



The President of the Republic of Burundi sends his best wishes to all Burundians



The President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, accompanied by his family, attended Mass at Murayi Parish in the Archdiocese of Gitega on Wednesday, December 25, 2024, to celebrate Christmas with the parish's Christians.

In his homily, the Parish Priest of Murayi Parish reminded Christians that Christmas means the birth of Jesus Christ, who came to earth to save mankind from sin. "Our belief is the only way to invite him to accept to be with

us," hammered the Murayi Parish Priest.

In his greetings to the Christians of Murayi Parish, the President of the Republic of Burundi extended his best wishes to all Burundians: a Merry Christmas and a new year 2025 marked by work and determination, to increase production and achieve sustainable development. The President of the Republic of Burundi called on Burundians to embody the will of Christ through sharing, love of neighbor, social justice and hard work for the com-

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mon good.

Subsequently, the President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, also called on all Burundian Christians to pray for the country's leaders, in particular the presidential institution. He also invited them to pray that the forthcoming elections

will enable Burundi to have leaders capable of guiding the country towards sustainable and inclusive development. As part of the Christmas celebrations, the Head of State's children shared the joy of Christmas with the children of the Murayi parish, after Mass; a moment of communion and solidarity during this festive season. **(RTNB)**

### Burundi : christians celebrate Christmas



**O**n the occasion of Christmas, Christians in Bujumbura, Burundi's economic capital, gathered in large numbers in the various churches to celebrate this high point of the Christian faith, with great fervor and in a spirit of joy.

Religious leaders from various denominations took the opportunity to share messages of peace, hope and love, underlining the importance of Christmas as more than just a spiritual celebration.

One of the highlights of the celebration was the Christmas Mass at Regina Mundi Cathedral, where the Vice-President of Burundi, His Excellency Prosper Bazombaza, joined the Christians to mark the occasion. The presence of authorities, and of the Vice-President in particular, testifies to the importance of Christmas as a moment of national unity around Christian and human values.

The Archbishop of the Diocese of Bujumbura, Monsignor Gervais Banshimiyubusa, in his turn, recalled that Christmas is first and foremost a message of hope for the unfortunate, but also a spiritual event that must be expressed through acts of solidarity and sharing towards those who suffer. "Christmas is the incarnation of God's love among us, not an event to be celebrated

only in our churches, but through our acts of charity", said the Archbishop.

Monsignor Gervais Banshimiyubusa also invited Christians to cultivate inner peace, pointing out that true peace can only be transmitted if it first exists in the heart of each believer. "Peace begins within us, and it is from this peace that we can work for a more just and fraternal society", he declared. A call for reconciliation and social cohesion resounded in his message, reminding the Christian community of the example of Jesus, who came to bring peace to the world.

On his behalf, Pastor Lambert Ntakarutimana, of the Pentecost Church of Ntahangwa in Bujumbura, underlined the profound significance of Christmas for Christians. According to him, Christmas is a central celebration in the Christian faith, a time to renew hope in a better future, despite the difficulties of the past year, the rising cost of living among others.

He encouraged the Christian community to remain optimistic, affirming that "God, who chose to be born among us, will answer our prayers if we keep our eyes fixed on Him". A message of perseverance in the face of trials, reminding us that 2025 could be a year of blessings, if believers remain faithful and hopeful.

Finally, Apostle Manirakiza Jean Paul, of Holly Center Church, emphasized the importance of Christmas as a symbol of peace and love for the most vulnerable. He called on Christians to make a concrete commitment to sharing with orphans, widows and all those living in difficult conditions. "Christmas is a time for reconciliation, solidarity and support for those most in need, in the image of Jesus who, despite his humble birth, brought light to the world," he declared.

The Christmas celebration in Bujumbura was therefore a moment of reconciliation and sharing. Beyond the festivities, it is an opportunity for Christians to renew their commitment to the fundamental values of Christianity: peace, love and solidarity. At a time marked by socio-economic challenges, these messages of faith, hope and sharing serve as a reminder of the importance of unity and brotherly love in building a more just and caring society.

Through their celebrations and messages, Bujumbura religious leaders invited all Christians to em-

body Christmas not only in their prayers, but also in their daily actions, always bearing in mind that "it is in sharing and peace that we truly find the spirit of Christmas."

The celebrations were a wonderful opportunity for the Christian community in Burundi's capital to come together around the universal values of love and solidarity, thus strengthening the social and spiritual bonds within society. May the spirit of Christmas continue to guide everyone throughout the coming year. **(RTNB)**

### The Government of Burundi adopts measures to rebalance the budget



**O**n Tuesday, December 24, 2024, the Burundian National Assembly examined the rectifying finance bill for the 2024-2025 financial year. This revision follows an analysis of commitment ceilings for the second quarter of 2024-2025, with the aim of readjusting expenditure to available resources.

The revision of the budget for fiscal 2024-2025 is the result of several factors that disrupted the initial budget balance. Indeed, the fiscal year was marked by significant pressure on the State's cash position, notably linked to payments for expenses incurred at the end of fiscal 2023-2024. In addition, tax and non-tax revenues for the first half of 2024-2025 fell short of forecasts, leading to an increase in the budget deficit.

To address this growing deficit, the Government of Burundi has proposed several measures to increase revenues. Prominent among these measures is the sale of BIF 148.9 billion worth of dry grain maize from the strategic stock held by the National Agency for Food Security Stock Management (ANAGESSA). These proceeds will be used to finance the purchase of fertilizers for the B agri-

cultural season.

Other measures are aimed at optimizing tax revenues, such as the forced collection of BIF 36 billion in tax arrears. In addition, the use of BIF 28 billion from the COVID account has been proposed to offset the budget deficit. Another important measure concerns the introduction of the Health Assistance Card (CAM), which will be compulsory for all households not covered by another form of insurance, generating around BIF 3 billion.

The amending bill also suggests measures to broaden the tax base and combat tax evasion more effectively. Among the proposals are the protection of local industries and the introduction of a 100% surtax to ensure tax fairness between local and imported beers. Measures aimed at reducing Value Added Tax (VAT) fraud and optimizing tax revenue collection are also planned.

The revision of the Finance Bill for the 2024-2025 financial year takes place against a difficult economic backdrop, marked by budgetary imbalances. The Government, under the impetus of the Ministry of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Mr. Nestor Ntahontuye, is implementing a series of measures to restore budget balance, boost tax revenues and support key economic sectors.

These adjustments are designed to ensure more efficient management of public finances, while preserving the country's economic stability. **(RTNB)**

## Amendments to the law governing the Supreme Court



On Thursday December 26, 2024, the Burundian National Assembly met in plenary session at its Kigobe palace in Bujumbura city to analyze and adopt on second reading the draft organic law amending organic law No1/21 of August 03, 2019 governing the Supreme Court.

Among the amendments to this law, in article 2, paragraph 3 relating to the seat of the supreme court, the lower house of the Burundian parliament suggests replacing the group of words “en Mairie de Bujumbura” with “au Chef-lieu de la province de Bujumbura” to comply with organic law no. 1/05 of March 16, 2023 determining and delimiting the provinces, communes, zones, hills or quarters of the Republic of Burundi, as explained by Honorable Evariste Ndikumana, Chairman of the National Assembly's Justice and Human Rights Commission.

Article 9 of the organic law, which was under discussion on Thursday, contains a substantial amendment concerning the number of years of professional experience that a magistrate nominated for appointment as a

Supreme Court judge must have.

The Chairman of the Committee on Justice and Human Rights pointed out that the number of years of professional experience could be increased from 8 to 10, to give priority to the magistrate's proven experience and maturity.

The draft law includes a new article stipulating that the President and Vice-President of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General of the Republic of Burundi, the First Deputy Attorney General, the judges of the Supreme Court and the magistrates of the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic may be dismissed by the President of the Republic of Burundi, after consulting the High Council of the Judiciary, on the grounds of : physical or mental incapacity duly ascertained by a medical commission; notorious incompetence; serious breaches of the magistrate's duties; violation of the terms of the oath; lack of intellectual or moral probity; lack of loyalty to the country.

The draft law adds an article to the chapter on the powers of the Supreme Court, stipulating that the Supreme Court is the highest ordinary jurisdiction in the Republic of Burundi, and that its decisions are not subject to appeal, except in the case of opposition, review or the rectification of a misjudgment by the High Council of the Judiciary.

After analysis, exchanges and debates, 119 deputies, including 112 present and 7 by proxy, unanimously adopted the organic bill amending law N°1/21 of August 03, 2019 governing the Supreme Court. **(RTNB)**

## The Christians of the United Methodist Church are invited to love their neighbors as God has loved us

The Right Honourable Emmanuel Sinzohagera, President of the Senate and Legal Representative of the United Methodist Church of Burundi, joined the congregation of the Rubirizi parish, located in the Mutimbuzi commune, for the Christmas prayer on December 25, 2024. He was accompanied by a deputy

from the Bujumbura constituency, elected Senators from Bujumbura city and administrative officials from Bujumbura Province.

In his sermon, the Right Honorable Sinzohagera drew on the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, in particular John 3:16 and Deuteronomy 28:1. He recalled that God's love



led to the sending of his only son to Earth, so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.



He also stressed that believing in Jesus implies



three essential commitments: to walk in his footsteps, to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to love our neighbor as God has loved us.

In addition, he challenged the believers with a crucial question: "What did you do when your neighbor was in need?" This question, he said, will be put to them in heaven.

