chosen to serve as president of Burundi for the remaining term

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of government, until June 1998. He was ousted by the military on July 25, 1996.

The period from October 1993 to July 1996 witnessed increasing violence and political instability, ultimately leading to full-scale civil war. The genocidal events that occurred in Rwanda during 1994 led to new mass movements into Burundi. Large numbers of Burundi refugees, who had fled to Rwanda in 1993, returned and a mass influx of some 200,000 Rwandan refugees moved into Burundi's northern provinces.

By mid-1994, Hutu militants had organized into armed factions, including the Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (FDD), and had begun their campaign of violence. At the same time, killings and other acts of violence, committed by the largely Tutsi Burundi military and by Tutsi militias, also escalated. An estimated 10,000-15,000 civilians were killed during 1995, and many tens of thousands were displaced due to raids and terror campaigns committed by both sides.

The civil war entered a new phase in March 1996 when armed groups extended their attacks to the southern provinces of Burundi. Fighting had previously been largely restricted to northern Burundi and around the capital, Bujumbura. By July 1996, the number of Burundi refugees in Zaire and Tanzania was estimated to be in excess of 200,000, while an additional 400,000 civilians were internally displaced.

The impact of the 1993-1996 crisis and civil war has therefore been enormous, both in terms of the direct human cost and devastating socioeconomic impact. Economic decline, damage to basic infrastructure, and a reduction in essential services have worsened conditions for all Burundians, especially women and children. This decline in human security caused by the conflict must be kept in mind when reviewing the effects of economic sanctions. There is no question that the damaging human and socioeconomic effects of the crisis far outweigh the negative humanitarian aspects of the regional embargo observed thus far.

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## The Military Coup of July 25, 1996

In response to the escalating violence in Burundi, and fearing genocide, the international community stepped up efforts to mediate an end to the crisis. In August 1995, the UN created an International Commission of Inquiry to establish the facts relating to the events of October 1993 and to recommend measures for bringing those responsible to justice. In December 1995, the secretary-general wrote to the president of the Security Council expressing his fear of “violence on a massive scale” in Burundi and set out three proposals for action: a rapid reaction force, armed guards for humanitarian organizations, and human rights observers.

From late April through mid-June 1996, former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere hosted a series of talks, known as the Mwanza Peace Process, between the leaders of Burundi’s two main political parties, FRODEBU and UPRONA. Before 1992, UPRONA was the sole legal party and after the 1993 elections, the only opposition party with seats in the national assembly. Prior to the 1996 coup, the prime minister was an UPRONA member. The talks then stalled over UPRONA’s refusal to meet with CNDD (the main political arm of the insurgents) and the latter’s insistence that it negotiate only with the Burundian military.

With the talks at an impasse, Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa convened on June 25, 1996 a summit meeting of regional heads of state in Arusha, Tanzania. The talks were attended by President Ntibantunganya and Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo of Burundi, who agreed to request regional “security assistance” in an effort to quell the violence in Burundi. This agreement was quickly rejected by both UPRONA and CNDD, as well as by hard-line elements within the Burundi military, further eroding the coalition government. UPRONA called for Ntibantunganya’s resignation, while former Burundian leader Jean-Baptiste Bagaza called for the president and prime minister to be overthrown. Bagaza, a Tutsi, ruled Burundi from 1976-1987, when he was deposed by Major Pierre Buyoya. He currently leads the Parti de la Rédressement National (PARENA), the only party not to sign

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the 1994 Convention of Government.

On July 23, 1996, President Ntibantunganya attended the funeral in Gitega of some 300 Tutsi victims of a massacre several days earlier. An angry crowd began throwing stones at the president, who was quickly escorted back to Bujumbura, where he sought refuge in the American ambassador's residence and remained until mid-1997. Other Hutu ministers and politicians, including the speaker of the National Assembly and the foreign minister, subsequently sought refuge in the German embassy.

Two days later, on July 25, the Burundian Minister of Defense named Major Pierre Buyoya, Burundi's leader from 1987-1993, as the new president, dissolved the National Assembly, banned all political parties, and suspended the country's Constitution.

The response of the international community was swift and critical. Regional governments took their condemnation one step further by imposing comprehensive economic sanctions against Burundi one week later, on July 31.

### **The Imposition of Sanctions**

Hopes that Burundi would receive and accept foreign troops to stem the country's violence ended with the announcement of the July 25 military coup. Stung by what seemed a betrayal of their mediation efforts, neighboring countries were swift to declare their opposition to Major Buyoya's regime. On July 31, heads of state or their representatives from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Zaire, Cameroon (as OAU chair), and OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, met in Arusha to discuss recent events in Burundi.<sup>5</sup>

The regional summit, known as Arusha II, strongly condemned the coup in Burundi and called upon the Bujumbura regime to "immediately undertake specific measures aimed at returning to constitutional order." Specifically, summit participants made three demands: restoration of the National Assembly, the reinstating of political parties, and immediate and unconditional negotiations with all parties to the conflict.

They also expressed support for Nyerere's mediation efforts,

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indicating that negotiations should take place within the framework of the Mwanza Peace Process. To help achieve the above demands, they agreed to “exert maximum pressure on the regime in Bujumbura including the imposition of economic sanctions in order to bring about conditions which are conducive to a return to normalcy in Burundi.”<sup>6</sup> Official country declarations concerning the imposition of sanctions followed promptly on August 2 in Tanzania, August 5 in Kenya, August 7 in Ethiopia and Uganda, August 9 in Rwanda and Zaire, and August 16 in Zambia.

Rwanda initially gave conflicting signals in response to the sanctions appeal. On August 6, Vice President Paul Kagame told journalists that economic sanctions were not the right approach to stem violence in Burundi. He was critical of the Arusha II summit, saying that a mechanism should have been put in place so that the timing of the imposition of sanctions was a regional measure rather than announced country-by-country. The following day, however, he indicated that Rwanda would abide by the sanctions, which were formally declared by Rwanda August 9.

The imposition of regional sanctions took the international community completely by surprise.<sup>7</sup> Generally, the reaction was one of considerable praise for the efforts of regional leaders in promoting democratic principles, although the international community refrained from giving explicit support to the sanctions. The Burundi regime went to great lengths to point out that the United Nations had never expressed its support for the sanctions.<sup>8</sup>

The international community’s ambivalence toward sanctions reflected to some extent its nervousness regarding their potentially negative impacts on Burundi’s civilian population. The absence of provisions exempting humanitarian items from the sanctions countered recent UN practice. Ironically, the absence of an explicit “sanctions policy” within the UN system may have contributed to the initial inclusiveness with which regional sanctions were applied. At present, there appears to be no clear “guiding force” on UN sanctions, including the necessity for humanitarian exemptions that emanate from either New York or Geneva.

On August 30, UN Security Council Resolution 1072 expressed the Council’s “strong support for the efforts of regional

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leaders, including at their meeting in Arusha on July 31, 1996.” Passed unanimously, Resolution 1072 contained no direct reference to economic sanctions imposed by governments party to the Arusha Summit. Paragraph 11 does, however, set a deadline of October 31, before which unconditional negotiations between all political parties and factions must begin. In the absence of such talks, the UN will consider “the imposition of measures...to further compliance...[including] a ban on the sale or supply of arms...and measures targeted against the leaders of the regime and all factions who continue to encourage violence and obstruct a peaceful resolution of the political crisis in Burundi.”<sup>9</sup> The OAU was marginally less equivocal. Its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention on August 5 issued a *Communiqué on Burundi* that “fully supported the conclusions of the second Arusha Regional Summit.”<sup>10</sup>

Although the avoidance of direct UN endorsement of regional sanctions was intentional, the UN lost a valuable opportunity to provide constructive and guiding influence to regional leaders regarding the humanitarian aspects of sanctions. In exchange for obtaining explicit international support for sanctions, regional leaders might then have deferred somewhat to “international expertise” regarding their management, humanitarian exemptions, enforcement, and impact monitoring. As it was, the UN’s broad support for regional “efforts” was generally understood by those in the region to imply tacit support for regional sanctions.

On August 16, regional foreign ministers met to review progress. They established a Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee (RSCC), under the Chairmanship of General Sarakikya, the Tanzanian High Commissioner to Kenya, to “harmonize, monitor and coordinate the activities of the national sanctions committees.” Sanctions against Burundi were specified as “comprehensive”, exempting “only human medicines” and “emergency basic food aid to Rwandese refugees.” A travel ban against “all members of the Buyoya regime” was imposed. An exemption for emergency food aid to *displaced* populations was denied, apparently due to concerns that such foodstuffs might be diverted, and with humanitarian agencies unable to guarantee its equitable distribution within Burundi.

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By this time, however, sanctions were already causing higher food prices, while tight import restrictions were beginning to affect UN and NGO operations. Those engaged in providing humanitarian assistance to the Burundi civilian population had already begun to express their concern regarding the strict nature of the embargo. RSCC members were convinced, however, that sanctions would require only one or two months to fulfill their objectives. Indeed, they believed that “tough” sanctions would bring the regime to the negotiating table faster, with less overall civilian hardship, than other available options. Kenya’s foreign minister declared to reporters on August 7, “If everybody cooperates, it will not take a month.” His Government recognized “that the innocent Citizens of Burundi may suffer as a result of the imposition of economic sanctions”, but that these were “unavoidable sacrifices” to prevent further deterioration of the situation in Burundi.<sup>11</sup>

Chapter 2 reviews the impact of sanctions on Burundi’s economy and society. Chapter 3 assesses their impact on the work of humanitarian organizations.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>According to the UN, ethnic fighting which followed President Ndadaye’s assassination in October 1993 resulted in the death of an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 persons and the movement of nearly one million. Amnesty International estimated that an additional 50,000 civilian deaths occurred from 1994 until June 1996. In November 1996, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Paolo Sérgio Pinheiro estimated that 10,000 persons had been killed since the July 25 military coup.

<sup>2</sup>UNHCR estimates that as of January 1997, approximately 300,000 Burundians reside as refugees in the neighboring countries of Tanzania, Rwanda and Zaire.

<sup>3</sup>Minority Rights Group, “Burundi: Breaking the Cycle of Violence” (March 1995).

<sup>4</sup>A *United Nations International Commission of Inquiry* into the October 1993 coup attempt, assassination and massacres was presented to the UN

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secretary-general just two days before the July 25, 1996 military coup.

<sup>5</sup>Although Zaire became the Democratic Republic of Congo in April 1997, the text refers to the nation as it existed during the period under review.

<sup>6</sup>Former Tanzanian President Nyerere formally discussed his intention to call for sanctions against Burundi with Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on July 24, 1996 as the coup was unfolding.

<sup>7</sup>It is important to note that the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burundi advocated sanctions in a written press statement dated July 18, 1996. "Should the Burundi authorities refuse to respect the commitments undertaken there (at the Arusha Summit on June 25), the international community must not shrink from its responsibilities. It should then consider applying sanctions against Burundi. It could also envisage collective sanctions, aimed at reducing international assistance or suspending certain United Nations programmes."

<sup>8</sup>"Les sanctions n'ont jamais été soutenues par la communauté internationale. Aucun texte du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies n'a été adopté à cet effet." Written correspondence to the authors from the government of Burundi dated March 26, 1997, transmitted through Mr. Nakaha Stanislas, Burundi's ambassador to Kenya.

<sup>9</sup>*UN Security Council Resolution 1072* (August 30, 1996).

<sup>10</sup>A comment by UN official Lakhdar Brahimi in the preface situates the regional sanctions against Burundi in relation to other similar measures elsewhere.

<sup>11</sup>Buchizya Mseteka, "Kenya clamps blockade on Burundi," Reuters, August 5, 1996 (dateline Nairobi).



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## CHAPTER 2

### THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF SANCTIONS

The humanitarian impacts of sanctions are difficult to measure under any circumstances. In the case of Burundi, distinguishing between sanctions' ill-effects and the socioeconomic impact of nearly four years of upheaval and internal conflict is particularly problematic.<sup>1</sup>

It should be stated at the outset that the effects of the prolonged crisis far outweigh the socioeconomic effects of sanctions thus far. This was the unanimous consensus of the personnel interviewed during the course of this study, whether from humanitarian or political institutions. This fact does not detract from the considerable negative consequences of the sanctions. However, it underlines the crucial imperative that the conflicting parties to the civil war must soon reach a negotiated and just settlement.

#### Economic Effects

Burundi is overwhelmingly rural, its economy based almost wholly on agriculture. Before the 1993 crisis, 54 percent of GDP came from agriculture. Industry, contributing 20 percent of GDP, consisted primarily of food processing, with minor activity in chemicals, textiles and construction. Burundi exported primary commodities, including coffee (75-85 percent), tea (10 percent), cotton, tobacco and alcohol. Imports include machinery and manufactured goods, petroleum, fertilizers and pesticides, foodstuffs, cement and asphalt, and textiles. Burundi's balance of trade was negative, averaging \$100 million annually from 1991-1993. Debt payment as a percent of exports averaged 35-45 percent. In 1993, 25 percent of Burundi's GNP came from official development assistance (ODA).<sup>2</sup>

At the household level, most Burundians work the fields. Bananas comprise roughly 50 percent of all food grown in

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Burundi, followed by sweet potatoes (20 percent), cassava (20 percent), beans (10 percent), maize and rice. Cash crops include coffee, tea, and cotton. As mainly subsistence farmers, Burundian farmers generally interact with the formal economy only to obtain necessary agricultural inputs (e.g. seeds, hoes, fertilizers, and pesticides) or to sell their surplus produce. As crops tend to differ among regions, whatever produce is not consumed locally is shipped to markets throughout the country, including in the capital Bujumbura. Until 1993, Burundi was largely self-sufficient in food.

### *Exports*

Burundi is heavily dependent on exports for foreign exchange earnings and government revenue. Since Burundi is landlocked, most exports transit through the Tanzanian capital Dar es Salaam or, to a lesser extent, the Kenyan port of Mombassa. The imposition of sanctions by Tanzania and Kenya severed these vital trade routes. Sanctions also prohibited entry of any goods, by any means, from Rwanda, Uganda, Zaire and Zambia. Only two means of entry were permitted into Burundi—and only for permitted UN humanitarian supplies—by land through Tanzania and by air via Nairobi.

Within days of sanctions being imposed, all legal exports from Burundi had ceased. More than \$100 million in annual exports were threatened. To avoid such a catastrophic loss, the regime in Bujumbura quickly set out to find ways to bypass the embargo. There is evidence that both coffee and tea is being exported directly to Europe from Bujumbura airport.<sup>3</sup> However, the quantities that can be exported are relatively small, and the route is expensive. Burundi has also established a regular air corridor with Brazzaville, Congo for both cargo and commercial flights. Since Congo and other countries outside the immediate region are not bound by the embargo, there is ostensibly nothing illegal about the shipments, except perhaps that sanctioning countries are violating the embargo by permitting such flights in their air space.

The difficulty of transporting exports by air suggests that

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Burundi also has found ways to smuggle coffee and tea exports by road, either through Rwanda or Zaire. Rwanda is known to be the source of much of the fuel and other contraband entering Burundi. Zaire was embroiled in its own civil war in early 1997 and was not in control of its eastern border with Burundi. A recent report for the European NGO Actionaid concluded that the Burundi Coffee Bureau (OCIBU) was again selling coffee to exporters in January 1997. The coffee auction houses were initially closed within days of the embargo being announced. This suggests, according to the study's author, that exporters are once again finding land routes through which to export the commodity.<sup>4</sup>

Reduced exports will also have an important impact on coffee and tea growers and their employees. If coffee and tea exports are indeed greatly diminished, as appears to be the case, then it is unlikely that either OCIBU or the Burundi Tea Bureau (OTB) will be in a position to purchase large quantities from growers. Lower demand may also translate into lower prices. Similarly, with decreased revenue from exports, the two companies may lack the currency with which to purchase new stocks through 1997.

### *Imports*

Burundi's annual imports have historically run in excess of \$175 million. They consist primarily of machinery and manufactured goods, fuel, fertilizers and pesticides, foodstuffs, cement, and textiles. As mentioned above, sanctions prohibit *any* imports into Burundi, except for specified items imported by the UN. It remains unclear whether human medicines can be imported by the private sector, although in practice they remain prohibited. The RSCC clearly stated that other exemptions are to be permitted only for UN-associated humanitarian activities.

The effects of regional sanctions were felt in Burundi within days of their implementation. In Bujumbura, many gasoline stations ran out of fuel during the first week of the embargo. Others faced huge lines of vehicles, some reportedly as long as 1.5 miles, as drivers attempted to stockpile fuel. The regime responded by introducing strict fuel rationing of 20 liters per month for each

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private car. A parallel market quickly emerged, selling gasoline at prices 500 percent above presanctions levels.

The Burundian franc (Bfr) began to lose value, falling 10 percent during the first week of sanctions. By October, it had lost roughly 40 percent of its value. Burundi's port on Lake Tanganyika was deserted and its international airport was closed. In Tanzania, thousands of tons of freight were stranded in the port of Dar es Salaam and up to 10,000 tons of maize, fertilizer, and machinery at the Lake Tanganyika port of Kigoma.<sup>5</sup>

Salt, available only through import, doubled in price in a single day. Prices of other imported goods, including soap and sugar, began to climb as supplies dwindled and families stock-piled. Basic foods were still available in markets, although prices rose quickly. By early September, the price of bananas in Bujumbura had doubled from 30 to 60 cents a kilogram. Potatoes had increased in price by 50 percent. In large part, the price of foodstuffs increased due to higher transport costs for moving goods from the interior of the country to markets. By mid-September private pharmacies began running out of stocks of medicines. Retail outlets began laying off staff, in many instances closing, due to lack of customers. Industries, unable to obtain raw materials and spare parts, were forced to close or greatly reduce staff.

By October, however, fuel was again available in considerable quantities on the parallel market, rationing ended, and the price of gasoline declined from a high of 1,000 Bfr per liter to 300 Bfr. Food prices appeared to be stabilizing. It became clear that smugglers were thriving. Boats full of gasoline, diesel fuel, and scarce consumer items arrived across Lake Tanganyika from Zaire, Tanzania, and Zambia. First, jerry cans of fuel and then tanker trucks were reported coming across land borders with Rwanda and Tanzania. In late September, Burundi officially reopened its side of the border with Zaire, which had been closed since May, making it easier for those supplying the parallel market to bring supplies into the country.

As of February 1997, when in-country research for this report was conducted, gasoline and diesel fuel were both available on the parallel market. Cement, historically imported from Zambia, had

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reappeared, along with salt from Tanzania as well as other consumer products. Medicines were smuggled into Burundi and offered at high cost to the public.

The initial dramatic effects of the embargo have since given way to massive smuggling. As a result, most products are once again available in local markets, albeit at much higher cost to the consumer. The regime in Bujumbura benefits financially from only a few of these imports, which greatly erode its tax and revenue base. The indirect impacts of decreased imports on other sectors of the Burundi socioeconomic infrastructure are discussed below.

### *Revenue, Spending, and Service Delivery*

With legal exports cut off and the smuggling of fuel and other imports providing little or no revenue, the regime was gradually going bankrupt. Luc Rukingama, the regime's Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated in early October 1996 that the sanctions had resulted in losses of \$127 million in the economic sector and that inflation was running at 40 percent. Outside research noted a decline in total revenue of 34 percent during the period August to October 1996, and 50 percent for the month of December. Beer taxes apparently provided a remarkable 76 percent of total revenue in December 1996.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the decline in direct revenue (34 percent), Burundi lost most of its official development assistance (\$250 million annually precrisis). In October, the World Bank suspended nearly all support to Burundi. By February 1997, it was clear that the combined effect of these reductions would slowly bankrupt the regime. Foreign currency reserves, already low before sanctions, were rapidly being depleted. It was likely to become increasingly difficult for the regime to finance ongoing social and economic programs and to pay the salaries of civil servants and the army. More and more, NGOs and UN agencies were being asked to fund, supply, or administer health care, education, and other social services. As sanctions continued, even with increased illegal export of coffee and tea, any overall improvement in central revenue was unlikely.

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## *Industry*

Burundi's fledgling industrial base was particularly hard hit by sanctions. The ban on imports depleted supplies of raw materials, spare parts, and other external inputs. In Bujumbura, many industries were forced to shut down or lay off employees. A UNDP survey of 12 large companies in November 1996 estimated that 60 percent of workers had been laid off due to the effects of the embargo.<sup>7</sup> According to the Bujumbura Chamber of Commerce, more than 6,000 employees were laid off during the second half of 1996.<sup>8</sup> Certain enterprises, specifically Air-Burundi, the Post Office, hotels, the port of Bujumbura, coffee export agencies, and the airport had to reduce their employees to practically zero.

The National Pharmaceutical Company (ONAPHA) was unable to obtain raw materials for manufacturing essential drugs. Production has become erratic, with many drugs no longer available. Burundi's main brewery temporarily suspended distribution in October 1996 due to lack of fuel and spare parts. Amstel beer stopped production due to a shortage of imported labels. The production of soap, matches, plastic and steel tubing, paints, and insecticides had been greatly reduced or suspended by late 1996.

The impact of sanctions on industry has obviously been greatest in Burundi's capital. The effect has been to extinguish household incomes of laid-off employees while further decreasing tax revenue available to the regime.

## *Inflation and Price Increases*

The prohibition of imports mandated by sanctions resulted in immediate and dramatic price increases for certain essential items and services. However, the ongoing civil war, population displacement, and poor 1996 harvests also greatly contributed to the observed increases.

Within days of the imposition of sanctions, panic buying, hoarding, and stockpiling led to dramatic hikes in the prices of items such as salt, sugar, fuel, and most basic foodstuffs. As the population adjusted to the realities of sanctions, the rate of increase

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began to slow. With the onset of smuggling, prices generally leveled off, sometimes even falling from previous highs.

