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Africa's Great Lakes Region: Current Conditions in Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda

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Africa's Great Lakes Region: Current Conditions in Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda

Summary

The Great Lakes region is slowly becoming more stable after almost a decade of conflicts. The region remains vulnerable, however, since armed rebel groups are active in eastern Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and northern Uganda.

In Burundi, after a decade of conflict, prospects for a lasting peace appear promising. On August 28, 2000, a partial agreement was reached in Arusha, Tanzania, signed by 14 parties, seven Hutu and seven Tutsi. Twenty heads of state were at this meeting, including then President Clinton. In early 2001, the parties had reached agreement on a transitional government, but the armed groups rejected the deal. A transitional government, consisting of all Arusha-participant parties, was formed in November 2001, with President Pierre Buyoya as interim head of state for 18 months. The transitional regime has had limited success thus far, but serious challenges remain.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), significant progress has been made in recent months and the transition program seems to be moving forward. In December 2002, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue achieved a major breakthrough when President Joseph Kabila and the parties to the conflict agreed to a transitional government. The Agreement was signed in Pretoria, South Africa by the DRC government, the Congolese Democratic Rally (RCD-Goma), the Movement for the Congolese Liberation (MLC), and representatives of the unarmed political groups. The agreement calls for a two-year transition period headed by President Kabila and four Vice Presidents. The new government was sworn in July 2003.

Rwanda held its first multi party elections in August 2003, almost ten years after the 1994 genocide. President Paul Kagame won 95% of the votes, while his nearest rival, Faustin Twagiramungu, received 3.6% of the votes cast. In the legislative elections, the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) won 73% of the 80-seat National Assembly, while the remaining seats went to RPF allies and former coalition partners. The European Union Observer Mission stated that the elections were marred by irregularities and intimidation of opposition candidates were widespread. Rwandan government officials dismissed the EU charges, arguing that the elections reflected the wishes of the people.

In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni continues to dominate the political scene. In March 2001, he was re-elected for a second term. In March 2003, President Museveni suggested to his National Executive Committee, the leadership organ of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), that the party should consider lifting the ban on a multi-party system. Museveni is being criticized by the opposition and the international community for his efforts to overturn the two-term limit in the Constitution in order to run in 2006 when his second term expires. Meanwhile, the situation in northern Uganda continues to deteriorate with indiscriminate attacks against civilians by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This report will be updated as events warrant.

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Africa's Great Lakes Region: Current Conditions in Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda

Burundi

Background

After independence from Belgium in 1962, Burundi was largely dominated by the Tutsi-led military and political establishment. In June 1993, however, Major Pierre Buyoya, who came to power in a bloodless coup in September 1987, accepted his defeat by Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, in a multi-party election that he had called. However, the transfer of power to a Hutu-led government embittered many Tutsi, who represent 14% of the population, while the Hutu are about 85%; and a long period of instability ensued. Ndadaye attempted

to implement a number of important changes in local government, to build a multi-ethnic cabinet coalition, and to increase diversity in the army. Opposing these changes, a small group of Tutsi army officers attempted a military putsch in October 1993, assassinating Ndadaye along with several of his ministers.

The putsch failed, but sparked ethnic violence in which an estimated 100,000 people, mostly Tutsis, were killed. In late January 1994, Cyprien Ntaryamira, a Hutu and former Minister of Agriculture, was elected president by the National Assembly. In April 1994, Ntaryamira was killed along with the President of Rwanda when the plane they were sharing was shot down over the airport at Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. Burundi authorities temporarily avoided a major political crisis by

Figure 1. Burundi



confirming Sylvester Ntibantunganya as an interim president, and later president. In late July 1996, a group of Tutsi extremists attacked the President's motorcade at the funeral for 350 Tutsis killed by Hutu rebels, and the President sought refuge at the U.S. ambassador's residence, fearing for his life.¹

On July 25, 1996, the Burundi army seized power and appointed former military leader Pierre Buyoya as head of the military junta. Internal peace negotiations began in late 1997, leading to the Internal Partnership for Peace and a new transitional constitution. Buyoya was sworn in as transitional president in June 1998, two days after signing into law the new transitional constitution designed to pave the way for a power-sharing government. In the transitional constitution, the position of prime minister was split into two vice presidential positions to be filled by one Tutsi and one Hutu. The National Assembly was expanded from 80 to 121 members in order to accommodate opposition parties and regional interests. But violence continued and Hutu armed groups intensified their attacks in Burundi. Regional leaders launched a peace process to bring an end to the violence that was threatening regional stability.

Burundi at a Glance

- ! **Population:** 6 million
- ! **Independence:** 1962 from UN trusteeship under Belgium
- ! **Area:** Slightly smaller than Maryland
- ! **Ethnicity:** 85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, 1% other
- ! **Religions:** 62% Catholic, 5% Protestant, 23% indigenous, 10% Muslim
- ! **Languages:** Kirundi (official), French (official), Swahili
- ! **GDP:** \$38 billion (2002)
- ! **GDP per capita:** \$600 (2002)
- ! **Exports:** \$26 million (2002)
- ! **Imports:** \$135 million (2002)
- ! **External Debt:** \$1.14 billion (2001)
- ! **Adult HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate:** 8.3% (2001 est.)

