

# Burundi

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

UNICEF estimated that 32.2 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in Burundi were working in 2000.<sup>730</sup> Children work in domestic services, subsistence agriculture, the informal urban sector, mining and brick-making industries, and family-based businesses.<sup>731</sup> Government and rebel armed forces have actively recruited children to serve in combat or as scouts, intelligence gatherers, porters, servants, and "wives."<sup>732</sup> Rebel forces continue to force or abduct children to serve as child soldiers or perform related activities.<sup>733</sup> Child soldiers from Burundi have also fought in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>734</sup> There are no reliable data on the number of children serving in armed forces.<sup>735</sup> Child prostitution is also a problem. There are reports that child trafficking occurs both within Burundi and across borders.<sup>736</sup>

Schooling is compulsory in Burundi until the age of 12, but this requirement is not enforced.<sup>737</sup> In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 80.0 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 53.4 percent.<sup>738</sup> Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. In 2000, only 47.0 percent of school-age children regularly attended primary school (43.7 percent for girls and 50.5 percent for boys).<sup>739</sup> As of 2000, 64.0 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.<sup>740</sup> Enrollment and

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<sup>730</sup> Child laborers are defined as children who have performed paid or unpaid work for someone who is not a member of their household, or children who work over four hours per day in housekeeping chores in their own household. See *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi (ENECEF-Burundi 2000)*, Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, March, 2001, 39; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/burundi/burundi1.pdf>.

<sup>731</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27715.htm>. See also International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, *Report for the WTO General Council Review of Trade Policies of Burundi*, Geneva, April 2-4 2003; available from <http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991217394&Language=EN>.

<sup>732</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Sections 5 and 6c. Amnesty International, *Burundi: Child soldiers- the Challenge of Demobilisation*, March 2004; available from <http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGAFR160112004>. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Child Soldiers Global Report 2004: Burundi," (November 17, 2004 2004); available from [http://www.child-soldiers.org/document\\_get.php?id=761](http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=761).

<sup>733</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*. See also Soldiers, "Child Soldiers Global Report 2004: Burundi."

<sup>734</sup> Amnesty International, *The Challenge of Demobilisation*.

<sup>735</sup> UNICEF estimates that between 6,000 and 7,000 children under the age of 18 must be demobilized Ibid.

<sup>736</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 6f. See also Ecpat International, *Trafficking*, online database, 2003; available from <http://www.ecpat.net>.

<sup>737</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 5.

<sup>738</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004.

<sup>739</sup> *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi (ENECEF-Burundi 2000)*, 20.

<sup>740</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004*.

attendance have been adversely affected by the military conflict. In some high conflict areas, schools have been destroyed, populations displaced, and qualified teachers are difficult to find.<sup>741</sup> The cost of school fees and materials are prohibitive for some families.<sup>742</sup> Another problem affecting school attendance is the rising incidence of HIV/AIDS, which has left some children orphaned or homeless and unable to participate in school.<sup>743</sup>

## **Child Labor Law and Enforcement**

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 16 years, except in cases of light, non-hazardous work or apprenticeships, provided that the work is not dangerous to the health of the child and does not interfere with their normal childhood development or education.<sup>744</sup> Children under the age of 18 are prohibited from working at night.<sup>745</sup> The Labor Code amendment of 1993 calls for inspections of workplaces and permits medical examination to determine if a child's work causes undue physical stress.<sup>746</sup> The Transitional Government only enforces child labor laws when complaints are filed, and no complaints were filed in 2003.<sup>747</sup> The Penal Code prohibits prostitution. An individual who entices or forces a person under the age of 21 into prostitution faces a fine of 10,000 to 100,000 francs (USD 9.30 to 93.04) and a prison sentence of up to 15 years.<sup>748</sup> The law does not specifically prohibit trafficking.<sup>749</sup>

## **Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

In October 2003, the Transitional Government launched a Permanent Committee for the Execution of Demobilization and Reintegration of Child Soldiers to assist children in both government and rebel

