



Challenges of securing land rights in post-conflict Burundi

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August 21, 2024

Introduction

In Burundi, a small landlocked country in Africa's Great Lakes region, land is far more than an economic resource – it is the foundation of history, livelihood, and identity for millions. However, Burundi's turbulent past, marked by cycles of conflict, displacement, and return since the 1970s, has created

a complex web of competing land claims that threaten efforts to build lasting peace and stability.

The challenges are immense. With one of Africa's highest population densities and over 90% of its people reliant on agriculture, competition for land in Burundi is intense. Decades of conflict have resulted in situations where multiple families often have legitimate claims to the same plots, creating a volatile landscape of overlapping rights and grievances.

Mediating land disputes and ensuring equitable access is fundamental to peace and reconciliation. Clarifying land rights can reduce tensions between returning refugees and resident populations, provide economic security for vulnerable groups, and restore faith in governance. However, this process carries significant risks if mismanaged.

Adjudicating land rights in a post-conflict setting can spark further conflict as it inevitably creates winners and losers. There is also a danger that without changes in property and inheritance laws the land rights of vulnerable groups, particularly women - including widows and those in polygamous marriages will continue to be overlooked or deliberately ignored.^[1]

As Burundi implements land registration and dispute resolution mechanisms, policymakers and practitioners must strike a delicate balance. They must move decisively to provide clarity and security around land rights, while remaining acutely sensitive to the country's fragile social fabric. The success or failure of these efforts will have profound implications not just for land governance, but for Burundi's prospects for lasting peace and inclusive development.

This data story draws on ZOA International's work to implement a land tenure registration project in Nyanza-Lac, a commune in the Makamba District, funded by the Netherlands

Enterprise Agency (RVO) in the frame of their LAND-at-Scale program.

ZOA Burundi is one of the key-promoters of land governance reform, engaging in particular in the design and implementation of mechanisms of land tenure registration (LTR) at the commune level. In the province of Makamba, through the Amahoro-at-Scale project, ZOA has established six *Services Fonciers Communaux (SFC)*. These local land registration offices are located in each of the six districts in Makamba to decentralize land administration and issue land certificates. To date some 176,000 land parcels have been registered. ^[2] The assumption that land certification could help resolve disputes was an important rationale behind the 2011 Revised Land Law. This aimed to facilitate large-scale, decentralized registration of land.^[3]

Securing land rights requires that conflicting claims to land are addressed and resolved. ZOA's local partner MiPAREC trains local village structures Commissions de Reconnaissance Collinaire (CRCs) in land conflict mediation. These CRCs are specifically mandated by Burundian land law to resolve disputes between landowners. Village peace committees have been established and their members trained to make conflict mediation accessible for the most vulnerable. To date ZOA and MiPAREC report that some 19,500 land conflicts were resolved.^[4]



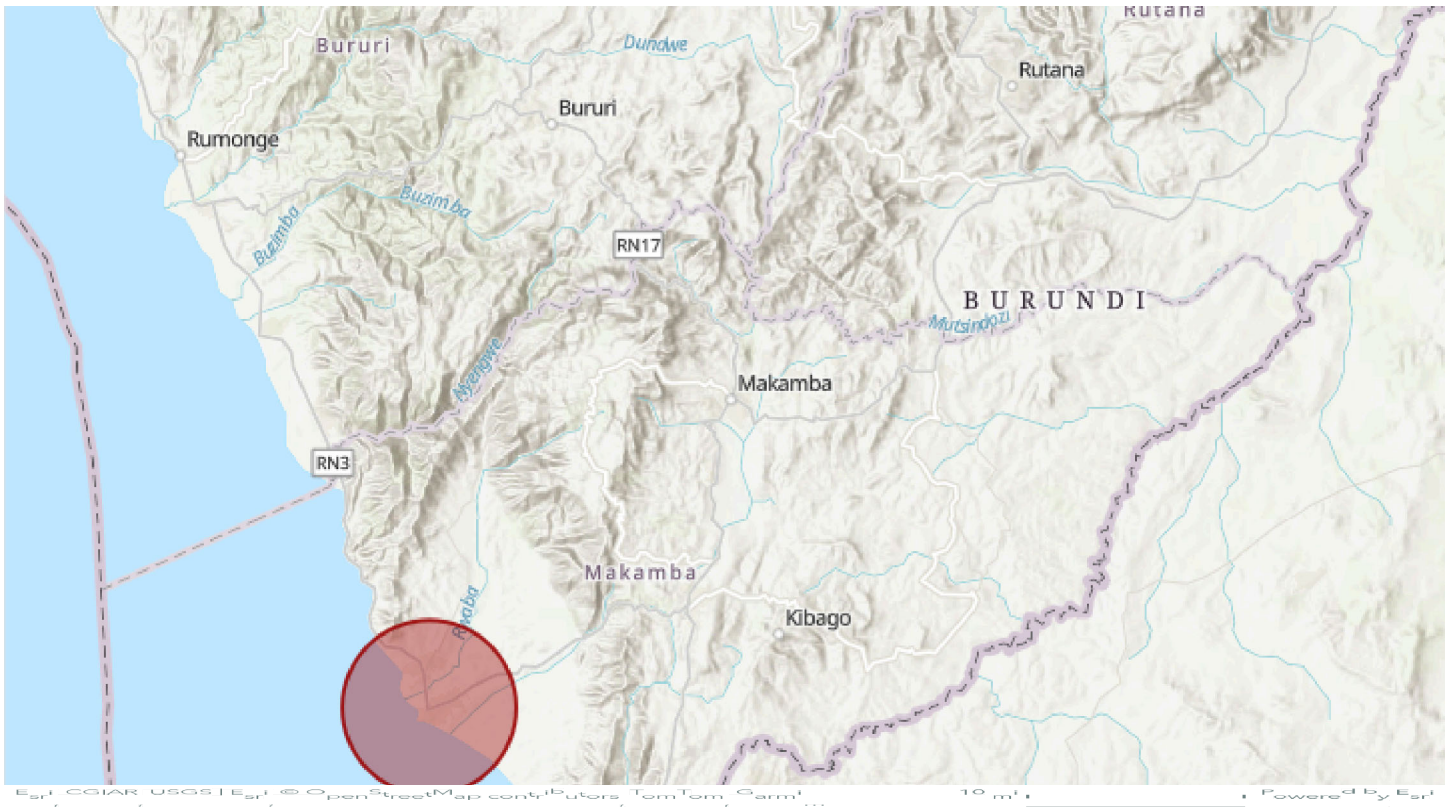
Lake Tanganyika at Nyanza-Lac

Learning from Nyanza Lac

ZOA commissioned a baseline study^[5] published in 2022 to provide a foundation for planning and evaluating its work. This data story draws from this study to profile Nyanza Lac commune and situate it within its historical and contemporary socio-economic context.