CIA World Factbook, 2003

The Peace Process

The former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, was appointed to be the principal mediator in the Burundi peace process at a regional meeting in 1995, and the decision was later approved by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Nyerere held this position until his death in October 1999. In July 1998, seventeen factions, including the government, Frodebu (Hutu-dominated political party), and Uprona (Tutsi-dominated political party) all signed a cease-fire agreement. The agreement fixed the length of negotiations at three months and foresaw the creation of commissions responsible for negotiating issues related to the establishment of a

¹ The former president left the residence after several months and became politically active as one of the leaders of Frodebu.

democratic, power-sharing government. Talks began on July 21, 1998, in Arusha, Tanzania and lasted for ten days, focusing predominantly on the rules of procedure and debate on the root cause of the problem in Burundi. Discussions resumed behind closed doors in Arusha in mid-October 1998, and delegates and the mediators established four sub-committees to address four issues agreed to earlier: the nature of the conflict, institutions and good governance, security, and economic reconstruction. The Arusha peace talks initially excluded several armed factions, including the Front for the Defense of Democracy (FDD—Hutu armed faction), a splinter group from the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD). The FDD and the Forces for National Liberation (FNL Hutu armed faction), another rebel group, refused to honor the ceasefire agreement as long as they were excluded.

Developments in 1999-2003

In 1999, shortly after Nyerere died former South African President Nelson Mandela was selected as the new facilitator. In July and August 2000, a regional summit was held in Arusha, under the chairmanship of Mandela, in an attempt at forging a peace agreement. Mandela called for the closing of “regroupment camps,”² when Hutu civilians near the capital were being relocated, by the end of July and set a deadline of August 28, 2000 for the signing of a ceasefire agreement. On August 28, a partial agreement was reached in Arusha, and was signed by 14 parties, seven Hutu and seven Tutsi. The FDD and FNL did not sign these accords. Twenty heads of state were at this meeting, including then President Clinton. The agreement called for a transitional government and the creation of a new upper house of parliament whose makeup would be 50% Hutu and 50% Tutsi. The deal also called for the integration

Burundi: Political and Armed Groups

Unity for National Progress (**UPRONA**) (Tutsi-dominated).

Leader: Alphonse Kadege

Burundi Democratic Front (**FRODEBU**) (Hutu-dominated).

Leader: Jean Minani

Burundi African Alliance for Salvation (**ABASA**).

Leader: Terrence Nsanze

Rally for Democracy and Economic and Social Development (**RADES**).

Leader: Joseph Nzeyimana

Party for National Redress (**PARENA**) (Tutsi-Dominated).

Leader: Jean-Baptiste Bagaza

People’s Reconciliation Party (**PRP**).

Leader: Mathias Hitimana

Front for the Defense of Democracy (**FDD**)—Armed Hutu group.

Leader: Pierre Nkurunziza

Forces for National Liberation (**FNL**)-Armed Hutu group.

Leader: Agathon Rwaswa

² Beginning in late 1999, the government of Burundi began forcing civilians into these regroupment camps around Bujumbura, allegedly to protect the civilian population from rebel attacks.

of Hutus into the military; a heretofore Tutsi-dominated force and the creation of a transitional government until elections are held in three years.

The Transitional Period

In early 2001, the civilian parties reached agreement on a transitional government, but the armed groups rejected the deal. A transitional government, consisting of all Arusha-participant parties, was formed in November 2001, with President Pierre Buyoya as interim head of state for 18 months. The Hutu-dominated political grouping known as G-7 nominated Domitien Ndayizeye, a Hutu, as Vice President for 18 months. In early December 2002, the Transitional government signed a cease-fire agreement with the FDD, the main Hutu rebel group, although factions of the FDD and FNL continue to attack government forces. In April 2003, Vice President Ndayizeye assumed the presidency as had been agreed upon in Tanzania, under the Arusha plan. President Ndayizeye will serve in that capacity through November 2004, and hand over the presidency to a democratically elected government. He faces enormous challenges, including securing a ceasefire agreement with the armed factions, preparing the country for multi-party elections, and improving economic and social conditions for the people of Burundi.³ The international community has welcomed the Transitional government, and in December 2001 international donors promised Burundi's Transitional government \$764 million in aid. In fiscal year 2003 (to date), the United States, Burundi's largest bilateral donor, has provided an estimated \$17 million in humanitarian assistance and \$4 million in development assistance.

