

# Burundi president, minister reported killed in coup

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NAIROBI, Oct 21 (AFP) - Renegade troops in Burundi staged a coup against the government of President Melchior Ndadaye on Thursday, reportedly executing him and his interior minister, officials said.

After the early morning coup the rebels from the minority Tutsi ethnic group took Ndadaye, Burundi's first head of state from the majority Hutu people, and several ministers to an army base in the capital Bujumbura, reports said.

Later Thursday, Rwandan radio said Ndadaye had been executed, along with Interior Minister Juvenal Ndayikeza and top security official Richard Mdikumami, according to Burundi's ambassador to Kenya, Joseph Bangurambona.

The report could not be independently confirmed as contact with the Burundi capital Bujumbura was impossible, Bangurambona said.

Communications Minister Jean-

Marie Ndendahayo, who was not seized by the putschists, said by telephone to the Rwandan capital Kigali that troops had fired on pro-Ndadaye demonstrators in Bujumbura, but gave no casualty figures.

The rebel troops were said to be led by newly appointed chief of staff Colonel Jean Bikomagu and loyal to former military ruler Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, who was ousted in 1987 after 11 years in power. He returned in July from exile in Libya.

The coup began with an attack on the president's residence by four tanks of the 11th Armoured Division and about 100 paratroopers at around 2:00 a.m. (0000 GMT), Ndendahayo said. The putschists exchanged fire with presidential guards.

"Bujumbura is a dead town," Ndendahayo said, adding that there were demonstrations in support of Ndadaye in Bujumbura and Gitega, the country's second city east of the

capital.

Radio Kigali reported demonstrations by thousands of Burundis in the Gisega region close to the border with Rwanda, some carrying placards reading: "We are fed up with coups. We want democracy to prevail."

The family of Ndadaye, 40, who won Burundi's first multi-party elections against expectations in June, were allowed to take refuge in a foreign embassy, Ndendahayo said, but he did not say which one.

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