The price of salt, available exclusively by import, provides a useful guide to the observed price increases for many imported goods. Several weeks before sanctions, one kilogram of salt cost approximately 120 Bfr. One week after sanctions, the price of salt had more than doubled to over 250 Bfr per kilogram. During August and September, the price declined slightly (partly due to smuggling), stabilizing at around 200 Bfr per kilogram. In early October, there was again a rapid price increase to around 300 Bfr, where it remained into February 1997. The price fluctuations illustrated in Figure 2.1, which shows the presanctions price of salt indexed as 100.

Another illustration of the price rise in imports is the cost of fuel (Figure 2.2). As with salt, all of Burundi's fuel is imported. After less than one month of the embargo, the price of a liter of gasoline had risen from 165 Bfr to 1,000 Bfr, a six-fold increase. Subsequently, the price of fuel fluctuated according to the amount available on the parallel market, gradually declining to 600 Bfr per liter by February 1997.

The high cost and decreased availability of fuel negatively affected many sectors of the Burundi economy. Food prices throughout the country increased due to the higher cost of commercial transport, creating significant price differentials for many foodstuffs between surplus and deficit food-producing areas. Factories reduced output or closed altogether due to the scarcity and expense of gasoline and diesel. In early February 1997, the price of gasoline in Ngozi (near the Rwandan border) was approximately 100 Bfr cheaper than in Bujumbura, suggesting an illicit and stable supply route for fuel through Rwanda into Burundi.

Table 2.1 documents the price increases of selected items (in kilograms, unless otherwise noted) in the Bujumbura market, shown in Bfr.

The dramatic increase in the price of fish was due to restrictions placed on fishing in Lake Tanganyika as well as to insecurity. Sugar, produced locally, increased in price due to higher costs of

Figure 2.1: Weekly increase in price of salt (Bujumbura market)

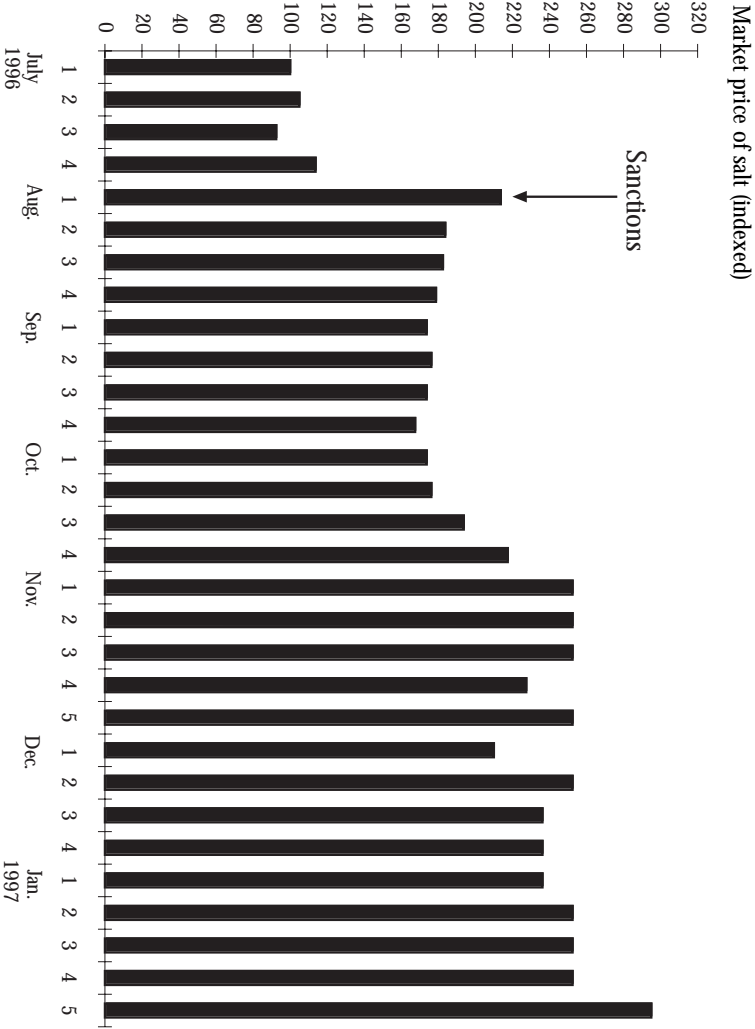
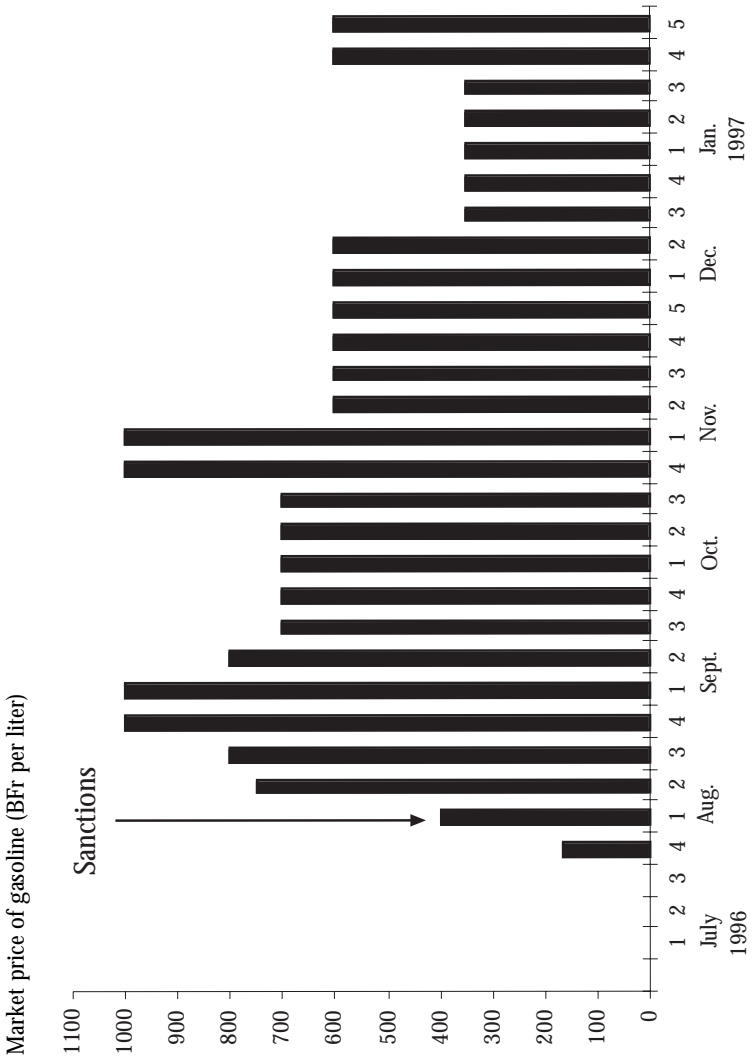


Figure 2.2: Weekly increase in price of gasoline (Bujumbura market)



transport and the shortage of industrial inputs. The price of beer, also produced locally, was tightly regulated by the state. The rise in price of beans following the imposition of sanctions can be seen in Figure 2.3.

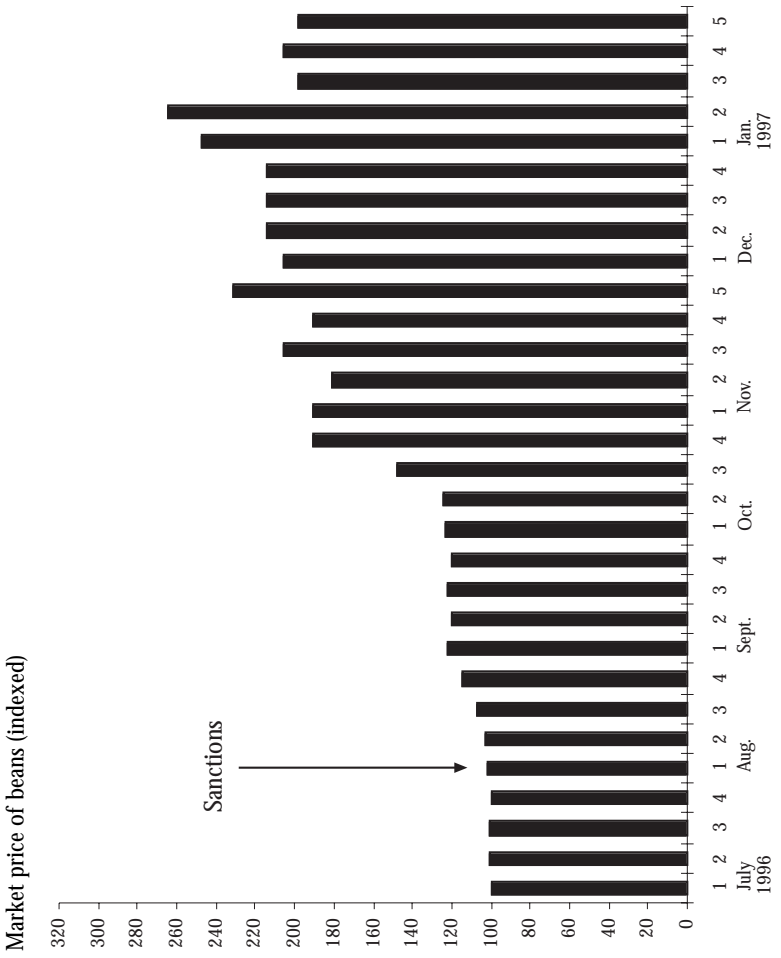
The embargo influenced the price of foodstuffs in several ways. First, as mentioned, the rising cost of fuel led to increased transport costs. Second, a shortage of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and other agricultural inputs resulted in lower crop yields and poor supply. Third, foods that otherwise would have been imported to offset poor harvests and to moderate prices (e.g. beans from Tanzania, potatoes from Rwanda) were blocked due to the embargo. Fourth, smuggled food had added to its price the cost of bribes and payoffs required to negotiate police and border controls. As stable smuggling supply lines were established, the prices of many imports stabilized or even declined slightly.

However, many factors unrelated to sanctions also influenced the price of foodstuffs. Foremost among these was the effect of the ongoing civil war. Internal displacement of up to 500,000 per-

Table 2.1: Percentage of Price Increases

Item	July 1996	February 1997	% Increase
Salt	120	300	150
Gasoline (liter)	165	600	264
Beans	120	240	100
Rice	180	380	111
Wheat flour	200	350	75
Bananas	100	200	100
Potatoes	80	130	63
Tomatoes	180	450	150
Powdered milk	1,600	5,270	229
Beef	1,000	1,400	40
Fish (fresh)	400	2,500	525
Cooking oil (liter)	250	300	20
Sugar	230	400	74
Beer	200	226	13
Charcoal (bag)	1,800	2,500	39
Cement (sack)	3,000	6,000	100

Figure 2.3: Weekly increase in price of beans (Bujumbura market)



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sons, mostly farmers, resulted in enormous reductions in areas planted. In addition, drought during 1996 decreased crop yields. FAO suggests that the main contributing factor to the post-sanctions rise in food prices has been “the succession of reduced harvests.”<sup>9</sup> Sanctions themselves contributed to poor harvests by decreasing the availability of quality seeds, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs.

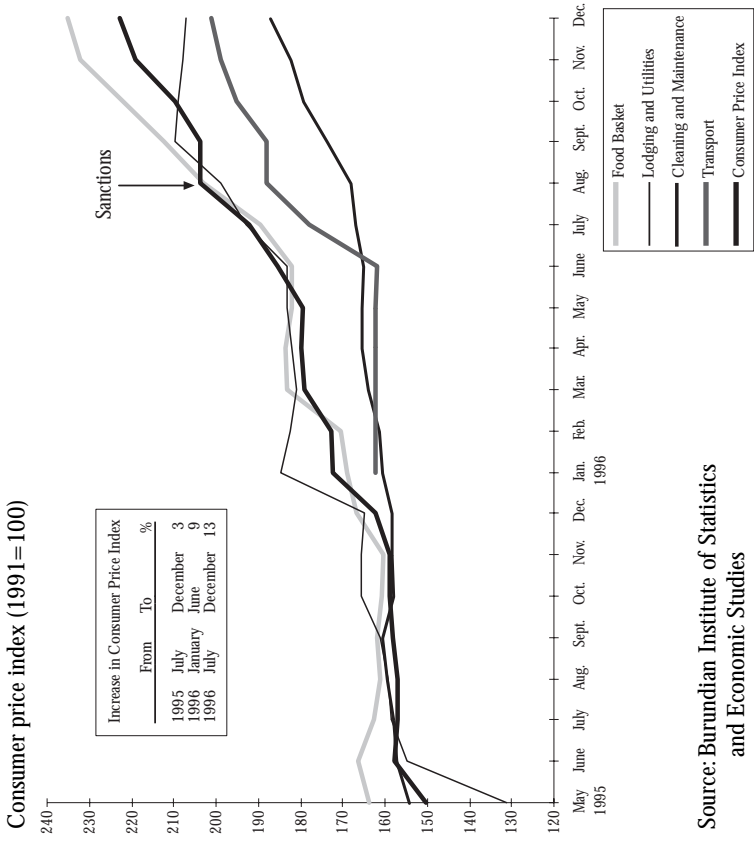
Sanctions also had a serious impact on the household. Many households, their incomes already reduced from unemployment and poor harvests, were unable to purchase sufficient quantities of food for their families. Even before sanctions, between 1994 and 1996, average per capita calorie intake in Burundi declined from 89 percent to 81 percent of recommended amounts, according to FAO estimates. Protein intake was estimated at only 83 percent of recommended amounts in 1995-1996.<sup>10</sup>

Malnutrition rates were already high among displaced populations and returning refugees. The post-sanctions increase in food prices further reduced the food purchasing power of households. The result was expected to be a further decline in food intake, a shift in household consumption patterns away from nutritious foods and toward less expensive, less nutritious foodstuffs, and a subsequent rise in malnutrition.

Thus at the micro level, the parallel impacts of sanctions and preexisting factors are dramatically evident. While war and drought had led to poor harvests and higher food prices, the embargo greatly aggravated an already perilous food security situation, further reducing the ability of families to cope.

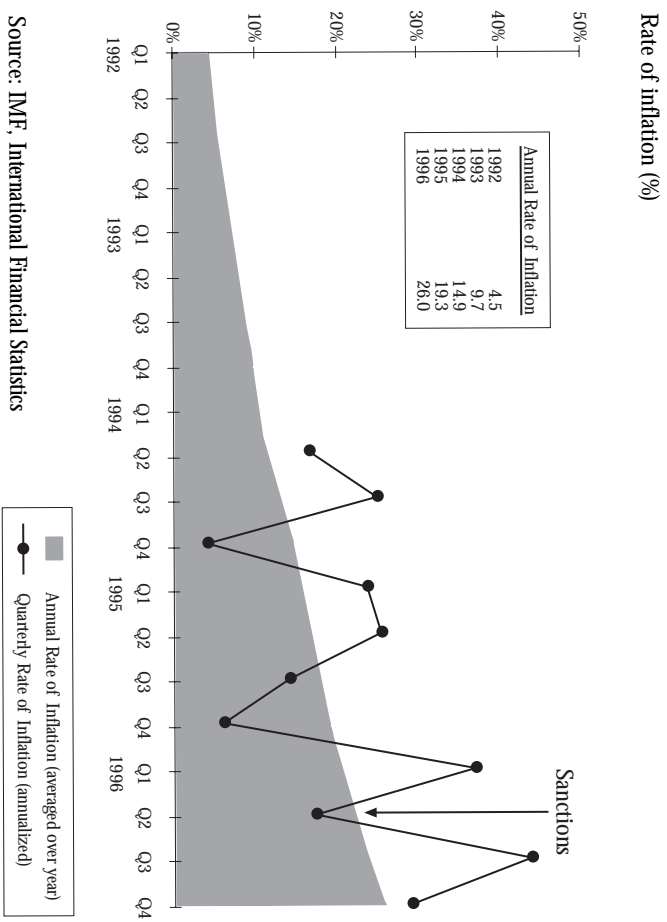
Sanctions-related inflation also affected the price of building and construction materials, medicines, household items, and spare parts. The sum total of these and other consumer items (food, lodging, utilities, furnishings, upkeep, health care, transport, education and leisure) make up Burundi’s Consumer Price Index (CPI). Figure 2.4 shows Burundi’s CPI from May 1995 until December 1996, some five months after the imposition of sanctions. The graph demonstrates an overall upward trend in cost of living during the entire 20-month period. Indeed, the trend had its origins in the period before the imposition of sanctions.

Figure 2.4: Increase in cost of living (Bujumbura)



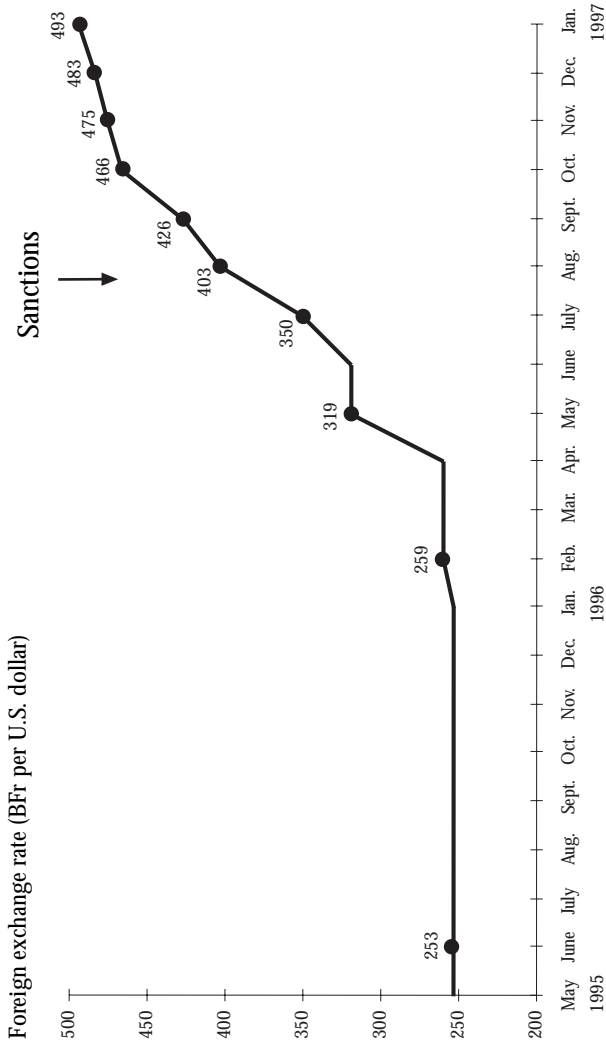
Source: Burundian Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies

Figure 2.5: Annual rate of inflation



Source: IMF, International Financial Statistics

Figure 2.6. Foreign exchange rate fluctuations



Source: IMF, International Financial Statistics

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However, CPI increases in the July-December 1996 period of 13 percent exceeded those during the previous six months (9 percent) and during the final six months of 1995 (3 percent).<sup>11</sup>

Finally, the impact of economic sanctions is also evident in the change in foreign exchange rate (Bfr/\$U.S.) over time. As in the case of the CPI, depreciation of the Burundian franc (Bfr) predates the imposition of sanctions (Figure 2.6). However, the rate of currency depreciation increased significantly after the 1996 coup and embargo. The loss of government revenue and reduced national productivity resulting from the embargo figure prominently in the rapid decline (41 percent) in the value of the Burundi currency in the six months following the August 1996 sanctions.

In summary, sanctions resulted in clear and substantial inflationary effects, particularly among foodstuffs and imported essentials. Some prices more than doubled following the embargo. Smuggling slowed the rate of increase for many items, as secure supply lines became established by road across all borders and by air to both Europe and Africa. However, the contribution of the civil war, the military coup, poor harvests, and general insecurity also contributed to inflationary tendencies.

## Agriculture

Agriculture is Burundi's main economic activity, contributing 54 percent of GDP before the 1993 crisis. It occupies more than 90 percent of Burundi's labor force, mostly as subsistence farmers. Once self-sufficient in food, Burundi's growing instability and population displacements have led to expanding food deficits and increased need for external food aid. There are three agricultural seasons.

Coffee is harvested between March and June, and tea all year round. Crops such as cassava and bananas are harvested throughout the year, offering a continual supply of food even during lean periods.<sup>12</sup>

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### *Subsistence Agriculture*

More than 90 percent of Burundi's population is rural and virtually all of these work the land. The main subsistence crops grown are cereals (maize, sorghum), pulses, tubers (sweet potatoes, cassava) and bananas. Rice is grown in the lowland areas and is usually sold as a local cash crop. Under normal circumstances, very little of the food produced is sold, with approximately 80 percent used for family consumption. Subsistence farming is carried out by hand, using the hoe. Farmers grow a mixture of crops, offering diversity as well as a safety net against crop failure and pests. The reduction in land holdings over the years to the current 0.6-0.8 hectare average has led to "associated cropping," for example planting beans under banana trees, or with maize.

Table 2.2: Seasonal Contributions to Percentage of Annual Production

Season	Duration	Main Crop	% Contribution
A (Agatasi)	September to January	Maize	35-40
B (Impeshi)	February to June	Beans	45
C (Marais)	July to August	Vegetables Maize	15-20

Food security in Burundi has deteriorated markedly since the start of the recent conflict. Thousands of farmers were killed, fled the country, or became internally displaced. Roughly one million civilians were uprooted from their homes due to the ongoing civil war, making it extremely difficult for them to continue growing food. Nonetheless, many internally displaced persons (IDPs) still had access to land and the possibility to work, whether on their own fields, neighbors' lands, or in communal fields.