In early July 2003, a six-month-old ceasefire between the government of Burundi and the FDD ended when FNL rebels, led by Agathon Rwaswa, and assisted by FDD rebels, attacked the Tutsi-led army in Bujumbura. Due to the occasional indiscriminate shelling of the capital by FNL rebels, the United Nations and the U.S. Department of State have ordered non-essential staff out of Burundi. The fighting has also displaced tens of thousands of civilians from their homes. The United Nations and the government of Burundi estimate that there are 800,000 internally displaced people (IDPs).⁴ Most of these people have been unable to return to their homes because of continued fighting and due to the destruction of their homes. In July 2003, an estimated 65,000 people were displaced in Kayanza province in the northern part of the country, near the Rwandan border. In mid-September 2003, negotiations, organized by leaders from South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda, collapsed after the FNL rejected a power-sharing proposal by the government.⁵ In early October 2003, the FDD and the government of Burundi met under the auspices of the South African government. The parties signed a ceasefire agreement after three days of talks. According to the agreement, the FDD will get four ministries, 15

³ Author's (Dagne) interview with President Ndayizeye, September 2003, Washington, D.C.

⁴ The Economist Intelligence Unit. "Burundi Politics: Rebels Demand Mr. Ndayizeye's Resignation." September 10, 2003.

⁵ Dow Jones International News. "Summit Talks On Burundi's Peace Process Break Down." September 16, 2003.

parliamentary seats, two ambassadorships, 40% of the army officer slots, and 35% of the police force.

The Role of the African Union (AU)

Since the early 1990s, the African Union (AU), which succeeded the OAU, has been actively engaged in peacemaking in Burundi. In April 2003, the African Union began to deploy the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB). The 3,099-strong force at full strength will consist of 1,600 troops from South Africa, 1,300 from Ethiopia, and 290 from Mozambique.⁶ As of mid-September 2003, only the South African troops were fully deployed. South African and AU officials have expressed concern about lack of funding for the African peacekeeping force. The overall commander of AMIB is General Siphso Binda of the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) and his deputy is Geberat Ayale of Ethiopia. The AMIB's mandate includes overseeing the demobilization and cantonment of rebel forces. In July 2003, an estimated 150 rebel fighters belonging to CNDD-FDD arrived at a cantonment site in Bubanza province. Some observers have noted that some of these rebel fighters arrive at the cantonment sites without their weapons, raising questions about their claims of being rebel fighters. South African officials are concerned about the slow pace of demobilization of rebel groups and warned that "African Union peacekeeping troops will only deploy all of their contingents when the number of rebel combatants reporting to cantonment centers increases significantly."⁷

Challenges Ahead

The transition has had limited success thus far, but serious challenges remain. Sporadic fighting still continues between government forces and Hutu rebels. The FNL, a Hutu rebel group, has not signed a ceasefire agreement with the government and some Tutsi extremists continue to undermine the Transitional government. Disarmament and reintegration have been slow. There is also fear that the Tutsi-dominated military may intervene and take over power. Some observers, however, are cautiously optimistic that despite some difficulties the peace agreement can be sustained. They argue that the recent ceasefire agreement between the main rebel group, FDD, and the government is seen as an important step in the right direction; the signatories of the Arusha Agreement are still committed to the peace agreement; and the international community appears committed to peace in Burundi. Moreover, the recent peace agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and relative stability in neighboring Rwanda could help the situation in Burundi.

⁶ *All Africa*. "South Africa Is Making Relative Progress in Burundi." September 10, 2003.

⁷ *All Africa*. "Mozambique, South Africa Set Conditions for Full Deployment of Peacekeepers." September 12, 2003.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Background

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire, has been in political turmoil for years. In May 1997, the Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL), with the support of Rwanda and Uganda, marched into Kinshasa and ousted longtime dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Within one year, tensions between President Laurent Kabila and his Rwandan and Ugandan allies began to mount. By August 1998, open conflict erupted between Kabila and Congolese forces supported by Rwanda. Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe joined the fighting in support of Kabila.

Figure 2. Democratic Republic of the Congo



In July 1999, at a summit in Lusaka, Zambia, the leaders of Uganda, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola signed a peace agreement. The agreement called for a cease-fire within 24 hours of the signing of the agreement. Nonetheless, both sides to the conflict consistently violated the ceasefire agreement. The Lusaka Accords established a joint military commission (JMC) to investigate cease-fire violations and to disarm militia groups. The withdrawal of foreign forces from Democratic Republic of the Congo was one of the key elements of the Lusaka Accords. The Accords also called for political dialogue among Congolese political and armed groups to settle their differences peacefully and to map out a new political chapter for Democratic Republic of the Congo. The former president of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, was appointed to facilitate the talks.

The Accords called for the deployment of U.N. military observers, and in August 1999, the United Nations Security Council authorized the deployment of 90 United Nations military liaison personnel to the DRC. In November 1999, Security Council Resolution 1279 affirmed that the previously authorized United Nations personnel would constitute the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC). In July 2003, the Council authorized an increase of MONUC forces to 10,800 troops. MONUC is mandated through July 2004 (U.N. Security Council Resolution 1493), to monitor the ceasefire agreement to verify disengagement of forces, to facilitate humanitarian assistance, and to oversee disarmament and demobilization of combatants. The operation is authorized under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which allows peacekeepers to use force, if necessary, to carry out their mandate. As of August 2003, an estimated 8,045 U.N. military

personnel, including 555 military observers have been deployed to DRC. French-led multi-national peacekeeping troops, which arrived at the end of May 2003 to secure areas in the northeast of the country, withdrew in September 2003 from the DRC. This European force, dubbed "Artemis," was incrementally replaced by a 3,800 multinational MONUC force from Asia and South Africa, mostly composed of Bangladeshi and Pakistani troops.