With more than 400,000 inhabitants and a density of over 1,000 persons per square kilometre, the commune has an exceptionally high concentration of people in comparison to other communes of Burundi. During the past decade, a large number of Burundian refugees returned to the province of Makamba. At the same time people from other areas in Burundi are also seeking land here, due to its strategic location, bisected by regional trade corridors. These pressures and other factors combine to create high numbers of land related conflicts.

By examining the historical context and assessing current realities **we identify key issues for policymakers and practitioners working on land issues in socially fragile environments.**



Nyanza-Lac city, southern Burundi

Historical context

To understand Burundi's current land challenges, it is essential to have some picture of its turbulent past. This is deeply entangled with contiguous conflicts in neighbouring Rwanda and the DRC.^[6] **The country's history has been marked by periods of intense conflict between the Hutu majority (approximately 85% of the population) and Tutsi minority (14%), with the indigenous Twa (1%) often marginalized in these power struggles.**^[7] The forces shaping this historical context have profoundly impacted on land ownership patterns and continue to influence contemporary conflicts.

The interpretation of Burundian history remains deeply contested. Hutu-Tutsi identity and social relations remain a complex and sensitive issue. Scholars and historians have interpreted these identities and relationships in very different ways.^[8] Many, if not all of these perspectives are selective in their focus and interpretation of history.

One perspective is that colonial rule created and exacerbated social divisions between Hutu and Tutsi. Some scholars present an ordered and harmonious precolonial society which was disrupted by the colonial regime^[9] with its emphasis on “social/racial stratification and profiling.”^[10]

Other interpretations foreground longstanding class differences, both between and among Hutu and Tutsi. Several analysts point to the historical rivalry between Tutsi-Banyaruguru and the Tutsi-Hima^[11], while others argue that a rigid caste system^[12] determined unequal social relations.

These different narratives continue to shape perceptions and inform politics in Burundi. The mandate of Burundi’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Commission Vérité et Réconciliation*) (TRC/CVR), agreed on as part of the peace accords of 2000, was to include the task of “rewriting Burundi’s history so that all Burundians can interpret it in the same way.”^[13]

The Commission, which was finally established in 2014, only began its work two years later, with a mandate to investigate human rights abuses between 1885 and 2008. Despite the creation of the TRC/CVR, **there remains no agreed-upon account of the past accepted by all Burundians.** Concerns have also been raised about the TRC/CVR 2008 cut off point. Critics argue that the most recent human rights abuses resulting from the 2015 constitutional crisis should also be included in its mandate. Continuing political volatility complicates efforts at reconciliation and transitional justice.^[14]

TUTSI PASTORALISTS, HUTU AGRICULTURALISTS AND TWA HUNTERS POPULATE THE TERRITORY. [1600]



GERMANY TAKES
CONTROL OF
RWANDA AND
BURUNDI AS PART
OF ITS COLONIAL
HOLDINGS IN
GERMAN EAST
AFRICA

Burundi: A concise timeline

The timeline below provides an abridged outline of some key events in Burundian history. These events are illustrated in the dynamic graph on the right -- click on the arrows to move to the next event.

Pre-colonial era

Burundi was a monarchy ruled by Tutsi kings (*mwami*) and princes (*ganwa*). There were social divisions among the ruling group between Tutsi-Banyaruguru who were closely associated with the royal house and Tutsi-Hima who had a lower social status. **Land was distributed based on a patron-client relationship**, with Tutsi elite generally owning cattle, while both the lower 'caste' Tutsi and the Hutu majority were primarily engaged in crop farming.^[15] Social mobility was based on wealth, so a wealthy Hutu could be regarded as a Tutsi.

Colonial era (1890's-1962)

German, and later Belgian colonial policies accentuated divisions between Hutu and within Tutsi groups. “The policy of replacing all Hutu chiefs by Tutsis marginalized the Hutus. What was once **a dynamic class system gradually became a rigid system largely characterized by Tutsi domination.**”^[16] The colonial administration favoured Tutsi-Banyaruguru in education and administration, laying the groundwork for future conflicts.^[17] Colonial administrators made formal schooling an exclusive privilege for the sons of Tutsi chieftains and elites.^[18]

The post-independence period

Burundi obtained independence in 1962 and was initially established as a constitutional monarchy. Latent social tensions erupted into violence. This was partly influenced by the revolution in Rwanda 1959-1960^[19] in which Rwandan Hutu overthrew the Tutsi elite. In 1965 a Hutu revolt in the north of the country was suppressed. A year later the *mwami* was overthrown and Tutsi Hima who dominated the army took power.

A second Hutu uprising in 1972 was met with a brutal crackdown by the Tutsi-dominated government. An estimated 150,000 Hutus were killed, and hundreds of thousands fled the country.^[20]

Crucially, the land left behind by refugees was often redistributed, sowing the seeds for future land conflicts.^[21]

The 1972 crisis thus represents a critical juncture in Burundi's history, exacerbating ethnic tensions, creating long-term displacement issues, and setting the stage for future conflicts over land and political power. Around two-thirds of the 1972 refugees fled to neighbouring Tanzania, where three settlements hosted some 220,000 Burundian refugees.

