

U.N. envoy warns of "vacuum of power" in Burundi

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NAIROBI, Oct 27 (AFP) - U.N. assistant secretary-general James Jonah warned Wednesday that a "vacuum of power" created in Burundi between the army and government after last Thursday's coup attempt was a major obstacle to solving the Burundian problem.

Speaking shortly after arrival in Bujumbura, Jonah, special envoy of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said the obstacle was that while the military asserted they had returned to barracks and were prepared to take orders from the government, the government and the people maintained that they had no confidence in the army.

"This to me appears to have created an extremely dangerous power vacuum", Jonah said in an interview with the BBC in Bujumbura, monitored here on Wednesday night.

Jonah, who is in Bujumbura to try and break the deadlock and indi-

cated that he had already held talks with the prime minister, foreign minister and other members of the cabinet since his arrival Wednesday afternoon, said he would also try to make contact with members of army, including the coup makers.

"A way to resolve the problem would be to get the coup makers out of the country, if one can identify them, but this will need cooperation from the army command, and until I have talked with them, I cannot be precise on such a possibility", Jonah said.

On the general security situation in Burundi, Jonah stressed that although the capital was quiet, reports of killings in the countryside meant that "urgent steps must be taken to bring the situation throughout the country under control".

"There is definitely a need that something must be done to give some sense of security to the government

at this moment", Jonah said, and promised to report the government's request for an international force to be sent to the country to Boutros-Ghali.

"But I informed them about the difficulties of mobilising an international force, given the many activities the U.N. has at the moment", Jonah added.

In another development, Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana declared a seven-day period

of mourning from Thursday for assassinated Burundian President Melchior Ndadaye and "other martyrs of democracy" in Burundi.

In a message to the nation reported by Rwanda national radio, General Habyarimana said the events in Burundi "must serve as a lesson for the Rwandan people" and called on the Rwandan army to be an army of democracy.

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