



3025 4th St. NE, Suite 122  
Washington, D.C. 20017

April 21, 2015

H.E President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are the Catholic Task Force for Africa, a coalition of Catholic religious orders, organizations and individuals committed to advocating for peace, justice, good governance, conflict prevention, reconciliation, religious freedom and development in Africa.

We commend you and your administration for your ongoing support of the democratic process and human rights in Burundi. We are encouraged to learn that on March 5, 2015 the US Embassy in Bujumbura sent a letter to the Minister of Defense and War Veterans, Major General Pontien Gaciyubwenge, asking him to submit the personal and professional information of armed service members currently serving in the 34<sup>th</sup> battalion of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) by March 27. The aim is to *"conduct Leahy vetting in order to ensure that the United States Government assistance is not provided to individual suspected of having committed grave violations of human rights in the past."*

Article 96 of the Burundian Constitution, drawing from the Arusha Agreement for Peace and reconciliation in Burundi promulgated on March 18, 2005, states: *"The President of the Republic is elected by popular votes for a term of five years renewable once."*

Contrary to this provision and the wishes of the Burundian citizens, President Nkurunziza is seeking to amend the constitution to continue for a third term which may fuel civil unrest, loss of life and a possible civil war.

We are writing to urge you Mr. President to use all available diplomatic tools to discourage President Pierre Nkurunziza from seeking a third term. As you indicated in your 2009 speech in Accra Ghana, Burundi *"does not need a strong man, it needs strong institutions"*.

On March 6, 2015 the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Burundi added their voice in a pastoral letter to those of many civil society groups and Burundians calling on President Nkurunziza to respect the presidential term limit as stipulated in the constitution. (Letter enclosed)

As a way forward, we request that you personally call President Nkurunziza and ask him to uphold the constitutional provisions on presidential term limits. This diplomatic effort could be coordinated with Burundi's European partners.

We wish you God's blessings and guidance in your work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aniedi Okure". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Aniedi" and the last name "Okure" clearly distinguishable.

Rev. Aniedi Okure, OP  
For Catholic Task Force for Africa