**Statement at 36th session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**Item 4: ID on Burundi**

Deliver by **Clément N. VOULE**

Mr. President,

ISHR and its partners in Burundi welcome the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi established through the resolution [33/24](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/33/24) of 30 September 2016

We are troubled by the grave human right violations documented by the Commission. The report lists grave systematic violations of human rights including enforced disappearances, killings, arbitrary arrests, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, sexual abuses and other forms of violence.

The report further raises concerns about the severe limitations on the right to freedom of association, including through the suspension of human rights NGOs who were critical of the government, and through the adoption of new restrictive legislation increasing the Government’s control on the work of national and international NGOs

As pointed out by the report a majority of the violations were committed by the defense and security forces. The report concludes that there are ‘reasonable grounds to believe that [crimes against humanity have been committed](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22016&LangID=E) and continue to be committed in Burundi since April 2015”

We are deeply troubled by the developments of recent days, including the arrest and ongoing arbitrary detention of human rights defender Germain Rukuki, the calls for indicting members of the COI in Burundi, the intrusion of armed men in OHCHR premises in Bujumbura and the killing of at least 36 Burundi refugees in the DRC.

Since its establishment the COI was not granted access to the country. The government of Burundi continues to refuse to cooperate with UN and regional human rights bodies to address the worsening human rights situation. This is a flagrant case of non-cooperation by a member of the Human Rights Council.

ISHR calls for Burundi to be suspended from the Council. Not only has the latest report of the COI confirmed the gross and systematic nature of the human rights violations in the country but the lack of commitment of the Government to cooperate with the international system in addressing these violations. The combination of these factors clearly warrant an invitation to the General Assembly to consider the suspension of Burundi as a member.

**Question to COI** :

In paragraph 98 of your report, you requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to report, at the forthcoming sessions of the Council, on the development of its cooperation with the Burundian Government. What action should the Council take considering recent attacks against the OHCHR in Bujumbura.

I thank you.