



## Embassy of the United States of America Bujumbura, Burundi

**PRESS RELEASE – 1 August 2013**

### **President welcomes AFRICOM General Rodriguez to Burundi**

The Embassy of the United States of America is pleased to announce that General David Rodriguez, Commander of United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), and United States Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi H.E. Dawn Liberi were received by H.E. the President of the Republic of Burundi Pierre Nkurunziza on Thursday, August 1, 2013, to discuss security cooperation related to the United States-Burundian military partnership, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and to express appreciation to the President for his leadership in regional peace keeping operations and continued support of AMISOM.

General Rodriguez was also received by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defense and War Veterans Major General Silas Ntigurigwa and the Chief of General Staff of National Defense Forces Major General Prime Niyongabo whom he thanked for their leadership and service in Somalia. “The Burundians have been great partners with the United States. The United States has provided U.S.-sponsored and ACOTA-led peacekeeping training to 23 battalions and over 21,000 Burundian soldiers since 2007. Additionally, since 2007 the United States has provided direct security assistance in excess of \$100 million,” the General said. “During this visit I also announced to the Chief of Defense Forces the recent delivery of 33 Heavy Transport Vehicles, valued at \$4.3 million, in Mogadishu, Somalia, for direct use by the Burundian contingent.”

“Burundi has been a steadfast partner in Somalia. They volunteered at the start of the AU mission, and as the second-largest troop-contributing country, they have been instrumental in expanding AMISOM operations from Mogadishu to other critical locations that support the people of Somalia as they emerge from decades of war and oppression,” General Rodriguez said.

General Rodriguez also recognized the sacrifices that Burundian soldiers have borne on the battlefield and offered condolences to the families of those Burundians who have been killed or wounded in the effort to assist Somalia.

At the conclusion of his trip General Rodriguez stated, “I received a warm welcome in Burundi and look forward to returning in the future as our two countries continue to partner for increased regional security.” Ambassador Liberi added that “The United States looks forward to increased collaboration in the years ahead as Burundi continues to build on its membership in the East African Community.”