

BIOGRAPHICAL RESUME OF HIS EXCELLENCY PIERRE NKURUNZIZA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI

His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, hails from the northern district of Ngozi where he was born on December 19th, 1964.

He attended primary school in his home region, and proceeded to secondary education in the central district of Gitega.

His father, Eustache Ngabisha, was elected to the Parliament of Burundi in 1965 and later became Governor of two provinces before being killed in 1972 during a period of ethnic violence that claimed the lives of nearly 300,000 Burundians, according to Western media.

As a University student in Bujumbura , Nkurunziza was so brilliant that he graduated with distinction in Education and Sports in 1990. After graduation, he served as a secondary school teacher in the central district of Muramvya, and he was later recruited as Assistant Lecturer at the University of Burundi , from 1992 to 1994.

In 1995, when Burundi was facing a bloody civil war, stemming from tribal antagonism between Hutus and Tutsis, the then University lecturer narrowly escaped assassination by unknown gunmen. At the time, it was reported that the army had attacked the University Campus.

After the incident, Nkurunziza went to the bush to join the Cndd-Fdd rebel combatants where he was soon promoted to the highest responsibilities.

After rising through the ranks, Nkurunziza was appointed deputy secretary-general of the Cndd-Fdd in 1998 in charge of internal affairs. In 2001, he was elected chairman. There was a split in the group in late 2001. He was re-elected to the post of chairman in August 2004

In his capacity as the Cndd-Fdd rebel chief, he led his delegation to peace negotiations with the transitional Government of Burundi. The negotiations led to the signing of a global ceasefire and a power sharing agreement in 2003.

In 2004, Nkurunziza was elected Chairman of the Cndd-Fdd, soon after the rebel movement was registered as a political party.

Earlier, since late 2003, he had been appointed Minister of Good Governance and State Inspector General within the transitional Government of President Domitien Ndayizeye. During his tenure, Burundians would soon realise that Nkurunziza was a man of great value, a man of peace, dialogue and

compromise.

The former rebel chief was nominated as presidential candidate to the democratic elections in June 2005 on his party ticket. He was first of all elected Member of Parliament in his constituency. He was then elected President unopposed by Members of Parliament acting as an electoral college on 19 August 2005.

One week later, Nkurunziza was sworn in as the new President of the Republic of Burundi.

The new Head of State inherited a country devastated by over a decade of civil war and dictatorship. In spite of those difficulties, he has since been working hard to restore peace and concord among the Burundian people.

His policy is aimed at reconstruction and reconciliation, economic recovery and political stability.

President Nkurunziza is known to be a man of dialogue, that's why he did everything in his powers to conclude a peace accord with the last rebel group, the Palipehutu-Fnl.

The man's simplicity is remarkable, and he always draws attention mingling with village people in the remote rural areas where he spends most of his time. One of his key priorities is to pull Burundi out of poverty.

Since achieving office, President Nkurunziza has initiated 'Community Works' every Saturday, and he has taken courageous but otherwise important measures in favour of children and women: free education for primary school children and free health care for under-5 kids, and maternity.

President Nkurunziza's political career and wisdom have become a source of inspiration for many of his colleagues and several humanitarian organisations.

He has been awarded several Prizes and other honorific Distinctions to recognize his status as a man of peace. Some of them are the following:

- "Prix pour la Paix " awarded by " Accord " in Durban in June 2006;
- "Oscar de Paix" awarded by " Assis Pax International ";
- "Diplôme de Docteur Honoris Causa" awarded by Latin University of Theology in California;
- Prize awarded by « Interfaith Peace Building » in September 2007;
- Prize on environment awarded in May 2009 by « Green Belt - Burundi ». The

award was dedicated to Mwezi Gisabo.

-Prize on Peace awarded in July 2009 by the UN Commission on Peace Consolidation in Burundi.

-August 2009 in Nairobi: the « Model Leader for a New Africa Award » by AFREG (African Forum on Religion and Government), a Florida-based religious organisation, with a sub-office in Accra, Ghana. HE Pierre Nkurunziza is the first African President to be awarded with such a distinction, the first of its kind on the continent. That is the pride of Burundi.

- September 2010, the India - based Unity International Foundation honoured HE Pierre Nkurunziza with the "Rising Star of Africa Award after Indian authorities found HE Pierre Nkurunziza as a role model in peace consolidation and development for the whole of Africa.

- In October 2011 in Monaco, the Peace and Sports International organization granted to HE Pierre Nkurunziza an award for having made sports as a tool for reconciliation in his country.

-Etc

President Nkurunziza is a talented sportsman who enjoys playing soccer and riding a bicycle. He began playing football at the tender age of five, and was always among the best at secondary school and University.

As a University lecturer, Nkurunziza used his football talents as a coach of "Union Sporting", a first division club side which was rated among the best at the time. As a President, he has re-called some of his former players to form a new team of veterans, "Helleluia FC", where he plays as a striker and scores regularly.

Back in 2004, when he was a State Minister, Nkurunziza created a "Soccer Academy " which is home to nearly 300 kids learning skills in various training centres across the country.

The President is using sports as a tool for reconciliation and development, and his soccer academy could become a reference in Africa in the near future.

In agriculture and stockbreeding, President Nkurunziza is leading by example He has got vast plantations of bananas, cassava, beans, pineapples, vegetables, etc. His cattle include cows, goats, sheep, and even camels. He also raises rabbits and poultry.

Since 2007, President Nkurunziza has undertaken a vast program aimed at planting fruit trees in whole the country. His aim is to see Burundi becoming one of the biggest fruit producing nations on the continent.

The President's objective is to fight against poverty and change the old

mentality of the so-called intellectuals of Burundi who think they cannot take up farming after attending school.

President Nkurunziza was re-elected on 28 June 2010 for a second term in office, an unprecedented fete in the country's history, where elections would be followed by widespread killings and forced displacement and exile for hundreds of thousands of people.

Leaders of the East African Community's Partner States have shown him confidence and elected President Nkurunziza in November 2010 as the chairman of the regional bloc whose Member States once decided an economic blockade over Burundi.

In his inauguration speech, 59 days after his re-election, President Nkurunziza declared "zero tolerance" on corruption and related offences, and pledged to build villages for his people in the rural areas, to improve their living.

As peace and security are now a blatant reality in the country, the President of Burundi is stepping up efforts for reconstruction and reconciliation of a society emerging from over a decade of civil war.

He has set up an ad hoc committee to oversee what will be the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that will establish responsibilities on crimes committed in Burundi since the end of the monarchy up to today. The commission was inspired by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

An accomplished 'born again' Christian, Nkurunziza married his wife Denise Bucumi in 1994. They have five children: three boys and two girls. He was one of seven children. Two of his siblings were killed after the civil war erupted in 1993 following the assassination of Burundi's first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, an ethnic Hutu.

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