Civil war (1993-2000)

In June 1993 elections were held in Burundi in which a civilian Hutu, Melchior Ndadaye, became Burundi's first

democratically elected president. His assassination in October of the same year sparked a prolonged civil war. This conflict led to an estimated 300,000 deaths, further internal displacement and the exodus of a **new wave of refugees to neighbouring countries**, particularly Tanzania.

Arusha Peace Accord (2000)

This accord brokered by South Africa set the stage for power-sharing between Hutu and Tutsi political parties and paved the way for the return of refugees. However, it left many land issues unresolved, particularly regarding the rights of returning refugees to reclaim their land.

Following the peace agreement, approximately 500,000 refugees returned to Burundi. Many found their former lands occupied by others who had remained during the conflict, or by secondary occupants who had been allocated the land by subsequent governments.

In 2008 UNHCR initiated the repatriation of refugees from the Old Settlements in Tanzania. Until that time the voluntary return from those settlements had been low. In the same year the Tanzanian government offered Burundian refugees the option to become naturalised citizens. Naturalization was seen as supporting peacebuilding in Burundi by reducing pressure on land in southern Burundi where many repatriated refugees returned after the finalisation of the Arusha Peace Agreement.^[22] Reportedly more than 160,000 Burundians living in Tanzania chose this option, but it is unclear how many were actually legally naturalised. This policy was met with domestic resistance from Tanzanian citizens in the resettlement areas, which led to the stalling of the process.^[23] However some 42,200 refugees who had lived for decades in Tanzania were excluded from the latest UNHCR refugee estimates in 2024 as they were deemed to be naturalised Tanzanians.

Establishment of the National Land Commission (2006)

The *Commission Nationale Terres et Autres Biens* (CNTB), (National Commission on Land and Other Assets) was established in 2006. This initially favoured the sharing of property between residents (*abasangwa*) and returnees (*abahungutse*). However, in 2015 the activities of the Commission were temporarily brought to halt by community protests alleging corruption.^[24]

For a detailed chronology of events relevant to the history of land governance in Burundi, check [here](#).



Refugee camp for Burundians in a neighboring region of the DRC (Lusenda, Katanga Province), 2015

Makamba District in context

In 2019 Burundi scored second lowest worldwide on the Global Food Security Index, with more than 50% of the population being chronically food insecure.^[25] According to

the National April 2024 survey by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 10% of the Burundian population (1.2 million people) are facing acute food insecurity and require immediate food assistance. The prevalence of chronic malnutrition among children aged 6-59 months is rated at 52.8%, one of the highest rates in the world.^[26]

Plots of land have continuously become more fragmented (0.3–0.5 ha per household), Farming is mainly rainfed, with staple crops like maize, beans, and cassava cultivated on steep slopes. Pressure on arable land coupled with the increasing incidence of extreme weather events has accelerated soil erosion rates.

Population

According to the Index of Subnational Population Statistics, the population of Makamba was estimated to be 805459 in 2022. The population was reported to be evenly split between men (50.3%) and women (49.7%)^[27]

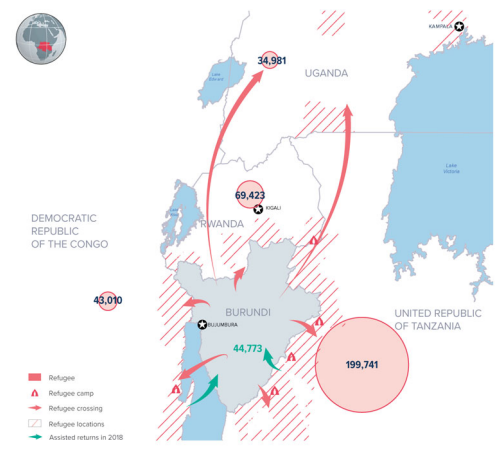
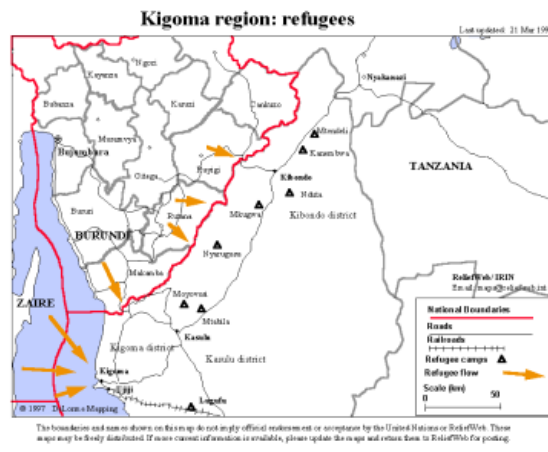
Between 2002 and September 2011 the largest return movement in the history of Burundi took place as more than 500,000 Burundians crossed the border into their home country, the majority from neighbouring Tanzania. Most of the returning refugees settled in Burundi's Southern provinces of Makamba, Rutana, and Bururi.^[28]

Many of the refugees that had left Burundi in the early 1970s “were *sans référence* – literally: without reference upon their return”^[29]. These **former refugees either lost their land entitlements due to their time spent in exile**, finding their land occupied by others upon their return, **or** they were second-generation returnees, born outside the country, who **literally did not have a place to which they could go ‘back’**.

