30 people killed in northern Burundi

AFP, March 9, 1995

BUJUMBURA, March 9 (AFP) - Ethnic tension between majority Hutus and minority Tutsis ran high Thursday in northern Burundi, where at least 30 people have been killed in clashes since the start of the week.

Local people said schools, markets, offices and shops have been closed since last Friday in Bubanza province, where residents are protesting that a local official helped a young Hutu guilty of murder escape.

Burundian media reports said a Tutsi schoolboy recognised the Hutu among a group of would-be recruits into the Tutsi-led army as the person who had killed his family when a wave of massacres swept the country in October last year after the assassination of president Melchior Ndadaye.

A fight broke out between the two and their respective supporters and ended in three people being injured, including the murder suspect who was taken to hospital.

The district administrator helped him escape, without authorisation from police and legal authorities, and then fled himself, the reports said.

Fearing reprisals, Hutsi children left their schools to hide in the hills, where they have been fed by local officials and some of the staff in their schools.

Bubanza province borders on Citiboke province, the scene of clashes between the regular army and armed Hutu bands making incursions from neighbouring Zaire. This week, about 10 gendarmes were killed during a battle in the town of Butara, reports said.

On Sunday, displaced people massacred 21 civilians in a reprisal attack after a local accountant was tied up and decapitated in Muramba district in Muyinga province, bordering on Tanzania and Rwanda, another theatre of strife between Tutsis and Hutus, the national news agency reported Wednesday.

The agency did not say to which ethnic group the victims belonged.

In October 1993, more than

50,000 people died in massacres sparked by the assassination of Ndadaye, the country's first Hutu president, elected in the country's first multiparty elections that year.

dn-hn/nb/ms

AFP AFP