

Bujumbura [Hundreds of thousands of refugees remain frightened and unwilling to return home]

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NAIROBI, Nov 1 (AFP) - Hundreds of thousands of refugees from massacres that followed an October 21 coup bid in Burundi remain frightened and unwilling to return home, a U.N. official said here Monday.

Solange Senaize, a representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said many of the refugees, mostly from the Hutu majority, said they would not go back while the army was dominated by Tutsis.

Burundi cabinet ministers have gone into hiding and called for international protection since the coup bid by some army units, which killed Melchior Ndadaye, the first president from the Hutu people, elected in June.

According to the latest UNHCR figures from Kigali, 364,941 Burundis have fled to Rwanda while 260,000 went to Tanzania, according to the

Tanzanian government.

Senaize said the flow of refugees to Rwanda had stopped, but no movement in the opposite direction had taken place. The UNHCR representative in Dar es Salaam, Kolu Doherty, said there had been a slowdown in the number of refugees fleeing to western Tanzania.

But they would not go back for fear of the armed forces, Doherty said.

There was no overwhelming food problem for the refugees from the small highland nation in central Africa, but health risks were serious, Senaize said.

Heavy rains had also begun and the UNHCR was to provide blankets, tents and plastic sheeting to protect their makeshift huts of branches, she added.

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