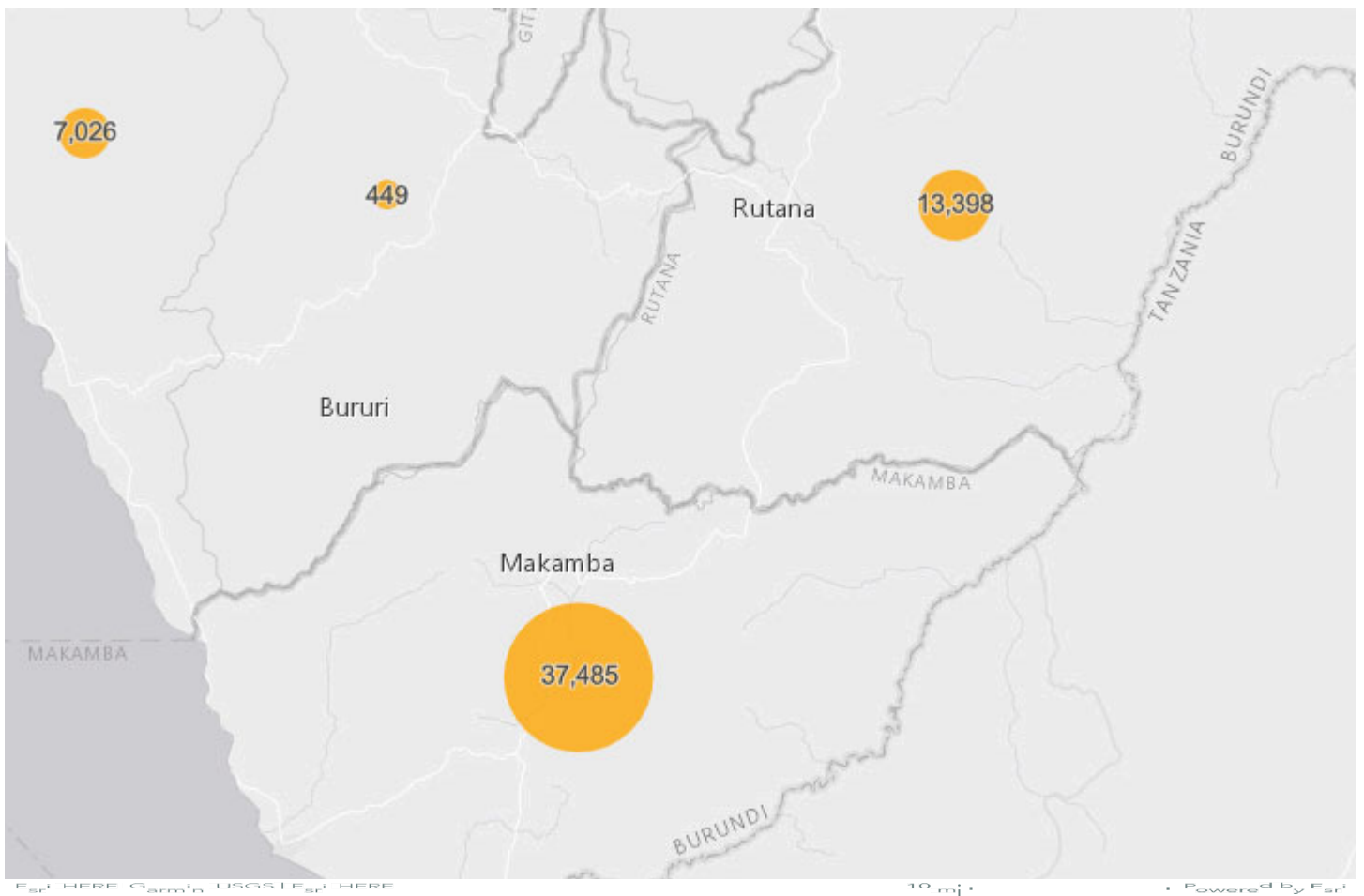
In 2008 the Burundian government established five *villages ruraux intégrés* (VRIs, or Rural Integrated Villages) where public lands were allocated to the returnees. This project

aimed to provide a solution for the group of *des personnes sans terre ni référence* – people with neither land or reference.

The management of the VRIs was based on an inter-agency approach, jointly involving the Burundian Government, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, and FAO – all of which provide different services in the VRIs. The Burundian Government was responsible to provide the land for the VRIs and to allocate land rights within the villages.^[30]



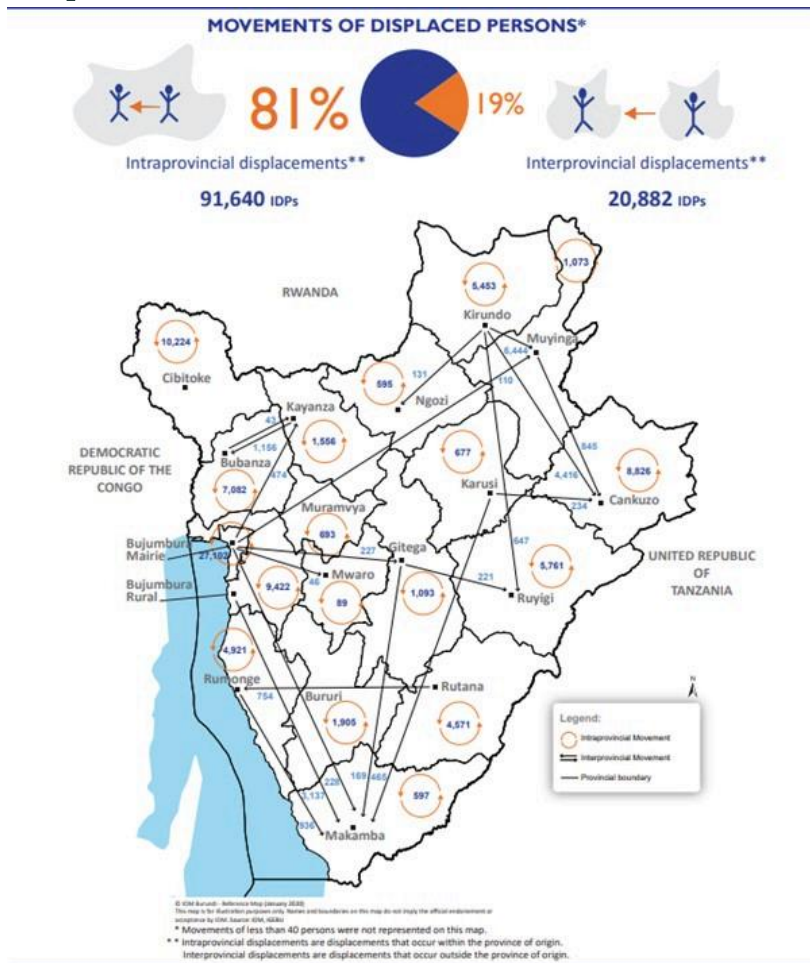
Selected collection of cartographies on refugee movements from the 1970s, 1990s, and 2010s.



