

**Message to the Nation by the President of the Republic of Burundi
on the occasion of New Year 2019**

**Dear Burundian compatriots,
Friends of Burundi;**

1. The year 2018 is coming to an end; the year 2019 is coming. I thank very much Almighty God for the blessings He has granted to us during the year that is ending, and I ask Him to stay with us during the coming New Year.
2. I present to all Burundians, wherever they are, my best wishes of good health, happiness, security, justice, prosperity and divine blessings for the coming year. May the year 2019 be for us a year of deeper meditation on our country, a year of solidarity, a year of consolidation of unity and a year of awakening consciences.
3. It is very nice to spend a whole year in peace, security and tranquillity in all corners of Burundian territory. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Defence and Security Forces and other institutions of the country that give their hearts and souls, day and night, for Burundi to live in peace and dignity. I cannot ignore the Burundian population and especially the Joint Security Committees.
4. I would once again like to express my gratitude to the countries and international organizations that support us in various policies and projects, and which help us, above all, to convince those who are still doubting and those who have taken a dead end because of rumours, lies and all sorts of fabricated stories that are orchestrated and spread by the enemies of Burundi.

**Dear Burundian compatriots,
Friends of Burundi;**

5. The year that has just ended has been a very fruitful one. The seasons have been good, and this has resulted in an increase of production in all sectors of national life. The main theme that has guided us for two years, "**Let's meditate deeply on our country to understand where we come from and where we are going**", guided our steps towards success. We will continue to take inspiration from it throughout the coming year.
6. The joy we are experiencing in this end of year and New Year is due to many things: what we achieved, what we saw with our own eyes, what we heard, without forgetting the signs showing that our future is very promising. Allow me to tell you some facts that make us feel cheerful:

First: The many good ideas expressed by the Burundian Citizens have resulted in a Constitution that promotes National Sovereignty, Dignity and the Public Affairs; a

Constitution that puts Burundi back into God's Hands as it used to be before the arrival of the colonizers.

Second: We categorically refused to return to a dictatorial regime, and we have consolidated country's independence and democratic governance when the Burundians organized the constitutional referendum themselves without asking for foreign assistance in terms of experts, material and financial means.

Third: We have safeguarded peace and security throughout the country, Burundians and foreigners living in this country have lived in peace and freedom; while our brothers and sisters who have taken refuge outside the country returned to their native country in great numbers.

Fourth: We have shown to those who continue to harbour doubts about us that the bad seeds of division no longer grow on our soil; we have turned a deaf ear to some Burundians and foreigners who still want to stir up the conflicts among us and divide us into antagonistic groups in order to plunge us back into the chaos in which the colonizers and the traitors who were allied with them had put in our country.

Fifth: Through the program of patriotic and civic education, we helped Burundians in distinguishing wheat from tares, to know the secrets and history of our country and we made them aware of the importance of leaving behind a dignified legacy. We will continue this program for the good of Burundians, both for those who live today and for future generations.

Sixth: We have continued to raise funds and searched for other material resources within the framework of organizing the 2020 elections, and many Burundian citizens have responded to this initiative, delighted to do so and without constraint. I thank you for responding to my appeal to organize the elections ourselves without foreign interference.

Seventh: We developed ourselves the **National Development Plan Burundi-PND BURUNDI 2018-2027**, which will serve as the basis and framework for the development of other development projects.

Eighth: We had a good food crop and decided to save it and share the surplus with our brothers and sisters who are in need.

Ninth: We protected the national heritage, especially mineral ores and industrial export crops. This is a new beginning that will lead us to true independence, political autonomy and economic independence.

Tenth: We have initiated a program of local solidarity and instituted by Presidential Decree a day dedicated to this good action. I call on Burundians to strengthen the culture of national and local solidarity, so that solidarity is not a one-day activity but rather an everyday practice.

Eleventh: We have continued to contribute to the peacekeeping effort in the world and to the fight against terrorist organizations.

