

Refugees say Tutsi soldiers are killing Hutus, coup leaders seek amnesty

Annie Thomas

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KIGALI, Oct 23 (AFP) - Fears of bloodshed in Burundi became reality Saturday as refugees reported Tutsi-led massacres while the coup leaders' self-styled national salvation committee offered democracy in exchange for an amnesty, Radio Burundi reported.

Burundians who fled to neighbouring Rwanda after Thursday's military coup told journalists the Tutsi-dominated army was killing Hutu civilians and had hurled grenades at schools and hospitals, the government in exile here said, citing refugees.

Radio Rwanda's reporters said some 200 corpses were lying around river Akanyaru on the Burundi border.

Tutsi soldiers dressed in civilian clothes were using grenades and heavy arms against Hutus, according to a Domicien Ndayizeye, spokesman for the Burundian government in exile whose formation was announced

on Rwanda radio by Burundi's Health Minister Jean Minani.

"Immediate intervention is crucial – with significant military means," Ndayizeye insisted, echoing Minani's earlier appeal to the U.N. Security Council to restore peace and democracy in Burundi.

About 200,000 refugees – mostly women, children and the elderly – have crossed into Rwanda since President Melchior Ndadaye was toppled by the Tutsi minority army, a Burundian government spokesman said.

Tens of thousands of Burundians continued to cross into Rwanda, government and international aid workers near the border reported.

"The men bring their families and then go back," a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) official said, adding it was unclear if they were returning to fight."

Mystery over Ndadaye's fate continued despite reports Friday from

Burundian diplomats saying he had been killed. ing the "Committee of National Salvation" – set up by the coup leaders –

Francois Ngeze, a former interior minister in the government of ex-president Pierre Buyoya who is head- said he did not know what had happened to Ndadaye. more AFP AFP