

OAU chief calls for African force to go into Burundi

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KIGALI, Oct 28 (5AFP) - The head of the Organisation of African Unity called here Wednesday for an African peacekeeping force with international backing to be sent into Burundi to restore order after last Thursday's aborted coup.

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, in Rwanda to see what can be done to help the estimated 200,000 refugees who have poured across the border since the coup, told AFP: "I believe there is merit in instituting some kind of force, a force to create confidence."

"My preference is an African force supported by the international community," he said.

The force should "assist the government" of President Melchior Ndadaye, who was killed by the plotters, and "act as a force to create the condition of a reorganisation of the security forces," he said.

Ndadaye was the first president

since independence from Belgium in 1962 to come from the majority Hutu tribe.

The army is dominated by the Tutsi minority, and was allegedly responsible for massacring Hutu civilians in the centre and east of the country immediately after the coup.

"Whatever we do, it must be done with speed," he said. "There is an international consensus on the need to restore legitimacy."

Rwandan radio, monitored in London by the BBC, reported Wednesday that Francois Ngeze, who was appointed caretaker leader by the plotters, had been placed under house arrest.

The radio also said 15 soldiers who took part in the plot had fled the country to escape arrest, amid increasingly clear evidence that the coup has failed.

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