Security is most precarious in the northern provinces, including Cibitoke, Bubanza, and Karuzi. As a result, crop production was reduced by some 50 percent in these three provinces during 1996. Insecurity also disrupted the supply and distribution of

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seeds, as well as the normal distribution of food between surplus and deficit areas. Drought in some parts of Burundi also contributed to lower 1996 yields. These factors together were responsible for continued below-average agricultural production.

According to the March 1997 *FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Burundi*, "There is little doubt that the economic embargo on Burundi has exacerbated the adverse effects of civil strife in the country and resulted in further lowering of agricultural production and incomes and a deterioration in the food supply situation."<sup>13</sup> The following negative effects were attributed to sanctions.

A combination of factors caused the shortage of seeds during the 1997 "A" season (See Table 2.3). Poor harvests during 1996 had reduced the availability of many seeds, particularly for cereals and pulses. The bean seed supply was tight in eastern provinces, where supplies were historically obtained from Tanzania. The shortage of fuel prevented distributing seeds from surplus to deficit provinces. Sanctions prohibited importing of any seeds until after the embargo was eased on September 21. Even then, supplies remained blocked in Tanzania and Rwanda until November, arriving too late for the 1997 A planting season.

Table 2.3: Observed Impacts and Outcomes of Sanctions

Observed Impact of Sanctions	Observed Outcome
1. Shortage of seeds	1. Reduced area planted
2. Shortage of fertilizer and inputs	2. Reduced yields
3. Increased cost of obtaining inputs	3. Negative impact on household economy
4. Higher fuel costs	4. Problems distributing food surplus to deficit areas; reduced trade and higher transport costs, leading to higher market prices for foods

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Although the embargo on fertilizers was eased on September 21, this proved too late for the 1997 A season. By mid-November, FAO had received only 400 out of the 4,000 tons of fertilizer that were still blocked at the Tanzanian/Burundian border. (At the time, Burundi was importing approximately 5,000 tons of fertilizer annually for noncash crops.) As a result, the 1997 A season food production was reduced by some 7 percent.<sup>14</sup> Roughly 2,200 tons of fertilizer had arrived by March 1997. Until April 1997, all other agricultural inputs including hoes (200,000 were needed) and phytosanitary products (e.g. pesticides and insecticides) were banned from import, further reducing the 1997 A harvest.

As indicated above, higher fuel costs affected food production in several ways. Increased transport costs reduced the distribution of seeds and surplus food, leading to provincial shortages, shrunken markets, and higher food prices. Fuel shortages also prevented the Ministry of Agriculture from making regular site visits to provide assistance and monitor conditions.

FAO/WFP suggested that the poor first-season (1997 A) crop was the combined result of “poor security, population movement, sanctions and adverse weather conditions in some parts of the country.” The crop was 18 percent below pre-crisis A season averages. Pulses (edible seeds) and, to a lesser extent, cereals were most affected. The 1997 B and C season crops were expected to recover if farmers obtained sufficient imports of fertilizers, seeds, and other inputs and if there was no further deterioration in Burundi’s overall security situation. Assuming that FAO’s second and third 1997 harvest predictions proved correct, the total 1997 food deficit was estimated at the equivalent of 146,000 tons of cereals and pulses. This deficit would have to be met through imports.

### *Commercial Agriculture*

The main cash crops produced in Burundi are coffee, tea, cotton and, to a lesser extent, sugar, palm oil, and tobacco. In addition, 80 percent of bananas grown are used in beer production, generally providing around 50 percent of farmers’ cash

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income. Coffee provides around 15 percent of such income.<sup>15</sup>

Most coffee is grown on peasant small holdings. Its cultivation is encouraged as a practical way for subsistence farmers to earn cash for capital expenditures and to pay for school fees and materials. Coffee exports are required to pay for Burundi's imports and for civil service salaries. Coffee production has declined as Burundi's insecurity has increased, from 51,000 tons in 1994 to 25,600 in 1996. Before the coup, the former agriculture minister estimated that 20 percent of coffee growers had fled the country, and that a further 20 percent were displaced. Many have switched to other foodstuffs.

Agricultural inputs for cultivating coffee, including insecticides, have been prohibited by the embargo. Although prospects for the 1997 harvest were not known early in the year, it seemed likely that harvests once again would be reduced by a combination of chronic insecurity and shortage of prohibited inputs.

Sanctions have had a dramatic effect on coffee exports. The embargo prohibits all exports from Burundi, including the 75-85 percent of export earnings derived from coffee sales. FAO indicates that coffee exports fell from 29,000 tons in 1995 to less than 14,000 tons in 1996, resulting in a drastic decrease in the regime's foreign exchange earnings.<sup>16</sup> Most small producers, however, had already sold their coffee to export companies prior to the embargo. With current stockpiles of coffee nearly 50 percent of the expected level of production, it remained to be seen how much of the upcoming harvest exporters would purchase, and at what price. The Burundi Coffee Bureau (OCIBU) and coffee exporters may also lack sufficient funds to purchase crops.

The impact of sanctions on coffee was important politically as well as economically. As one analyst observed in February 1997:

Because of the vital significance of coffee export earnings to the Burundian economy, the prevention of coffee exports is the key to the credibility of regional sanctions. If they are successfully enforced, Burundi will be very short of export earnings, which will affect everyone in the coun-

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try indirectly, and thousands of small-scale coffee producers will be directly affected because of lost income. The evidence at the moment, however, is not pointing in this direction.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the embargo, coffee was still being exported illegally in early 1997. The sale by OCIBU of 3,900 tons of coffee in January and February suggested that illicit routes for coffee export were by then well-established. If this rate of sale (and presumed export) continues throughout 1997, export levels could approach those of 1995. Whether this would translate into foreign currency earnings for the regime depends largely on who now controls the coffee's sale and export. A resumption of exports should benefit the small producer. Even with illegal export of coffee, sanctions were having a continuing and damaging effect on the regime's ability to generate foreign currency through the export of coffee. However, this effect appeared to diminish over time.

The impact of sanctions on tea production and export generally mirrored that of coffee. The export of tea fell from 6,700 tons in 1995 to 4,000 tons in 1996, according to FAO. Since sanctions were imposed, there had apparently been illicit exports by plane directly to Europe. Production of tea was also likely to suffer due to sanctions and the resulting shortage of fertilizers and other inputs. On July 3, the Teza tea factory was destroyed during fighting. Although it is being rebuilt, sanctions are reportedly slowing its repair. Once again, civil strife joined with sanctions to take a toll.

### *Livestock*

Large herds of cattle can still be found, but the role of pastoralism in Burundi has declined due to a reduction in individual land holdings. In 1994, there were an estimated 380,000 cows, 350,000 sheep, and 850,000 goats. Most settled farmers, on the other hand, own livestock, usually goats, chicken and ducks. Animal products provide less than 3 percent of the total calories and protein consumed by civilians.

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The embargo has prevented importation of veterinary products, most notably animal vaccines and acaracides. Consequent shortages could result in epidemics of transmissible diseases, including those carried by ticks, causing increased animal disease and mortality. The embargo also brought about the closure of the ALCOVIT feed factory. Inability to import cotton seed from Zaire has resulted in a shortage of oil cake, a by-product, for feed. This in turn has seriously affected the poultry industry, resulting in higher market prices.<sup>18</sup>

### Health

As with agriculture, the ongoing civil war caused grave damage to Burundi's health infrastructure. Health care facilities were destroyed. Local health services were closed or became inaccessible due to the prevailing insecurity. The insecurity and the lack of remuneration has reduced the ranks of health professionals, particularly outside the capital. Essential drugs have also been in short supply. Preventive services have declined, including immunizations, prenatal care, and nutrition monitoring. Civilians, unable to pay health care user fees, have come to rely increasingly on nonstate health care providers, including churches, nongovernmental organizations, and other private institutions.

These difficulties have been exacerbated during recent months by the sanctions. To be sure, certain health-related items were approved for import during the embargo by the RSCC. The exemption of human medicines on August 16 was followed on September 6 with baby foods and other essential requirements for infants and hospitalized patients. Also on September 6, emergency medical and laboratory supplies were exempted, as was kerosene for the vaccine cold chain. On October 21, laboratory supplies and kerosene for refrigerating medicines were added to the approved list.

Despite these exemptions, however, health services were badly affected by the embargo. RSCC approval of the stated exemptions did not quickly unlock customs procedures. Some supplies remained blocked and some specific approvals delayed. In

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addition, the exemptions represented only a tiny fraction of health-related inputs required by Burundi's vulnerable civilian population and the institutions serving them. To add to the difficulties, the stated items could be imported only by the UN and associated NGOs, not by the Burundi regime or the private sector.

### *Medical Services*

Burundi's 35 hospitals and 290 health centers were badly affected by the ongoing civil war. An estimated 40 percent of its health workers either died or fled the country. Many health facilities in conflict areas remained closed while others had programs greatly reduced due to chronic shortages of personnel, supplies, funding, and supervision. Over the years, NGOs have taken over greater responsibility for health services, particularly for Burundi's more vulnerable displaced population, as government capacity has declined.

Sanctions have exacerbated the already poor condition of Burundi's health facilities. Despite exemptions, the regime and the private sector are in practice prohibited from importing medical supplies and equipment. Syringes, gloves, catheters, and x-ray film, already in short supply due to the crisis, were by early 1997 nearly exhausted. Surgery was frequently canceled due to a lack of surgical materials and anesthetics. Conditions in Burundi's rural hospitals were generally far worse than in the capital.

The reduction in foreign currency earnings due to the ban on exports diminished the regime's ability to pay health workers. The high cost of fuel greatly reduced Ministry of Health supervision of rural hospitals and health centers. High transport costs prevented distribution of scarce resources, including medicine, to peripheral sites. Epidemiological surveillance, essential for early warning of outbreaks of infectious diseases, was further hampered by high transport costs.

Until the ban on travel was clarified by the RSCC on February 13, 1997, it was not possible to evacuate emergency patients to neighboring countries (generally Nairobi, Kenya) for advanced medical care.

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## *Essential Drugs*

All human medicines were technically exempt from sanctions from August 16, 1996 onward. Yet there are numerous instances in which NGOs had shipments of medicines blocked in neighboring countries, especially Tanzania, for months. World Vision, for example, had a shipment of medicines blocked in Dar es Salaam from August until November 25. Four containers of medicines belonging to Caritas remained in Tanzania from August until December 13. Such shipments were particularly important since neither the private sector nor the Burundi regime were allowed to import medicines.

The state company responsible for importing, manufacturing, and supplying medicines to the country's health service is the National Pharmaceutical Bureau (ONAPHA), which was unable to obtain raw materials required for manufacturing essential drugs. As a result, production declined and supplies were sporadic. Many drugs were no longer manufactured due to lack of ingredients. UNICEF estimated that 75 percent of the drugs normally supplied by the Central Pharmaceutical Depot of the Ministry of Health were no longer available.<sup>19</sup> Although one of the main suppliers of essential drugs to the Burundi public health system, UNICEF lacked the funds and logistical capacity to airlift sufficient quantities of medicines to make up for the huge shortfall. As a result, supplies have become more concentrated in the capital, with peripheral hospitals and health centers going without.

Private pharmacies started running out of stocks of medicines as early as late August 1996. Unable to obtain new supplies from ONAPHA or to import medicines legally from Tanzania or Kenya, pharmacies either closed, functioned with a skeleton supply of medicines, or purchased medicines smuggled across the border.

In early September, WHO indicated that there was a worsening shortage of medicines (despite the exemption), giving the example that Bujumbura hospitals had run out of antifungal medications for AIDS-related illnesses.<sup>20</sup> Delivery of medicines to rural health centers had been nearly suspended due to insufficient fuel supplies. As a result, drug supplies in many provinces, already

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low from the effects of the crisis, were at a minimum.

### *Vaccination*

The impact of sanctions on the national vaccination campaign was particularly severe. Once a highly successful program, Burundi's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) had suffered great losses due to the civil war and insecurity. Despite the conflict, however, major strides had been made in 1995 and early 1996 (see Table 2.4).

Early in 1996, Burundi women launched a nationwide vaccination campaign in celebration of Women's Day on March 8. In response, the Ministry of Health, WHO, and UNICEF set a target of vaccinating 75 percent of all under-ones before the end of the year. The strategy chosen was a national campaign of 10-days duration, to be undertaken in each of the months of June, July, and August. The August portion, however, was canceled due to lack of fuel caused by the imposition of sanctions.

Table 2.4: Annual Percentages of Measles Vaccinations and Coverage

Year	% Fully Vaccinated	% Measles Coverage
1992	81	70
1994	51	43
1995	66	53
1996 (estimated)	75	50

By August 22, UNICEF indicated that "there are now no supplies of polio or BCG [antituberculosis] vaccines in the country."<sup>21</sup> In September, only three of 16 hospitals in Burundi had received their monthly supply of vaccines due to sanctions-related transport problems. Although by late September, a vaccine airlift was running reasonably well between Nairobi and Bujumbura, delivery of vaccines remained problematic. Mobile vaccination clinics, envisaged by the MOH and UN to aid in reaching the

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target of vaccinating 75 percent of eligible children under one year of age, were stalled due to lack of fuel. Health officials began to worry that the national coverage level would fall below the “minimum acceptable threshold” of 50 percent. Below that level there would be a serious risk of outbreaks of polio, measles, and other vaccine-preventable diseases. UNICEF estimated that approximately 50 percent of 190,000 targeted children under one year would not get vaccinated as a result of the sanctions.<sup>22</sup>

At the level of local health centers, vaccines were maintained viable through cooling in kerosene-powered refrigerators. Sanctions prohibited the importation of kerosene until September 6, at which time “limited quantities” were permitted. However, a specific quantity was not authorized until January 27, further delaying kerosene imports. Also of great concern at the health centers was the lack of disposable syringes and fuel for sterilization. Needles and syringes were routinely reused without proper sterilization, dramatically increasing the risk of transmission of HIV and hepatitis.

### *Water and Sanitation*

As with the other health components, the effect of sanctions on water and sanitation belongs in the context of the much larger and more damaging effects of civil war and internal conflict. Insecurity and a general lack of infrastructure maintenance had caused wide disruption of water and sanitation systems throughout the country. There also had been extensive damage and sabotage to rural water systems.

When the State Company for Production and Distribution of Water and Electricity (REGIDESO) tried to import 34 tons of calcium hypochlorite for the treatment of drinking water, sanctions prohibited it from doing so. Eventually, the shipment was approved by Tanzanian authorities after intervention by the UN. By then, however, the cargo ship had already departed Dar es Salaam, taking the calcium hypochlorite with it.

Much of Burundi’s vulnerable population depends on the UN and NGOs for providing and maintaining drinking water supplies.

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The shortage of fuel reduced water distribution to these populations via tankers. Small scale water schemes organized by UNICEF were suspended due to transport problems and a lack of construction materials such as cement, pipe, and plastic sheeting. Obtaining sufficient fuel for powering medium- and large-sized water systems remained a problem. Materials ordered from abroad for the provision of emergency water and sanitation facilities were routinely blocked from delivery.

As a result, more and more civilians were consuming untreated, contaminated water, increasing the risk of water-borne diarrheal diseases and epidemics.

### *Infectious Disease Outbreaks*

It is impossible to determine what role, if any, sanctions played in the various reported outbreaks of disease. These included a meningitis outbreak in Kirundo, first detected September 24, 1996 and a cholera epidemic in Bururi province declared December 29, which resulted in 549 confirmed cases and 23 deaths by January 15, 1997. In early October, WHO reported more than 200 cases of typhoid; between October and March, more than 8,000 cases of louse-borne typhus were reported. Several NGOs reported outbreaks of bacillary dysentery. Such outbreaks, however, underscored the need for a smoothly functioning pipeline available for the importation of emergency medical supplies should a serious epidemic be detected. Similarly, the shortage of fuel hampered efforts at a timely and effective epidemiological disease surveillance system and emergency response.

### **Nutrition**

Available data confirms a high rate of malnutrition among the civilian population before the sanctions were imposed. The food deficit and unstable conditions existing from 1993 had led to a deterioration in the nutritional status of the civilian population. By December 1995, 46 percent of children under five measured in a national survey were underweight, while 52 percent were stunted

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from chronic malnutrition.

In the camps for the internally displaced, the nutritional crisis was even more severe. A nutritional survey carried out in August 1996 by Médecins sans Frontières (Belgium) in the camps of Giohogazi and Nyogoro in Karusi province found high levels of wasting (14 percent). A mid-upper-arm circumference survey conducted by UNICEF in three displaced camps in Bujumbura in February 1996 revealed substantial levels (22 percent) of moderate and severe malnutrition.

Vulnerable children whose nutrition status was monitored by the UN and NGOs were often enrolled in supplementary feeding programs. Indeed, UNICEF supported the establishment of wet ration distribution at 130 health centers throughout the country that provided a daily ration to more than 30,000 children under five. Sanctions contributed to a shortage of UNIMIX for daily rations, while a shortage of fuel compromised delivery of supplies and supervision. As noted earlier, they were also a factor in reduced food production, further contributing to the overall food deficit and reduced caloric and protein intake by vulnerable sectors of the Burundi population.

Inquiring in early 1997, the authors were unable to obtain post-August 1996 nutritional surveys reflecting the effects of sanctions. The lack of studies was due to a combination of factors including poor security, higher costs of transport, and diminished logistical capacity resulting from sanctions. Although post-sanctions nutritional data was lacking, it can be expected that the combination of higher food prices and diminished household income would lead to a further deterioration in the nutritional status of the most vulnerable children.

## **Education**

As of January 1997, Burundi had 1,459 primary schools, of which only 72 percent were functioning. Again, the ongoing violence has been largely responsible for the closure of schools and deterioration of the educational system. Many schools were damaged or looted as a result of civil war and the lack of security.

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Parents were afraid to send their children to school, and teachers were afraid to teach. Young persons displaced by the conflict had particular difficulty in accessing the school system. Many were also needed to work on farms to support their families. State expenditures on education also dwindled.

A UNHCR/UNICEF mission to Bubanza in 1996 found that the number of functioning primary schools had fallen from 28 to 5 between 1993 and 1996. The number of registered students had dropped from a pre-crisis level of 13,852 to only 1,334. The numbers of teachers was also down. Primary school enrollment rate had declined from 52 percent in the school year 1992-1993 to 37 percent in 1994-1995 and less than 35 percent the following year.<sup>23</sup>

Although the crisis was most responsible for the deterioration in education, recent efforts to rehabilitate primary schools suffered due to the effects of the embargo. The sanctions put UNICEF's plans to train 3,000 teachers at risk. The high cost of fuel prevented transport of teachers to rural areas. Sanctions also prohibited the importation of educational supplies, including exercise books, chalk, pencils, pens, and printing materials for text books. The cost of such items, where available, was prohibitive for most households.

Families were increasingly unable to pay tuition and other education costs (for example, uniforms and supplies). In previous years, farmers had been encouraged to grow coffee to generate cash income for school-related expenses. With the imposition of sanctions, higher household expenses, as well as the ban on exporting coffee, made it more difficult for families to raise the income necessary for educational expenditures.

Schools are not only essential to enable future generations to reach their full potential, they also signal stability in both family and community life. The impact of the crisis and embargo on Burundi's faltering education system could cause repercussions far into the future.

Table 2.5: Populations and Observed Effects of Sanctions

Populations	Characteristics	Observed Effects of Sanctions
Rural households	Undisplaced rural households less dependent on formal economy Able to grow food	Reduced agricultural production Reduced access to cash income from coffee production Reduced purchasing power due to inflation Reduced quality of and access to health services; greater susceptibility to illness and disease Decreased educational opportunities for children
Urban households	Highly dependent on formal economy for employment and basic needs Little or no opportunity to grow food, resulting in more dramatic effects of higher food prices	Greatly increased unemployment Reduced purchasing power due to decreased household income and inflation Reduced quality of and access to health services; greater susceptibility to illness and disease Decreased educational opportunities for children
IDP Camps	Greatly (often totally) dependent on relief assistance Often few opportunities for employment or food production Community attachment and safety net often severed	Decrease in relief assistance, including both food and nonfood items More vulnerable population suffers from problems experienced by rural households, but risk may be greater due to reliance on relief assistance

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## Conclusion

Across the various sectors reviewed, the pattern is consistent: serious problems predating sanctions were exacerbated by the imposition of sanctions, which themselves had numerous effects on civilian populations, whether rural or urban, as indicated in Table 2.5. Such effects were demonstrably more serious on those in camps for Burundians displaced by the conflict.

At the end of the day, the people of Burundi are in the first instance no different from civilians in any other war-torn society. The conflict has created major suffering, economic destitution, and physical as well as mental hardship. The imposition of economic sanctions worsens an already grim situation, raising serious moral and ethical questions. The effects of sanctions on humanitarian activities are the subject of the following chapter. An analysis of the political effects is offered in the final chapter.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Difficulties in measuring the effects of sanctions have received more attention in recent years as the negative effects of sanctions on civilians and on humanitarian agencies have become more apparent. For a review of the issues, see the several texts cited in the Preface.

<sup>2</sup>For these and additional statistics, see World Bank, *World Development Report 1994* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1994), and Economist Intelligence Review, *EIR Country Profile, Burundi, 1995-96* (London, EIR, 1995).

<sup>3</sup>International personnel transiting the airport have observed bags of tea and coffee off-loaded from trucks into the airport's cargo area. One NGO was reportedly asked to fly coffee and tea out of Burundi on one of its chartered flights.

