**BURUNDI: DEMOCRATIC SPACE REMAINS TIGHTLY CLOSED**

**MAINLY SYMBOLIC, INADEQUATE MEASURES TAKEN SINCE JUNE 2020**

**MEDIA** The welcome release of journalists (without admission of the arbitrary nature of their arrest and detention) and lifting of sanctions against certain media

**HOWEVER**
- Conviction of media representatives and journalists in exile
- Persisting harassment, threats and intimidation against journalists
- Self-censorship by journalists, intolerance for all criticism, especially of government actions, and for reporting on sensitive subjects such as security incidents or human rights violations

**CIVIL SOCIETY** Long awaited release of human rights defenders from prison

**HOWEVER**
- Independent human rights NGOs still suspended or revoked
- Persistent mistrust and hostility against independent civil society
- Increased monitoring of civil society by limiting their operating costs and monitoring the ethnic composition of the staff of foreign NGOs

**OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES**
- Persistence of abusive restrictions on the freedom of association and freedom of assembly, though to a lesser extent than during the election period
- Persistence of extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment of opposition members, mainly from the CNL
- Persistence of political intolerance and hate speech towards opponents, though political violence has generally declined

*Whoever is dissatisfied with his achievements [of late President Nkurunziza] for Burundi and Burundians is simply possessed by the devil and is only thinking of doing evil*

(Excerpt from President Ndayishimiye’s speech delivered during the ceremony ending the mourning period for President Nkurunziza and commemorating the ‘National Day of Patriotism’ on 8 June 2021)