Recent data on refugees

Since 2017, more than 200,000 Burundians have been repatriated ^[31]. Despite this, as of June 2024 there are still more than a quarter of a million people classified as Burundian refugees. ^[32] These are mainly distributed between Tanzania, DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya.

Burundi also hosts a high number of refugees fleeing violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo – some 56,000 located in five camps.

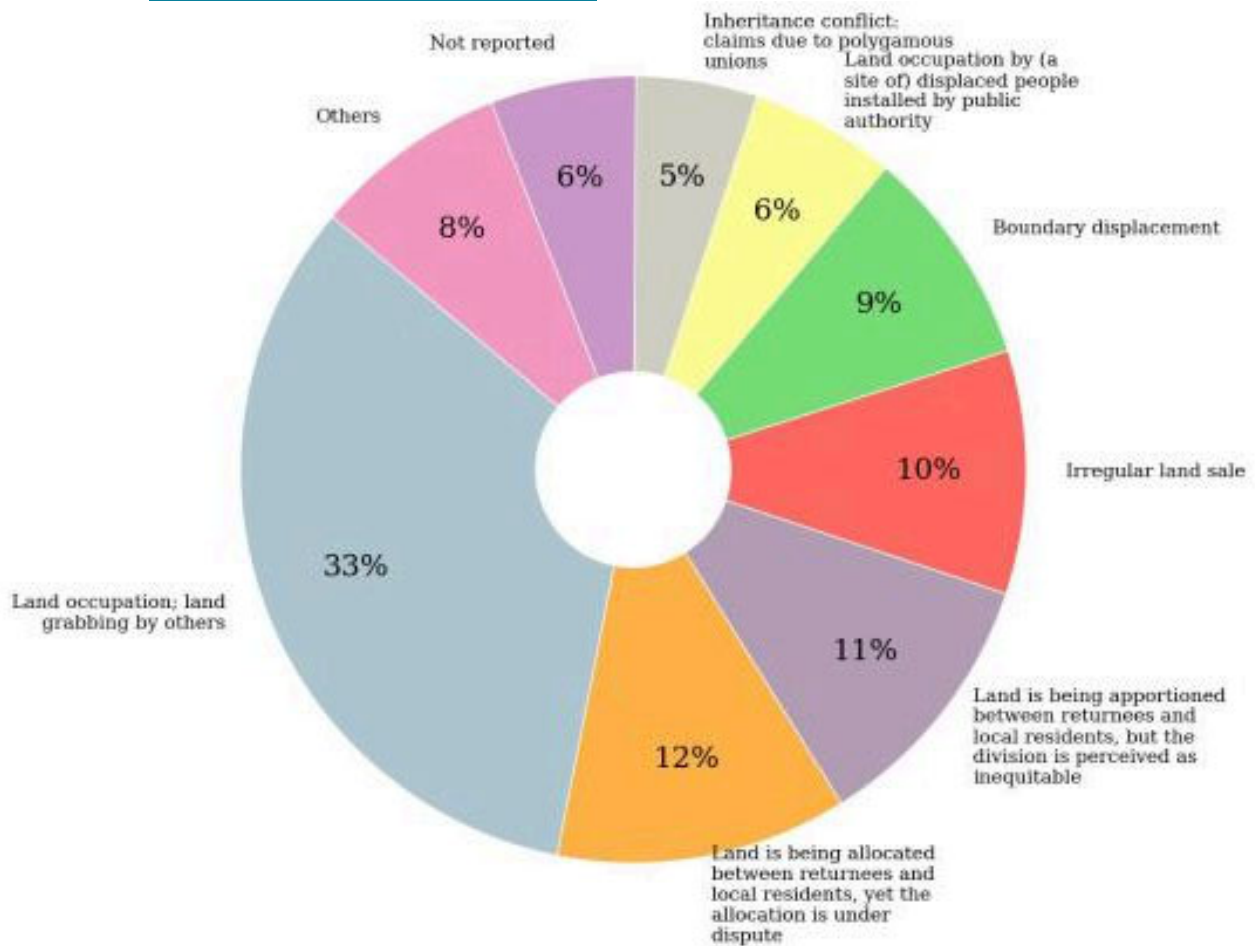


Displaced people within Burundi

The displacement tracking matrix by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that in 2020 some 28,333 households totalling 131,336 people had been internally displaced in Burundi. Of these, just 5,130 internally displaced persons (IDPs) originated from Makamba. It is important to note that most displaced people move within their home province (81%), while 19% moved between provinces. **Where people move between provinces, the map**

on the right indicates that Makamba is a popular destination, with many arrows pointing to that province. This is likely to further increase pressure on land in the area.

While 83% of IDPs were reported displaced by natural disasters, the presence of climate-linked IDPs impacts on access to land and livelihood resources and has the potential to become a driver of conflict.



