

Burundi [International reaction to the coup]

AFP, October 21, 1993

Like neighbouring Rwanda, another densely populated highland nation, Burundi has been wracked by outbreaks of strife between the Hutu majority and their Tutsi overlords.

The Hutu people make up 85 percent of the population, while the dominant Tutsis, more recently arrived in the country, make up constitute 14 percent.

The first trouble against Ndadaye came before he was invested, with a coup attempt by Tutsi officers on July 3. This was put down quickly as the army, led then by chief of staff Colonel Michel Mibarurwa, remained loyal to him.

Some 200,000 Hutus were massacred in 1972, 10 years after independence from Belgium, and another wave of violence claimed at least 5,000 lives in 1988, according to official figures.

In international reaction to the coup, France expressed its "full support" for Ndadaye and threatened to suspend economic cooperation with Burundi, worth some 200 million

francs (35 million dollars).

A threat to "democracy in this friendly nation is unacceptable," foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duque said. "France will not be able to maintain its major cooperation effort if legality is not respected in Burundi."

He added that there was no particular risk to the 900 French nationals in Burundi, including 800 in Bujumbura.

The United States condemned the reported arrest of Ndadaye and suspended the country's 16 million dollar aid program.

"This represents a serious setback to the cause of democracy in a country whose previous democratic success served as an inspiration to the region and the world," said State Department spokesman David Johnson.

The coup was also condemned by the 12-member European Community, as well as Germany and neighbouring Rwanda.

bur/job/mt/ms
AFP AFP