

Troops arrest Burundi president in coup [Following]

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AFP, October 21, 1993

NAIROBI, Oct 21 (AFP) - Tutsi soldiers backed by tanks arrested Burundi's President Melchior Ndadaye on Thursday in a coup bid against the first head of state from the majority Hutu people, a government minister said.

The soldiers led by newly appointed chief of general staff Colonel Jean Bikomagu and loyal to former military ruler Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, took Ndadaye with several cabinet ministers to an army base in the capital Bujumbura, several reports said.

Communications Minister Jean-Marie Ndendahayo, who was not among the captives, said on the telephone to the Rwandan capital Kigali that troops had also fired on pro-Ndadaye demonstrators in Bujumbura, but he gave no casualty figures.

"Bujumbura is a dead town," Ndendahayo said. "The radio has not broadcast since this morning, but we

are beginning to see some demonstrations on behalf of President Ndadaye in Bujumbura and Gitega," the country's second city east of the capital.

"The putschists shot at them" in the Bamenge, Jabe and Citiboke districts of Bujumbura, he added, but he have no casualty figures.

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

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), Nden-

dahayo said. The putschists ex- he added.
changed fire with presidential guards, more AFP AFP