Recent Developments

The peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo began to move forward shortly after the still unresolved assassination of President Kabila in January 2001. He was considered by some observers as a major obstacle to a negotiated settlement. Kabila refused to recognize the facilitator of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, Masire, repeatedly violated the ceasefire agreement, and demanded the withdrawal of Rwanda and Uganda from Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kabila was succeeded by his son, Joseph, who removed most of the obstacles put forth by his father and helped expedite the implementation of the Accords. President Joseph Kabila took a number of important steps shortly after taking power, giving hope for a negotiated settlement of the Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict. He met with Masire in Kinshasa, and promised to support the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. In August 2001, after a long delay, Congolese political and rebel groups, including government representatives, met in Botswana and laid the ground work for talks. President Kabila also facilitated the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping troops and relaxed restrictions on political activity in Democratic Republic of the Congo.

DRC at a Glance

- ! **Population:** 56.6 million
- ! **Independence:** 1960 from Belgium
- ! **Area:** Slightly less than one-fourth the size of the US
- ! **Ethnicity:** Over 200 ethnic groups, majority Bantu
- ! **Religions:** 50% Catholic, 20% Protestant, 10% Kimbanguist (Syncretic), 10% Muslim, 10% other/indigenous
- ! **Languages:** French (official)
- ! **GDP:** \$34 billion (2002)
- ! **GDP per capita:** \$610 (2002)
- ! **Exports:** \$1.2 billion (2002)
- ! **Imports:** \$890 million (2002)
- ! **External Debt:** \$12.9 billion (2000)
- ! **Adult HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate:** 4.9% (2001 est.)

CIA World Factbook, 2003

By late 2002, after a series of South African-U.N.-sponsored talks, foreign troops in DRC withdrew their forces, although some Ugandan and Zimbabwean troops remained, in part with the consent of the Kabila government. In December 2002, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue achieved a major breakthrough when President

Kabila and the parties to the conflict agreed to a transitional government. The All-Inclusive Agreement was signed in Pretoria, South Africa by the DRC government, Congolese Democratic Rally (RCD-Goma), the Movement for the Congolese Liberation (MLC), and representatives of the unarmed political groups.

The agreement calls for a two-year transition headed by President Kabila and four Vice Presidents, who will be in charge of four commissions: the Political Commission, headed by Azarias Ruberwa of RCD Goma; the Economic and Finance Commission, headed by Jean Pierre-Bemba of the MLC; the Reconstruction and Development Commission, headed by Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi from the DRC government; and the Social and Cultural Commission, headed by Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma, representing the unarmed opposition political groups. In July 2003, these four Vice Presidents were sworn, and the event was considered by some observers to be an historic step towards peace in the DRC.

The cabinet consists of 36 ministers and 25 deputy ministers. The parties also agreed on a bicameral parliament, consisting of a 500-member National Assembly, whose president was chosen from the MLC and a 120-member Senate, whose president was chosen from civil society.⁸ In late August 2003, the National Assembly had its inaugural session and agreed to focus on three priority areas: the government budget, laws governing political parties, and amnesty. Moreover, civil society groups were given responsibilities to chair several independent institutions on democracy, human rights, and electoral commission, as part of the December Accords. They also agreed on final transitional arrangements, including the deployment of international monitors to provide protection during the transitional period.

DRC Armed and Civilian Groups

Party for Reconciliation and Development (**PPRD**).

Affiliation: Government

Leader: President Kabila

Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma (**RCD-Goma**).

Affiliation: Pro-Rwanda-East Congo

Leader: Adolphe Onusumba

Congolese Rally for Democracy-Liberation Movement (**RCD-ML**).

Affiliation: Pro-Uganda/Split from RCD in 1999.

Leader: Mbusa Nyamwisi

Congolese Rally for Democracy-National (**RCD-N**).

Affiliation: Ituri Province-based

Leader: Roger Lumbala

Congolese Liberation Movement (**MLC**)

Affiliation: Pro-Uganda/Equateur Province

Leader: Jean-Pierre Bemba

Union for Democratic and Social Progress (**UDPS**).

Affiliation: Kinshasa-based

Leader: Etienne Tshisekedi

Mai Mai Militia.

Affiliation: Generally Pro-government

Leader: No clear leadership; Anselme Enerunga is Minister of Environment in the current government.

⁸ The Economist Intelligence Unit, September 22, 2003.

