

Letter from U.S. President Bill Clinton to Burundi President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, 15 January 1996

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 15, 1996

Dear Mr. President:

As the new year begins, I extend to you and the people of Burundi the best wishes of the American people as well as my personal regards. I know these are difficult times for Burundi, and I want you to know I follow developments in your country closely. I have asked Ambassador Albright to visit Burundi to reiterate the importance we attach to ending the cycle of violence and the culture of impunity, without which Burundi cannot achieve the economic development that is so urgently required.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to achieve development in the absence of security, particularly when the targets of violence include those who have come to help the people of Burundi. The United States along with Burundi's many other friends in the international community, is deeply concerned about the escalating violence, rampant killings and other human rights abuses that have become daily occurrences in recent months. It is imperative that Burundi's leaders work vigorously to stop the violence, isolate extremists and seek a lasting peace.

I know that you have pledged to combat the violence that plagues Burundi. The United States fully supports you in that endeavor. Like you, we view the Convention of Government and a spirit of compromise and conciliation as the basis upon which to build a lasting peace in Burundi. My government will continue to support international efforts to facilitate political reconciliation in Burundi including those of neighboring governments, the United Nations and its agencies, President Carter, and other private groups working to that end. We also remain prepared to help strengthen Burundi's political, judicial, social and economic institutions so that peaceful development can resume.

However, the United States will provide no political recognition or economic assistance to any government in Burundi that comes to power by force.

I know you share our views and I would welcome your ideas on how the international community, including the United Nations and its agencies, can further help Burundi.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

His Excellency
Sylvestre Ntibantunganya
President of the Republic of Burundi
Bujumbura