Competing claims on land

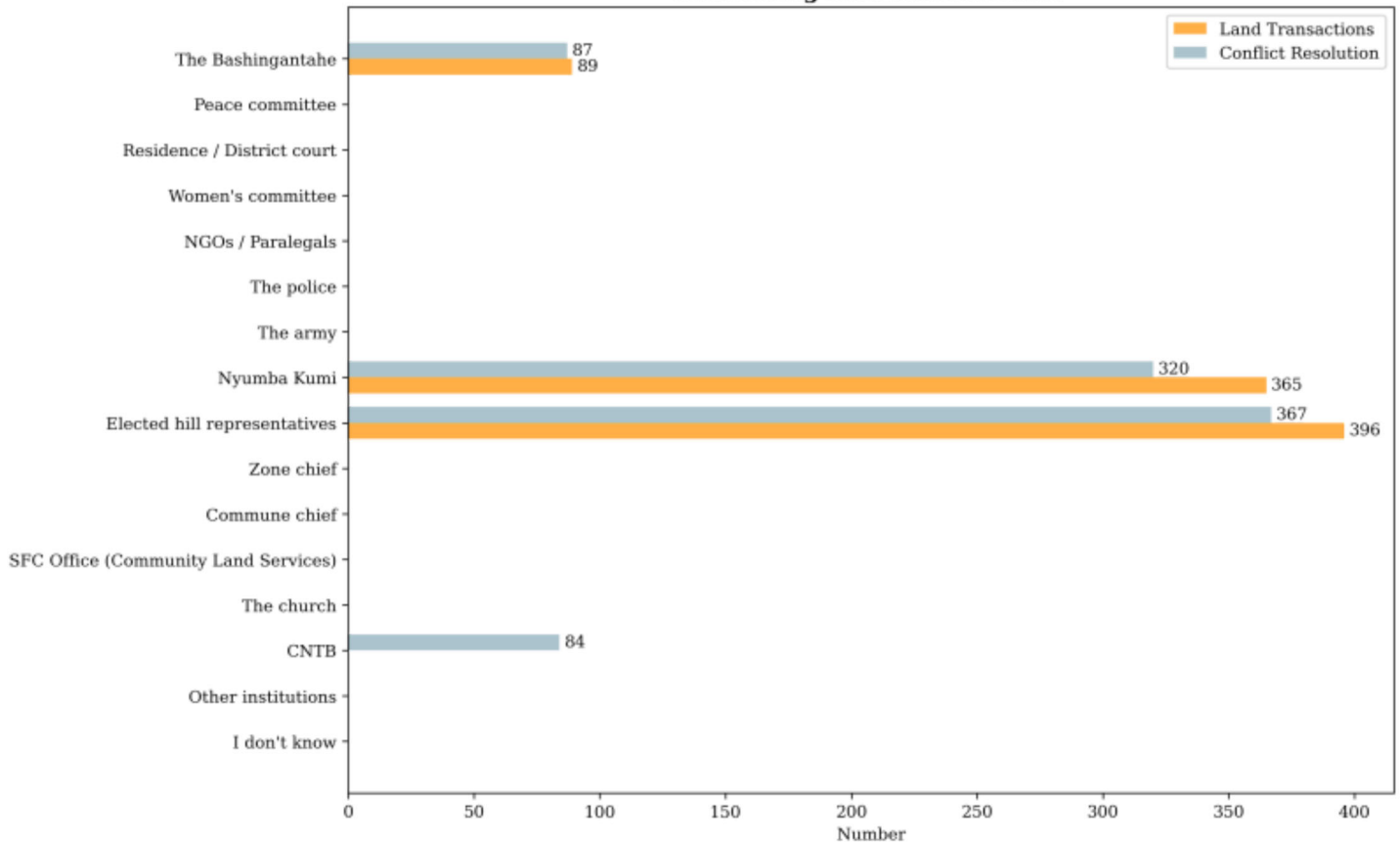
The long history of conflict and displacement has created a situation where multiple families may have legitimate claims to the same piece of land, based on different historical moments and legal frameworks. The challenge of reconciling these competing claims lies at the heart of Burundi's current land rights issues.

Contemporary tensions, while still influenced by historical ethnic divisions, have evolved to encompass broader issues of land rights, refugee return, and political power. While conflicts over land may have an ethnic dimension, as many

returnees are Hutu refugees from the 1972 crisis or the 1993-2005 civil war, **the 2022 baseline study by ZOA cautions against binary readings of the land problem as a Hutu versus Tutsi issue.** It notes that there are many returnee-related cases where Hutu are in conflict with Hutu over land rights and access to land.^[33]

Gender adds another layer to these tensions. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, women face significant barriers to land ownership and inheritance. This gender inequality intersects with ethnic tensions, often leaving women, especially those from marginalized groups, particularly vulnerable.

Could you indicate the key actors important for resolving land conflicts / facilitating land transactions?



Dispute resolution

The baseline study sought to identify the institutions that respondents consider most important for resolving land disputes. Highest scores were given to local structures such as the *élus collinaires* (367 or 85% of the responses); *Nyumbakumi* (320 or 74%); *Bashingantahe* (87 or 20%).^[34]

Only 19% of the respondents identified the National Land Commission as an important institutional actor.^[35] The baseline study notes that “most disputes between returnees and residents have been brought before the CNTB, despite this commission having been accused, especially in the recent past, of favouritism towards returnees, corruption, and even complicity for baseless claims.”^[36]

The mandate of the Land Commission ended in March 2022. However, the *Court Speciale des Terres et autres Biens* (CSTB) still operates. Since the expiry of the Commission’s mandate, the *Commission Vérité et Reconciliation* (CVR) has been given the task to follow up on all the 35,000 unresolved land related conflict cases.

The Government of Burundi recently appointed a new body of mediators (*médiateurs collinaires*) at each *colline*. Each mediation body comprises 15 people, of whom at least 30% must be women. These locally identified mediators have been given a mandate for local level of conflict management ^[37]

