

## Political settlement sought after coup committee is scrapped

Damien Ntiranyuhura

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BUJUMBURA, Oct 28 (AFP) - U.N. special envoy James Jonah and regional leaders worked Thursday to end chaos in Burundi, where Prime Minister Sylvie Kinigi announced that a committee set up by leaders of a bloody coup bid had "ceased to exist."

Jonah, the U.N. under-secretary general for political affairs, pursued a mission to help restore constitutional legality after the October 21 coup attempt by Tutsi-led troops in which the country's first president from the Hutu majority, Melchior Ndadaye, was assassinated.

"We inform all Burundians and the international community that the little group which tried to take power has been dismantled," Kinigi said in a radio broadcast late Wednesday, referring to a self-proclaimed public salvation committee.

The head of the committee, Francois Ngeze, was under house arrest,

while 15 members of the armed forces who took part in last Thursday's coup had fled the country, according to state radio in neighbouring Rwanda.

Informed sources here, however, said they believed Ngeze, who was interior minister in the previous regime of military ruler Major Pierre Buyoya, had found refuge in the U.S. embassy. No official confirmation could be obtained.

Kinigi denied there were divisions in the cabinet between ministers who had taken refuge in western embassies here and a government-in-exile announced by Health Minister Jean Minani from Kigali, the Rwandan capital.

She explained in her broadcast that she had assigned Minani and Justice Minister Fulgence Dwima Bakana, who also escaped to Kigali, "to represent the government abroad."

Kinigi is from the minority Tutsi

tribe. She was appointed by Ndadaye after he beat Buyoya in democratic elections in June and pledged to end the small central African nation's endemic ethnic strife once and for all.

After initial talks on Wednesday with Kinigi, Foreign Minister Sylvestre Nibantunganya and other

cabinet members, Jonah noted that while the military asserted they had returned to barracks and were willing to take orders from the government, the government and the populace at large maintained they had no confidence in the army.

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