

# Burundi refugees tell of atrocities

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KIGEMBE, Rwanda, Oct 25 (AFP) - Refugees fleeing Thursday's military coup in Burundi are streaming into neighbouring Rwanda with horror stories of atrocities by the army.

President Melchior Ndadaye, the first man from the majority Hutu tribe to head the state since its independence from Belgium in 1962, was, according to several reliable reports, murdered by the plotters from the army, which is dominated by the minority Tutsi tribe.

Refugees in this town on the Burundi-Rwanda border told AFP of systematic persecution by the army.

One said: "The soldiers came. They asked the Tutsis to show them Hutu houses. And then they opened fire. If you tried to hide, they came at you with swords and machetes. So we ran and ran until we reached the border."

At Nyaruteja village, in the Kitembe district of southern Rwanda, more than 15,000 refugees have ar-

rived since Thursday.

On Sunday evening, Louis Dambonyirugu was still documenting the new arrivals. He had started in the morning, and he stopped at number 153.

Two other officials at his table were doing the same work, asking the refugees their names, ages, where they had come from.

The village, which is usually virtually deserted on Sundays, was choc-a-bloc with people come to shelter on this hillside overlooking the river Akanyaku.

The women sat on their haunches on the ground, their children clinging to them.

Others were lighting fires to heat water or to cook the meagre supplies of maize, sweet potatoes and beans that the locals had brought them. Amid the sea of refugees, it was a drop in the ocean.

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