President Kabila and the armed opposition appear pleased with the transitional arrangement, although they acknowledge that there are difficult challenges ahead.⁹ One of the most thorny issues they must deal with is the reintegration of the various armed groups. The armed parties agreed to merge their respective armies with the national army. In August 2003, after weeks of contentious debates, the parties agreed on a formula that seem to satisfy all sides, giving senior posts to both government and rebel commanders. However, when the reintegration of the various armed groups would be completed is not entirely clear. Jean Pierre Ondekane of RCD-Goma was chosen as Minister of Defense, while Lt. General Liwanga Maata, former Navy Chief of Staff under Laurent Kabila was named Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, and General Sylvain Buki of RCD-Goma was picked as Army Commander. The poor economic conditions in the DRC after years of conflict are another challenge the new government faces.

⁹ Author's interview with several senior government and former rebel officials in Kinshasa and Goma, August 2003.

Rwanda

Rwanda, a landlocked nation of slightly smaller size than Maryland, is one of the poorest in sub-Saharan Africa. The population is largely comprised of two ethnic groups, the Tutsis (about 14%), who had been the dominant political and economic force until 1961, and the majority Hutu (about 85%), who took power at independence. For decades, Rwanda suffered from periodic ethnic clashes in which hundreds of thousands died. In 1990, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launched a military offensive from Uganda against government troops inside Rwanda. Government forces were able to repel the RPF and forced it to retreat into the mountains. After several failed efforts, the RPF and the government of Rwanda reached an agreement in Tanzania, referred to as the Arusha Peace Accords.

Figure 3. Rwanda



In early April 1994, the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi along with several senior government officials, were killed when their plane was shot down as it approached the capital of Rwanda, Kigali. Shortly after, the Rwandan military and Hutu militia began to systematically massacre Tutsis and moderate Hutu opposition members. In the first ten weeks of the Rwandan genocide, an estimated 500,000-1,000,000 people, mostly Tutsis, were slaughtered by government forces and the Interhamwe militia. Millions of Hutu refugees fled to neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (then Zaire) after RPF troops took control in Kigali and ousted the Hutu government in July 1994. In 1996, most of the refugees returned home after RPF troops attacked militias and former Rwandan government troops inside Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Rwandan intervention in Democratic Republic of the Congo led to the ouster of the Mobutu regime. President Laurent Kabila became president of Democratic Republic of the Congo with the help of the RPF-led government of Rwanda and Uganda. However, violence related to the Rwanda upheaval continued in Democratic Republic of the Congo for much of the

late 1990s. Rwanda is still very divided along ethnic lines, and the 1994 genocide is fresh in the minds of many survivors and perpetrators. However, resentment among the majority Hutu population toward the Tutsi appears to have decreased in part due to reconciliation efforts by the government. In 2000, the Hutu president and a leading figure of the ruling RPF, President Pasteur Bizimungu, resigned in protest of “Tutsi domination” in government. But Bizimungu has not been able to garner support for his cause. In April 2000, one month after President Bizimungu resigned, General Kagame, who had served as Defense Minister and Vice President since July 1994, was elected by the Rwandan legislature to the post of president.

Current Political Conditions

In March 2001, Rwanda held its first local elections in over 30 years. The turnout was estimated at about 90% and the elections were monitored by 200 international observers. The United Nations Special Representative for Human Rights in Rwanda, Michel Moussali, called the elections a success, despite some “technical problems.” Human Rights Watch criticized the elections, arguing that people were forced to vote and that the elections were not transparent. Between May and August 2002, the government of Rwanda organized hundreds of meetings throughout the country to seek the input of the people of Rwanda for the draft constitution. A referendum on a draft constitution was passed in May 2003. In late August 2003, Rwanda held its first multi-party elections in decades. President Kagame won 95% of the votes cast, while his nearest rival, Faustin Twagiramungu, received 3.6 % of the votes cast. In the legislative elections, the ruling RPF won 73% in the 80-seat National Assembly, while the remaining seats went to RPF allies and former coalition partners.

Twagiramungu charged that the elections were marred and that government officials intimidated his supporters. Twagiramungu, who served as prime minister shortly after the 1994 genocide, had resigned in 1995 and fled to Belgium where he lived until his return to Rwanda in 2003. The European Union Observer Mission

Rwanda at a Glance

- ! **Population:** 7.8 million
- ! **Independence:** 1962 from U.N. trusteeship under Belgium
- ! **Area:** Slightly smaller than Maryland
- ! **Ethnicity:** Hutu 84%, Tutsi 15%, Twa (Pygmoid) 1%
- ! **Religions:** 56.5% Catholic, 26% Protestant, 11.1% Adventist, 4.6% Muslim, 2% none or other
- ! **L a n g u a g e s :** Kinyarwanda (official), French (official), English (official), Swahili
- ! **GDP:** \$9 billion (2002)
- ! **GDP per capita:** \$1,200 (2002)
- ! **Exports:** \$68 million (2002)
- ! **Imports:** \$253 million (2002)
- ! **External Debt:** \$1.3 billion (2000)
- ! **Adult HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate:** 8.9% (2001 est.)

