Burundi Pulls out of ICC

Why in news?

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Burundi has become the first country to officially quit the International Criminal Court – ICC.

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What is the crisis in Burundi?

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- Mr. Nkurunziza won a third term in 2015, in contravention of a two-term limit that was agreed upon earlier.
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- Lately, his streak has become very authoritarian in crushing protests and the state machinery seems to rallying behind him.
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- Recently, a UN commission investigating violence under 'President Nkurunziza' of Burundi had called for the court's intervention.
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- The fact-finding missions had reported large-scale incidents of sexual abuse, torture, forced disappearances and executions.
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- The flight of refugees to neighbouring countries is said to have exceeded 400,000.
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- International pressure to bring the situation in Burundi under control has proved ineffective.
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- 'African Union – AU' too abandoned a planned intervention despite its charter providing for such action to stop genocides.
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What are the Implications for ICC?

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- Burundi’s decision to quit the ICC might find resonance among many other African countries too.
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- **Targeting Africa -** Mood across the AU to defy the jurisdiction of the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC is obvious.
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- As most ICC investigation involves African governments, there is a popular perception that the institution is biased.
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- ICC indeed faces hurdles to hold big global powers to account for human rights violations.
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- But that doesn’t eliminate the complicity many African dictators in subverting democratic institutions to keep their grip on power.
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- **Burundi Intervention -** In any case, Mr. Nkurunziza’s regime may not be able to evade ICC.
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- UN Security Council which is empowered to refer complaints against non-member nations might take up Burundi’s case.
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Quick Facts

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1. International Criminal Court:

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- ICC is an intergovernmental organization and international tribunal that sits in The Hague in the Netherlands.
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- The ICC has the jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.
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- It is intended to complement existing national judicial systems and it may therefore only exercise its jurisdiction when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute criminals.
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- United Nations Security Council or individual states may also refer situations to the Court.
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2. Rome Statute:

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- The Rome Statute is a multilateral treaty which serves as ICC's foundational and governing document.
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- ICC began functioning on 1st July 2002, the date that the Rome Statute entered into force.
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- States which become party to the Rome Statute by signing and subsequently ratifying it, become member states of the ICC.
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- Withdrawal of Burundi brings the membership down by 1 to 122.
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- While Russia had withdrawn its signature to the initial satute last year, it was never a member of ICC as it never ratified the statue.
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- USA, Israel, UAE and several other countries are also signatories to the ‘Rome Statute’ but haven’t ratified it as yet.
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Source: The Hindu

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