

New government in Burundi

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BUJUMBURA, April 2 (AFP) - Burundi's military ruler Pierre Buyoya named a new transition government Thursday to run the small highland nation for 12 months until general elections are held.

Prime Minister Adrien Sibomana was asked to appoint the government under the terms of Burundi's new constitution introducing multi-party politics, which was overwhelmingly backed in a referendum on March 9.

The new team is little changed at senior level from the outgoing one appointed by Major Buyoya himself, though it brought in an army officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Leonidas Marezagege, as defence minister.

A new planning minister, Isaac Budabuda, has also been appointed in the team of 21 ministers and two secretaries of state, which sees eight new faces.

The former governor of the Bujumbura rural district, Francois Ngeze, joined the government as interior and local communal develop-

ment minister, in place of Libere Bararunyeretse, who took the foreign affairs and cooperation portfolio.

Buyoya himself had previously taken responsibility for defence and Sibomana held the planning portfolio.

At the weekend, Buyoya stepped down from the chairmanship of the Union for National Progress (UPRONA), the single, ruling party in the east central African country since 1966.

Under the new constitution, he could not retain the post and remain head of state.

UPRONA was founded in 1958 by Prince Louis Rwagasore, with the single aim of winning independence from Belgium, which came in July 1962.

Unable to keep the lid on tribal strife between the traditionally ruling Tutsi clan and the Hutu majority, Rwagasore was murdered on October 13, 1961, at a dinner he was hosting for his first government.

UPRONA became the single ru-

ling party in November 1966, the month the monarchy was overthrown.

As in neighbouring Rwanda, the history of Burundi has been marked by conflict between Tutsis and Hutus.

Officials Thursday said the task of the new government would be to ensure national unity and work for de-

mocracy and development.

New legislation authorising multi-party politics is due to be released in coming days, following discussions in cabinet and the submission of the law to the constitutional court.

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