

## Hutus flee clashes in Bujumbura

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BUJUMBURA, March 22 (AFP) 6:00 a.m.  
- Dozens of Hutus fled the working-class Bwiza neighbourhood of Bujumbura on Wednesday as soldiers of the Tutsi-dominated army patrolled the streets after murderous clashes.

The Hutus, carrying beds, mattresses, and cooking pots on their heads, tried to enter the adjacent neighbourhood of Buyenzi, but its mixed residents repelled them, fearing for their lives.

Most then set off for Kanyosha, in the south of the capital – a long trek.

Clashes between Hutus and Tutsis which erupted Monday continued in Bwiza overnight Tuesday, with the state-owned radio Wednesday reporting four people wounded by gunfire and grenades.

Bursts of automatic fire rang out around the start of the nightly curfew at 7:00 p.m. (1700 GMT), then gunfire and grenade explosions could be heard in the middle of the night. The dusk-to-dawn curfew, imposed in December after similar clashes, ends at

The radio reported one house burned down.

Assailants opened fire on Monday evening on Bwiza bars frequented largely by Tutsis, and machine-gunned houses, with the toll put at eight dead and 13 wounded. That followed four deaths earlier in the day when gangs of young Hutus and Tutsis confronted each other in the central market.

Soldiers sent in Tuesday to patrol the streets of Bwiza were out in force Wednesday.

Many outer neighbourhoods in Bujumbura have been "ethnically cleansed", inhabited now solely by members of one tribe, but the central neighbourhood of Bwiza remains a powderkeg mixture.

The two tribes have been clashing there regularly since the end of last year, raising fears that the tiny central African nation may explode into ethnic civil war, as in neighbouring Rwanda, which has the same eth-

nic mix – 85 percent Hutu to 14 percent Tutsi – and where more than 500,000 people died in savage fighting and massacres last year.

Bujumbura's central market opened Wednesday morning, but foreign-owned shops were closed in mourning for three Belgians, one of them a four-year-old girl, who were gunned down along with two Burundians on Sunday evening as they were returning to the capital from a sporting event.

That attack, generally attributed to Hutu extremists, ignited the fol-

lowing violence.

Hutus also fled Bwiza last December after revenge attacks following the slaughter of 10 Tutsis in another neighbourhood.

The Hutus complained then that the Tutsis were engaged in "ethnic cleansing" in Bwiza, but most returned in the following months.

With tension high throughout the city, the university and some secondary schools closed their doors Wednesday after lecturers and teachers failed to turn up.

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