CIA World Factbook, 2003

also charged that there had been election irregularities and that intimidation of opposition candidates were widespread. Rwandan government officials dismissed the EU charges, arguing that the elections reflected the wishes of the people. Some observers questioned the 95% victory for president Kagame, suggesting that Kagame could not get that level of support without rigging the elections. Other observers were pleased that support for President Kagame and the RPF was widespread and cut across ethnic lines.¹⁰ Analysts note that the RPF was well organized and financed, and none of the opposition candidates had a political party base or a clear

slogan. Opposition candidates had access to government-controlled media, but some of them did not utilize the access. President Kagame also benefitted from key endorsements, including all the Hutu-dominated political parties and one of the presidential candidates, who withdrew several days before the elections.

Longtime Rwanda observers had little doubt about Kagame's victory in the presidential elections. The poor showing by the leading opposition candidate, however, was not fully expected. Twagiramungu was not even able to receive the endorsement of RPF critics and reportedly did not spend much time campaigning. Another problem that faced Twagiramungu was that he did not understand, according to some Rwandan commentators, the concerns of his Hutu constituency in part because of his long absence from Rwanda. RPF officials used his absence from the country against Twagiramungu, suggesting that he abandoned them during the dark days in Rwandan history. Despite the poor showing by the opposition, President Kagame is expected by donor governments to provide more political space for the opposition and implement necessary reforms to make Rwanda more democratic. Although more than a dozen African heads of state, including President Mbeki of South Africa and President Obasanjo of Nigeria, attended the swearing in ceremony, western officials were notably absent. Western officials criticized reported harassment of opposition officials and election irregularities.

Rwanda: Political and Armed Groups

Rwandese Patriotic Front (**RPF**).

Leader: President Kagame

Centerist Democratic Party (**PDC**).

Leader: Jean Nipomuscene Nayinzira

Democratic Republican Movement (**MDR**)

Leader: Celestin Kabanda

Islamic Democratic Party (**PDI**).

Leader: Andre Bumaya

Liberal Party (**PL**).

Leader: Pie Mugabo

Liberation Army of Rwanda (**ALIR**)—Armed Hutu group based in Eastern Congo, consists of former Rwandan armed forces and members of the Interhamwe—the group responsible for the 1994 genocide.

Leader: NA

¹⁰ Author Ted Dagne spent several days in August 2003 in Rwanda and met with many people, including with three opposition candidates, including Mr. Twagiramungu, President Kagame, ambassadors and observers from European Union, U.S. embassy officials and Rwandan election officials.

Rwanda in DRC

The Interhamwe, the militia that led the Rwandan genocide, and the former Rwandan armed forces (ex-FAR), intensified their attacks inside Rwanda from bases in Democratic Republic of the Congo in the late 1990s. Relations between the government of Laurent Kabila and that of Rwanda deteriorated by mid-1998. Rwanda accused President Kabila of training and providing safe haven to the Interhamwe militia and the former Rwandan army. President Kabila accused the Rwandan government of undermining his government. In July 1998, Rwandan military and security advisers left Democratic Republic of the Congo, and within a month a pro-Rwanda military unit in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo mutinied against the Kabila government. In August 1998, regular Rwandan troops, once again, invaded Democratic Republic of the Congo in support of anti-Kabila Congolese rebels. Within weeks Rwandan troops penetrated deeper into Democratic Republic of the Congo, threatening the Kabila government. In late 2002, after almost four years of signing of the Lusaka Accords, Rwandan troops withdrew from DRC. MONUC¹¹ officials in DRC have acknowledged that Rwandan troops have withdrawn from Democratic Republic of the Congo, although human rights groups remain skeptical.

Uganda

Uganda, a country slightly smaller than Oregon, gained its independence from Britain in 1962. Until the mid 1980s, the East African country was mired in civil war and ethnic strife, and suffered under a brutal dictatorship. By the time President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) took power in early 1986, the country was in ruins, with an inflation rate of over 240% and a non-existent economic infrastructure. President Museveni is credited with bringing about relative stability and economic growth in Uganda. His strategy was to coopt his political opponents and when necessary

Figure 4. Uganda



to use military means to neutralize rebel groups. His first government included opposition figures who had served in previous governments and arch critics of his

¹¹ Author's (Dagne) interview with MONUC officials in Goma and Kinshasa, August 2003.

Movement. Despite efforts at reconciliation, armed opposition to his government continued for much of the 1980s and 1990s, especially in the northern part of the country.

In May 1996, after a long transition period, President Museveni was elected to a five year term by a large margin. Museveni won 74.2% of the votes cast, while his opponent, Paul Ssemogerere, a former deputy prime minister and longtime rival of the president, received 23.7%. The elections were declared by international observers to be free and fair. A national referendum on multiparty politics was held in June of 2000. Museveni prevailed with 90.7% of Ugandans favoring a no-party government system. The President stated that multiparty politics would only be introduced when the no-party system has succeeded in eliminating the threat of a return to sectarian politics.

