

## **RETHINKING VIOLENCE, RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION IN BURUNDI\***

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### **SUMMARY**

Armed violence and genocide are among the on-going problems that are still facing contemporary Africa and the world. In the aftermath of the outrages, devastation and appalling carnage of the Second World War, member states of the United Nations (UN) undertook radical steps, *inter alia*, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights". Subsequently, the International Bill of Human Rights was proclaimed in order to lay down international human rights norms and standards of conduct and to prevent the recurrence of mass killings. Although Burundi is a State Party to the UN and African Union and is a signatory to a number of international and regional human rights treaties, the post-colonial history of Burundi is an epic tale of indescribable human suffering and misery as a result of systematic mass killings. At least every family or household in Burundi has been negatively affected by the mass killings of the 1960s, 1972, 1988 and 1990s, which have created a significant number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This article traces the root causes of Burundi's systemic armed violence and argues that despite several UN Security Council Resolutions and peace agreements aimed at national reconciliation and reconstruction, mass killings and other heinous crimes remain unaddressed. The article recommends that a comprehensive transitional justice model is required in post-conflict Burundi in order to bring about national reconciliation, healing and reconstruction.

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