

**THE ROLE OF THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION IN AFRICA'S  
CIVIL CONFLICTS: THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S PEACE  
MISSION IN BURUNDI (1999-2004)**

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Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.**

**Supervised by,  
Prof. Philip Frankel**

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this Thesis entitled, “*The Role of Third Party Intervention in Africa’s Civil Conflicts: The Case of South Africa’s Peace Mission in Burundi (1999-2004)*”, is my own unaided work and that the assistance obtained has been only in form of professional guidance and supervision; that no part of this research has previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning or university.

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Charles J. Kiiza

21 day of November 2006

## **DEDICATION**

This piece of work is dedicated to all those who relentlessly endeavoured to promote peace in Burundi most especially South African diplomats who sometimes endured sleepless nights by trying to bring Burundian warring parties to a common understanding so as to resolve the civil conflict.

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AMIB	: African Mission in Burundi
ANC	: African National Congress
APSC	: African Peace and Security Council
AU	: African Union
BBC	: British Broadcasting Corporation
CEWS	: Continental Early Warning System
CNDD	: National Council for the Defence of Democracy
CODESA	: Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COMESA	: Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa
CP	: Conservative Party
DA	: Democratic Alliance
DDR	: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	: Economic Community of West African States
EU	: European Union
FAB	: Burundian Armed Forces
FDD	: Forces for the Defense of Democracy
FNL	: Forces for National Liberation
FRODEBU	: Front for Democracy in Burundi
FTA	: Forces Technical Agreement
GoB	: Government of Burundi
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
JCC	: Joint Ceasefire Commission
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEPAD	: New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	: Non Governmental Organization
OAU	: Organisation of African Unity
PAC	: Pan Africa Congress
PSC	: Peace and Security Council/ Protracted Social Change
RIPB	: Regional Initiative for Peace in Burundi
ROE	: Rules of Engagement
SA	: South Africa

SADC	: Southern African Development Community
SANDF	: South African National Defence Force
SAPSD	: South African Protection Support Detachment
SSR	: Security Sector Reform
TgoB	: Transitional Government of Burundi
TGoB	: Transitional Government of Burundi
UN	: United Nations
UNMOGIP	: United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNOB	: United Nations Operation in Burundi
UNTSO	: United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation
UPRONA	: National and Union Progress Party

**ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the role played by external actors in contemporary African civil conflicts with specific attention to South Africa's leading role in addressing Burundi's intractable civil conflict. The inquiry was guided by looking at SA's efforts in managing Burundi's peace process in partnership with key external parties such as the Regional Initiative for peace in Burundi, AU and the UN; and by examining the level of success of SA's involvement in the peace process and limitations encountered in pursuing diplomatic/political and military efforts aimed at resolving the civil conflict. The theories of conflict resolution and protracted social change, and scholarly and policy literature on intervention were drawn upon to frame the research.

The struggle for political power explains the key root cause to Burundi's civil conflict; rival politicians manipulated ethnicity and the past injustices, which are rooted in colonial policies of divide and rule, as tools in an attempt to accede to power and thereby, gain economic advantage at the expense of others. SA diplomatic efforts played an important role in addressing this by advocating for political and military power sharing.

In order to reconcile and manage differences in approaches that were advocated to deal with the Burundi civil conflict, SA mobilized for support in Burundi's neighbouring countries so as to back a peaceful solution to address the conflict. Further, in an effort to bolster its troops and, therefore, expand operations designed to promote peace in Burundi, SA had to merge into the African Mission in Burundi, and cooperate with the UN in order for the latter to render impetus to the peace process by, providing necessary resources and political support for the Burundi peace mission, and subsequently to assume the mission by taking over from the African mission.

Although SA's troop deployment provided protection for the former Hutu exile politicians and thereby, encouraged them to participate in negotiations and the transitional government, which participation increased chances of success in the peace process, however, SA did not do much in peacekeeping under the UN due to inadequate military equipments; civilians continued to be killed in the presence of SA troops, even though, under the UN their role extended to include civilian protection.



To the extent that SA's intensive diplomatic efforts resulted in the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, however, a number of Burundian parties did not participate in the signing of the agreement and the rebel movements were excluded from the process. Thus, the Arusha peace process failed to attain consensus in addressing Burundi's contentious issues.

Although the UN peacekeepers in Burundi, of which SA was part, had a Chapter VII mandate to enforce the peace of which civilian protection was part of their mission, they did not exercise it. Intervention was constrained by the Burundian government; they argued that the ultimate authority in maintaining security throughout the country rested on them. Moreover, it is difficult if not impossible to observe UN traditional peacekeeping norms while at the same time having to implement the responsibility to protect, which has been occasioned by the post-Cold War world, in which human rights have gained wider recognition, and international norms of sovereignty and non-intervention redefined. Thus, strict observance of the UN traditional peacekeeping norms, inhibit intervention aimed to protect civilians facing catastrophic circumstances or under imminent threat.

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