



USAID | BURUNDI

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

OVERVIEW

PROFILE

Date of Independence: 1962
Population: 8.7 million (2008)
Languages: Kirundi, French, Swahili
GDP per capita: \$138 (2008)
Source: U.S. State Department

MISSION DIRECTOR

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BACKGROUND

In 2005, Burundi completed the transition to a constitutional democracy mandated by the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accords with five rounds of national elections. Since the elections, Burundi has entered a period of relative stability, and ethnic tensions have decreased considerably, although the pre-election period brought about some cases of politically motivated violence. The political system created by the 2005 Constitution has been widely embraced by both political actors and the public. However, over the last five years the executive branch has expanded and solidified its dominance to the detriment of competing democratic and social forces. The ruling party claimed an overwhelming victory in the 2010 elections at the local and regional level, and President Pierre Nkurunziza won re-election in the face of opposition boycotts.



Burundi now faces the dual challenges of consolidating fragile democratic gains through free and fair elections as well as an ongoing struggle to deliver peace dividends after a decade of civil war. A recent democracy and governance assessment in Burundi confirmed that one of the greatest challenges remains the concentration of power in the hands of the executive and the closely linked ruling party. Significant USAID assistance and engagement with the Government of Burundi and civil society stakeholders remain absolutely vital to rebuilding the country's economy, accelerating social service delivery, consolidating peace and security, and advancing the democratization process.

PROGRAMS

USAID focuses on fostering respect for constitutional rule of law; enhancing accountability, efficiency, and transparency in government administration; and opening political space for participatory issue-based dialogue. USAID works with the Government of Burundi to improve governance through policy reform. USAID programs encourage Burundians to debate public priorities, voice and win support for alternative solutions, and provide input into decisions that affect their lives. USAID-supported programs also monitor political platforms for signs of corruption and work to improve media freedom and freedom of information. Through women's leadership initiatives, USAID assists local organizations to facilitate broader participation by women in the democratic process.

RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

USAID focuses on fostering respect for constitutional rule of law. USAID works with the Government of Burundi to improve governance through policy reform, including laws and regulations pertaining to the national water management system and land tenure. USAID's long-term assistance goals in Burundi are to encourage government and citizen accountability, equal administration of justice, and protection and advancement of civil and individual rights.

On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.



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GOOD GOVERNANCE

USAID supports strengthening transparency, accountability, and oversight mechanisms. Current assistance provides training in planning, policy-making, implementation, and leadership to the executive branch. Policy sectors including land tenure, water resource management and cooperatives law have been highlighted as specific entry points for cross-sectoral partnership in agricultural, economic, and environmental policy development. With this programming, USAID hopes to assist in the development of well-trained and efficient Executive Branch officials; improved transparency and accountability mechanisms; and routine investigations of corruption.

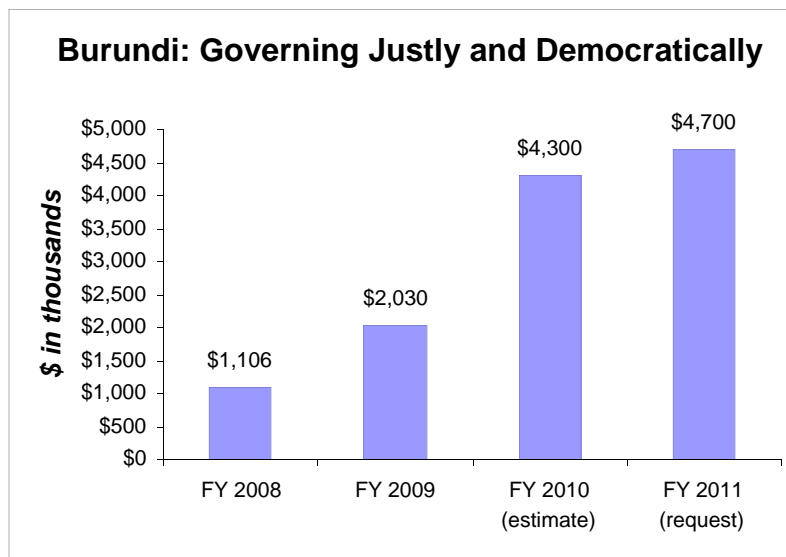
POLITICAL COMPETITION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

Promoting democracy and political competition through free, fair, and transparent elections is one of the highest priorities for USAID in Burundi. USAID supports peaceful political competition and negotiation of disputes through democratic and inclusive political processes. For example, USAID provides technical support to the recently established National Independent Electoral Commission, developed by the Government of Burundi for the 2010 and 2015 elections. Additionally, USAID supported the 2010 election process through a robust program that focused on civic education, voter registration, conflict mitigation, and technical assistance. Together with the U.S. Embassy, USAID also helped coordinate election observation.

CIVIL SOCIETY

USAID assists in the protection and development of civil rights, empowerment, civic participation and free access to information so that individuals and civil society organizations may fully exercise their rights to participate in the conduct of the country's affairs. USAID is currently supporting efforts to strengthen civic participation, media freedom, and freedom of information. Assistance also supports assessments of the laws and regulations governing civil society organizations' operations, farmers' associations, farmer cooperatives, and professional associations. USAID also provides assistance to community-based media outlets, and supports other cross-sectoral activities in economic growth, health, and education programs.

FUNDING



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