

Suspected coup leaders deny role

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BUJUMBURA, Oct 24 (AFP) - Two presumed leaders of the coup here publicly denied any part in the putsch, heightening confusion over who was running the country, amid further reports Sunday that President Melchior Ndadaye had been killed.

Two ministers of the government overthrown Thursday in this central African state said the democratically-elected president was dead.

Public Service Minister Leonard Nyangoma told Radio Rwanda there was "no doubt" that Ndadaye had been killed.

Communications Minister Jean-Marie Nguedayo [Ngendahayo] told Radio France Internationale: "The president of the republic was killed by a commando in a Bujumbura military camp during the morning of October 21 around 10 o'clock.

"He was taken in an armoured car with his wife and children from the presidential palace to the camp. There he was taken aside and shot in

cold-blood."

Nguedayo [Ngendahayo], who has taken refuge in a Western embassy in Bujumbura, said the speaker of parliament and several other high-ranking officials were also executed.

The death of Ndadaye, who became Burundi's first president from the majority Hutu tribe when he was elected in the nation's first multi-party elections on June 1, had previously been reported by ministers and ambassadors abroad, but not from within the country.

Meanwhile the head of the coup-imposed Committee of Public Salvation, Francois Ngeze, has made two broadcasts on radio and television over the weekend denying that he was involved in the putsch.

Ngeze said he had accepted the committee's chairmanship "to help re-establish peace" and to restore legal authority.

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