

Rwanda declines to send Burundi peacekeepers, ministers on tour

AFP, October 30, 1993

KIGALI, Oct 30 (AFP) - Rwanda will not be able to contribute troops to an international force proposed to help bring peace to neighbouring Burundi following a coup attempt, Rwandan radio reported Saturday.

Burundi President Melchior Ndaye was murdered in Thursday's bloody coup attempt.

The radio quoted Rwandan foreign minister Anastase Gasana as saying in an interview that "Rwanda, which has just emerged from three years of fratricidal war, was not in a position to take part immediately in the force by sending troops to Burundi."

"However, Rwanda would not dissociate itself from the action, but would take part in one way or another in the stabilization force and in restoring confidence in Burundi," Gasana said.

President Juvenal Habyarimana, Tanzanian Prime Minister John

Malecela, Zairean Prime Minister Faustin Birindwa and the Organisation of African Unity Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim meeting here on Friday urged the immediate deployment of an African-led multinational peacekeeping force in Burundi.

Meanwhile, radio Burundi reported late Friday that Burundi's ministers who survived the putsch have begun touring the countryside to reassure the population.

The radio said some ministers visited villages in Kirundo, Muyinga and Karuzi provinces in northern Burundi, Ruyigi and Cankuzo provinces in the west of the country, and the central province of Gitega.

"They strongly urged the people to restore peace, brotherhood and unity, but denounced the murderous behaviour of the troops who perpetrated the murder of the head of state and certain of his close aides," the radio said.

They also denounced the ethnic killings that followed the coup.

The violence between the minority Tutsi tribe, who dominate the army, and the majority Hutu tribe – to which Ndadaye belonged – has spiralled into a vicious cycle of revenge killing.

Nearly 600,000 Burundians have

fled to neighbouring states, more than half to Rwanda, according to U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees' spokeswoman Silvana Foa in Geneva. The refugees number almost one 10th of the total Burundi population.

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