

## Bujumbura [Grenades exploded in the Burundi capital during a strike]

AFP, February 4, 1995

BUJUMBURA, Feb 4 (AFP) - President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya renewed support for his beleaguered prime minister on Saturday as thousands of opposition members converged on central Bujumbura to demand the premier's dismissal.

Ntibantunganya showed his backing for Prime Minister Anatole Kanyenyiko by asking him to appoint two ministers to replace a pair sacked for failing to attend a cabinet meeting, Burundian radio said.

Kanyenyiko responded by immediately naming two new ministers, the radio added.

Several thousand people meanwhile protested peacefully in response to a call from the main opposition group, Union for National Progress (UPRONA), to demonstrate for Kanyenyiko's dismissal, officials said.

UPRONA, dominated by the minority Tutsis and, despite its op-

position status, holding ministerial posts in the government dominated by Hutu parties, sacked Kanyenyiko from its ranks a week ago for failing to toe the party line.

The president then called a cabinet meeting to test support for Kanyenyiko in the government.

When Claudine Matuturu and Libere Bararunyeretse, respectively ministers for public office and for resettlement of displaced people, failed to show, they were sacked. The pair both belong to UPRONA.

Kanyenyiko responded Saturday to the president's request to appoint new ministers by naming Vincent Ndikumasabo, a former justice minister, to replace Matuturu, and Lieutenant-Colonel Louis Murengera, former governor of the northern province of Ngozi, to replace Bararunyeretse, the radio said.

Earlier in the week, UPRONA head Charles Mukasi called a two-

day general strike which paralyzed the capital. He said it was urgent to "topple the government at all costs."

UPRONA's campaign comes as the country risks plunging into ethnic carnage similar to that which last year engulfed neighbouring Rwanda, which has the same tribal make-up.

In Burundi in late 1993, a foiled coup by soldiers from the Tutsi-led army, in which the country's first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, was assassinated, led to a wave of ethnic slaughter in which some 50,000 people were killed.

The current coalition government

was formed in October last year after dealings among parties to stave off renewed carnage, but the central African highland nation has teetered on the brink of more massacres.

A grenade attack Thursday night on a school in the southern town of Bururi killed three students and wounded nine.

On Wednesday and Thursday, grenade explosions in outlying districts of the capital killed one person and wounded several others.

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