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<sup>741</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 5. See also Tony Jackson, *Equal Access to Education a peace imperative for Burundi*, International Alert, London, September, 2000, 8-9; available from [http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubgl/burun\\_ed\\_en.pdf](http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubgl/burun_ed_en.pdf). Low teachers' salaries led to a strike that lasted from January to March 2004 that put at least one million children out of school nationwide. See also UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Burundi: Schools reopen as teachers suspend strike", IRINnews.org, [online], March 15, 2004 [cited March 24, 2004]; available from [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=40041&SelectRegion=Great\\_Lakes&SelectCountry=BURUNDI](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=40041&SelectRegion=Great_Lakes&SelectCountry=BURUNDI).

<sup>742</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 5. See also Tony Jackson, *Equal Access to Education*, 33.

<sup>743</sup> See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 5.

<sup>744</sup> *Decret loi no 1/037 du 7 juillet 1993 portant revision du Code du travail*, Article 126; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/txt/F93BDI01.htm>.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 119. Reports indicate that many children, however, do work at night in the informal sector. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 6d. and U.S. Embassy-Bujumbura, *unclassified telegram no. 1025*, August, 2003.

<sup>746</sup> *Decret loi no 1/037 du 7 juillet 1993 portant revision du Code du travail*. See also U.S. Embassy-Bujumbura, *unclassified telegram no. 1025*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 6d.

<sup>747</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 6d.

<sup>748</sup> *Offenses Against Public Morals*; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/BurundiF.pdf>.

<sup>749</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*. See also Ecpat International, *Trafficking*.

forces.<sup>750</sup> As of the end of 2003, no child soldiers had been formally demobilized under the program, but the Committee had begun working to create a list of child soldiers and identify the NGOs and other organizations that could provide assistance in the demobilization and reintegration process.<sup>751</sup> In the first few months of 2004, the government reported to have demobilized some 300 child soldiers.<sup>752</sup>

In March 2004, the World Bank approved a USD 33 million grant for the Burundi Emergency Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration Program (DRRP). UNICEF has begun implementing a special project under the DRRP that aims to demobilize and reintegrate some 3,500 child soldiers.<sup>753</sup> The government is also participating in a worldwide ILO-IPEC project, funded by USDOL, to demobilize and rehabilitate children involved in armed conflict. This project aims to reintegrate 1,440 child soldiers in Burundi, and prevent the recruitment of an additional 1,000 children at risk. The ILO will work in cooperation with UNICEF.<sup>754</sup>

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	7/19/2000	✓
Ratified Convention 182	6/11/2002	✓
ILO-IPEC Associated Member		✓
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

<sup>750</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003: Burundi*, Section 5.

<sup>751</sup> Ibid. See also UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Burundi: Army Demobilizes 29 Child Soldiers", allAfrica.com, [online], February 14, 2004 [cited February 19, 2004]; available from <http://www.allafrica.com/stories/200402160245.html>.

<sup>752</sup> Amnesty International, *The Challenge of Demobilisation*, page 2.

<sup>753</sup> World Bank, *Burundi Emergency Demobilization, Reinsertion, and Reintegration Program: Updated Project Information Document*, [Electronic source] November 8, 2004 2004 [cited November 8, 2004 2004]; available from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/01/26/000104615\\_20040126140800/Rendered/PDF/PID0P081964.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/01/26/000104615_20040126140800/Rendered/PDF/PID0P081964.pdf). See also [http://Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program for the Greater Great Lakes Region, "Country Profile: Burundi,"](http://Multi-Country%20Demobilization%20and%20Reintegration%20Program%20for%20the%20Greater%20Great%20Lakes%20Region,%20Country%20Profile:%20Burundi) (May 11, 2004 2004); available from [http://www.mdrp.org/countries/profile-burundi\\_may04.pdf](http://www.mdrp.org/countries/profile-burundi_may04.pdf).

<sup>754</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflict: an Inter-Regional Program*, project document, Geneva, September 17, 2003.