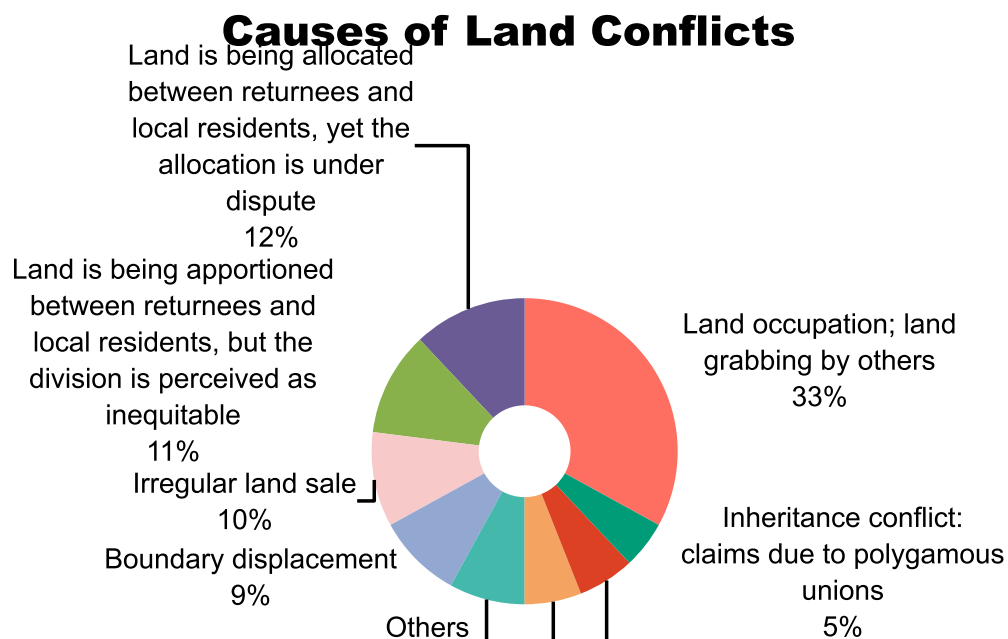


Harvesting Time in Nyanza-Lac

Current land realities in Nyanza-Lac

Nyanza-Lac is home to more than 400,000 people with a density of over a 1,000 inhabitants per square kilometer.^[38] Bordering Tanzania, it has been a major point of return for refugees and faces significant land pressures. The baseline study in Nyanza-Lac commune in Makamba reveals that Nyanza Lac is generally known in Burundi for the high number of returnees, and the numerous land conflicts related to the return process. According to the President of the *Tribunal de Residence*, Nyanza-Lac has 20 times more conflicts than other tribunals in Makamba. According to him, the tribunal has 600 pending land conflicts that require some field work.^[39]

Figure: The pie chart illustrates the various motivations behind land-related conflicts in Nyanza-Lac, as identified in the baseline study. Key drivers include land occupation, inheritance disputes, and the allocation of land to displaced persons. The role of 'others'—which may involve local elites, investors, or other actors—in these conflicts remains unclear, raising questions about their relationship with returnees and whether there is overlap with other causes of migration, such as climate change or regional political conflicts. While the study sheds light on the complex and multifaceted nature of these conflicts, it also highlights the need for further investigation to fully understand the underlying dynamics and the specific actors involved



Land conflicts

The baseline study data reveals the multifaceted nature of land conflicts. When exploring with whom the conflict took place, the following scores were given: 29% with returnees or residents; 29% with neighbours; 22% with other family members; 17% with other community members.^[40]

A total of 101 (31%) respondents out of a total of 430 interviewed for the baseline study indicated that they had personally experienced land related conflicts in the previous two years. Thirty three percent of conflicts concerned occupation of land by others; 23% concerned conflicts about dividing land between residents and repatriates; 10% of conflicts concerned irregular sales of land; 9% of conflicts were about the displacement of boundary markers.

High levels of mobility

The survey reveals that 34% of survey respondents were born in Nyanza-Lac while 63 (15%) were born in another commune

of Makamba province. One hundred and eighty five (185) respondents were born in another province.^[41] This figure includes migrants from elsewhere in Burundi and returned refugees, highlighting the demographic and social complexity of the commune.^[42]

Informal land purchases

The commune of Nyanza-Lac is reported to experience a high proportion of informal land sales. This fuels insecurity of land rights and has led to a growing number of conflicts between the residents and new settlers; especially those who come from other parts of Burundi in search of fertile and profitable land.

Some 59% of land plots in Nyanza-Lac are reported to have been bought, rather than acquired through customary ownership and inheritance.^[43] This shift suggests a breakdown of traditional land allocation systems and the emergence of a more commercialized land market which can erode local tenure security. This often impacts heavily on the livelihood security of poor and vulnerable households.

Land rental

About one-third of plots used by respondents belong to others, accessed through rental agreements or other secondary rights. This situation is particularly common among women, especially those in polygamous or informal relationships. The high prevalence of land rental indicates both land scarcity and the precarious nature of land access for many residents.^[44]

Perceptions of tenure insecurity

Some 45% of respondents lack any evidence of ownership for their second-most important plot of land (after their residential plot).^[45] This lack of formal documentation is thought to leave many landholders vulnerable to dispossession and complicates efforts to resolve disputes.^[46]

Some 36% of survey respondents believe it's possible that the

majority of people on their hill might lose their land within five years. This perception of insecurity was higher among women and in areas with high concentrations of returned refugees.^[47]

High incidence of land conflicts

Some 29% of informants interviewed in the study reported knowledge of land conflicts between returnees and residents. Of these, 23% concerned the division of land between returnees and residents. Other reported causes of disputes include boundary issues, inheritance conflicts, and fraudulent land sales.

Gender disparities in land access

Women, particularly widows and those in informal relationships, face significant barriers to secure land rights. The study found that women are more likely to rely on rented land and express higher levels of tenure insecurity.^[48]

Multiple land use patterns

The study revealed a mix of subsistence agriculture, cash crop production (particularly coffee and palm oil), and increasing pressure to convert agricultural land for housing and urban development.

Overall, the survey findings paint a picture of a community grappling with multiple factors including the legacy of conflict and displacement, rapid demographic change, changing land use patterns and the increasing number of informal land transactions.

The high levels of perceived tenure insecurity and the prevalence of disputes both between returnees and residents and amongst the community at large, highlight the importance of effective land governance and local dispute resolution mechanisms.

Overcoming institutional challenges in land governance

Tenure security cannot be guaranteed by land registration alone. The ZOA experience indicates that five key factors also have to be in place for land governance to be effective:

1. A clear legal framework
2. Trustworthy institutions
3. Capacitated local land governance actors
4. Well-resourced and publicly supported communal land services
5. An accessible and responsive court system

Work on the ground in Nyanza Lac indicates that much still needs to be done to establish land governance institutions and systems in which there are high levels of public trust.

Currently the lack of a clear, consistently applied legal framework has led to a situation where different actors – from local officials to national institutions – may apply different standards in resolving land disputes. This inconsistency further complicates an already complex land rights landscape.

Burundi has established various institutions to address land disputes and manage land rights, but these face significant challenges in fulfilling their mandates effectively.

The Afrobarometer survey found that while a slim majority (53%) of Burundians say the CNTB works without political or ethnic bias, the minority (34%) say the commission favours certain groups.^[49] In Nyanza-Lac, the CNTB's decisions have sometimes exacerbated tensions, particularly when they've ruled in favour of returning refugees over long-term occupants.