<sup>4</sup>Gregory Salter, *Sanctions in Burundi*, (Actionaid: London, February 1997), 13. [Also available at [www.oneworld.org/actionaid](http://www.oneworld.org/actionaid)]

<sup>5</sup>Chris Tomlinson, "Rwanda Planning to Impose Sanctions as of August 15," Associated Press, August 8, 1996.

<sup>6</sup>See Salter, 13.

<sup>7</sup>UNDP Burundi, "Impact de l'embargo sur la population," November 1996.

<sup>8</sup>Food and Agriculture Organization, *Special Report, FAO/WFP Crop*

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and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Burundi, March 4, 1997, Section 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Section 6.

<sup>10</sup> IMF *International Financial Statistics* gives annual rates of inflation at 4.5 percent in 1992, 9.7 percent in 1993, 14.9 percent in 1994, 19.3 percent in 1995, and 26.0 percent in 1996.

<sup>11</sup> Burundi Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, Bujumbura, Burundi (1995-97).

<sup>12</sup> World Food Programme, *An Analysis of the Food Security Situation in Burundi*, December 1995.

<sup>13</sup> World Food Programme, *FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment* (March 4, 1997): section 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> World Food Programme, *An Analysis of the Food Security Situation in Burundi* (December 1995): section 2.

<sup>16</sup> *FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Burundi*.

<sup>17</sup> See Salter, *Sanctions*, 13.

<sup>18</sup> World Food Programme, *FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Burundi* (March 4, 1997): section 5.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF, "Principal Indicators for Assessing Impact of Embargo in Burundi," Bujumbura, Nov. 29, 1996.

<sup>20</sup> World Health Organization, "Point Sur la Situation de Sécurité d'Urgence du 11 au 18 Septembre 1996," p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Press Release CF/DOC/PR 1996-22 August 22, 1996, UNICEF, Bujumbura.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF, "The Impact of the Embargo on Humanitarian Activities," Bujumbura, August 1996 [Internal document].

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF, "One-year Multi-Level Crisis Intervention Plan for Burundi (Bujumbura: UNICEF, 1996), 6; "Request to the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee," (Bujumbura: UNICEF, 1996).

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## CHAPTER 3

### THE IMPACTS OF SANCTIONS ON HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

The comprehensive sanctions imposed by the regional governments began affecting humanitarian operations in Burundi within days of their imposition. UN relief flights between Bujumbura and Nairobi were suspended. Relief goods transiting Kenya and Tanzania were blocked. Humanitarian agencies began to worry about the collapse of relief operations in the absence of exemptions for humanitarian supplies and equipment.

#### Agency Reactions to Sanctions

Articulating misgivings one week after the imposition of sanctions, UN under-secretaries-general for Humanitarian Affairs and Political Affairs wrote to OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim expressing their “concern over the possible adverse humanitarian consequences of the recent decision to impose sanctions against Burundi.”<sup>1</sup> The UN appealed for permission to send relief supplies to the estimated 300,000 IDPs in Burundi and to an additional 400,000 war-affected civilians. Meanwhile, humanitarian agencies operational in Burundi, caught off guard by sanctions, established a Contact Group to coordinate operations, estimate in-country relief supplies, and begin contingency planning.

In their efforts to respond, UN agencies and NGOs were disadvantaged in several ways. First, the international community had little advance warning that sanctions would be imposed in the event of a coup. Second, the ground rules of the regional initiative were unclear, and agencies were expected to follow procedures set by local and regional bureaucracies generally unfamiliar to them. Third, UN agencies and NGOs in the field suffered from vague or absent sanctions policy from higher up within their respective organizations.

On August 10, the UN forwarded to the OAU proposed

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Table 3.1: Chronology of Exemption Requests and Authorizations

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Date Requested	Exemptions Requested by the United Nations to the RSCC
August 6, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foodstuffs</li> <li>2. Gasoline and kerosene</li> <li>3. Health (vaccines, cold chain equipment, essential drugs, and emergency food rations)</li> <li>4. Relief items (blankets, cooking sets, buckets)</li> <li>5. Water and sanitation equipment and materials</li> <li>6. Educational supplies</li> <li>7. Psychosocial trauma material</li> <li>8. Shelter materials</li> <li>9. UN agencies' supplies and equipment (office supplies, vehicles, communications equipment, spare parts)</li> <li>10. Air access</li> </ol>
September 23, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agriculture (seeds, fertilizer, veterinary products, phytosanitary products, hoes)</li> <li>2. Food aid (1,620 tons of food aid for 20,000 displaced families, 740 tons for schools)</li> <li>3. Nonfood relief items (plastic sheeting, blankets, buckets, water and sanitation equipment and materials. Cooking pots, mats, motor oil, vehicle, and other spare parts)</li> <li>4. Air flights (increased capacity of air corridor, blanket exemption for emergencies)</li> </ol>
October 2, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fuel for the distribution of in-country exempted agricultural supplies</li> <li>2. Refillable (water) bladders</li> <li>3. Educational materials (chalk, exercise books, paper, pens, pencils)</li> <li>4. Office supplies and equipment</li> </ol>

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Table 3.2: Chronology of Exemption Requests and Authorizations

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Date Authorized	Items Authorized by the RSCC
August 16, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Human medicines</li> <li>2. Emergency basic food aid to Rwandan refugees</li> </ol>
September 6, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Baby foods and other essential requirements, including personal hygiene provisions for infants and hospital patients</li> <li>2. Emergency medical and laboratory supplies</li> <li>3. Limited quantities of kerosene for the cold chain for vaccines</li> <li>4. A restricted number of UN flights to and from Bujumbura, emergency flights authorized on a case-by-case basis</li> <li>5. Restricted road access to the UN and other humanitarian agencies</li> <li>6. Limited and controlled amounts of diesel and gasoline</li> <li>7. Communications equipment</li> </ol>
September 21, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FAO authorized to import 1,000 metric tons of vegetable seeds and 4,000 tons of fertilizer sufficient for one planting season for 100,000 rural families</li> </ol>
October 21, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To assist up to 250,000 displaced persons in Burundi, UN and NGO agencies allowed the importation of food, bean seeds, water purification agents, jerry cans, buckets, sanitary facilities, blankets, plastic sheeting, mats, and cooking materials (Quantities and details to be submitted to the RSCC before importation)</li> </ol>
February 13, 1997	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There should be unimpeded flow of humanitarian goods already exempted</li> <li>2. Monthly quantities of diesel fuel (365,500 liters), gasoline (80,450 liters), jet A-1 fuel (40,000 liters) permitted</li> </ol>
November 30, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approval for importing food aid by WFP, authorized to import up to 2.55 metric tons of food aid monthly to feed 130,000 persons</li> </ol>
April 16, 1997	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The summit decided to expand immediately the easing of sanctions to include all food and food products, educational items, construction materials, medicines, agricultural items and inputs (Previous quotas and restrictions on these items were lifted)</li> </ol>

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guidelines for exemptions.<sup>2</sup> The draft included a list of items requested for exemption, in addition to a proposed mechanism for monitoring exempted items. The UN asked that special provisions be made for foodstuffs, gasoline and kerosene, health items (vaccines, cold chain equipment, essential drugs and emergency food rations), as well as other items related to relief, such as water and sanitation, education, shelter, and psychosocial trauma alleviation. In light of the existing ban on air traffic, the UN requested air access to the country. It also sought permission to import supplies and equipment, including vehicles, for its own use and raised the possibility of detailing experts on sanctions to the OAU.<sup>3</sup>

The guidelines reflected a UN stance that generally supported sanctions, but still recognized the need for “simple but modest” humanitarian exemptions. In retrospect, this first submission was a defining one that firmly established, the subordinate relationship of the UN to the regional authorities. The UN opted for “gentle persuasion” rather than more assertively reminding regional authorities of the humanitarian precedents set in Iraq, Haiti, and Yugoslavia and insisting that similar pass-through provisions be incorporated into the Burundi sanctions.

The absence of a more determined approach by the UN may have had several origins, according to observers at the time. First there were those within the UN system, particularly on the political side, who subscribed (as did regional authorities) to the “hard and fast” approach to economic sanctions and wanted to avoid diluting their effect. Second, there was a desire among some governments on the Security Council to be seen as supporting the positive and democratic message exemplified by Arusha II, rather than risk alienation from regional leaders by “second-guessing” them. The UN’s tepid approach and lack of concerted effort to engage the regional authorities on issues of evident concern also may have reflected the still underdeveloped state of UN sanctions policy.

On August 16, foreign ministers from the sanctioning countries agreed to exempt “human medicines” and “emergency basic food aid to Rwandese refugees.”<sup>4</sup> This concession represented the

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first effort toward establishing humanitarian exemptions under the Burundi sanctions. Not surprisingly, however, humanitarian agencies were disappointed both with respect to the narrow list of items included for exemption and their application strictly to Rwandan refugees. Despite its frustration, the UN dispatched the first convoy of humanitarian aid (210 tons of beans) from Tanzania to Burundi only two days after the RSCC's announcement.

On August 23, the UN Secretary-General appointed Frederick Lyons, UN resident coordinator for Kenya, to serve as the Regional Focal Point on Sanctions and to liaise with the chairman of the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee. DHA also sought to recruit several sanctions experts to work in the region, although the idea never materialized. Former Tanzanian President Nyerere also apparently suggested consulting with international experts to ensure that sanctions did not impede humanitarian programs.<sup>5</sup> Although New York identified and even contacted several individuals with sanctions experience, placing them on standby to be dispatched to the region, these individuals for undetermined reasons never arrived.

UN policy and strategy on Burundi were formulated in an Interagency Ad Hoc Working Group on the Great Lakes, which met regularly beginning in September 1996 under DHA chairmanship in Geneva. In New York, DHA chaired weekly meetings that included the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping. In New York and Geneva, sanctions were one of a number of complex issues monitored on an ongoing basis. A detailed review of the UN system's response to Burundi sanctions indicates that neither in New York, nor in Geneva, nor in the region itself were past experiences with sanctions, or persons who had borne responsibility for programs in sanctioned countries such as Iraq, Yugoslavia, or Haiti, brought to bear on the Burundi challenge.

In Nairobi, Burundi's humanitarian concerns were overseen by Martin Griffiths, the UN-appointed Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region. The UN Focal Point for Sanctions, Frederick Lyons, made strenuous and highly commendable efforts to bring the humanitarian concerns of the agencies to the attention of the RSCC. His activities as liaison between the regional

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authorities and UN/NGO agencies greatly advanced the humanitarian agenda with regards to the Burundi sanctions and accelerated the pace of introducing humanitarian exemptions.

The first meeting of the Nairobi-based Burundi Working Group was on September 12, 1996. Its regular participants included not only UN organizations and NGOs, but also the diplomatic community, whose involvement was widely viewed as constructive. In Burundi, there was a weekly meeting of humanitarian agencies to discuss developments and coordinate efforts.

Establishing a common approach to sanctions among the agencies proved difficult, reflecting, in the words of a UNICEF official, "a worrying process issue." UN relief organizations had their own individual priorities and some wanted to retain their own lines of access to the regional and national sanctioning authorities, efforts of the UN Focal Point notwithstanding. Agencies, which worked through the prescribed coordinating mechanisms, were critical of other agencies for making their own arrangements.

Agencies with longer term mandates such as FAO felt that the urgency of winning exemptions for food production inputs such as seeds and fertilizer was not acknowledged in the Interagency Standing Committee, which was preoccupied, in its view, with emergency strategies. NGOs, although represented in interagency discussions in Nairobi, Geneva, and New York, felt that the pace of action lacked the requisite urgency. MSF, for example, negotiated its own relief flights and shipment authorization from the authorities in Nairobi rather than working through the UN Focal Point.

An additional complicating factor was the variety of views among the agencies and their staff about the appropriateness and utility of sanctions. Relief workers stationed in Burundi interviewed for this report were generally opposed to sanctions on the grounds that they were unnecessarily categorical and jeopardized agency operations. Many also felt that the situation before sanctions was sufficiently precarious from a humanitarian standpoint and volatile politically as to render sanctions dangerous.

As early as August 21, 14 US-based relief and refugee-

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assistance NGOs sensed that the violence was outrunning the diplomatic steps, including sanctions, taken by regional and international authorities to contain the situation. In a letter to President Clinton, they observed that “the earnest preventive efforts undertaken by the U.S. and key African leaders have not defused the situation” and warned that “The recent coup and subsequent embargo add to internal pressures which could tear the country apart.”<sup>6</sup>

The thrust of discussions in interagency forums was to arrange for as many exemptions as possible in order to maintain agency operations and respond to growing civilian need. Lists of requested exemptions resembled hastily constructed agency shopping lists. There was no effective process whereby agencies met, discussed civilian needs and their own requirements, prioritized agency needs, and then agreed upon a consolidated list to be submitted to the authorities. While time was crucial, a more deliberate process might have led to a less ad hoc and piecemeal approach and to more comprehensive responses by the authorities.

### **Impacts on the Agencies**

During the sanctions period, agencies focused primarily on service delivery. There was little structured assessment of the humanitarian impact of sanctions. Indeed, the authors were struck by the relative lack of reliable and comprehensive data concerning the humanitarian situation in Burundi. Granted, security was a major problem throughout 1996, with many parts of the country off limits; sanctions stretched resources and personnel far beyond normal capacity. Nonetheless, only small snapshots of data were available that reflected nutritional status (generally from NGOs working in one or two camps for the displaced). Available trip reports were largely anecdotal and short on objective data. The exceptions included the excellent food and crop reports of FAO/WFP, as well as data on market prices collected by a number of agencies. “We have an obligation continuously to assess the impacts of sanctions,” explained one senior FAO official,<sup>7</sup> referring specifically to reduced availability of vegetable seeds and

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fertilizers and to the potential losses of foreign exchange due to cutting-off coffee exports.

Although collecting data might seem a low priority item in such circumstances, this should not be the case. Information is needed to detect changing patterns of vulnerability, to measure the impact of the intervention, and to inform international advocacy efforts. In the Burundi episode, the issue involved the absence not only of the appropriate priority but also of the necessary expertise in designing, implementing, analyzing, and reporting on humanitarian assessment surveys. Although requested by regional countries to carry out monitoring of sanctions' humanitarian impacts, the OAU did not succeed in doing so.

A major exception was the UN's Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), based in Nairobi. This office collected, consolidated, and disseminated official documents, press statements, agency information and media reports, concerning the humanitarian and socioeconomic and political situation in Burundi and in the Great Lakes as a whole. As a result, agencies operating in Burundi had access to more relevant information than perhaps those in any previous emergency situation, even though many lacked the means, expertise, or time to capitalize on the information available.

By early August, international humanitarian programs in Burundi were rapidly losing momentum as a result of the embargo. Relief stocks were quickly becoming exhausted. Both diesel fuel and gasoline had been rationed by the regime within days of the embargo. By late August, the lack of fuel had forced suspension of the distribution of medicines to 250 health centers. UNICEF's supplementary foods were not able to reach 130 centers.<sup>8</sup> The vaccine cold chain was running out of kerosene for refrigerators in health centers. Lack of fuel for transport was blamed for canceling vaccinations for 150,000 children under one year old, including the final round of a series of nationwide immunization days instituted before the coup.<sup>9</sup>

Other UN agencies and activities were also affected within a month after imposing sanctions. WFP had only one month's supply of emergency food relief remaining, while its fuel supplies

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had run precariously low. Sanctions blocked the delivery of four thousand tons of fertilizer and 610 tons of seeds in Tanzania.<sup>10</sup> Lack of fuel halted the delivery of drinking water to the internally displaced. The shortage of fuel also severely restricted the ability of the humanitarian community to monitor developments. The reduction in UN/NGO field missions affected not only the supervision of programs but also monitoring issues such as human rights and security. By the end of August, UN personnel in Burundi were reporting that shortages would soon begin to “have a very serious impact on basic livelihoods.”<sup>11</sup>

The roughly 20 NGOs operating in Burundi also experienced serious problems, largely because interrupted supply lines had reduced stocks. As noted earlier, World Vision had a shipment of medicines blocked in Dar es Salaam from August until November 25. Tanzanian authorities indicated that they would only release goods that were consigned to the UN. Four containers of medicines for Caritas-supported health centers were blocked in Tanzania from August until December 13.<sup>12</sup>

UN organizations and NGOs were equally alarmed by the prospect of prolonged sanctions, with no broadening the original list of humanitarian exemptions. During August, as the humanitarian situation worsened and the constraints on agency programs became more serious, there was still no formal RSCC mechanism for reviewing and approving requests for humanitarian exemptions. These considerations compelled the agencies to formalize a request to the RSCC for specific humanitarian exemptions.

On September 4, the UN submitted its first formal request for humanitarian items.<sup>13</sup> It was essentially unchanged from the draft sent to the OAU on August 6, except that the target population had been drastically reduced from 700,000 to 255,000, likely reflecting the UN belief that more modest requests would have a greater likelihood of success. The request included arrangements for coordinating and monitoring the delivery of exempted humanitarian supplies. At a meeting in Arusha on September 6, the RSCC agreed to address “genuine humanitarian concerns in a manner that does not undermine the very essence of the sanctions.”<sup>14</sup>

Shortly thereafter, the RSCC approved more exemptions for

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items to be imported by the UN, subject to “strict verification and control arrangements.” The expanded list included baby foods, other essential items for infants and hospital patients, emergency medical and laboratory supplies and limited quantities of kerosene for the vaccine cold chain, a restricted number of regular UN flights to and from Bujumbura (with emergency flights authorized on a case-by-case basis), restricted road access for the UN and other humanitarian agencies, limited amounts of diesel fuel and gasoline, and communication equipment.<sup>15</sup>

Considering its previously restrictive approach, the RSCC appeared moderately flexible in admitting humanitarian supplies once the principle of allowing exemptions had been established. Among the most important provisions were those concerning fuel and the air corridor. However, the RSCC had still not agreed to exempt emergency food aid and other items destined for the displaced or destitute (as distinct from the refugee) population. Furthermore, it was not clear what the RSCC meant by requiring “strict verification and control arrangements” and there was considerable uncertainty with regard to the meaning of “limited and controlled amounts” of diesel fuel and gasoline.

Despite this exemption for fuel and its availability in Kigali, Rwanda, several more weeks passed before the Rwandan Foreign Ministry on September 27 approved one month’s supply of fuel (200,000 liters). The Rwandan national sanctions committee took several more weeks before signing off on the agreement. As a result, the fuel did not arrive in Bujumbura until October 31. Even then, bureaucratic delays in Burundi prevented its release from BP/Fina for several more weeks. As in other instances, action was delayed by the national sanctions authorities who were, in effect, the implementing agents for the regional undertaking.

Given RSCC concern regarding the diversion of food supplies to noncivilians, it might have paid off had the UN done more to highlight its potential role in monitoring the distribution of all exempted humanitarian supplies, including foodstuffs. This could have been done at the outset of sanctions, or with the first draft submission to the regional authorities of requested exemptions on August 10. While the UN’s request to the RSCC mentioned the

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need for monitoring, had greater assurances regarding UN/NGO cooperation in monitoring end use been given to the RSCC (and greater insistence been made by the international community that food be exempted), approval for foodstuffs might have been granted by early September. As it was, food for displaced populations was not exempted from sanctions until October 21, nearly three months after sanctions were first imposed.

### **Confusion Regarding Sanctions Procedures**

The September 6 RSCC meeting also established a set of procedures for obtaining approval for specific consignments of items exempted under the Burundi sanctions policy. The RSCC would be responsible for considering and authorizing any new exemptions, whereas approval for individual shipments of already exempted items would be administered through the seven individual national sanctions committees.

UN agencies and NGOs in the ensuing months expressed their constant frustration about the poorly understood sanctions procedures and ambiguity concerning proper channels for obtaining authorizations from the various national committees. Land shipments were often turned back or delayed by border authorities, despite completed documentation from national committees. Some committees authorized shipments of nonexempt items (for example, cement) while others appeared to intentionally delay legitimate (and exempted) shipments.

On September 10, 1996, the African Regional Committee of WHO called for a partial lifting of the embargo to allow “products of medical and humanitarian assistance, such as drugs, vaccines and the equipment required for their conservation, hygienic and cleansing materials, laboratory equipment, petroleum products for health centers and food aid.”<sup>16</sup> This statement likely helped strengthen the hand of those within the humanitarian community trying to press for greater exemptions.

Following approval of a limited air corridor between Nairobi and Bujumbura, WFP agreed to take the lead in organizing such flights. In fact, some UN flights had been permitted between

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Nairobi and Bujumbura, as well as to and from Kigali, even before the limited exemption of relief flights. MSF, for example, airlifted 24 tons of medical supplies from Nairobi to Bujumbura on August 22, with Kenyan government authorization. The first flight authorized under the new guidelines, a 10-seat Beechcraft, took place September 19. The twice-weekly UN flights proved especially valuable to UNICEF for maintaining vaccine supplies. As the crisis deepened, it became clear that a larger plane would be required to accommodate both more passengers and increased cargo. On November 4, the plane was upgraded to a 49-seat Fokker 50, operated under contract by Ethiopian Airlines. In addition, NGOs and UN agencies jointly chartered other private aircraft to transport relief shipments.

On September 21, the RSCC approved a request directly from the FAO to import 1,000 metric tons of vegetable seed and 4,000 tons of fertilizer, sufficient for one planting season for 100,000 rural families. FAO had made a strong case with the OAU for the urgency of its request. However, FAO's request for hand tools, pesticides and veterinary drugs, submitted at the same time in late August, was refused without explanation. Despite one pass-through granted by mid-November, FAO had received only 400 out of 4,000 tons of fertilizer. By the time the fertilizer arrived, it was already too late for the 1996 planting season, and the missing tonnage would have to be applied to the 1997 season.<sup>17</sup> A UNICEF submission to the RSCC for exemption of educational supplies also was turned down.<sup>18</sup> Educational supplies were eventually approved during the Arusha IV summit of April 16, 1997.

