

## Hundreds reportedly flee as Burundi coup leaders close borders

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NAIROBI, Oct 22 (AFP) - Hundreds of Burundians have fled to southern Rwanda in the wake of the coup by minority Tutsi army rebels in what may signal ethnic clashes, diplomatic sources said Friday.

Meanwhile earlier Friday, Radio Burundi reported that the coup leaders had set up a committee of national salvation and closed the east African country's borders.

Leopold Ndayisaba, first secretary at the Burundian embassy in the Rwandan capital of Kigali, said that more than 2,000 refugees reached the southern Rwandan town of Butare early Friday.

He added that the exodus indicated there were political and ethnic clashes in the wake of Thursday's coup in which President Melchior Ndadaye, a majority Hutu, was reported by Rwandan radio to have been executed along with several supporters.

"This means that the (Hutu) population is being slaughtered," the Burundian ambassador here, Joseph Bangurambona, said. He urged the international community to intervene "immediately."

Radio Burundi, monitored in neighbouring Rwanda, said the salvation committee would be led by a former interior minister Francois Ngeze.

Coup leaders have imposed a curfew and have closed the country's borders, the report said.

Ngeze was a minister in the government of Pierre Buyoya, a member of the minority ethnic Tutsi who lost an election on June 1 to Ndadaye, the first president of Burundi from the ethnic Hutu majority.

In their statement on Radio Burundi, whose broadcasts have been interrupted since the coup, the rebels called on local, political and religious leaders to attend a meeting Friday.

They called on the public to

remain calm and for neighbouring in Burundi's affairs.  
countries to refrain from interfering more AFP AFP