**Dear Burundian compatriots,
Friends of Burundi;**

7. Let us say it loud and clear, we owe all our achievements to the Almighty God and to the security that has been safeguarded by the Burundian people, the defence and security forces and the national intelligence service. Security is the foundation, pillar and shield of Dignity and Development in Burundi and around the world. Allow me to tell you briefly about the achievements this year that is coming to an end, the details will be given to you over the next few days by the different Ministers.
8. Beginning with the security sector, the year 2018 has been characterized by a largely satisfactory security throughout the national territory. However, the picture is not all bright; there was an armed gang that killed **26** people and wounded **7** others in Ruhagarika, Buganda Commune in Cibitoke Province. Some of these criminals have now been brought to justice. Those who committed these crimes acknowledged that it was in Rwanda that everything had been planned, that those who sent them are in Rwanda and that they came from Rwanda.
9. There was also banditry with firearms; murders largely committed in a setting of land disputes and witchcraft suspicion; persons who produce, market or use narcotic drugs and prohibited beverages; it is these elements that largely cause disputes and insecurity in the community. The perpetrators of all these crimes were each time apprehended and punished in accordance with the law.
10. This prompted us to conduct searches at several locations across the country, which resulted in the seizure of **123** rifles, **16095** bullets, **127** cartridge cases, **446** grenades, **27** bombs, **8** mines and other military or police items, while many quantities of illegal drinks were also seized and put away from harm.
11. In the political sphere, a dialogue between the Government and the legally recognized political parties was held and they agreed on a roadmap leading to the 2020 elections.
12. We welcomed **58,262** returnees returning from Tanzania, Congo, Kenya, Uganda and Gabon, as well as **200,000** returnees coming without assistance from the UNCHR. I cannot forget to mention the **30,000** Burundians who were expelled by the Rwandan

Government and who were separated from their spouses and offspring after being stripped of all their property.

13. The other major accomplishment of the year was the eradication of the disorder that prevailed in the International Non-Governmental Organizations and Private Corporations operating in Burundi with a view to encouraging them to work legally and in conformity with Burundian law.

**Dear Burundian compatriots,
Friends of Burundi;**

14. As security can only prevail where true justice does, **33,500** court decisions have been implemented in the framework of strengthening justice for all, while **1,500** vulnerable people have benefited from the free assistance of lawyers.
15. To enable citizens to easily access the Courts, Courts of Appeal and their respective General Prosecutor's Offices have been created in Makamba and in the Ntakangwa and Muha Communes of the Bujumbura Mayorship.
16. With regard to the defence of the State interests, **6 billion** Burundian Francs were credited in the State coffers through trials won by the Ministry of Justice.
17. Through the Administrative Court and the Special Court of Lands and Other Property, around **4707** hectares of State land that had been plundered by individuals, and whose cost is estimated at **280 billion** Burundian Francs, were recovered.
18. In the spirit of promoting a human rights compliant criminal justice system, approximately **2750** prisoners were set free by Presidential Decree while the sentences of **1300** others were reduced.
19. I urge the Justice and Public Security Sector Leaders and the Independent National Human Rights Commission to redouble their efforts, so that Burundians really feel that they live under the Rule of Law, that they have Jurisdictions they can seize and obtain justice and that their Rights are respected.

**Dear Burundian compatriots,
Friends of Burundi;**

20. A saying of our ancestors which can be translated: "**It is from the belly that comes the strength to work**", or "**Hungry belly has no ear**" perfectly illustrates this situation. It is with this in mind that we have put forward the increase of production, and that more than **50,000 tons** of chemical fertilizers and **10,000 tons** of dolomite were distributed.

21. In addition, we sensitized the population to the practice of irrigated agriculture during the dry season, and this has meant that agricultural production is increasing in all the provinces of Burundi, and that the prices of foodstuffs are decreasing. I take this opportunity to salute the work valued at **18 billion** Burundi Francs accomplished by students during the summer holidays.
22. Restocking activities have been carried out. More than **1500** cows, around **5000** goats, and more than **1500** pigs were distributed, as more than **3,000,000** sheep and goats were vaccinated against the plague.
23. Awareness-raising and improvement activities for industrial export crops such as coffee and tea were undertaken, resulting in a significant increase in production compared to 2017.
24. Activities aimed at protecting the interests of Farmers and the State have been carried out, and 98% of coffee growers received their dues. From now on I ask those in charge to pay coffee growers to it on time because this is their right. I also ask that appropriate measures be taken to ensure that incapable partners are excluded from this sector, and that those who undermine the property and rights of citizens are punished and excluded from the coffee sector.
25. In the economy sector, incomes continue to increase from one year to the next. The Burundian Revenue Authority (OBR) expected to collect **792 billion** Burundian francs, but in reality it collected about **850 billion** Burundian Francs. This represents a surplus of more than 10% over the 2017 revenue. I would like to express my gratitude to OBR officers for their dedication and professionalism when it comes to performing their duties, even though corrupt agents remain among them.

**Dear Burundian compatriots,
Friends of Burundi;**

26. It is these funds that are thus collected that enable us to carry out major national projects in all sectors, to pay officials and to finance social projects aimed at improving the living conditions of Burundians, so that they can easily seek treatment, produce more, educate their children, pay for transportation costs, etc.
27. With regard large-scale projects, tarmac roads that facilitate the movement of people and goods in the town of Gitega, the traffic lights regulating smooth flow of road users in the city of Bujumbura have been carried out, and the **Bujumbura-Nyamitanga** road is in the final phase.
28. During the coming year, construction works on the **Kibumbu-Gitega, Bujumbura-Gatumba, Bururi-Gakuba, Nyanzarake-Rumonge** and **Rumonge-Gitaza** roads will start. Alongside these roads, the **Port of Bujumbura** will be renovated and expanded.

29. I congratulate the Ministry for Hydraulics, Energy and Mines; the Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock; and the Ministry of Public Works for their numerous good achievements.
30. I call upon the entire population to increase their vigilance in keeping an eye on shared wealth and in safeguarding public buildings. I also ask that the **National Strategy for Good Governance and the Fight against Corruption, 2nd generation**, which is under preparation, can finally be finalized, so that we have texts of laws clear and adapted to the current situation.
31. While waiting for the finalization of this National Strategy, I would like to ask anyone who has stolen in any way, to return to the country any ill-gotten gain. I call on all institutions entrusted with the protection of national wealth to punish the perpetrators of embezzlement and misappropriation of public property more rigorously. I urge that the final report on the distribution of state vehicles under the new Non-State Fleet Policy be submitted, and this in the first quarter of 2019.
32. We are all invited to work in synergy to fight against corruption and fraud, and to look after collective wealth as we do for our very own. This is how we will be able to raise the necessary and sufficient funds to finance the construction of roads, sources of energy, drinking water supply, schools, health centres, hospitals, stadiums and playgrounds; provide free education to pupils in basic schools, free health care for children under 5, pregnant mothers and those who give birth in public health facilities, grant loans and scholarships to University students, etc.
33. Remember also that we have no other resources besides our own funds to finance social security, medical assistance to the poor, the national solidarity through the programs such as **MERANKABANDI** and others, without forgetting assistance to victims of various natural disasters.

**Dear Burundian compatriots,
Friends of Burundi;**

34. During the coming year, we will continue the national programs from the stage where we are, and then bring them forward.

First: We will continue to consolidate peace and security within and on the borders of the country, with a view to ensuring the independence and sovereignty of Burundi.

Second: The preparatory work for the 2020 elections, with regard to the collection of funds and materials, will continue.

Third: We will educate Burundian citizens and we teach them to implement the new NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF BURUNDI-PND BURUNDI 2018-2027.

Fourth: We will rethink the program of community development work and multiply public infrastructures: schools, health centres, hospitals, markets, villages, playgrounds, drinking water sources, erosion counter dugouts and rural pathways. We will focus on cleanliness, building homes for vulnerable, etc.

Fifth: The program of free medical care for children under 5, pregnant mothers and mothers giving birth in public health facilities will continue.

Sixth: To cope with climate change, we will continue to protect the environment through the program "EWE BURUNDI URAMBAYE"

Seventh: We will continue to build hydropower plants and distribute drinking water throughout the country.

Eighth: We will continue to maintain excellent relations with other States, and we will increase the number of true friends, building cooperation based on mutual respect.

Ninth: We will continue to protect collective natural resources, especially minerals and industrial export crops.

Tenth: We will continue to make decisions about respect for human rights, enforce the law and punish offenders.

Eleventh: We are going to deal seriously with the problem of rampant demography. It is with this in mind that we ask the Ministry in charge of Land Settlement to stop the work of apportioning residential plots in the city of Bujumbura and its surroundings.

Twelfth: We will work with companies that have proven capitals and expertise to decent houses, which will be sold on mortgages. We will have found in this way the solution to the problem of scarcity of houses and plots.

Thirteenth: We will vigorously protect the customs and tradition of Burundians and reject and denounce the teachings, language, attitudes and behaviours that taint the culture and morality of the Burundian people. The household registration process according to the Personal and Family Code is 90% with the exception of Rumonge Province. We are satisfied with this level. We will continue to do this work and complete it in the year 2019. This is done for the sake of households and families, to uphold the customs and tradition of Burundians, as well as the security within households and in any country. We hope that by the end of 2019, all children living in Burundi will know their true fathers and not those to whom they are connected

because, even when the child is an orphan, he is always the fruit of the union of two parents.

Fourteenth: We will continue the program of supporting the Development programmes of Communes by granting each one 500 million Burundian Francs per year.