On September 23, 1996, the UN Regional Focal Point requested RSCC approval for an extended list of items including additional agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer, veterinary products, phytosanitary products, hoes), food aid (1,620 tons for 20,000 displaced families, 740 tons for schools), and nonfood relief items (plastic sheeting, blankets, buckets, water and sanitation equipment and materials, cooking pots, mats, motor oil, vehicle parts, as well as other spare parts).<sup>19</sup> The UN also sought expanded use of the air corridor and blanket exemption for

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emergency flights.

The UN wanted greater operational latitude and fewer bureaucratic delays; the RSCC, exercising its authority and control over the sanctions, was not prepared to accommodate such changes, even on humanitarian grounds. Meeting September 25, the RSCC simply noted its belief that “sanctions have so far been effective” and that “the exemptions given so far... are sufficient.”<sup>20</sup> On October 2, the UN resubmitted its request, adding fuel for the distribution of already exempted agricultural supplies, refillable bladders for water, educational materials such as chalk, exercise books, paper, pens and pencils, office supplies and equipment.

At the Arusha III meeting on October 12, the summit simply “took note of the exemptions already granted in respect of fertilizers and vegetable seeds in recognition of the steps taken by the Buyoya regime toward meeting the conditions set by the Arusha II Summit.”<sup>21</sup> This statement implied that humanitarian exemptions were not viewed separately from the political objectives of sanctions but as an integral part of them. Again, engagement by the UN Security Council with governments in the region on the humanitarian (and legal) imperatives of providing basic survival items to civilian populations might have produced greater flexibility on this issue.

Throughout this period of time, sanctions were deeply affecting humanitarian activities. Shortages of fuel had forced UN agencies and NGOs to consolidate their programs. Operations of both UN agencies and NGOs were greatly reduced due to limited relief supplies and lack of fuel. Yet their workload had increased as a result of their new role in importing and distributing exempted items. In addition, the diminished capacity of the government to provide and maintain social services meant that communities and vulnerable groups became even more dependent on the agencies.

Outbreaks of meningitis, dysentery, and typhus worried aid officials, who feared that their ability to contain serious epidemics would be further compromised by sanctions-induced fuel and drug shortages. Agencies such as Médecins du Monde, World Vision, Caritas, UNICEF, and WHO complained of medical supplies stalled outside Burundi because of logistical or bureau-

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cratic problems associated with the sanctions. For months, Christian Aid had been unable to transport 60,000 blankets, 20 tons of soap as well as other nonfood items from Tanzania due to the embargo.

Meanwhile, the crisis in Eastern Zaire and continued internal fighting in Burundi placed even greater demands on an already overstretched humanitarian operation. During the four months beginning in September 1996, fighting in Zaire had forced an estimated 60,000 refugees to cross into northwest Burundi, many in poor condition due to the prolonged fighting in Zaire as well as the general insecurity in Cibitoke province.<sup>22</sup> New outbreaks of fighting within Burundi increased the demand for emergency assistance. An October assessment mission by the UN to Gitega province found severe shortages of nonfood relief items and a growing lack of essential drugs.<sup>23</sup> Depleted agency resources combined with ongoing sanctions restrictions caused severe shortages in emergency assistance to displaced populations.

A lack of in-country stockpiles was also a major concern. Supplies of emergency food rations, vaccines, drugs, and emergency nonfood items were thought to be sufficient for only 1-2 months. Even exempted items were in short supply due to the added bureaucracy accompanying the sanctions. Suppliers were reluctant to ship goods without prior authorization from sanctioning governments. One shipper of plastic sheeting donated by the German government even insisted that “[W]e are not allowed to send our goods anywhere as long as our documents state Burundi as destination, not even with...confirmation from the German Foreign Ministry....We can only ship...[if we] have a written confirmation from UNDP wherein they allow us to import the containers under their flag and escort.”<sup>24</sup>

Ambiguity concerning how and where to apply for authorization remained problematic. Even once in hand, paperwork authorizing transport into Burundi could be (and often was) challenged by border personnel. The requirement that all air shipments come via Nairobi and all road transport through Tanzania slowed and complicated the delivery of emergency items and increased the costs of some shipments. All agencies would have benefited from more timely information about sanctions and

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allowable exemptions. Particularly useful would have been a brief, and widely disseminated, UN analysis of each RSCC meeting and statement.

Efforts at emergency contingency planning were further hampered by sanctions restrictions. All agencies agreed that their capacity to respond to a large-scale humanitarian emergency—highly possible in Burundi—was severely compromised. Emergency stockpiles were low and the pipeline for transporting emergency supplies into Burundi required advance planning not possible under emergency conditions. The UN's *Joint Operations Plan for Humanitarian Assistance in Burundi*, drawn up by UN agencies and NGOs as a contingency plan in advance preparation for any potential emergency, warned that “an emergency at this time would find humanitarian agencies struggling to operate through the thicket of prohibitions and administrative paperwork imposed by the sanctions.”<sup>25</sup>

### Relaxations of Restrictions

The humanitarian community learned with great relief of the RSCC's positive response to the interagency request for exemptions at its October 21 Extraordinary Meeting.<sup>26</sup> The committee agreed to allow the following items to be exempt from sanctions to provide emergency relief to the 250,000 displaced persons in Burundi: food, jerry cans and buckets, bean seeds, cooking materials, water purification agents, sanitary facilities, blankets, mats, plastic sheeting. The quantities of these items were to be submitted to the chairman of the RSCC for approval before importation. Yet, logistical constraints remained. On October 24, the RSCC confirmed that, appeals from humanitarian organizations notwithstanding, all air shipments would proceed to Burundi through Nairobi and all shipments by road through Tanzania.

With no monthly quota for food agreed upon in advance, it was not until November 30 that WFP, following further negotiations, was authorized to import up to 2,545 tons of food aid monthly, sufficient to feed an estimated 130,000 persons. Even then, authorization was provided only for truck shipments through

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Tanzania, so that only small quantities could be shipped at a time. (Trucks were also becoming scarce due to increased needs in Rwanda.). WFP did not obtain authorization to transport the food up Lake Tanganyika by barge from Kigoma until January 1997.

The long and convoluted approval process, involving essentially two separate steps of general exemption and then authorization for specific quotas and shipments, prompted the UN to submit its second request for fuel two weeks after the first shipment had arrived in Bujumbura. On November 18, 1996, it requested a monthly quota of 180,000 liters of diesel fuel and 30,000 liters of gasoline. However, the next meeting of the RSCC did not take place until February 13, 1997, making a gap of nearly four months since the previous meeting of October 21, 1996.

By then, agencies were facing a number of serious fuel-related difficulties. With supplies totally depleted since January, agencies were forced to purchase diesel fuel and gasoline on the parallel market at prices 2-3 times presanctions levels. This placed the agencies in the dubious camp of the sanctions-busters and profiteers. Even so, fuel was not widely available and essential programs continued to run at greatly reduced levels.

Repeated appeals to the RSCC brought no response to UN requests for a monthly allocation of fuel. On January 13, Martin Griffiths, UN humanitarian coordinator for the Great Lakes Region, warned in a press release: "If a favorable decision by the RSCC is not taken immediately, agencies will be unable to provide life-sustaining assistance to hundreds of thousands of extremely vulnerable people in Burundi."

On January 27, 1997, the Tanzanian national sanctions committee authorized, as an interim measure, 175,000 liters of diesel fuel, gasoline, kerosene, and lubricants. This quantity was enough fuel for only 1-2 weeks. The shipment did not arrive in Bujumbura until early March. On February 13, at its fourth meeting, the RSCC agreed to a monthly quota of 500,000 liters of diesel fuel, gasoline, and jet A-1 fuel. The approval of limited quantities of imported fuel was an important and long-awaited step, welcomed by the aid community. Although logistical difficulties and delays in obtaining fuel shipments remained, this

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decision marked an important turning point for many agencies.

An additional relaxation of sanctions was authorized on April 16, 1997 at the Fourth Regional Summit on Burundi. The meeting decided “to expand with immediate effect the easing of sanctions to include food and food products, all items relating to education, construction materials, as well as all types of medicines, agricultural items and inputs in order to alleviate the suffering of the people of Burundi.”<sup>27</sup> The secretary-general of the OAU had supported steps in this direction.

This loosening of sanctions, which occurred after the present study was completed, involved by far the most dramatic and wide-ranging concessions on the part of the sanctioning governments. Not only was the list of exempted items expanded; the enumerated items could be imported through both commercial and humanitarian channels. Major Buyoya, attending such a meeting for the first time, welcomed the move as a “very important step” and one that would facilitate the peace process and benefit “the ordinary people.”<sup>28</sup> The RSCC itself stressed that certain sanctions were waived but not lifted; sanctions, including the arms embargo, would not be lifted altogether until there was movement in negotiations between the regime and the opposition.

The leaders of the region also expressed an interest in streamlining the process of granting humanitarian exemptions by devolving some responsibilities more clearly to national sanction committees. Although some logistical and bureaucratic delays would nevertheless continue, the broader exemptions would strengthen the capacity of humanitarian agencies to respond to civilian need.<sup>29</sup>

In short, RSCC action appeared to recognize the distress caused by sanctions while acknowledging that to continue them would have little political use. Within weeks, reports followed that the relaxation of sanctions had been accompanied by a lowering of political violence, but the precise linkages would require further review.<sup>30</sup> In addition, reflecting the complex causality described earlier in this study, the humanitarian situation as of July 1997 remained “extremely serious,” which reflected both widespread insecurity and “the concentration of the rural population from

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conflict-prone areas into regroupement camps.”<sup>31</sup> As with the sanctions and the exemptions themselves, easing restrictions was itself the subject of much confusion.

## Conclusion

This review of the effects of sanctions on humanitarian activities highlights two major themes. First, aid agencies were caught between the political objectives of the region’s governments, which chose sanctions as a means of applying pressure on the Buyoya regime, and the distress of Burundi’s civilians, perceptibly worsened as a result of such measures. Mirroring the political consensus of seven OAU member states in response to the coup of July 25, 1996, the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee imposed sanctions without any exemptions for humanitarian necessities on July 31.

Under pressure from humanitarian interests, the RSCC introduced the first exemptions on August 16. Specific humanitarian essentials were then added in series of actions on September 6 and 26, and then on October 21. On April 16, 1997, governments broadened the exemptions significantly to include a wide array of food, agricultural, medical, educational, and construction items. While the Buyoya regime interpreted the April action as lifting sanctions altogether, the basic embargo remained in place and some of the delays experienced by aid agencies continued.

Governments of the region, not having imposed an embargo before, improvised and adapted to suit the changing situation. Throughout, however, the authorities were challenged by the dilemma—as they put in their September 6 pronouncement—of addressing “humanitarian concerns in a manner that does not undermine the very essence of sanctions.”<sup>32</sup> The fact that they were largely on their own in framing the sanctions, crafting exemptions, and implementing the arrangements represented something of a missed opportunity for the United Nations.

Second, sanctions became a difficult and on occasion contentious matter for the agencies themselves to address. The UN under-secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs moved to orchestrate

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relations among aid agencies by appointing a UN Focal Point for Sanctions while he himself played a role as a high-level intermediary to help negotiate exemptions for critically needed items. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region, who had broader responsibilities, also became a major player in sanctions matters.

For their part, UN organizations and NGOs tended to pursue their individual interests, often negotiating their own arrangements with the regional and national authorities. Efforts to vet a common strategy for approaching the regional authorities and hammer out a common programmatic response to civilian distress were generally unsuccessful, despite the labors of the UN Focal Point for Sanctions and the detailed and comprehensive information resource provided by IRIN. Once again, the humanitarian experience gained elsewhere was not systematically applied.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Letter from Yasushi Akashi, under-secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs, and Marrack Goulding, under-secretary-general for Political Affairs, to Salim Ahmed Salim, secretary-general, Organization of African Unity, August 6, 1996.

<sup>2</sup>Guidelines for Exemptions for Humanitarian Purposes to the Economic Sanctions Imposed on Burundi. Correspondence from Yasushi Akashi, under-secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs, to Salim Ahmed Salim, secretary-general, Organization for African Unity, August 10, 1996.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Press Release, Regional Foreign Ministers Meeting, August 16, 1996.

<sup>5</sup>Akashi and Goulding to Salim.

<sup>6</sup>InterAction, Letter to President William J. Clinton, August 21, 1996, p. 1. The agencies called for U.S. pressure on its allies to be prepared to provide ground troops for an intervention force in Burundi should one become necessary.

<sup>7</sup>World Food Programme, News Release, Rome, August 12, 1996.

<sup>8</sup>UNICEF, Impact of Embargo on Humanitarian Activities: The UNICEF Perspective, August 7, 1996.

<sup>9</sup>UN Internal Correspondence, Burundi, August 30, 1996.

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<sup>10</sup>World Food Programme, *An Analysis of the Food Security Situation in Burundi*, December 1995.

<sup>11</sup>UN Internal Correspondence, Burundi, August 30, 1996.

<sup>12</sup>Catholic Relief Services, Burundi, September 3, 1996.

<sup>13</sup>Guidelines for Exemptions.

<sup>14</sup>Sanctions Committee Statement, Arusha, Tanzania, September 6, 1996.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p.14

<sup>16</sup>Joseph Gouala (AFP), African health ministers ask for easing of Burundi embargo, Brazzaville, AFP, September 11, 1996.

<sup>17</sup>Food and Agriculture Organization, Crop and Food Supply Situation in Burundi: Special UN Food and Agriculture Organization Report, Rome, December 5, 1996.

<sup>18</sup>Requests to the Regional Sanctions Co-ordinating Committee, from UNICEF, January 9, 1997.

<sup>19</sup>United Nations, Recommendations for Humanitarian Exemptions to the Sanctions on Burundi, September 23, 1996.

<sup>20</sup>Recommendations by the Second Meeting of the Regional Sanctions Co-ordinating Committee, Kigali, Rwanda, September 25, 1996.

<sup>21</sup>Joint Communiqué of the Third Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi, Arusha, Tanzania, October 12, 1996.

<sup>22</sup>UNHCR, Refugees in the Great Lakes Region, December 30, 1996.

<sup>23</sup>Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator, UNDP, Burundi: Humanitarian Situation Report—October 8 to October 15, 1996.

<sup>24</sup>Christian Aid, November 15, 1996.

<sup>25</sup>United Nations (Burundi), Joint Operations Plan for Humanitarian Assistance in Burundi, September 1996.

<sup>26</sup>Press Release, Office of the Regional Chairman of the Sanctions Coordinating Committee, Nairobi, October 24, 1996.

<sup>27</sup>Statement of the Heads of State and Leaders attending the Arusha IV Regional Summit, Arusha, Tanzania, April 15, 1997.

<sup>28</sup>IRIN, Emergency Update No. 151 on the Great Lakes, April 16, 1997.

<sup>29</sup>In July, MSF-Switzerland was reported to be partially phasing out its medical activities in Gitega province. With sanctions against Burundi lifted, the NGO was reported to believe that “local authorities are now able to procure and distribute the drugs on their own.” The agency was continuing its programs elsewhere in the country. IRIN, “Burundi Humanitarian Situation Report: July 1-16, 1997.”

<sup>30</sup>See DHA/Humanitarian Coordination Unit, Bujumbura, “Burundi

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Humanitarian Situation Report, April 25-May 5, 1997.

<sup>31</sup>Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi to the UN Security Council, S/1997/547, July 15, 1997, para. 19.

<sup>32</sup>For a discussion of this generic tension between political objectives and humanitarian interests, see Weiss et al., *Political Gain and Civilian Pain: Humanitarian Impacts of Economic Sanctions* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997).



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## CHAPTER 4

### THE POLITICAL IMPACTS OF SANCTIONS

Regional economic sanctions were imposed against Burundi to accomplish three concrete political objectives: restoring the country's parliament, reinstating its political parties, and conducting unconditional negotiations between opposing factions. Assessment of sanctions must therefore examine to what extent each of these objectives was attained.

Sanctions also must be scrutinized for their broader intended and unintended political impacts. As of this writing, eight months after sanctions were imposed, is Burundi closer to the comprehensive peace being sought? Did sanctions usher in a period of greater stability, with less overall violence, or did the conflict intensify?

Cognizant of the many difficulties inherent in linking a given cause (in this instance, sanctions) with an effects (in this instance, political impacts), this section examines sanctions' success at meeting their stated political objectives and reviews some of the broader political impacts of the regional embargo.

#### Background Events

As noted earlier, Burundi by early 1996 was descending into a pattern of escalating violence and insecurity. The military and armed extremist groups were undisciplined and acted with impunity, killing thousands of civilians and creating massive numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. The coalition government was paralyzed and the country was again on the brink of disaster.

In the months leading up to the July 25, 1996 coup, regional and international authorities had been intensively engaged in efforts to promote a peaceful solution to the growing instability and violence in Burundi.<sup>1</sup> Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania, had been engaging Burundi's political parties in talks aimed at establishing a framework for peace negotiations.<sup>2</sup> With

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the internal crisis deepening, regional heads of state and government met in Arusha, Tanzania on June 25, 1996. Burundi was represented by President Ntibantunganya and Prime Minister Nduwayo. Regional leaders welcomed their request for security assistance to restore peace and stability and expressed readiness to respond positively, establishing a Technical Committee to determine the type and level of assistance needed.<sup>3</sup>

In Burundi, however, there was strong political opposition to the Arusha agreement. Shortly after his return, Prime Minister Nduwayo began to distance himself from the agreement, suggesting the president had hidden motives and was attempting to neutralize the army. Meanwhile, Burundi's National Security Council was unable to reach agreement on requirements for a security assistance plan. On July 4, former President Jean-Baptiste Bagaza warned of armed resistance against a military intervention and called for the government's overthrow. UPRONA President Charles Mukasi also called for resistance against the Arusha agreement and accused the president and prime minister of treason. Rejecting the agreement on the grounds that it failed to take account of the balance of power in Burundi, the CNDD pledged resistance. Public demonstrations rallied against foreign intervention and pledged to defend the country.

On July 10, the OAU's annual summit reaffirmed its support for the Arusha initiative and urged the political parties to reconcile differences and facilitate the work of the Technical Committee. Nyerere, meanwhile, amid rumors of an impending coup d'état, was expecting to meet the leaders of the Burundi political parties in Mwanza, Tanzania on July 23. On July 20, however, armed Hutu insurgents massacred approximately 340 Tutsi women, children, and elderly men in a camp for displaced persons in Bugendana, in central Gitega Province. A week of national mourning was announced.

Former President Bagaza, meanwhile, called for a two-day general strike to protest the killings, repeating his call for the government's overthrow.<sup>4</sup> Demonstrations were becoming increasingly militant. Sensing imminent danger, FRODEBU urged "friendly countries and the international community to realize that

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the country was in danger and urgently in need of help.” FRODEBU was “awaiting the arrival of assistance as soon as possible so that peace can prevail in Burundi.”<sup>5</sup>

On July 23, while attending the funeral of the victims of the Bugendana massacre, President Ntibantunganya was pelted with stones and forced to return by helicopter to Bujumbura. Feeling his life threatened and apparently anticipating his forced removal, he sought refuge in the residence of the American ambassador. The following day, once news of his actions began to surface, UPRONA withdrew support for Ntibantunganya and announced it was in dialogue with “partners” to “endow” the country with new institutions.<sup>6</sup> The prime minister announced his intention to resign to a “competent authority.” On July 25, the armed forces, claiming a “constitutional vacuum,” seized power, proclaiming former President Major Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi, Head of State.<sup>7</sup>

The new regime immediately suspended the National Assembly and banned all political parties and associations. In a prepared statement, Major Buyoya announced his intention to hold a “national debate,” to engage in dialogue “those who have demands and who renounce the ideology of genocide,” and to reestablish “a democracy adapted to Burundian realities.”<sup>8</sup> He also declared his intention to establish a transitional government and to study the possibility of setting up a parliament of transition. On July 31, he appointed Pascal Firmin Ndimira as prime minister. On August 2, a new government of 23 members was introduced.

International reaction to the events of July 24-25 was immediate. On July 24, the UN Security Council strongly condemned “any attempt to overthrow the present legitimate Government by force or coup d’état.”<sup>9</sup> On the same day, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Kofi Annan warned that the UN had to be ready to intervene, if necessary, with a massive intervention force. On July 25, the UN secretary-general stated that “the international community would on no account accept a change of government by force or other illegitimate means.”<sup>10</sup> On July 29, the Security Council condemned the coup, urging “the military leaders of Burundi to restore constitutional government and processes.”<sup>11</sup>

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On July 25, the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention stated that “[A]ny attempt to take over power through illegal means will not be accepted by Africa and will be strongly condemned and opposed by the Organization of African Unity....In such an event, Member States and the international community should also be prepared to impose sanctions against the regime.”<sup>12</sup> The OAU urged swift implementation of the Arusha “peace plan” and warned that any obstruction of its implementation could be met with the deployment of a multinational force for humanitarian intervention.

### **Political Rationale for Sanctions**

On July 31, a previously scheduled summit of regional heads of state and government (Arusha II) was held in Tanzania. In attendance were leaders from Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zaire, as well as former President Nyerere and OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim. The summit condemned the coup, demanded a return to constitutional rule, and imposed economic sanctions against Burundi.