In 2002, however, bowing to donor pressure, Museveni authorized the introduction of the Political Parties and Organizations Act (POA), which allows for the formation of political parties. The opposition argues that the POA infringes on the right to associate because it stipulates that political parties are only permitted to operate inside the capital city of Kampala. In March 2003, however, President Museveni suggested to his National Executive Committee, the leadership organ of the NRM, that the party should consider lifting the ban on a multi-party system. Museveni is also being criticized by the opposition and the international community for his efforts to overturn the two-term limit in the Constitution. His second term will end in 2006.

Uganda at a Glance

- ! **Population:** 25.6 million
- ! **Independence:** 1962 from Britain Area: Slightly smaller than Oregon
- ! **Ethnicity:** 17% Baganda, other ethnicities compose remainder of population
- ! **Religions:** 33% Catholic, 33% Protestant, 16% Muslim, 18% other/indigenous
- ! **Languages:** English (official), Luganda
- ! **GDP:** \$31 billion (2002)
- ! **GDP per capita:** \$1,260 (2002)
- ! **Exports:** \$476 million (2002)
- ! **Imports:** \$1.14 billion (2002)
- ! **External Debt:** \$2.8 billion (2002)
- ! **Adult HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate:** 5% (2001 est.)

CIA Factbook 2003

The 2001 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

On March 12, 2001, Uganda again held national elections, and President Museveni won 69.3% of the votes cast, while his closest challenger, Kizza Besigye, received 27.8%.¹² Besigye, a doctor and Museveni's one-time ally, was a member of the NRM and Museveni's personal physician during the insurgency in the early 1980s. He ran on an anti-corruption platform, vowing to rid the government of its

¹² Ugandan Elections 2001. [<http://www.uganda-elections.com>]

excesses. He also raised questions about Uganda's military involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), advocating Uganda's withdrawal from the DRC. Election observers, both local and international, declared the elections to be free and fair, although they acknowledged that the electoral process and management had many weaknesses. The results of the elections were rejected, however, by Besigye on the grounds that there were discrepancies and inconsistencies in the electoral process. He filed a petition at the Supreme Court challenging the declaration of Museveni as president-elect and sought to annul the vote. Besigye subsequently lost the petition and said he would respect the Supreme Court verdict. In August 2001, Besigye fled Uganda and later surfaced in the United States, alleging that he feared for his life in Uganda. He now says he would return to Uganda if the right conditions prevail.¹³

Uganda: Political and Armed Groups

National Resistance Movement (NRM).

Leader: President Museveni

Ugandan People's Congress (PC).

Leader: Milton Obote

Democratic Party (DP).

Leader: Paul Ssemogerere

Conservative Party (CP).

Leader: Ken Lukyamuzi

Justice Forum (JF).

Leader: Muhammad Kibirige Mayanja

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)—Armed group.

Leader: Joseph Kony

Parliamentary Elections

In late June 2001, more than 50 incumbent members of the Ugandan parliament lost their seats, including 10 ministers. The no-party parliamentary elections reportedly gave President Museveni a major base of support in Parliament. He campaigned aggressively for his favorite candidates, although a number of his ministers were defeated by lesser known individuals. According to press reports, the elections were marred by violence in which an estimated 12 people were killed. Meanwhile, in February 2002, the ruling NRM lost several seats in local elections to opposition figures, including the mayoral seat in Kampala, the capital.

Instability in Northern Uganda

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, is a rebel group that has violently pursued a government overthrow since 1986. More than 20,000 children have been abducted during this conflict for forced conscription and sexual exploitation. As of July 2003, over 1 million Ugandans have been displaced. From its bases inside Sudan, the LRA launches attacks against civilians in northern Uganda and takes its abductees inside Sudan. There appears to be no political ideology behind LRA's armed insurrection, although LRA officials promote the Ten Commandments as their political philosophy. The Acholi, the dominant ethnic group

¹³ Author's (Dagne) interview with Besigye, October 7, 2003.

in northern Uganda, do not support the LRA. Because of the LRA's killings, lootings, and abductions, Uganda is facing what USAID has called its "worst humanitarian crisis in 17 years."¹⁴

Many efforts at a negotiated settlement between the LRA and the government of Uganda have failed, although some LRA members have accepted the government's amnesty offer and have returned home. In March 2002, the government of Uganda launched Operation Iron Fist in an effort to dismantle LRA camps in southern Sudan. The Agreement reached between the governments of Sudan and Uganda allowed Ugandan forces to deploy troops inside Sudan. Uganda and Sudan also agreed to resume diplomatic relations, deploy monitors along the Uganda-Sudan border, and ban activities by armed groups in their respective countries. But Uganda's offensive against LRA rebels has not produced tangible results. The government's offensive was followed by the spread of LRA attacks into previously unaffected districts in the eastern part of the country, an area inhabited by the Teso people. Teso self defense groups have aggressively attempted to counter LRA forays into the east. Moreover, Ugandan officials believe that the government of Sudan continues to support the LRA and continues to provide sanctuary to LRA leadership.¹⁵

