



INITIATIVE FOR PEACEBUILDING

A workshop was held in Bujumbura, Burundi on 2 March – 6 March, 2009. It was organised by International Alert in cooperation with Dushirahamwe on the topic of Gender and Security Sector Reform (SSR). Amongst the participants were high level officers from the Burundian army; representatives from the Burundian police corps; representatives from a wide variety of civil society organisations and also representatives from the Dutch military police stationed in Bujumbura.

During the weeklong workshop that was led by an international expert on gender and security a number of experts gave presentations on related topics. These included experts from BINUB (the UN office in Burundi) who discussed security and gender in relation to SSR; an expert from ICTJ and the Burundian civil society who discussed gender and transitional justice; experts from ICTJ and CENAP who discussed security sector reform in Burundi and experts from the EC project Gutwara Neza who presented the project and how it promotes gender and SSR. Considerable time was also devoted to the issue of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and its manifestations in Burundian society.

The workshop was opened by the Minister of Defence who spoke of his commitment to gender in Security Sector Reform. The number of high level participants from the Burundian security sector further showed the government's wish to understand and include gender in their work to reform the security sector.

The workshop ended with a variety of recommendations that aim to enhance the understanding of gender issues amongst government officials, civil society, security sector officials and the population at large. The dialogue between security sector officials and civil society that has been initiated by this workshop was perceived as very valuable by all participants who stated their wish and commitment to continue the deliberations on SSR and gender in the future. A full report on the workshop's deliberations and results will soon be available.