Sanctions were imposed “in order to bring about conditions which are conducive to a return to normalcy in Burundi.” The three specific objectives sought have already been enumerated. The framework for negotiations was to be “the Mwanza Peace Process, reinforced by the Arusha Peace Initiative, under the auspices of Mwalimu Nyerere.” The region’s leaders also stressed their “preparedness to cooperate fully with the UN and to...[adopt] measures aimed at avoiding a catastrophe in the country.” This was generally perceived as a threat of military intervention.<sup>13</sup>

By imposing sanctions, while hinting at possible military intervention, the region’s governments were letting Buyoya know of their intention to maintain the forward momentum generated by both Mwanza and Arusha. Indeed, many had seen the June 25 Arusha agreement as a breakthrough in regional efforts toward peace in Burundi. Regional leaders, including Nyerere, likely felt personally offended and betrayed by the recent coup. Yet motivations for imposing sanctions ran even deeper. The 1994 Rwandan

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genocide deeply affected regional politics, with many African leaders believing, in hindsight, that they—and the broader international community—should have intervened to stop the massacres. The possibility that a similar tragedy might unfold in Burundi was simply not acceptable.

Democratic trends in the region also figured in the action against Burundi. Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda had concluded democratic elections in recent years. With democracy growing stronger in Africa, coups were seen more often as threats to those popular mandates. Regional leaders were also skeptical of Buyoya's reputation as a moderate.

Pragmatism also affected the thinking of the region's heads of state. At the time sanctions were imposed, Tanzania and Zaire were hosting nearly 2 million refugees from Rwanda and Burundi. These refugees were unlikely to return home until a settlement was reached.

Regardless of motivation, regional leaders had few coercive measures from which to choose. Short of military intervention, sanctions were the strongest punitive instrument available. Heads of state no doubt realized that Burundi, a tiny landlocked country, would be exquisitely sensitive to an effectively-implemented embargo. Even before the coup, there were clear signs that sanctions would likely form part of any regional response to military overthrow.

On July 24, for example, Nyerere indicated to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali that, in the event of a coup, he would call for sanctions to be applied against Burundi. Six days earlier, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burundi recommended that, "should the Burundi authorities refuse to respect the commitments undertaken at Arusha, the international community should consider applying sanctions."<sup>14</sup> The OAU's threatened use of sanctions on July 25 has already been referenced. Meanwhile, global political sentiment still generally supported sanctions initiatives. Summit participants were likely well aware of discussions aimed at imposing limited UN sanctions against the Sudan government.

With these issues in mind, regional countries party to the

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Arusha II summit began imposing economic sanctions against Burundi. As the summit itself had not established a mechanism or a common framework through which this would be done, it was left up to individual countries to announce what measures would be taken. Sanctions were imposed on August 2 by Tanzania, on August 5 by Kenya, on August 7 by Ethiopia and Uganda, on August 9 by Rwanda and Zaire, and on August 16 by Zambia.<sup>15</sup>

### **International and Regional Reaction**

International condemnation of the coup was swift and categorical. Response to the regional plan for sanctions, by contrast, was delayed and muted.

On August 19, the European Union expressed “support for the regional leaders...in the efforts which they have been making to assist Burundi to overcome peacefully the grave crisis which it is experiencing.” Despite implicit support for the regional measures, there was no specific mention of sanctions.<sup>16</sup>

The UN also took this approach. On August 30, more than a month after the coup, the Security Council made its first pronouncement with respect to Arusha II. In Resolution 1072, the Council expressed “strong support for the efforts of regional leaders, including at their meeting in Arusha on 31 July 1996.” By supporting regional “efforts,” Security Council members appeared to lend their weight to the sanctions initiative without shouldering any legal, political, or humanitarian responsibilities.

The absence of explicit endorsement of sanctions apparently reflected several considerations. First, the Security Council undoubtedly wanted to avoid taking measures that might further destabilize an already volatile situation in Burundi, possibly provoking more violence.<sup>17</sup> Second, there was a reluctance to preempt or second-guess an initiative taken at some risk by the governments of the region. Third, some Council members had doubts regarding the use of sanctions in general and against Burundi in particular, with the result that Council debate on the subject might have proved contentious. The Council, however, left open the possibility of future UN sanctions by suggesting that,

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if negotiations between opposing factions had not taken place by October 31, 1996, it would consider imposing measures “targeted against the leaders of the regime and all factions who continue to encourage violence.”<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, the humanitarian community generally restricted comments to those reflecting concern about the potentially negative impact on an already vulnerable civilian population and the lack of humanitarian exemptions. Save the Children (UK), for example, stated that “economic embargoes are not helpful given Burundi’s vulnerability.”<sup>19</sup>

In Africa itself, the OAU issued a statement on August 5 indicating that it “fully supported the conclusions of the second Arusha Summit.”<sup>20</sup> Despite no mention of sanctions, the OAU was generally understood to be wholly supportive of the embargo. Both the OAU’s chairman and its secretary-general were present at the July 31 Arusha Summit when sanctions were announced. Only those countries participating in the Arusha II agreement on July 31 were specifically bound by the terms of the sanctions. Nonetheless, most African countries, albeit some reluctantly, abided by their terms.<sup>21</sup>

As for the sanctioning countries themselves, Tanzania was the first country to impose sanctions on August 2 and, as of early 1997, remained their strongest proponent. Its ambassador to Kenya, Major General M.S.H. Sarakikya, was appointed chairman of the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee. Tanzania was responsible for enforcing the only sanctions-authorized road access into Burundi. Its active involvement reflected the presence in Tanzania of more than 250,000 Burundian refugees, a serious domestic economic and political burden, and the central role played by former President Nyerere in efforts toward a peaceful settlement. At the same time, Tanzania was regularly suspected of permitting smuggling across its borders into Burundi in violation of regional sanctions.

Kenya’s position vis-à-vis the sanctions was somewhat more ambiguous. Initially a strong proponent, its enthusiasm waned over time. By early 1997, Kenya had shifted responsibility for its national sanctions committee from the Office of the President to

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the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with UN officials having increasing difficulty discerning precisely who was responsible for sanctions' implementation. By mid-December 1996, most observers believed that Kenya would support the lifting of sanctions, arguing that they simply were not working. In any event, Kenya was less affected by developments within Burundi. Only around 5 percent of Burundi's land transport passed through Kenya's port of Mombasa. Kenya remained responsible for policing the only authorized air corridor into Burundi.

In the case of Rwanda, there was early evidence that the country's leaders were reluctant to impose sanctions against their southern neighbor. Vice President Paul Kagame was quoted as saying that he preferred dialogue and negotiations with the Burundi regime over the imposition of sanctions, although he later confirmed that Rwanda would impose sanctions in line with the regional agreement.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, enforcement, initially less than rigorous, was significantly stepped up in April 1997 as relations between the two countries cooled.<sup>23</sup>

Zaire announced the imposition of sanctions against Burundi on August 9. Despite a closed border since May 1996, smuggled goods also crossed the Zaire/Burundi border in both directions. With the escalation of fighting in Zaire in November 1996, Zaire was unable to police its eastern borders. Considerable quantities of smuggled goods reportedly crossed into Burundi by land and across Lake Tanganyika.

Uganda, Zambia, and Ethiopia also imposed sanctions; however, Uganda and Ethiopia were relatively unimportant to enforcement of the sanctions regime, lacking common borders with Burundi, but Zambia was accessible to Burundi by boat across Lake Tanganyika. There were frequent allegations that contraband, especially cement, was smuggled from Zambia to Burundi across Lake Tanganyika.

Despite differing commitments to and implementations of sanctions, all of the sanctioning countries maintained a highly unified public position. Governments were determined to put aside individual differences and take a concerted stand against the military coup. Nonetheless, the deteriorating situation in the

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region as a whole appears to have contributed to a dwindling willingness to enforce sanctions. Whether the concessions made at the Arusha IV Summit on April 15, 1997 represents a crack in the regional consensus or simply acknowledges new political realities remains to be seen.

### **Sanctions and their Political Results**

Imposed to coerce the military regime into compliance, little meaningful progress had been made on any of the three demands made as of April 1997 at Arusha II. The National Assembly, although restored, lacked constitutional power and a quorum, and its deputies were regularly intimidated and arrested. Political parties, although legal, were not permitted to demonstrate. Opposition party members were frequently arrested. As for unconditional peace negotiations, there was no evidence at the time of writing this paper that such talks were taking place between the major parties to the conflict, the military and the CNDD.

#### *Restoration of the National Assembly*

With respect to the reinstatement of the National Assembly, even before the coup the assembly functioned at a greatly reduced capacity. The 1994 Convention of Government drastically trimmed its legislative powers. Of the 81 original deputies (65 FRODEBU, 16 UPRONA), 31 members either had been assassinated or were in exile abroad. Still, the assembly represented for Burundi the closest remaining link to the democratic legislative elections of 1993.

The July 25 coup suspended the National Assembly and the country's constitution. On August 9, the regime announced that a "transitional" parliament would be established, consisting of deputies from the previous assembly as well as appointed representatives of civil society.<sup>24</sup> On September 13, Buyoya restored the assembly "within the legal framework of the transitional institutional system" while at the same time lifting the ban on political parties.<sup>25</sup>

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On October 7, the National Assembly met for the first time since the coup d'état. However, in the absence of a working constitution, the assembly had no clearly defined legislative powers. Furthermore, parliamentary and security conditions discouraged attendance by the elected deputies. Only 36 members were present out of 81. Consequently, FRODEBU deputies announced a boycott of the assembly, stating they would not vote on legislation until three conditions had been met: restoration of the constitution, introduction of an electoral code, and settlement of the conflict. The National Assembly suspended its first session in January, after weeks of deadlock between the rival parties.

As the legislative power of the National Assembly remained paralyzed, some of its members suffered arrests and intimidation. On November 22, the attorney-general reportedly interrogated assembly speaker Leonce Ngendakumana, accusing him of complicity in the 1993 massacres. On February 11, FRODEBU Secretary-General Augustin Nzojibwami was detained for allegedly "violating state security." Follow-up of an International Commission of Inquiry's conclusions regarding the events surrounding the assassination of President Ndadaye triggered legal proceedings against members of parliament and further strained efforts at constructive dialogue.

In summary, it would appear that the National Assembly provided merely the semblance of governance, devoid of any real legislative power and weakened even further by suspicion and intimidation. Indeed, the regional leaders reached the same verdict, commenting simply in the RSCC Chairman's report on February 13, 1997, that the "Parliament was not functioning."<sup>26</sup>

### *Reinstating political parties*

On the second issue of reinstating political parties, the military regime announced on September 13 that "political parties and associations of a political nature are authorized to resume their activities within the context of the law."<sup>27</sup> This appeared to end the banning of political parties announced on July 25.

However, without restoring the 1992 constitution, the extent

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to which political parties could exert their rights and freedoms within Burundi was questionable. While they were permitted to associate with one another, members of political parties were not authorized by the regime to hold public demonstrations. "Opposition" party members remained highly suspect, and security concerns prevented free movement. Senior members of FRODEBU were subject to interrogation and arbitrary arrest. Legal proceedings were apparently underway against FRODEBU members accused of involvement in the massacres following Ndadaye's assassination in October 1993. In January 1997, members of PARENA, including former President of Burundi Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, were arrested for allegedly breaching state security. The National Debate, which opened January 28, was boycotted both by FRODEBU and PARENA.

Therefore, even taking into account existing political conditions before the coup d'état, the extent to which political parties have been able to resume their democratic activities under the current regime falls far short of the required minimum conditions of security, freedom of association, and freedom of speech. Although reinstating political parties in Burundi does represent an important concession by Buyoya, it only partially fulfills the minimum requirements.

### **Unconditional negotiations**

The third issue is more difficult to assess. Serious international efforts toward a lasting political settlement in Burundi were already underway before the coup d'état. Former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, under the Mwanza Peace Process, had met twice with representatives from FRODEBU and UPRONA. These talks had culminated in the Arusha Summit of June 25, when the Burundi government requested the countries of the region to provide "security assistance," and further agreed that peace negotiations should involve "all parties and groups."

Shortly after taking power on July 25, Major Buyoya announced his intention to hold a "national debate," and to engage in dialogue "those who have demands and who renounce the

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ideology of genocide.”<sup>28</sup> On September 23, Buyoya reiterated his offer to the armed opposition, “We are ready to start negotiations with the armed factions...but on the other side they are not ready. Are we going to remain under embargo because the other side is not ready?”<sup>29</sup>

On September 26, at the second RSCC meeting in Kigali, the Sanctions Committee recommended “that Major Buyoya be invited to be available during the Third Arusha Summit on October 12.”<sup>30</sup> The RSCC also recommended that “other leaders of parties to the conflict...also be invited.” It was clear that Buyoya was not being asked to join regional leaders in an official capacity, but rather he should be prepared to meet with them on the sidelines.

Although Buyoya did not attend the Arusha Summit meeting, he did meet separately with Nyerere beforehand. According to the summit communiqué, Buyoya gave Nyerere written assurance that he was ready to negotiate with CNDD, as well as with all other armed factions. Similarly, there was a letter from Leonard Nyangoma, president of CNDD, to the summit pledging “I solemnly declare herewith that despite all odds, the CNDD is ready to enter into open negotiations with the Burundi military junta immediately.”<sup>31</sup>

Despite Buyoya’s written assurance to Nyerere, summit leaders did not budge on the imposition of economic sanctions. In fact, they gave both sides of the Burundi conflict just one month to enter into peace negotiations, expressing their readiness to take “appropriate measures” against *any* group refusing to participate.<sup>32</sup>

Angered when their overtures did not result in the loosening of sanctions, the Burundi regime opted for a more hard-line approach. In an October 15 press conference, Prime Minister Ndimira withdrew earlier statements that Bujumbura was willing to begin talks and said that no negotiations would begin until sanctions were lifted.<sup>33</sup> On October 19, Buyoya, referring to the sanctions, stated that the regime would not hold talks with the armed opposition “with a noose around its neck.”<sup>34</sup> Two days later, the RSCC approved a list of humanitarian items, including food, water purification agents, blankets, and cooking materials, for immediate exemption from the sanctions.

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On November 16, Buyoya once again met with former Tanzanian President Nyerere for talks. By now, Nyerere's role as effective mediator was in question. As fighting intensified in Eastern Zaire, military bases belonging to factions opposed to the Bujumbura regime were forced to relocate. New bases were alleged to have been established within Tanzania. Extremist political parties within Burundi accused Nyerere as being partial to opposition concerns, also blaming him for convincing regional leaders to maintain the embargo against Burundi.

A summit meeting for Central African leaders in Brazzaville, Congo, on December 3, called for the lifting of sanctions in recognition of constructive steps by the Burundian government. On December 12, Nyerere invited all parties to meet for peace talks in Arusha. UPRONA declined, accusing Nyerere of having a "biased attitude...regarding terrorist and genocidal organizations."<sup>35</sup> Representatives from FRODEBU, CNDD, and the military regime attended, each holding private talks with Nyerere, but they did not meet with each other.<sup>36</sup>

With little apparent progress, the peace process appeared stalled. On December 23, CNDD declared a unilateral 11-day truce, which the regime dismissed as propaganda. Meanwhile, in his New Year's address Major Buyoya insisted that no talks were possible until the armed opposition renounced violence. On January 2, 1997, the regime announced plans for a national debate, to be held January 28, adding, "all parties, except those that kill, will be brought together at the debate to discuss the country's problems and in particular its future."<sup>37</sup> Armed factions could also attend the debate, offered the regime, if there was first a cease-fire and an end to the massacres.

On the surface, while political realities were such that a cease-fire might have been sufficient for the CNDD to gain admission into the national debate, such a debate was certain to fall short of anything resembling unconditional peace talks. Nonetheless, the announcement represented a modest concession that might have constituted the first real step toward peace negotiations between the parties.

In the meantime, there was an increase in acts of violence and

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military operations throughout the country. From November to mid-January, some 150,000 civilians fled to Tanzania. There were frequent reports of massacres, with an estimated 1,000 civilian casualties per month.<sup>38</sup> On January 6, 1997, all first and second year students at Burundi's main university were called up for one year's mandatory military services. Despite overtures toward peace, Buyoya appeared to be accelerating war efforts. As a result, the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention announced on January 22 that sanctions against Burundi should not be lifted because of "a multiplication of human rights violations." When the national debate, designed to hammer out agreement on a peace process, opened on January 28, it was boycotted by FRODEBU, PARENA, and CNDD.<sup>39</sup>

At his third post-coup meeting with Nyerere, Buyoya apparently restated his willingness to negotiate "unconditionally." In summing up the meeting, however, Nyerere stated that, "so far we haven't made any progress...conditions are worse than they were last July. I am beginning to feel that I am providing an umbrella for the killings."<sup>40</sup> The European Union envoy to the Great Lakes region, Aldo Ajello, observed that the situation in the region remained blocked. The behavior of the authorities in Bujumbura, he said, wasn't "encouraging us to back the lifting of sanctions."<sup>41</sup>

The most damning indictment of the Buyoya regime, however, came from UN Special Rapporteur Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro. He observed on February 10 that, while the regime has declared its commitment to peace and open to negotiations, "it has recently adopted measures which...indicate a desire to pursue the war and conquer the enemy wherever he may be." He added that "the behavior of the de facto authorities is based on a wartime rationale for conquering the rebels and that, every day, it moves further from the path of negotiations."<sup>42</sup>

Publicly, there were very few diplomatic advances during February and March 1997. In Bujumbura, a number of mine explosions and reports of a plot to assassinate Buyoya led to arrests of both military personnel and civilians allegedly sympathetic to Bagaza's PARENA party.

The first signs of progress in negotiations may have come at

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the Arusha IV Regional Summit on April 15. In the days preceding the summit, Nyerere chaired talks with representatives of Burundi's main political parties, including UPRONA and FRODEBU. For the first time, Buyoya was formally invited to attend the summit.

On the day of the Summit, OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, in an important shift of the OAU's previous position on sanctions, said that "there is a need to review and ensure that those sanctions, which hurt civilians...are lifted."<sup>43</sup> The summit decided "to expand with immediate effect the easing of sanctions to include all food and food products, all items relating to education, construction materials, as well as all types of medicines, agricultural items and inputs in order to alleviate the suffering of the people of Burundi." It also called on the Bujumbura regime to disband all "regroupement camps" and urged the creation of a "conducive spirit for national reconciliation and negotiations."<sup>44</sup>

This action represented a major concession to the Burundi military regime and a political victory for Buyoya. It is unclear whether this action was offered as a "carrot" to give Buyoya more leverage against his right-wing opponents and encourage him to enter negotiations, or simply represented an acknowledgment by political leaders throughout the region of their humanitarian obligations. Although leaders had been under considerable international pressure to permit the entry of humanitarian items, such pressure had largely dissipated with the allowance of monthly quotas of fuel in mid-February.

Regional leaders may have wanted to demonstrate to Buyoya that his cooperation would be rewarded. It is also possible that Buyoya had made concessions during his presummit meetings with Nyerere. However, until Buyoya demonstrates his commitment to negotiations, the connection between sanctions and positive steps toward peace would remain tenuous. Moreover, progress eventually made may be connected less to economic sanctions than to Burundi's isolation from the international community and other forms of diplomatic pressure.

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## The Peace Process and Domestic Reactions

Beyond the three stated political objectives of regional sanctions, it is extremely difficult to establish the impacts of sanctions on the ongoing peace process. This section examines the question of whether the parties were closer to a peaceful resolution of their differences at the time of this writing in April 1997 than before the imposition of sanctions.

Prior to the coup, the formal mechanism for negotiations was the Mwanza Peace Process, chaired by Julius Nyerere. There were hopes, after two rounds of talks attended by both FRODEBU and UPRONA, that the two main political parties might agree on a framework for future peace talks. On June 17, Nyerere consulted with opposition groups, which ended in a signed declaration by eight political parties (excluding UPRONA and PARENA) that called for improvement of the Convention of Government and inclusion of legally established political organizations and civil society in the peace negotiations.

As noted, the Burundi government at the first Arusha Summit on June 25, 1996 requested security assistance to restore peace and stability. The meeting agreed to form a technical committee to determine the nature and level of assistance required. That was where things stood before the July 25 coup d'état. Since then, very little progress has been made toward peace talks. Despite Buyoya's frequently stated willingness to negotiate, there has been no public confirmation that any face-to-face talks have taken place.<sup>45</sup> In the absence of direct talks, the peace process appears to have fallen far behind its somewhat hopeful June 1996 beginnings.

Sanctions have significantly affected Burundi's politics and domestic opposition groups generally favored them. On July 31, FRODEBU Chairman Jean Minani expressed his party's support, saying that the whole world should line up behind the measures.<sup>46</sup> The following day, CNDD President Leonard Nyangoma stated that "CNDD is satisfied with the decision taken at the Arusha Summit on July 31st by regional Heads of State to impose economic sanctions."<sup>47</sup> On August 21, FRODEBU member and former Foreign Minister Jean-Marie Ngendahayo affirmed that

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“[T]he embargo set on Burundi must be tougher and be implemented by the rest of the world until Buyoya gives up power.”<sup>48</sup> Most opposition groups welcomed outside pressure in support of the reinstatement of the democratic process.

The regime manipulated the embargo to serve its own political objectives. First, sanctions were used by Buyoya as a powerful propaganda tool. By insisting that sanctions were meant to punish Burundi’s people, Buyoya personalized sanctions and appealed to Burundian national pride. As in other sanctions episodes in which the target regime created a “rally around the flag” effect, Buyoya encouraged the development of a “siege mentality” against the embargo.<sup>49</sup>

Second, Buyoya accused neighboring countries, specifically Tanzania and Kenya, of having secret agendas and trying to influence Burundi’s internal politics for reasons of self-interest. The widely-held belief that Tanzania permitted CNDD military bases on its territory added fuel to Buyoya’s accusations. Allegations of a serious external threat enabled Buyoya to deflect criticism from his own regime. The palpable increase in tension between Burundi and key countries of the region may prove to have serious long-term implications.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, sanctions were used as the scapegoat for Burundi’s many problems. Inflation, unemployment, depleted social programs including health and education, the suspension of development assistance, absent foreign investment, and diplomatic isolation were all blamed on economic sanctions. While years of civil war and the undemocratic nature of the current regime were implicated in Burundi’s disarray, sanctions provided a useful cover for the regime’s inadequacies in addressing critical problems.