Fifteenth: We will build capacities of the Defence and Security Forces, and provide them with adequate equipment and materials so that they can face any difficulties in the best conditions.

Sixteenth: We will continue the civic education program and meditation on our country, to help Burundians know the truth about our past and behave as intelligent people.

Seventeenth: From the year 2019, all **Administrative Managers** will have to show, in their sectors, the effects of the measures taken in favour of the population both in the present time and in the future. This is the best way to raise awareness about our country and the love of the homeland **in the national life** and Burundian citizens, especially the Administrative officials.

Eighteenth: In the year 2019, the Political Capital of Burundi will be established in the Chief Town of Gitega Province, and some Ministries will soon move to this Province. Some National Commissions, including the Independent National Electoral Commission, the National Commission on Land and Other Property, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and many others will settle in Gitega or in other Provinces.

Nineteenth: From the year 2019 onwards, the Council of Ministers' meetings will be held in Province Gitega, and the President of the Republic to be elected in 2020 will be sworn in at Gitega.

Twentieth: Through the Impetus and Guarantee Fund, we intend to grant **three billion Burundian Francs** to young people grouped within cooperatives. This money will be granted in the form of low-interest loans, and will be revised upwards in the coming years. This is a safe and direct way to fight against unemployment and increase the number of taxpayers.

**Dear Burundian compatriots,
Friends of Burundi;**

35. To achieve the goal we have set for ourselves, we must learn to take full advantage of the teachings from the civic education campaign. Let's continue the road towards sustainable development without trial and error. And **let us meditate on our country so that we know where we come from and where we are going.**
36. I would like to reiterate my appeal to refugees to return to their country. I know that some of them ended up in captivity, while others were deceived or misled themselves. **"One does not prevent the evil from happening, but one can prevent it from happening again";** and **"There is nothing wrong in falling down, but falling and refusing to rise is rather wrong".**
37. I hope that all the Burundians who are still outside and wishing to return will do so in 2019. And as we always do, we will welcome them with the honour we always pay to returnees.
38. Let this year 2019 be a year of repatriation, for peace and security are undoubtedly well established. I take this opportunity to ask the countries that have hosted the Burundian refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to also receive this appeal to our people and to make it easier for those who wish to return to do so. I warmly thanks those who have already responded.
39. I call on Burundian citizens to refrain from falling into the trap of bad advisers who usually come forward especially in the run-up to elections. Be reassured and reassure each other, stay calm and go about your daily activities. As for what remains, God will take care of it Himself.
40. In order to establish social peace throughout the country, and in accordance with article 114 of the Burundian Constitution, I grant presidential pardon to prisoners who had been given a sentence not exceeding 5 years imprisonment, pregnant or breastfeeding women, prisoners with obvious disabilities, those who have already served half of their sentence, and others. This measure will take into account the nature of their offenses and the behaviour displayed in the place of detention.
41. As I conclude, I reiterate my thanks to all you who continue to defend our sovereignty in an impeccable spirit of solidarity, and to watch over the security of your community day and night. Keep in mind that the enemies of Burundi do not sleep, especially during this time of Christmas and New Year.
42. I renew my wishes for Happy New Year 2019 to you all Burundians wherever you are. May it be for you a year of milk and honey, a year in which peace and joy abound. I invite you to celebrate it without wasting anything, because **"Tomorrow is another**

day". Let us unite, form an undefeatable front, and "Meditate on our country so that we know where we come from and where we are going".

43. I would like to announce to Burundians that in the year 2019, God will reveal many things that have not yet been seen in Burundi. We expect from 2019 a new turning point in history, receiving the exceptional gifts of God in Burundi. We will grow these heavenly gifts, take advantage of them, and they will be for us a source of blessings and prosperity that come from God Almighty, and we will accept to work with God.

God bless Burundi and the people of Burundi.

May God fill his donations with Burundi and the people of Burundi.

May God keep Burundi and the people of Burundi.

May God enlighten Burundi and the people of Burundi with his eyes.

May God bless Burundi and the people of Burundi.

May God look with a merciful eye on Burundi and the people of Burundi.

May the peace of God be in Burundi and among the people of Burundi.

May the name of Almighty God always praised in Burundi and by the people of Burundi.

May you all the people of Burundi and Burundi agree to have your rights re-established by God and to be compensated by God.

May you Burundi and the people of Burundi receive a new covenant of joy from the Almighty God.

May the Almighty God destroy all bad plans of the enemy of Burundi and of the people of Burundi wherever he is.

Thank you!