In conclusion, the President of the Senate, the Right Honourable Sinzohagera, promised the parish a contribution to ensure the smooth running of the New Year sharing festivities among believers. **(Senate)**

**The family of the President of the Senate grants aid to the most vulnerable people on Nyambuye hill**



ar, oil and loincloths to the most vulnerable people on Nyambuye hill, Nyambuye zone, Isare commune in Bujumbura province, so that they could well celebrate Christmas too.

The Right Honourable Sinzohagera said he had chosen to share Christmas with them in order to give thanks to God, who had guided and

**O**n Tuesday, December 24, 2024, the family of the President of the Senate, Right Honourable Emmanuel Sinzohagera, granted aid consisting of food, soap, sug-

protected his family from all harm.

Afterwards, he went to Nyambuye Hospital to give a helping hand to those who are hospitalized. **(Senate)**

## The Ombudsman visits some provinces



The Ombudsman of Burundi, Mrs Aimée Laurentine Kanyana, met on December 23 and 24, 2024, with local authorities in the provinces of Karusi, Mwaro and Gitega to assess the implementation of recommendations issued during public listening sessions.

The Ombudsman of Burundi, Mrs. Aimée Laurentine Kanyana, met with the administrative, judicial and security authorities of the provinces of Karusi, Mwaro and Gitega to assess the implementation of the recommendations related to the grievances of the population, addressed to the Ombudsman during her visit to these provinces last August. The aim of this initiative was to ensure that the population's grievances were taken into account, and to reinforce the quality of public service across the country.

The Governor of Karusi province, Mrs Dévotte Nizigiyimana, recalled that the Ombudsman's previous visit to this province had taken place in the commune of Shombo, where the population expressed its grievances, particularly in the judicial sector. The governor praised the initiative of this mediation authority, which strives to find solutions to social problems in the country in general and in the province in particular.

After analyzing the implementation of the recommendations of her previous visit to Gitega and Karusi, the Om-

budsman praised the authorities for their efforts to find solutions to the conflicts raised by the population of these two provinces. She encouraged them to continue to serve the population under their responsibility, without distinction, in order to better manage conflicts at their source.

During this visit, the Governor of Karusi province referred to the Ombudsman a case of conflict concerning a piece of land purchased by the Ministry in charge of National Solidarity. This provincial authority requested the Ombudsman's involvement to resolve the conflict between the site's residents and the person claiming part of the land before the situation escalated.

Samuel Nininahazwe, Socio-Cultural Advisor in the Office of the Governor of Gitega Province, pointed out that the provincial authorities are currently available to serve the population. However, he pointed out that some individuals oppose judicial decisions, thus contributing to the delay in implementing the Ombudsman's recommendations.

The Ombudsman of Burundi, Mrs Aimée Laurentine Kanyana, called on the local administration to change its mentality and adopt a culture of respect towards all people, regardless of their social strata. Not fulfilling one's duty to serve the population as an authority is one of the main causes of instability and social insecurity, stressed Mrs Aimée Laurentine Kanyana, Ombudsman of Burundi. With regard to cases of conflict to which local authorities fail to find solutions, the Ombudsman, Mrs Aimée Laurentine Kanyana, undertook to submit these issues to the competent authorities, so that they become involved and find lasting solutions.

Finally, the Ombudsman warned against authorities who fail to properly serve the population under their responsibility, prompting the latter to take their disputes to higher authorities. She insisted that these problems should be resolved at local government level. The Ombudsman urged the authorities to avoid corruption and any other form of fraud, in order to better serve the population unconditionally. **(RTNB)**

## The Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock visits Mukike Commune



**T**he Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, Ir. Prosper Dodiko visited Mukike commune, in Bujumbura Province, on the evening of December 24, 2024, to inquire about the state of the maize seed distributed in this commune during the A 2025 cropping season.

The purpose of the visit was firstly to congratulate the inhabitants for having responded to the call of the Head of State, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, to take up farming. Secondly, it was a

question of finding out about the state of the maize seed sown recently.

Inhabitants of Mukike claim that the maize seed they received during the A 2025 growing season has not germinated at all. The Minister accused them of distributing seeds from the previous WANNAK season, whereas this year the seeds distributed were PAN A53.

The Provincial Office for the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock (BPEAE) in Bujumbura province was immediately suspended by order. As for the technicians involved in examining these seeds, which have already lost their germination capacity, they will be severely punished, stressed the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Livestock. Farmers will be compensated accordingly. **(RTNB)**

## The Minister of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender assists 120 orphans



**O**n Tuesday December 24, 2024, the Minister of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender distributed over 50 tons of rice to legally recognized orphanages across Burundi, to enable orphans to celebrate Christmas in better conditions.