The ZOA baseline survey highlights that there is greater community trust in local actors playing land governance roles. These include traditional leaders and elected local officials

who often play a crucial role in land governance at the community level.

In Nyanza-Lac, 91% of survey respondents identified *élus collinaires* (elected hill officials) as key actors in land transactions. The *Nyumbakumi* (ten-household leaders) and *sous-colline* chiefs were also identified as playing a role in overseeing land transactions and resolving minor disputes.^[50]

Historically the *Bashingantahe*, a traditional council of elders, played a role in land dispute resolution in many communities. However, in Nyanza-Lac, only 20% of survey respondents identified the *Bashingantahe* as important actors in resolving land conflicts. This may reflect the fact that around 2021/2022 this traditional institution was reconstituted into the “*conseil de notables*” designed to play a more formal justice role.

While there are trusted local actors, they often lack formal training in land administration. There is also some evidence that their decisions may be influenced by local power dynamics or personal interests. The study found instances where local officials were accused of bias or corruption in land-related decisions.^[51]

The SFC established the *Commissions de Reconnaissance Collinaire* — community-level committees — to mediate local land disputes identified in the certification process.^[52] However, communal land services face significant challenges in terms of capacity and resources.

The baseline study reports that “many people are not aware of the existence of the SFC. 53% of respondents do not know whether there is a *service foncier* in their community (37% of respondents think there is a *service foncier*). Likewise, 66% do not know whether there is a *Commission de Reconnaissance* (17% think there is a *Commission de Reconnaissance*).”^[53] The baseline study questions why this is the case? “Does the SFC fail to communicate about its presence and activities? Is there

a lack of real interest from the local population? Is there lack of support from the communal administration?”^[54]

The court system is overwhelmed with land cases, which comprise an estimated 90% of all court cases in

Burundi.^[55] This backlog leads to long delays in resolving disputes and high costs for litigants. Moreover, many rural residents perceive the formal court system as inaccessible or biased against certain groups^[56]

In Nyanza-Lac, the local court (*Tribunal de Résidence*) faces significant challenges, including a lack of resources, limited staff, and difficulties in enforcing judgments. Additionally, the court's perceived Tutsi dominance is reported to discourage many Hutu residents from seeking justice through this channel.^[57]

Finding a sustainable way forward

A review of the evidence presented in the ZOA/Amahoro-at-Scale baseline study and related research suggests that there are a number of options for addressing Burundi's land rights challenges:

The study reports that only 11% of survey respondents in Nyanza-Lac knew how to obtain a land certificate.^[58] While the Amahoro-at-Scale project is providing awareness raising, this finding could benefit from further investigation as it could be indicative of a lack of confidence in formal land registration processes and a preference for land rights to be secured through customary practice.

In 2019 ZOA and its local partners supporting the land registration and dispute resolution processes in Nyanza-Lac conducted a separate study to see how many cases in court are related to land.^[59] This found that the number of cases brought to court still remain high in the districts where land

registration has taken place and local dispute resolution capacity exists.

This suggests that certain types of conflict can be addressed through public mediation sessions while recognising that there are also land disputes which can only be resolved in court. Practitioners have identified the need to distinguish between the different types of land related conflicts to identify those that are best resolved through local dispute resolution processes and those which require a binding decision from the courts. At the same time more attention needs to be paid to how the courts could better handle the load of conflicts in a fair, transparent and effective way.

The success of community dialogues in resolving some land disputes in Nyanza-Lac demonstrates the potential of this approach. In eight months, 15 cases were resolved through dialogue, with participants reporting high levels of satisfaction with the process.^[60]—

This suggests that further support is needed for the establishment and operation of such community-level dialogue platforms that bring together diverse stakeholders, including returnees, residents, women, youth, and local authorities. These platforms can address both individual disputes and broader land governance issues including:

- The protections provided by local land registration systems compared to those provided by the systematic approach to land tenure registration implemented by Amahoro-at-Scale.
- Procedures for resolving land disputes locally and through the courts.
- Women's land and inheritance rights under both statutory and customary law.

As the scope of these dialogues expands, further training in community and women's land rights, conflict resolution and mediation will be required to facilitate these dialogues effectively.



Conclusion

The programme to regularise and register land rights in Makamba District reveals the diverse challenges encountered in post-conflict settings, characterised by poverty, food insecurity and land pressure. Continuing ethnic tensions, waves of displacement and return, rapid population growth, and weak institutional capacity converge to create a volatile land rights landscape. The competing claims of returnees and long-term residents, coupled with gender inequalities and the erosion of traditional land governance systems, further complicate efforts to establish clear and equitable land rights.

Despite these challenges, the Amahoro-at-Scale project suggests promising avenues for progress. Community-led dialogue, improved legal literacy, and strengthened local dispute resolution mechanisms offer potential pathways to more secure and equitable land rights. However, success will require sustained political will, significant resource investment, and a delicate balancing of competing interests.

As Burundi continues to grapple with its past, while building for the future, the fair and effective resolution of land rights issues in Makamba and beyond remains crucial for lasting peace and sustainable development.

A mid-term review of the Amahoro-at-Scale project has been conducted recently and the results will be presented by [RVO](#) by the end of this month. The Land Portal will also provide any updates on this [page](#) - stay tuned!

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Suggested citation

de Satgé, R., Baquero, L. (2023). Challenges of securing land rights in post-conflict Burundi. Land Portal Foundation.

Design & Maps

Luis Baquero

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Wytse Chamberlain – van der Werf, Senior Researcher Knowledge Management at Utrecht University, Alexandra Emerusenge 't Lam, Land Rights Specialist at ZOA, Lisette Meij, LAND-at-Scale program advisor, and Gemma Betsema, Senior Program Advisor at LAND-at-Scale program for providing many helpful resources and their generous time in responding to our questions. Many thanks as well to Romy Sato for her thorough review of both text and graphs, and edits.

This data story has been developed with the support of the LAND-at-Scale program, funded by The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by the Netherlands Dutch Enterprise Agency (RVO).

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