Sanctions also fueled extremism on both sides of the conflict. By forcing early concessions from Buyoya, neighboring countries ran the risk of further destabilizing the regime, which was already walking a fine line between factions. At every turn, right-wing elements within Burundi criticized Buyoya’s weakness at giving in to international pressure while receiving nothing in return. Extremist factions committed to total war against the armed opposition were highly critical of any hint of compromise, warning

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Buyoya that he would not survive politically if he negotiated with the armed opposition. Whether this criticism would translate into yet another political or humanitarian crisis was uncertain.

The political impacts of sanctions vis-à-vis forces opposed to the regime were less certain. Although the armed opposition apparently believed the embargo would help them achieve a military victory, there was little evidence to demonstrate any reluctance to enter into negotiations. FRODEBU had apparently become more militant, although this was more likely in response to the coup itself rather than a reflection of the sanctions.<sup>51</sup> Sanctions also probably gave the opposition a political advantage, weakening Buyoya's negotiating position and perhaps also the capacity of the military.

Sanctions were also linked to increased violence. Even before the July 25 coup, violence was high. A report issued by the U.S. Committee for Refugees estimated that approximately 5,000 civilians were killed in 1994, 10,000 in 1995, and as many as 7,500 civilians during the first six months of 1996.<sup>2</sup> However, evidence suggested that even this level of violence has been surpassed since the coup.

In a post-coup investigation, Amnesty International estimated that the military slaughtered as many as 6,000 civilians in the countryside during the three weeks immediately following the coup.<sup>53</sup> On November 15, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burundi Pinheiro stated that "some 10,000 people had perished since the coup d'état."<sup>54</sup> UN human rights monitors subsequently reported at least 2,100 civilians killed between the end of October 1996 and January 22, 1997.<sup>55</sup> Church officials in Kayanza province said that Burundian troops had massacred approximately 3,000 civilians during December 1996.<sup>56</sup> More than 100 refugees forcibly repatriated from Tanzania were killed by the Burundian armed forces on January 10, 1997. Amnesty International charged that the army on December 3, 1996 massacred more than 500 people in and around a church in the northern village of Butaganzwa.<sup>57</sup>

The armed opposition was also responsible for grave violations of human rights and an escalation in violence. Amnesty

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International reported that “armed groups have deliberately and arbitrarily killed civilians in almost all the provinces of Burundi, leaving virtually no part of Burundi unaffected by civil war. [Armed groups] have carried out attacks against camps for [the] displaced.”<sup>58</sup> On December 4, the UN reported “strong indications that the civil war in Burundi is spreading.”<sup>59</sup> The WFP/FAO report of March 1997 stated that “there was an escalation of the civil strife during the second and third quarters of 1996.” On February 3, Nyerere said that “conditions are worse than they were last July.”<sup>60</sup> The Burundi regime’s policy of regroupement—forcing hundreds of thousands of civilians to relocate themselves to underserviced camps kept under military guard—was greatly accelerated following the July 1996 coup.

By all accounts, violence had increased, not decreased, following the military takeover. The difficulty is in establishing whether sanctions in some specific way have contributed to escalating the conflict.

Certainly the Bujumbura regime used the threat of increased violence when calling for the suspension of sanctions. On September 23, 1996, Buyoya said that the sanctions in Burundi were shattering the fragile peace process and, if continued, would plunge the country into further violence. The regime believed that sanctions favored the armed opposition, who were avoiding talks because they believed the embargo would help them gain a military victory over an under-supplied army.

There can be no doubt that Buyoya was walking a fine line in his domestic politics. He was intent on maintaining a moderate stance by offering dialogue and compromise but was also under great pressure from extremist civilian and military groups who demanded total war. Diplomats expressed concern that by attempting to extract early concessions, the international community was making Buyoya even more politically vulnerable, pushing him into the hands of extremists.

Even if sanctions did not escalate the violence, there was little to suggest that they had reduced it either. In all likelihood, sanctions themselves, as well as the regime’s response, fueled much of Burundi’s domestic politics since the coup. The other major

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element was, of course, the ongoing civil war itself.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For a detailed summary of the main political events preceding the July 25, 1996 coup and of the coup itself, see the *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi, S/1996/660*, August 15, 1996.

<sup>2</sup>Nyerere's peace efforts are referred to as the Mwanza negotiations or Mwanza peace process after the site of the talks, Nyerere's home town of Mwanza, Tanzania.

<sup>3</sup>Ironically, the agreement reached at the June 25 Arusha Summit appears to have been the main catalyst for the overthrow of President Ntibantunganya exactly one month later.

<sup>4</sup>*Report of the Secretary-General, S/1996/660*, para. 11.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, para. 12. Although plans for a regional peacekeeping operation were advanced at the time of the coup d'état, including troop commitments from Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania, such a force required consent of the parties involved. At the same time, contingency planning for a multinational intervention force, acting without the parties' consent under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, were bogged down. Of the nearly 50 countries petitioned, only 3 had offered troops. No country had emerged as the lead nation which such an operation would require.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, para. 13.

<sup>7</sup>The imminent release of the UN International Commission of Inquiry's report into the events of October 1993 may also have played a part in the timing of the coup. Several officers of the armed forces were expected to be, and indeed were, implicated in the 1993 coup attempt and assassination of President Ndadaye.

<sup>8</sup>Pierre Buyoya, "Message from President Buyoya to the Nation," Burundi Radio, July 25, 1996.

<sup>9</sup>UN Security Council, Presidential Statement, July 24, 1996, S/PRST/1996/31.

<sup>10</sup>United Nations, Daily Press Briefing, Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General, July 25, 1996.

<sup>11</sup>UN Security Council, Presidential Statement, July 29, 1996, S/PRST/1996/32.

<sup>12</sup>Organization for African Unity, "Burundi: Statement on the Grave Situation," Addis Ababa, July 25, 1996.

<sup>13</sup>Joint Communiqué of the Second Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi, Arusha, Tanzania, July 31, 1996.

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<sup>14</sup>UN Information Service, "Special Rapporteur on Burundi calls for international pressure to end spiral of violence," Geneva, July 18, 1996.

<sup>15</sup>Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame apparently told BBC on August 7 that Kigali would not declare sanctions against Burundi, preferring instead to try and negotiate with the Bujumbura regime. The following day however, this was strongly denied by Kagame who stated at a New York press conference that Rwanda "will abide by the decisions made [in Arusha] and...[soon] declare how we are going to carry out the sanctions."

<sup>16</sup>European Union, *Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU, Dublin/Brussels*, August 19, 1996.

<sup>17</sup>The same consideration allegedly resulted in delaying the public availability of the report of the UN International Commission of Inquiry into the events surrounding the October 1993 coup attempt and presidential assassination.

<sup>18</sup>UN Security Council Resolution 1072, August 30, 1996.

<sup>19</sup>Save the Children Fund, *International Community Must Decide on Burundi*, August 1, 1996.

<sup>20</sup>Organization for African Unity, "Communiqué on Burundi," Addis Ababa, August 5, 1996.

<sup>21</sup>Some countries saw Buyoya as a moderate, a better alternative to some other more militant leader, and wanted to give him more time to see what he would do.

<sup>22</sup>IRIN, *Burundi: Uganda Slaps Sanctions on Burundi*, August 7, 1996. AFP, *Rwandan President Denies Aide's Pledge of No Sanctions on Burundi*, August 7, 1996.

<sup>23</sup>DHA, *Burundi: Humanitarian Situation Report*, April 1-9, 1997. Incidents were reported in which Rwandan diplomats were stopped and searched at roadblocks.

<sup>24</sup>Serge Arnold, "New regime announces transitional national assembly," AFP Bujumbura, August 10, 1996.

<sup>25</sup>Pierre Buyoya, Press Conference, Bujumbura, Sept. 13, 1996.

<sup>26</sup>*Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee*, Lusaka, Zambia, Feb. 13, 1997

<sup>27</sup>Radio Burundi broadcast, Sept. 12, 1996.

<sup>28</sup>Pierre Buyoya, Message from President Buyoya to the nation, Burundi Radio, July 25, 1996.

<sup>29</sup>AFP, Buyoya says sanctions are destroying peace, Nairobi, Sept. 23, 1996.

<sup>30</sup>*Report of the Second Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee Meeting*, Kigali, Rwanda, Sept. 26, 1996.

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<sup>31</sup>Hugh Nevill, "Summit gives Burundians one month to start talks," AFP, Arusha, Tanzania, October 12, 1996.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Jacques Boyer, "Burundi pleads for lifting of embargo," AFP, Geneva, Oct. 15, 1996.

<sup>34</sup>"Buyoya says no talks unless sanctions on Burundi lifted," AFP Bujumbura, Oct. 19, 1996.

<sup>35</sup>AFP, "Tutsi parties reject Nyerere's mediation in Burundi conflict," Bujumbura, Dec. 11, 1996.

<sup>36</sup>With this and other discussions held, the authors relied on information in the public domain or otherwise made available to them. There may, in fact, be great substance to these and other talks with Nyerere, and what few specifics which have been made available are reported here.

<sup>37</sup>AFP, "National debate planned for end of January leaves out rebels," Bujumbura, Jan. 2, 1997.

<sup>38</sup>Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Special Rapporteur, *Second Report on the Human Rights Situation in Burundi*, UN Commission on Human Rights, C/CH.4/1997/12, Feb. 10, 1997, 36.

<sup>39</sup>AFP, "Four-day national debate opens in Burundi without Hutus," Bujumbura, Jan. 28, 1997.

<sup>40</sup>AFP, "Nyerere, Buyoya in talks on Burundi crisis," Arusha, Tanzania, Feb. 3, 1997.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Pinheiro, "Second Report," p. 7.

<sup>43</sup>IRIN, "Emergency Update No. 150 on the Great Lakes, April 15, 1997.

<sup>44</sup>Statement of the Heads of State and Leaders attending the Arusha IV Regional Summit, Arusha, Tanzania, April 15, 1997.

<sup>45</sup>Despite statements regarding "secret" talks involving the Sant' Egidio Catholic community in Rome, there was no direct evidence at the time of writing that such talks between CNDD and the Bujumbura regime had taken place. On August 30, 1996, the Sant' Egidio community announced a plan drawn up with Nyerere and U.S. envoy Howard Wolpe for joint efforts to end the conflict. However, the RSCC Chairman in his report on the February 3, 1997 meeting between Nyerere and Buyoya in Arusha stated that, "as regards Buyoya's secret negotiations in Rome, the Arusha meeting found no evidence that they were taking place and the link between the Mwanza talks and the so-called secret talks was not known." [Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee, Lusaka, Zambia, Feb. 13, 1997.]

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<sup>46</sup>Matthew Bigg, "Burundi defiant as neighbours threaten sanctions," Reuters, August 1, 1996.

<sup>47</sup>Leonard Nyangoma, "Letter to Alain Dejammet" [Chairman of the Security Council], Nairobi, August 1, 1996.

<sup>48</sup>Segun Adeyemi, "Burundi politicians for sanctions against military ruler," PANA, New York, August 21, 1996.

<sup>49</sup>The creation of an external aggressor in the case of Iraqi sanctions proved to be highly successful, deflecting criticism away from the regime in Baghdad and creating powerful national resistance to sanctions.

<sup>50</sup>One senior minister in the Burundi regime indicated to the authors that were "Burundi a strong country, we would respond to sanctions with a declaration of war." Although Rwanda's leadership had come to power through force, he noted, no sanctions had been imposed against them. Indeed, the argument has been made that, among the sanctioning countries, the leaders of Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zaire all came to power through force.

<sup>51</sup>On Sept. 19, 1996, Leonard Nyangoma of CNDD announced that he had taken over the FRODEBU presidency from Jean Minani. FRODEBU then became divided into a majority "Nyangoma wing," whose members, in exile, supported the former Interior Minister and the armed insurgency, and the "Minani wing," whose members, generally still in Burundi, supported party chairman Jean Minani, who refused to take up arms.

<sup>52</sup>For a more detailed analysis, see U.S. Committee for Refugees, "From Coup to Coup: Thirty Years of Death, Fear, and Displacement in Burundi," Sept. 1996.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>UN Press Release, "Special Rapporteurs Present Country Reports on Human Rights to Third Committee; Countries Respond to Allegations," Nov. 15, 1996.

<sup>55</sup>UNHCR, *Actualisation sur la situation des droits de l'homme et activités de la mission d'observation du Burundi*, December 1996.

<sup>56</sup>AFP, "Troops killed 3,000 in north Burundi: church sources," Bujumbura, Jan. 14, 1997.

<sup>57</sup>AFP, "Burundian rebels declare truce, government dismisses it," Nairobi, Dec. 23, 1996.

<sup>58</sup>Amnesty International, "Burundi: Plight of returning refugees should not be forgotten," Nov. 21, 1996.

<sup>59</sup>FAO, "Special Report: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Burundi," March 4, 1997.

<sup>60</sup>*Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee*, Lusaka, Zambia, Feb. 13, 1997.



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## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The humanitarian impacts of economic sanctions on Burundi must be measured against nearly four years of internal crisis, violence, and civil war. The scale of wartime destruction, with an estimated 100,000 civilians killed, nearly one million displaced, and immeasurable infrastructural and economic damage, exceeds by massive proportions any particular impacts of the subsequent embargo. However, the impacts of sanctions on the local population have been both serious and substantial.

The imposition of sanctions was an important initiative by the countries of the region. The democratic principles espoused in imposing sanctions were worthy of international support. In addition to representing a laudable effort by governments of the region to take responsibility for acting in the face of a perceived threat, sanctions also helped keep international attention focused on Burundi.

A fundamental question arises, however, about the point at which the humanitarian repercussions associated with sanctions become so substantial that they discredit the measures themselves. Is it morally or legally acceptable to impose and maintain an embargo against a country in severe humanitarian crisis with an already suffering civilian population?

Assessing the overall impacts of sanctions, one must examine not only how much the three stated political objectives were achieved but also the impacts of the measures on the humanitarian condition and on the overall level of violence and extremism in Burundi. The fundamental issue is whether as a result of the regional initiative, the nation is closer to, or more distant from, a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

#### **The Imposition of Sanctions**

Regional countries imposed economic sanctions in an effort to

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sustain the momentum of earlier peace negotiations. In their Arusha II statement, they declared “their preparedness to cooperate fully with the UN and to make [their] contribution as appropriate” and stressed the “importance of closer cooperation and better coordination.”

Although regional efforts won the international community’s broad support, the sanctions themselves never received international endorsement nor was specific technical support or other guidance provided. In practical terms, the UN provided little substantive leadership during the early stages of the sanctions process. The Security Council, apparently fearful of aggravating an already unstable political environment, adopted a wait-and-see approach. In retrospect, a more proactive role might have been helpful.

The absence of sanctions expertise from outside and the lack of direct international involvement or guidance resulted in the sanctioning countries “reinventing the wheel.” The evolution of sanctions against Burundi was not unlike earlier sanction episodes (for example, against Iraq) where, in the absence of a clear sanctions policy from the outset, sanctions arrangements were constructed in response to emerging priorities, humanitarian concerns, and bureaucratic mandates.

In the case of Burundi, despite the trial-and-error approach taken to sanctions as a policy instrument, the sanctioning countries responded generally quite well—albeit slowly—to requests for humanitarian exemptions. When excessive delays or other problems involving humanitarian items did occur, there was no evidence to suggest reasons other than inexperience, bureaucracy, and competing priorities.

*Recommendations:*

- The UN should be alert to opportunities to provide political counsel and technical assistance to governments considering the imposition of regional economic sanctions. In the case of Burundi, it might have supported the sanctions on the understanding that regional authorities would work in

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close coordination with the UN and OAU to ensure that sanctions were implemented in accordance with international norms of human rights and humanitarian law.

- Providing such assistance would require much clearer UN policy and institutional memory of lessons learned in other sanctions environments. Its failure to provide one or more sanctions experts represented a missed opportunity. Such a person could have been deployed in Burundi collating data on sanctions and coordinating efforts and requests of UN agencies and NGOs. A second person could have been deployed in Nairobi, working closely with the UN Focal Point and liaising with the RSCC and national sanctions committees, to offer technical assistance and guidance.
- The UN should take steps to enhance its capacity to manage and respond to sanctioned environments. Specific steps could include discussion of a standard list of humanitarian exemptions, articulation of a precise mechanism for requesting and implementing exemptions, and development of impact assessment and monitoring procedures.
- In instances in which countries undertake sanctions at the regional level, a number of measures would improve the functioning of such sanctions. In the case of Burundi:
  - The RSCC should have established a technical committee charged with developing detailed sanctions policy and procedural guidelines. All restrictions, exemptions, and procedures for obtaining authorization should have been made explicit.
  - The RSCC should have established mechanisms both for monitoring compliance with sanctions and for measuring their humanitarian impacts.
  - From the outset, purely humanitarian items (for example, basic foodstuffs and essential medicines) should not be barred entry.
  - Business-like review of exemption requests is essential. The RSCC should have regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., every 15 or 30 days) to deal with such requests and other administrative matters. Equally important is the

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business-like enforcement of sanctions and the objective monitoring of humanitarian impact.

—Issuing humanitarian exemptions should not be linked to political concessions by the Bujumbura regime. Basic relief essentials should not be denied to any population, regardless of the behavior of the political authorities. Broader exemptions—for example, air travel, certain manufactured goods, and other nonessential items—might merit political concessions. Thus, sanctioning countries should have responded at Arusha III to Buyoya’s “cooperation” with political and other diplomatic concessions rather than allowing humanitarian exemptions for fertilizers and seeds.

- Clear delineation of authority is essential. In the Burundi case, it would have been preferable had either the OAU or the UN assumed the legal and administrative responsibility for sanctions. Not only would the embargo have had greater legal force, but also countries in the region could then have concentrated on the more technically manageable aspects of implementing agreed sanctions policy.

### **The Socioeconomic Impacts of Sanctions**

The impact of sanctions was greatest in Bujumbura, where the population was largely dependent on the formal economy, commerce, industry, and the civil service. As subsistence farmers, Burundi’s rural population was somewhat less affected. Still, the embargo reduced food production, drove up market prices, and further damaged an already beleaguered social service. Sanctions contributed to reduced household income, both urban and rural, lowered purchasing power, and diminished household access to basic services including health and education. Sanctions prevented the regime from exporting significant quantities of coffee and tea, normally the source of more than 90 percent of export earnings.

Cross-border smuggling partially attenuated the effects of sanctions, while benefiting mainly the private sector and those receiving bribes. Enforcement of sanctions by some of Burundi’s

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neighboring countries was lax. The military regime presumably benefited from smuggling activities, and appeared increasingly capable of generating foreign currency earnings through the unauthorized export of small quantities of coffee and tea. Yet the high cost of fighting a civil war and meeting the civil service payroll continued to deplete Burundi's currency reserves. Inflation increased, particularly for imported items and certain foodstuffs, while the economy remained stagnant.

*Recommendations:*

- There should be a clearly established assessment mechanism for regular and reliable monitoring of the humanitarian impacts of economic sanctions. Sanctioning countries and the international community might have considered conducting a joint multidisciplinary assessment mission to Burundi, perhaps similar to the post-war mission to Iraq led by Martti Ahtisaari, to assess civilian conditions, determine humanitarian requirements, and recommend a list of exemptions.
- Regional leaders, before implementing sanctions, should have agreed on a detailed and adequate list of humanitarian exemptions, in close consultation with the UN/OAU. By not insisting on a jointly-prepared slate of exemptions from the outset, the UN acknowledged the preeminence of the RSCC in matters concerning sanctions. Although regional leadership was not only highly regarded but also indispensable, the scale of UN operational humanitarian activities on the ground pointed toward greater UN involvement in setting and managing sanctions. Early signals from the region, including the Arusha II statement announcing the embargo, suggested greater scope for international cooperation.
- There should be no restrictions on imports of essential humanitarian items, such as basic foodstuffs and essential medicines. Although such restrictions have been relaxed since April 1997, there was never acceptable justification

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for prohibiting such items. UN sanction regimes generally permit unrestricted exemptions for basic foodstuffs and essential medicines, although the scope and procedures may vary from case to case. Defining “essential humanitarian items” is not simple, yet constructing a detailed list of items central to basic human survival and requiring unrestricted flow is both technically feasible and ethically necessary.<sup>1</sup>

- The effectiveness of sanctions should be reviewed regularly. In this instance, sanctions were imposed with the expectation that they would achieve their objectives within a month or two. As time passes, it is necessary to reassess their political, economic, and humanitarian impacts. Consideration should be given to retargeting sanctions so as to put greater pressure on the regime while deflecting the impacts from the civilian population.

### **The Impacts of Sanctions on Humanitarian Activities**

Economic sanctions against Burundi created serious operational difficulties for humanitarian agencies. The almost total lack of exemptions during the first months of the embargo placed many UN and NGO programs at risk. RSCC approval of partial exemptions resulted in somewhat improved operational conditions, although considerable difficulties remained. Shipments of exempted humanitarian items, including many tons of medicines, seeds, and fertilizers, were blocked in neighboring countries for months. As the mechanism for case-by-case approval of exempted items became better understood, some improvement in the flow of relief materials did occur. By early 1997, most agencies regarded sanctions as a serious obstacle, greatly complicating but no longer jeopardizing their ongoing operations.

