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Dear.....,

I am writing to you regarding Amnesty International's recent report entitled "Burundi: No Protection from Rape in War and Peace" which documents the high incidence of rape and sexual violence in Burundi and the failure of the government and authorities to investigate and prosecute incidences of rape. Under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and its Optional Protocol, both of which were ratified by Burundi, the state has a responsibility to prevent violence against women and to prosecute those responsible. The government must demonstrate that rape and sexual violence are violations of women's human rights which will not be tolerated and should take immediate steps to enact laws and policies to prevent, investigate and punish sexual violence.

I urge the government to collect official statistics on the extent of rape in Burundi. This would help the government to allocate sufficient resources to help victims of rape, increase accountability among state authorities, and encourage women to come forward. The government must also ensure that the police and judiciary receive proper training to investigate cases of rape and prosecute those found responsible. A legal service should be set up throughout the country, including in rural areas, to provide advice, financial assistance and support to women who instigate legal proceedings. Furthermore, the government needs to take immediate steps to eliminate the practice of "amicable settlements," in which rape victims are sometimes forced to marry the perpetrators. These settlements are not an effective remedy for victims of rape and amount to a further violation of women's human rights.

Sincerely,