

Ethnic fighting escalates as exiled leader calls for intervention

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NAIROBI, Oct 26 (AFP) - Burundi's ousted government appealed Tuesday for foreign intervention to halt ethnic bloodletting that was escalating in the country's north, where witnesses said troops were rampaging through villages.

Jean Minani, minister of health and leader of a government-in-exile in the Rwandan capital Kigali, called for an intervention "to end the massacre" of Hutus by the military, which is dominated by the ethnic Tutsi minority.

Tutsi troops were slaughtering Hutus in the north of the country, Minani said, describing the army as a "furious force the government cannot control."

Nearly 400,000 refugees have fled across the border to Rwanda, bringing with them tales of atrocities by the army, who staged a coup Thursday during which they assassinated the country's first Hutu president,

Melchior Ndadaye.

Clashes were particularly fierce in Muhinga district on the border with Tanzania, where "soldiers gathered Tutsis together in their camps to protect them and then went out and slaughtered Hutus," Minani said.

Tutsis, who are in the minority in the countryside, were reported to be fleeing to towns to find protection in military camps.

Roads across the country had been cut and bridges blown up by Hutus trying to prevent the movement of troops. International telephone connections were also severed, operators in Nairobi said,

"The fighting at home really started when we knew the president was dead," a refugee in the southwestern Rwandan village of Bugurama.

Relief officials said some 270,000 people had crossed into Rwanda, while 80,000 had fled to Tanzania ac-

According to the interior ministry there are more AFP AFP
and 15,000 were now in Zaire.