



Military budget stretches Burundi's limits

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INCESSANT civil war in Burundi which has been forcing the Transitional National Assembly to approve a huge budget for the armed forces has been obstructing smooth implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed in Arusha on August 28, 2000.

This was said in Dar es Salaam late last week by the Burundian Member of Parliament, Oscar Nibogora, who is also the Chairman of the parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security.

Nibogora was presenting his paper on the role of Parliament on Defence and Security, Issues during a seminar for legislators on 'Building Capacity for Parliamentarians for Global Actions (PGA)' last week.

"The Parliament must vote for the budget of war. As a result sections of populations continue to live under the poverty line," Nibogora said.

He said some political parties were still against provisions of the Peace and Accord, although they had signed the document while having special reservations.

"Signing the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement with reservation has been delaying smooth implementation of the accord in Burundi," Nibogora said.

He said that at least 300,000 people had been slaughtered in Burundi since the assassination of first democratically elected Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye, by a group of Bujumbura soldiers in 1993.

According to Nibogora, an estimated 500,000 Burundian nationals were still in exile, apart from those displaced inside the tiny Central African country.

"Lack of genuine security for all in Burundi has been contributing to insufficient food, apart from massive poverty which dominates the whole country at this moment," Nibogora said.

The PGA seminar attracted participants from Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Sweden, Tanzania and South Africa.