More than 119 orphanages benefited from this important aid, reflecting the Government's commitment to supporting institutions that care for children in vulnerable situations. This food aid is designed to alleviate the difficulties faced by these orphanages, particularly during the festive season.

During the donation ceremony, Mrs Barindogo VÉR-

onique, Assistant to the Minister, reminded participants that wishing children a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year is a way of promoting their rights, and in particular their right to be happy. She stressed that every child, whether Burundian or foreigner living in the country, has the right to protection and well-being.

“The Government of Burundi is fully committed to guaranteeing the rights of all children, especially those in difficult situations, such as orphans, disabled children, street children, and Batwa communities,” she stressed.

As part of this distribution, a visit was made to the Islamic Charity Home (Foyer Islamique de la Charité) in Kiyange, located in the Buterere zone of the Ntshangwa commune. Accompanied by Jean Christophe Ndikumana, Director General of National Solidarity and Social Assistance, Barindogo Véronique handed over a specific donation to this orphanage: 1.5 tons of rice, three cans of oil, bottles of juice, cookies and soap. This gesture testifies to the government's commitment to concrete support for orphanages and their residents.

Mrs Révocate Nzikibazane, head of the Foyer Islamique de la Charité, expressed her deep gratitude to the

Government for this generous donation. "This orphanage is currently home to 60 children, aged from 5 to over 18. This support enables us to improve their living conditions and provide them with a more comfortable environment," she said.

This donation symbolizes the Government of Burundi's ongoing commitment to children's rights. In this Christmas season, this action reflects the spirit of solidarity and compassion towards those most in need, offering vulnerable children the opportunity to spend the festive season in dignity and joy. **(RTNB)**

### The Ministry of East African Community Affairs, Youth, Sports and Culture



**O**n Thursday, December 26, 2024, at his headquarters, the Minister of African

Community Affairs, Youth, Sports and Culture, Ambassador Gervais Abayeho, presented a review of the major achievements of the first quarter from July 1 to December 31, 2024.

In the regional integration sector, the Ministry has carried out activities linked to the coordination and facilitation of statutory and non-statutory meetings, the organization of and participation in the 7th edition of the East African Community cycling tour, and the organization of 3 capacity-building workshops for 78 Ministry executives, field visits, updating and dissemination of the Ministry's Manual of Administrative and Financial Procedures, participation by the Republic of Burundi in the 46th meeting of the EAC Council of Ministers, organization of the 24th ordinary summit of Heads of State and celebration of the 25th anniversary of the EAC.

In the youth sector, the Ministry organized: International Youth Day, a retreat for the National Youth Policy, an evaluation and coaching raid for members of youth center management committees, 2 follow-up and coaching raids for groups of young entrepreneurs, and the 24th edition of the week dedicated to Youth Innovation, coupled with the activities of the 3rd edition of the Continental Dialogue on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa.

In the sports sector, young Burundians have been supported to participate in 25 regional and international

sports competitions to maximize the country's visibility. A quarterly meeting was held with the Sports Federations, and a national championship for traditional games was organized, along with the official launch of the 2024-2025 Men's Intercommunal Football Championship.

The main achievements in the cultural sector include: an awareness campaign for the occupants of the RYAN-YONI site to return to their original communes, a project to construct a Grand Burundian Drum Monument at the Roundabout of Melchior Ndadaye International Airport, an awareness session for administrators on the Missions and Operations of the House of Culture, award ceremonies for the winners of the 6th edition of the theater competition in 2024, and the launch of the 7th edition in 2025 aimed at promoting literary creation in high schools in Burundi. Additionally, the 8th edition of the week dedicated to the emblematic dance UMURISHO W'INGOMA was celebrated, coinciding with the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the drum dance on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

At the Burundian Agency for Youth Employment (ABEJ), there was a field recruitment drive for 500 young people for first job internships.

At the Burundian Center for Reading and Cultural Animation (CEBULAC), a training session was held for 30 employees on book processing. The BIJE granted 1 billion, 125 million Burundian Francs in credit to 96 cooperatives made up of 640 young people, including 369 men and 271 women.

Under the Economic Empowerment and Youth Employment Program (PAEEJ), the INKEREBUTSI DAY was organized to promote financing and self-employment for young people. 350 projects from youth enterprises or cooperatives were supported. 1,670 young people received support through capacity building in agro pastoral techniques and irrigation techniques. **(RTNB)**

# Merry Christmas

& happy new year

2025 

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*En cette fin d'année, je vous adresse mes meilleurs vœux de bonheur, de prospérité et de succès. Que la nouvelle année qui s'ouvre soit pour vous une année sereine et épanouissante, remplie de moments de partage et de douceur.*

**Amb. Albert SHINGIRO**



# Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation

## Department of Communication

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