

The Rt Hon Stephen Twigg MP
International Development Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

30 August 2016

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 9 August on the status and payment of Burundian Peacekeepers following the Committee's oral evidence session on *The Humanitarian Situation in Burundi*.

In the past decade Burundi has become an important contributor to peacekeeping missions in Africa. The Burundian contingent is the second largest within the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with 5,400 troops currently deployed. Burundi also currently contributes over 800 police and military officers to the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

Burundian troops who have risked their lives in peacekeeping missions must receive payment for the challenging work that they have done. The Burundian contingent has made a particularly substantial contribution to AMISOM's success. Its withdrawal would be a significant threat to progress in Somalia; and the UK's investment in that effort.

However, the UK has been absolutely clear that these contributions must not be made in a way that supports acts of violence and repression; or exacerbates the current crisis in Burundi. We have put a number of measures in place to mitigate this risk.

Working closely with partners, we led discussions which resulted in the suspension of EU funding for AMISOM channelled through the Government of Burundi. The EU has now asked the African Union to implement a payment system that allows troops who have served in Somalia to be reimbursed directly and not via the Ministry of Defence as was previously the case. The disbursement due for the Burundian contingent will not be transferred until a viable system is in place. We have also suspended our contribution to pre-deployment training for Burundian troops assigned to AMISOM, alongside the US and France.

We share the committee's concern about reports that AMISOM deployment is being used by the Government of Burundi as a reward for officers who have committed abuses on their behalf. We have raised this matter directly with the African Union. They have assured us that they are taking concrete steps to ensure that any alleged perpetrators are not deployed into AMISOM. They have already refused two senior

appointments in the Burundian contingent on that basis. We are satisfied that they will continue to do all they can.

In June the UN announced that it was ending the involvement of police units from Burundi in the Central African Republic because of allegations that the units had been involved in serious violations of human rights domestically. The units are now in the final stages of being withdrawn. In our role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council we will continue to encourage the UN to ensure that all troop and police contributing countries comply with the organisation's Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

RT HON BARONESS ANELAY OF ST JOHNS DBE

Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the UN

Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict