

Tanzania appeals to Burundi government to end massacres

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DAR ES SALAAM, Dec 7 (AFP) - Tanzania has appealed to Burundi's government and army to immediately stop the ongoing tribal massacres which have led to an influx of more than 700,000 refugees into neighbouring Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire.

In a strongly-worded statement Prime Minister John Malecela indicated that Tanzania would no longer receive any refugees from Burundi if the massacres continued.

"The government of Burundi has the responsibility to restore peace in the country and protect lives," he said in the statement released in the Lake Victoria town of Mwanza.

His remarks came in the wake of reports of the Burundi army's involvement in the killing of innocent civilians, and increased ethnic backlashes between the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis.

Saying that there were already re-

ports that some Burundian soldiers were crossing into Tanzania to harass innocent civilians and rob them of their property, Malecela warned that "the Burundi government should understand that Tanzania reserves the right to take any necessary measures to stop the flow of refugees into our country".

"We don't want state authorities in Burundi, be it the government or army, to think that they can kick out people whom they don't need into Tanzania."

About 500,000 Burundian refugees have fled into Tanzania in the wake of ethnic violence and the attempted coup last October 21 in which President Melchior Ndadaye and several of his key aides were killed.

Since the coup attempt, the predominantly Tutsi army has been accused of involvement in the massacre of majority Hutus, renewing

centuries-old ethnic hostility between the two tribes.

But Malecela said: "Although Tanzania had continued to accept refugees from Burundi and other neighbouring states on humanitarian grounds and in the spirit of good neighbourliness, this does not mean that it has to accept refugees forced out by bad administrations in their motherlands."

hb/lto/ss