A number of NGOs indicated they would have benefited from more detailed and timely information regarding overall sanctions policy, as well as procedures for obtaining approval for their humanitarian shipments. Early confusion regarding procedures was partly due to the lack of detail provided by the RSCC, as well as unannounced modifications to the sanctions mechanism as the

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RSCC and national sanctions committees learned what was required of them. A series of tightly written policy and procedural memos from the UN Focal Point's office in Nairobi to the UN offices and NGOs in Burundi might have helped clarify procedural matters and kept agency personnel abreast of recent sanctions developments and UN thinking.

The procedure for generating the UN/NGO exemption list that was finally approved was cumbersome and convoluted. The initial list apparently took several weeks to develop. The process might well have been expedited by a joint UN/NGO meeting in Burundi, followed by several days of activity by a small working group. A standard UN list of exemptions, for use in any sanctioned country, would have enabled a faster response, although such a list has yet to be developed.

Submissions to the RSCC might have had a greater impact if they had been more concise and technically crafted. The requested list of exemptions, which could and should have been presented in a single table, was generally obscured by text and divided throughout the document and attached in annexes. The requested exemptions themselves were not precisely defined or explained. The annexes provided by various UN agencies were complicated and diluted the overall document.

The process would also have been facilitated had agencies allowed the UN Focal Point to submit all exemption requests on behalf of all humanitarian agencies. It appears that FAO submitted a request for seeds and fertilizers (among other items) in August, while UNICEF apparently made its own submission for educational supplies later in the year. While capitalizing on existing agency relationships with the authorities, such separate submissions may also on occasion have weakened the coordinated effort.

Aid agency concerns regarding the inadequacy of land and air corridors into Burundi should have received greater support at high levels within the UN system. There was no clear operational reason to explain the RSCC's refusal to establish land and air corridors between Rwanda and Burundi. If some sanctioning countries prove unable or unwilling to control air and land borders, that should be identified as a problem of sanction

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enforcement rather than allowed to constrain humanitarian access.

With the exception of the impressive FAO/WFP agricultural reports, there was a serious lack of reliable UN/NGO-generated sectoral information concerning the humanitarian situation in Burundi. Collection, analysis, and documentation of useful data appeared to be an extremely low priority for most UN agencies and NGOs. Furthermore, in light of sanctions, there should have been a shift toward collecting data sensitive to the effects of sanctions. Once again, a designated sanctions expert would have been able to work with UN agencies and NGOs to help strengthen information systems and collect sanctions-related data.

The UN Focal Point on Sanctions, and the UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) each made outstanding contributions on behalf of the international system. Frederick Lyons, the focal point, together with his staff and many others, worked tirelessly to bring sanctioning countries and the humanitarian agencies closer to a common vision of humanitarian responsibility. Under the leadership of Pat Banks, IRIN, by consolidating and circulating up-to-date information on humanitarian, economic, and political developments in the Great Lakes Region, greatly enhanced the humanitarian environment.

*Recommendations:*

- Sanctioning authorities—UN, regional, and national alike—should give clear and precise guidance regarding sanctions policies and procedures.
- The UN should develop a list of standard humanitarian exemptions for use whenever sanctions are contemplated and imposed.
- UN and associated aid organizations should submit consolidated requests for humanitarian exemptions to the authorities. Regular consolidated submissions could be part of a serious effort to make the sanctions mechanism a more collaborative effort between the regional authorities and the UN/NGO humanitarian community.
- Humanitarian agencies should join together to monitor the

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impacts of sanctions. In the Burundi case, a multidisciplinary assessment of the humanitarian effects of sanctions, if necessary using outside resources and personnel, should have been organized and implemented within two months of their imposition.

- Information systems should be strengthened since timely and accurate information is vital for agency activities and advocacy.

### **The Political Impacts of Sanctions**

How much coup leaders complied with regional demands is subject to debate. As of April 1997, the regime had failed to engage the opposition in unconditional negotiations within the framework specified by governments in the region. The National Assembly had been restored yet lacked any constitutional authority and power. Political parties were tolerated, though freedoms remained limited and party members were often harassed and sometimes arrested.

Moreover, the role played by sanctions in securing these minor concessions is unclear. Prolonged diplomatic isolation and the suspension of foreign aid were widely held to have provided at least equal incentive for change. Moreover, the regime may have had its own motives for responding, however partially, to opposition and international pressure for democratic change. Simply agreeing to talks while refraining from talking can also give the illusion of compromise at relatively little political risk.

Sanctions may even have increased tensions between the regime and its neighbors. As in other sanctions episodes, the regime attempted to portray the embargo as an attack not against the coup leaders but against the nation's people themselves. It used sanctions as a propaganda device and scapegoat, diverting attention away from its involvement in the internal conflict and from its human rights record. Although the role of sanctions in the escalation of tensions was unclear, violence increased significantly since the July 25 coup d'état as the peace process lagged far behind the hopeful point reached in June 1996, following the Mwanza

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talks and the Arusha Summit.

At the same time, the sanctioning countries themselves were becoming less enthusiastic about the embargo. Regional authorities were on the defensive, given little evidence of serious progress and increasingly vocal international concern regarding sanctions' humanitarian effects.

*Recommendations:*

- Regional and international leaders should mount a comprehensive review of current political realities in Burundi, the socioeconomic situation, and the role played by sanctions. If consensus emerges that sanctions can play a positive role in encouraging democratic change, the embargo should be reformatted and retargeted to reflect new political and socioeconomic realities.
- Sanctioning countries, in consultation with the international community, should clarify what specific actions by the regime will be sufficient to trigger a lifting of sanctions. In delineating the meaning of unconditional negotiations, governments of the region should avoid "moving the goal posts," as did the OAU in January 1997 in recommending that sanctions continue because of a "multiplication of human rights violations." Concessions made by the regime should also be publicly acknowledged.
- A more active role should be played by the United Nations system in regionally initiated sanctions such as those against Burundi. If sanctions had been part of a truly international effort to encourage democratic change, they would likely have greater political, moral, and legal force.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the issues involved, see Larry Minear, David Cortright, Julia Wagler, George A. Lopez, and Thomas G. Weiss, *Enhancing the Capacity of the United Nations System: Toward More Humane and Effective Sanctions Management* (New York: UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, October 1997)

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## APPENDIX I: CHRONOLOGY OF BURUNDI SANCTIONS

*1996*

- June 25 Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi. Government of Burundi requested security assistance.
- July 25 Military-led coup.
- July 31 2nd Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi (Arusha II): coup in Burundi strongly condemned, regional countries call for the restoration of the National Assembly, the unbanning of political parties, unconditional negotiations with all parties to the conflict, and the imposition of economic sanctions.
- August 2 Sanctions imposed by Tanzania.
- August 3 Commonwealth Secretary General supports economic sanctions.
- August 5 OAU supported the conclusions of Arusha II.
- August 5 Sanctions imposed by Kenya.
- August 6 UN expressed concern to OAU about potential humanitarian consequences of sanctions.
- August 7 Sanctions imposed by Uganda and Ethiopia.
- August 9 Sanctions imposed by Zaire and Rwanda.
- August 10 UN submitted to OAU Guidelines for Exemptions with proposed exemption list.

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Mid-August	FAO requested RSCC to exempt fertilizers and vegetable seeds for noncash crops.
August 16	Sanctions imposed by Zambia.
August 16	Regional Foreign Ministers Meeting, Kampala, Uganda, decided to establish a Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee (RSCC) to “monitor and coordinate” the activities of the national sanctions committees; exempt from sanctions human medicines and emergency basic food aid to Rwandese refugees, and ban regional travel by all members of the Buyoya regime.
August 23	UNDP Representative (Kenya) designated UN Regional Focal Point on Sanctions.
August 30	UN Security Council Resolution 1072 “expresses its strong support for the efforts of regional leaders, including at their meeting in Arusha on 31 July 1996.”
September 4	Draft Guidelines and Itemized List of Humanitarian Exemptions submitted to RSCC: food stuffs (essential food requirements only); health (vaccines, emergency medical and laboratory supplies, hygiene); relief items (blankets, clothing, water buckets, etc.); water and sanitation (equipment for rehabilitation of water sources, construction material for pit latrines); shelter (tent/plastic sheeting); UN agency supplies (basic requirements for maintaining humanitarian operations, fuel, kerosene for the cold chain for vaccines, communications equipment); air and road access.
September 6	RSCC Meeting, Arusha, Tanzania allowed UN

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- agencies to import, subject to strict control: baby foods and other essential requirements including personal hygiene, provisions for infants and hospital patients, emergency medical and laboratory supplies, and limited quantities of kerosene for the vaccine cold chain. RSCC also granted for a restricted number of UN flights to and from Bujumbura (emergency flights to be authorized on a “case by case” basis), and allowed UN agencies to import limited and controlled amounts of diesel fuel/gasoline and communications equipment for their own use.
- September 10 WHO African Regional Committee, Brazzaville, Congo, called for a partial lifting of the embargo to allow “products of medical and humanitarian assistance, such as drugs, vaccines and the equipment required for their conservation, hygienic and cleansing materials, laboratory equipment, petroleum products for health centers and food aid.”
- September 21 RSCC allowed FAO to import 1,000 metric tons of vegetable seed and 4,000 metric tons of fertilizer.
- September 23 Exemption Request submitted by UN to RSCC: agriculture (vegetable seeds, fertilizer, veterinary products, phytosanitary products, hoes); food aid (for 20,000 displaced families and for WFP’s school feeding program); nonfood relief items (plastic sheeting, blankets, buckets/jerry cans, water and sanitation equipment, cooking pots and utensils, mats, motor oil, vehicle spare parts, other essential spare parts); air flights (increase to twice weekly, and from 10 to 20 passengers per flight; blanket exemption for

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flights for emergency evacuation sought).

- September 25 2nd RSCC Meeting, Kigali, Rwanda, “took note of the positive steps taken by the Buyoya regime...namely, the lifting of the ban on political parties and the restoration of the National Assembly”; and recommended that Buyoya be invited to be available during the forthcoming summit.
- October 2 Exemption Request from UN to RSCC: September 23 request resubmitted; in addition: fuel for distribution of in-country exempted agricultural supplies; refillable (water) bladders; education materials (chalk, exercise books, paper, pens, pencils); office supplies and equipment.
- October 12 3rd Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi (Arusha III) took “note of the exemptions already granted in respect of fertilizers and vegetable seeds in recognition of the steps taken by the Buyoya regime towards meeting the conditions set by the Arusha II summit”; stated that negotiations “should start within the period of one month”; was informed that Nyerere “has received a written communication from Major Buyoya confirming his commitment to enter into negotiations with CNDD and all other armed factions that are ready to negotiate”; and decided to send a Ministerial delegation to Bujumbura.
- October 21 RSCC Extraordinary Meeting, Arusha, Tanzania, allowed the importation, on humanitarian grounds, of food, bean seeds, water purification agents, blankets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans and buckets, cooking materials (pots and utensils), sanitary facilities, and mats enough for 250,000

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- displaced persons in Burundi. Quantities and details to be defined by UN agencies and NGOs, and submitted to the RSCC Chairman before importation.
- October 25 RSCC Chairman’s Clarification on Fuel Exemption: monthly UN/NGO requests for diesel fuel and gasoline must be submitted to the RSCC Chairman; requests to include full details of consumption patterns, measures being taken to economize the use of gasoline, and information on security and prevention of “leakage.”
- October 31 Arrival of fuel from Kigali (208,773 liters diesel fuel and gasoline—approximately one month’s supply).
- November 15 UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burundi declares: “Economic sanctions should not be lifted until the authorities have pursued efforts for a cease-fire between the parties, and human rights violations have been investigated.”
- November 18 Second request to RSCC for fuel (180,000 liters of diesel fuel and 30,000 liters of gasoline—one month’s supply).
- November 30 Approval for importation of food aid by WFP, which was authorized to import up to 2,545 metric tons of food aid monthly to feed 130,000 people.
- December 3 Summit of Central African Leaders called for a lifting of sanctions “noting steps taken by the Burundian government towards reestablishing democracy.”

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December 6 Franco-African Summit, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, participants urged all sides in Burundi's civil war to "immediately open a dialogue," and further urged its neighbors "to take appropriate measures on the embargo to reduce the suffering of the people."

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January Additional requests to RSCC for fuel (increased monthly requirements to 365,500 liters of diesel fuel and 80,450 liters of gasoline). Tanzanian National Sanctions Committee authorizes WFP to use barges from Kigoma, Tanzania to Bujumbura on Lake Tanganyika for food aid deliveries.

January 10 UNICEF resubmits exemption request to RSCC for "basic education supplies for Burundian primary school children."

January 23 OAU Committee on Conflict Prevention stated that sanctions should not be lifted because of "a multiplication of human rights violations in Burundi."

January 27 Tanzanian National Sanctions Committee authorizes importation of an additional 100,000 liters of diesel fuel, 50,000 liters of gasoline, 25,000 liters of kerosene, 5,000 liters of engine oil, 1,250 liters of grease, 1,000 liters of brake and transmission fluids, and 500 liters of cleaning solvents.

February 13 4th RSCC Meeting, Lusaka, Zambia:  
• "Although sanctions were considered effective ...commodities were still finding their way

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into Burundi.” RSCC encouraged governments to tighten loopholes;

- “the travel ban...was intended to apply only to officials of the Buyoya regime and not to the ordinary Burundi”;
- “there should be unimpeded flow of humanitarian goods already exempted,” with “all fresh requests [for exemptions] submitted through the UNDP Coordinator in Nairobi to the RSCC”;
- “the Committee emphasizes the need for better information-sharing and management to avoid multiple allocations of exempted goods destined for Burundi”;
- the committee requested that member countries assist monitoring the situation on the ground;
- RSCC “expressed need to carry out a critical assessment of the sanctions eight months after their imposition”;
- RSCC indicated that “to date, sanctions have not achieved their intended objective” but should be maintained; and
- the committee approved requests for defined fuel importation exclusively through Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on a monthly basis to Burundi for the use of UN system and NGOs (365,500 liters of diesel, 80,450 liters of gasoline, 40,000 liters of jet A-1 fuel).

March 1 Exemptions requests still pending before RSCC: educational materials; spare parts; office supplies and equipment; exemption for diplomatic freight; blanket medical evacuations; hand tools; vehicles and spare parts.

March 5 OAU 65th Ministerial Meeting, Tripoli, Libya,

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“appeals to the countries of the region which imposed sanctions in Burundi to carry out an objective evaluation of the situation prevailing in the country as the result of implementation of the sanctions and to review these sanctions in the light of progress in the peace process.”

April 15 OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim stated that “there is a need to review and ensure that those sanctions which hurt civilians...are lifted.”

April 16 4th Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi (Arusha IV). “The regional summit decided...to expand with immediate effect the easing of sanctions to include all food and food products, all items relating to education, construction materials, as well as all types of medicines, agricultural items and inputs in order to alleviate the suffering of the people of Burundi.” The leaders also called on the regime to disband all regroupment camps and urged the creation of a “conducive spirit for national reconciliation and negotiations.”

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## APPENDIX II

### Persons Interviewed

#### *Burundi Government Officials*

Leonidas Havyarimana	Secretary of State for Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Juma Kariburyo, M.D.	Minister of Health
Emmanuel Maregeya, M.D.	Director General of Public Health, Ministry of Health
Apollinaire Masugura	Director of Agriculture, Ngozi Province
Christine Ruhaza	Minister of Human Rights, Social Action and Promotion of Women
Nakaha Stanislas	Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Burundi, Kenya

#### *Officials of Other Governments*

Bernard Dussault	High Commissioner for Canada
Timberlake Foster	Deputy Chief of Mission, United States Embassy
Major General M.S.H. Sarakikya	High Commissioner for Tanzania, Chairman, RSCC

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Rudi Veestraeten                      Second Secretary, Belgian  
Embassy

*Intergovernmental Organizations Interviewed in Burundi*

Lilian Bigayimpunzi                      Relief and Rehabilitation  
Office, UNICEF

Claire Boujoir                              Emergency Coordinator,  
UNHCR

Roberto de Bernardi                      Program Officer, Health  
Section, UNICEF

Gabriella de Vita                              Program Officer, UNICEF

Daniele Donati                              Coordinator, Emergency  
Operations for Agricultural  
Sector, FAO

Marc Faguy                                      Special Representative of the  
UN Secretary-General for  
Burundi

Mirza Hussain Khan                      Resident Coordinator and  
Humanitarian Coordinator,  
UNDP

Elizabeth Kramer                              Information Office, UNICEF

Bernard Lala, M.D.                              Representative, WHO

Andrew Marshall                              Chief, Humanitarian  
Coordination Unit, DHA

Philip O'Brien                              Deputy Director, Emergency,  
UNICEF, New York

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Marie Pain	Logistics Section, UNHCR, Burundi
Jean Pierre	UNICEF, Ngozi
Jean Luc Siblot	Country Director, World Food Programme
Michel Sidibe	Representative, UNICEF
Rosine Sori Coulibaly	Principle Economist, UNDP
Terry Tanzer	Program Officer, Education Section, UNICEF
Sheldon Yett	Humanitarian Affairs Officer, DHA

*Intergovernmental Organizations Interviewed in Nairobi, Kenya*

Pat Banks	Coordinator, IRIN, DHA
Brenda Barton	Regional Information Officer, WFP
Pierce Gerety	Coordinator, Great Lakes Emergency Office, UNICEF
Martin Griffiths	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region, DHA
Kerstin Holst	Policy Advisor, Office of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region, DHA

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Alexandra Humme	Information Analyst, Office of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region, DHA
Arjun Katoch	Representative of the Humanitarian Coordinator, Office of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region, DHA
Frederick Lyons	Resident Representative, UNDP; Resident Coordinator in Kenya
Everett Ressler	Regional Emergency Adviser, UNICEF

*Nongovernmental Organizations*

Bernard Chomilier	Head of Operations Support Unit, IFRC, Nairobi
Richard Hands	Action Contre la Faim
Tom Kaptijn	General Manager, Logistical Centre Nairobi, MSF
Colin Baker	Country Director, ActionAid, Burundi
Gregory Mthembu-Salter	Consultant, ActionAid
John Myers	Country Representative, OXFAM

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Bob Reitemeier

Deputy Director, Africa  
Region, ActionAid

Officials of the International Refugee Committee and Médecins  
Sans Frontières organizations



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Eric Hoskins** is a physician, specializing in the health of civilians in unstable environments, including zones of armed conflict. He has a doctorate in public health and epidemiology from Oxford University and has worked throughout Africa and the Middle East. In addition to extensive experience in documenting the humanitarian impacts of economic sanctions against Iraq, he has worked as a consultant to UNICEF on sanctions. He is the author of chapters on Iraq in the American Public Health Association's *Public Health and War* and in the volume *Political Gain and Civilian Pain* described in the Preface. An associate of the Center for International Health at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada, Hoskins is also codirector of the Toronto-based Health and Human Security Group.

**Samantha Nutt** is also a physician, specializing in women's health in developing countries. With post-graduate degrees in both family medicine and public health, she has worked on women's health programs in Africa and the Middle East. Nutt is an associate of the Center for International Health at McMaster University and codirector of the Toronto-based Health and Human Security Group. She is currently the Inaugural Fellow in International Women's Health at Women's College Hospital, University of Toronto.



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## ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

The present volume is one product in a collaborative research project on economic sanctions by the Humanitarianism and War Project of Brown University's Watson Institute, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and the Fourth Freedom Forum of Goshen, Indiana. The research project itself is described in the Preface; the three collaborating institutions are described in the following paragraphs.

The Humanitarianism and War Project is an independent policy research initiative underwritten by some forty UN organizations, governments, NGOs, and foundations. During the years 1991-1996, it conducted more than 3,000 interviews in complex emergencies around the world, producing an array of case studies, handbooks and training materials, books, articles, and op-eds for a diverse audience of humanitarian practitioners, policy analysts, academics, and the general public. Beginning in 1997 and building on earlier research, the Project is examining the process of institutional learning and change among humanitarian organizations in the post-Cold War period.

The Project is part of Brown University's Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, which was established in 1986 to facilitate the analysis of global problems and to develop initiatives to address them. Additional information about the Institute and the Project, including the names of the organizations which have made financial contributions to its work, may be found on the Internet at [www.brown.edu/Departments/Watson\\_Institute](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Watson_Institute)

The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame University was established in 1986 to provide undergraduate and graduate education, conduct research, and engage in public outreach. Its purpose is to develop and apply integrated multidisciplinary approaches to understand the causes of violence and the conditions for peace, to resolve violent conflicts, and to contribute to the demilitarization of international

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relations. It seeks to be a multifaceted training, research, and policy institute in which each activity supports the other. A hallmark of the Institute is its international character, manifested especially in its graduate education but also in its research and outreach activities. For more information contact:

The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, Hesburgh Center, P.O. Box 639, Notre Dame, IN 46556, Phone: 219-631-6970, Fax: 219-631-6973, or visit the website: [www.nd.edu/~krocinst](http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst)

The Fourth Freedom Forum is a private, nonprofit foundation that promotes informed public discussion of international security issues, emphasizing the use of economic power instead of military force. Founded in 1982 by Howard S. Brembeck, the Forum specializes in the study of economic sanctions and incentives with a particular focus on nuclear nonproliferation, humanitarianism, and the prevention of war. The goal is to achieve “freedom from fear” through the large-scale reduction of armaments and the establishment of enforceable international law. The Forum has cosponsored several programs with the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Further inquiries can be made to the Forum at: Fourth Freedom Forum, 803 N. Main Street, Goshen, IN 46528; Phone: 800-233-6786/219-534-3402; Fax: 219-534-4937; or by e-mail: [FFF@tln.net](mailto:FFF@tln.net)