



North

# Business in Africa

We've got Africa covered  
online

denotes paid content

Make

Subscribe to Newsletter

Search

## Content

- Home
- News
- Features
- News in brief
- Editorials
- Columns
- Market intelligence
- Leadership
- Economy
- Companies
- Energy in Africa
- Technology (ICT)
- Education
- Motoring
- Property
- Travel
- Books

## Interactive

- Have your say
- Newsletter
- Search

## Services

- Subscription centre
- Conferences
- Marketing
- Publishing
- Business intelligence Africa
- Indices by SMS
- Travel Bookings
- Country Profile
- Events Calendar

[CONFERENCES](#)

## News by Region



## Books

### BOOK REVIEW

## Why peace in Burundi matters to South Africa

Published: 03-NOV-04

On the surface, it does seem strange. Why has South Africa sent both politicians and platoons of peace-keeping soldiers to a distant African country that it appears to have no connection with at all? What have they been doing there? How long will they stay? In short, why should South Africa be bothered about Burundi?



SA sending off its troops to war torn countries in Africa

Over the past five years, South Africa has been involved in the quest for peace and democracy in the war-torn territory of the Great Lakes in central Africa. An important focus has been on Burundi, which has been in a state of civil war since 1993.

The ongoing conflict between Tutsi and Hutu members of the population, in vying for control of financial and political resources, has resulted in a downward spiral of the country's economy and trapped its civilian society in a web of violence. In the past decade up to 300 000 people are estimated to have died as a result of inter-communal aggression. The extent and depth of poverty is considered to be close to the worst in Africa. Most heinous of all are the mass killings in which many thousands of both Hutu and Tutsi people have been brutally massacred.

In directing its energies towards the cessation of war and the creation of a democratic society in Burundi, South Africa has not simply been humanitarian. Peace and democracy in Africa are crucial to the economic development and upliftment of standards in all countries - including South Africa - on the continent. And there is growing support for the theory that Africa is ultimately responsible for its own future. In this respect, one can see peace in Burundi as one vital piece of a jigsaw relating to peace and prosperity in Africa as a whole.

*An African Peace Process: Mandela, South Africa and Burundi* by Kristina Bentley and Roger Southall (HSRC Press) traces the history of South Africa's role in the peace negotiations in Burundi. It addresses the key question - why South Africa is involved - as well as detailing exactly how the process has progressed. An investigation into Burundi's past, and predictions for the future, place this study within a context that takes into account colonial and more contemporary influences, and which seeks to link Burundi's struggle to the broader African community.

Burundi is small - just 27 834 square kilometres - and landlocked. Its population stands at 6.2 million people, consisting of around 14 percent Tutsi, 85 percent Hutu and one percent Twa (pygmy). The country is largely agricultural and, due to various factors including the ratio of people to land and the years of civil war, is one of the poorest in the world.

During its most recent past, since 1993, the country has been wracked by a series of coups, assassinations, mass killings and revenge massacres. While much has been blamed on "ethnic rivalries" between Hutu and Tutsi, there are many more complex issues arising out of Burundi's past and present that have contributed to the unhealthy decline of the country.

In 1999, following in the footsteps of Tanzanian ex-President Julius Nyerere who started the process, Nelson Mandela was nominated to broker peace negotiations in Burundi. Working with representatives of most (but not all) of the political groups operating in Burundi (including the main Hutu and Tutsi parties, and also a number of rebel groups), Mandela spearheaded the signing of the Arusha Accord in August 2000. It is this Accord which has provided the foundation for progress towards political transition in Burundi, currently ongoing. And it widely hoped that the Accord will finally lead to the end of hostilities between the government and armed political groups.

However, it was no arbitrary decision by the African community to elect Mandela to head up the process. As the iconic leader of one of the most successful liberation movements in the world, who negotiated his country to freedom, Mandela was the obvious choice. A veteran of the exhaustive debates between opposing political groups in South Africa, which ultimately led to the formation of a new constitution and a democratically-elected government, his experience was invaluable. So too was his international influence, which he used to garner support for Burundi. His connections within the South African military ranks led to the SANDF sending two battalions of peace-keeping soldiers to Burundi.

Su  
Sul  
Afr  
rec  
we  
Fin

Sp  
A r  
Re  
ent  
sta

Ma  
yo  
Ge  
wa  
bre  
inte  
agr  
ma  
on  
Fin

En  
En  
inte  
loo  
imp  
pro  
dev  
Afr  
firs  
put  
anc  
put  
Sul

Es  
for  
Afr  
put  
def  
pro  
cor  
Fin



Subscribe Now



And South Africa, as a nation, was also an important influence. There are several points of similarity between the countries, including the fact that both were, or had been, divided along ethnic or racial lines; and that ethnicity was used by one group to dominate another. The fact that South Africa avoided a bloodbath by choosing the negotiating process was seen to be inspirational for the Burundian scenario.

The authors tie together the important lessons that both South Africa and Burundi can learn from the ongoing peace process, as well as analysing its success in relative terms. The significance of this in terms of Africa's positioning in the wider international community is explained, paralleled with the importance of Africa being the broker of its own political processes.

The book attempts to understand the complex causes of the civil conflict in Burundi; to outline the dynamics of the negotiations process; and to assess the longer-term prospects for peace. Crucially, it explains to the ordinary South African why South Africa has become so intimately involved with Burundi. And why peace in that small, far-away country actually matters to our own development.

#### About the authors

Kristina Bentley is a Senior Research Specialist in the Democracy and Governance Research Programme at the HSRC. She holds an MA from Rhodes University and PhD from the Department of Government at the University of Manchester. Prior to joining the HSRC she lectured in the Department of Political Studies and International Relations at Rhodes University.

Roger Southall is a Distinguished Research Fellow and former Executive Director of the Democracy and Governance Research Programme of the HSRC. He has an MA from the University of Manchester and a PhD from the University of Birmingham. He was Professor of Political Studies at Rhodes University, and has also worked at universities in Uganda, Lesotho, Canada and the UK.

*An African Peace Process: Mandela, South Africa and Burundi* is written by Kristina Bentley and Roger Southall and published by the HSRC Press. It is available from the online bookshop at [www.hsrcpress.ac.za](http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za).

Print this article

Email this article

TOP

#### Ads by Goooooogle

##### Dating in South Africa

1000s of Sexy Singles to choose from. Meet Your Ideal Match Today!

[www.ThunderboltCity.com](http://www.ThunderboltCity.com)

##### Africa Travel Resource

Everything you need to know about safari in East Africa.

[www.africatravelresource.com](http://www.africatravelresource.com)

##### Find South Africans

What are your SA friends up to? Where are they?

[www.sareunited.com](http://www.sareunited.com)

##### Dating - SA Style.

Find Your Perfect Love - Today. This is the Easy Way !

[www.Love2KnowU.co.za](http://www.Love2KnowU.co.za)

On  
bo  
Pla  
acc  
& S  
Bo

C  
ne  
Te

H

H

H

H

H

H

H

H

H

H

Cu  
Ca  
cur  
anc  
Fin

Dic

Ha  
del  
any  
dire  
Fin

Ec  
Ch  
col  
tel