

# UNHCR to coordinate aid for 300,000 Burundi refugees

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GENEVA, Oct 26 (AFP) - The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced Monday it would send a team of experts to Rwanda to coordinate aid for the estimated 300,000 people who fled Thursday's coup in Burundi.

The UNHCR said in a statement late Monday that it would need between three and four million dollars, and perhaps more, if the Hutu ethnic majority continued to flee the country for fear of massacres by the army, which is dominated by the Tutsi minority.

"We urgently need medicines, blankets and shelters for refugees," a UNHCR spokesman said.

"Cases of meningitis, dysentery and measles have been reported among the refugees," he said.

More than 250,000 have fled to Rwanda to the north, some 40,000

to Tanzania to the east, and another 15,000 to Zaire to the west.

Most of them are women, children and the elderly, who have gone on the road with very little by way of food and supplies.

Ethnic clashes have taken place in the east and centre of Burundi, and several massacres have been reported, the UNHCR said.

President Melchior Ndadaye, the first Hutu to head the government since independence in 1962, was killed in the coup.

U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has asked an aide, James Jonah, to travel to Burundi at a date yet to be decided to report on the situation, Boutros-Ghali's spokesman Joe Sills said Monday.

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