

OAU mini-summit in Bujumbura cancelled amid Burundi unrest

AFP, February 18, 1995

BUJUMBURA, Feb 18 (AFP) - A mini-summit of heads of state in the Organization of African Unity to be held Saturday in the tense, strike-bound Burundi capital here has been cancelled, a Burundi official said Saturday.

No reason was given for the cancellation, which comes amid growing unrest in this small central African nation locked in a cycle of ethnic violence that a UN mission this week warned could again explode into a bloodbath.

Burundi officials said only three African heads of state, from Rwanda, Zambia and Tanzania, had actually pledged to come to Burundi, making plans for the mini-summit shaky from the start.

The OAU summit was to follow right after a three-day international conference here that adopted an action plan to encourage the return of some 3.8 million refugees – both dis-

placed Burundians and people from neighboring Rwanda who fled their country's bloodbath last year.

That forum, jointly sponsored by the OAU and the UN High Commissioner for refugees, was held in a big Bujumbura hotel, but sealed off by Burundi army guards in a sign of the trouble in the country.

A UN mission warned on its return to New York Friday that conditions that the situation in Burundi was potentially explosive.

The capital has been the scene of clashes between Tutsis and Hutus following a general strike launched Tuesday by the Tutsi-dominated opposition, which is demanding the ouster of Prime Minister Anatole Kanyenkiko, a leader of Union for National Progress (UPRONA) who is accused of betraying his own followers.

A number of people have been killed in the unrest.

"The political and security situation remains precarious and is potentially explosive," the report by the UN mission said, accusing "extremist forces" within the UPRONA of trying to "undermine the coalition government."

The mission recommended that UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali establish as soon as possible an international commission to investigate an October 1993 coup

attempt, which triggered massacres that left some 50,000 dead.

The killings have never been punished. They preceded the massacres on an even larger scale this year that ravaged Rwanda, which has the same volatile ethnic make-up of a large Hutu majority and a small but politically influential Tutsi minority.

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