The Rwanda-Uganda Conflict: Background

Between 1996-97, Uganda along with Rwanda, had helped the then-rebel leader Kabila to oust former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Kabila became president in May 1997, after the ouster of the Mobutu regime, but tensions between Kabila and his allies, Rwanda and Uganda, soon began to mount. In August 1998, Uganda joined Rwanda and Congolese rebels in a joint effort to oust the government of Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). By early 1999, the Congolese rebels and their Rwandan and Ugandan allies were in control of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In northwest Democratic Republic of the Congo, a pro-Uganda Congolese rebel group, the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), appeared in late 1998. However, the emergence of the MLC led to serious tensions between the pro-Rwanda rebel group, the Congolese Democratic Rally (RCD), and MLC, as well as between Rwanda and Uganda. Ugandans sought to influence events in DRC independent of Rwanda and its Congolese allies. President Museveni was sidelined in the first Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict by Rwanda and its allies because Museveni sought a negotiated settlement with former dictator Mobutu. Kigali considered the creation of MLC as a direct challenge and as undermining its RCD allies. Efforts to merge the two Congolese groups failed in part because senior Ugandan officials were opposed to a merger.

Rwanda -Ugandan tensions began to mount in 1999, when Rwandese officials demanded a code of conduct for their respective armies in DRC. In August 1999,

¹⁴ USAID Situation Report, July 3, 2003.

¹⁵ Interview with senior Ugandan government officials in Kampala and Washington, 2003.

Ugandan and Rwandan troops clashed in Kisangani, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The leaders of the two countries were able, at first, to bring a quick end to the conflict, but tensions remained. Rwanda and Uganda clashed twice in Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2000 and later agreed to a peace package; although tensions remained because Ugandan forces were defeated in all three engagements in Kisangani. Ugandan officials have long maintained that the problem with Rwanda can be resolved peacefully and that they will work to improve relations. Indeed, a number of meetings have taken place over the past two years between the two sides, but relations between President Museveni and President Kagame continue to be strained.

President Kagame and most of the senior political and military leaders of Rwanda lived in Uganda for decades, until their return to Rwanda in 1994. President Kagame and many Rwandese fought alongside President Museveni during the Ugandan civil war, and Kagame later served as chief of military intelligence when Museveni assumed power in 1986. Current senior Rwandese government officials also served in senior positions in the Ugandan government and military. President Museveni considered his role as that of mentor and senior statesman. The Rwandese leadership, while grateful to Ugandans and Museveni, contend that the relationship between the two sides must now be one of equal partnership. Ugandan officials assert that in order to establish good relations, Rwanda must halt its alleged support for Ugandan dissidents. Rwandan officials deny that they are supporting Ugandan dissidents and instead, accuse Ugandan officials of collaborating with the Interhamwe, the group responsible for the 1994 genocide. The British government has been mediating between the two sides over the past several years.

In March 2003, Uganda sent an estimated 8,000 troops back into the Ituri region of Democratic Republic of the Congo, reportedly to provide protection to the civilian population and to assist the Ituri Pacification Commission (IPC). The Ituri region has been devastated by ethnic clashes since Rwandan and Ugandan troops withdrew in early 2003. The redeployment of Ugandan troops threatened to destabilize the region once again, as Rwanda accused Uganda of violating the terms of agreement concluded by the parties to the conflict. Under international pressure, Uganda withdrew its troops in late April 2003, creating a power vacuum in the Ituri region.¹⁶ Shortly after the withdrawal of Ugandan troops, armed tribal factions in Ituri began to terrorize the civilian population, killing several hundred people. In late May 2003, the United Nations Security Council approved an intervention force to be deployed in the Ituri region to protect civilians. As noted above, an estimated 1,400 troops led by France were deployed in June 2003 and were replaced in September by MONUC forces.

In recent months, relations between Rwanda and Uganda have improved in large part due to ongoing high-level bilateral talks. In 2003, on several occasions, the leaders of the two countries met to discuss issues relating to alleged support for their

¹⁶ "Last Batch of Ugandan Troops Withdrawing from Eastern Congo." *The New Vision*, June 03, 2003.

respective opposition groups.¹⁷ One particular meeting between Presidents Museveni and Kagame, in May 2003, where the intelligence chiefs and other senior officials from the two countries were present, reportedly helped significantly to improve relations between the two countries. Both sides appear to have distanced themselves from supporting the others' opposition, who had been given sanctuary at the height of the conflict between Kampala and Kigali. In August 2003, President Kagame acknowledged that relations have improved with Uganda.¹⁸ President Museveni's presence at the swearing in ceremony of President Kagame in Rwanda, along with several other Africa heads of state, is likely to strengthen relations between the two countries.

¹⁷ Interview by author (Dagne) of senior Rwandan and Ugandan officials in August 2003.

¹⁸ Author's interview (August 2003) of President Kagame in Kigali, Rwanda.