

## **Burundi should be suspended from Human Rights Council for failure to cooperate with UN treaty body**

03.08.2016



Burundi's failure to reply to serious questions about war crimes posed by the UN Committee against Torture (UNCAT) has prompted a call for the country to be suspended from the Human Rights Council.

ISHR's Rumbidzai Masango, said Burundi's 'no show' at the Committee's 58<sup>th</sup> session was absolutely unacceptable.

'This blatant non-cooperation and straight out refusal to answer questions should be met with prompt and firm action from the General Assembly. Membership of the Human Rights Council comes with responsibilities and it's clear that Burundi is not even taking them seriously' said Ms Masango.

The [UNCAT had invited](#) Burundi to submit a special report in light of the deteriorating human rights situation in the country. The delegation presented itself and listened to questions on the 28 July, but did not appear on the 29 July to offer their replies.

Instead, in a letter to the UNCAT, the delegation requested more time to contest the human rights allegations in the NGO shadow reports and refuted all allegations of the serious human rights violations and the suggestions that Burundi's judicial system could no longer uphold the rule of law in the country.

These claims run contrary to the General Assembly resolution Res23/03 that was adopted on the same day in New York. It reiterated the Assembly's support for the Inter-Burundi Dialogue and called for an end in ongoing violence, torture, forced disappearance and targeted political violence in the country.

Ms Masango said it was time for the Human Rights Council to refer Burundi to the General Assembly for suspension or expulsion from the Council.

'Such behaviour must not be tolerated. The Government of Burundi has made it clear that it does not plan to cooperate with UN human rights mandated experts and treaty bodies and it shows little effort in providing any effective action to address the gross and systematic human rights violations occurring in Burundi. Membership of the Human Rights Council is not sustainable,' said Ms Masango.

The UNCAT decided in a closed session to send a [letter](#) to the permanent representation of Burundi in Geneva expressing regret for their decision to discontinue the interactive dialogue and informing them that the Committee will make concluding remarks and recommendations in two weeks, based on the information at hand.

'Failure to adequately respond to the contempt that Burundi has shown the UN will set a bad precedence and anything short of suspension will ultimately damage the reputation of the Human Rights Council,' said Ms Masango.

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