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BURUNDI: LEADERS CHANGE, BUT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES CONTINUE UNABATED

Despite claims by the new Burundi military leader, Major Pierre Buyoya, that he wants to stop genocide in Burundi, massacres by government forces and armed groups continue unabated, Amnesty International said in a report issued today.

Since the *coup d'etat* on 25 July the security forces have reportedly continued to execute unarmed civilians and to assist or condone killings of Hutu civilians by Tutsi.

On 1 August the military authority announced that government forces had killed an unspecified number of Hutu soldiers who they claimed had deserted the army. However a source in Bujumbura claimed that in this operation no deserters were killed, but instead government forces assassinated a teacher and his three children on Nyambuye hill near Bujumbura's Kamenge suburb.

On 29 July soldiers reportedly executed an unknown number of people, including women and children, in Giheta, Gitega province. Those too weak to run away drowned in the nearby Ruvyironza river.

On 26 July government forces killed at least 110 unarmed Hutu civilians in Carama, near Bujumbura. An eye-witness told Amnesty International that the army mainly killed people with bayonets. Those who tried to run were shot with machine guns.

Since 25 July soldiers have reportedly killed at least 100 people in Shumba and 26 in Kibogoye, on Bukeye colline, in Muramvya province. In addition, there have been reports of summary executions by the army in Mutimbuzi commune, daily mass arrests of young Hutu in Rubirizi and Mubone which have generally ended in killings and also killings of Hutu by the armed forces in Mashitsi, near Gitega.

Many Hutu students have also been killed by their Tutsi schoolmates, sometimes with the assistance of Tutsi soldiers. On 26 July Tutsi students killed two Hutu students in Mabanda High School and ordered the other Hutu to vacate the school as they were now "back in power". On 25 July, 30 Hutu were assassinated by Tutsi at the *Institut superieur d'Agriculture* (ISA). Members of security forces who surrounded the school reportedly killed other Hutu who tried to escape. Some of the students were burned in their beds with their property.

Military authorities who have been presiding over human rights violations for years continue to head the security forces. Many who were implicated in the October 1993 coup attempt which sparked off a wave of massacres by civilians and government forces, are free while more than 6,000 civilians, mostly Hutu, are still in custody in connection with the massacres carried out after the coup attempt.

“The international community should take appropriate measures to bring an end to impunity and human rights abuses which continue to fuel political violence in Burundi,” Amnesty International said.

The human rights organization is appealing to all parties to the conflict in Burundi to take urgent steps to end human rights abuses.

“Burundi political and military leaders should give public instructions to those under their command to refrain from killing unarmed civilians. They should facilitate independent investigations into killings and adopt measures to bring those responsible to justice,” Amnesty International said.

“Burundi political and military leaders should also stop forced repatriation of Rwandese refugees and respect the principle of *non-refoulement*.”

Amnesty International calls on foreign governments and inter-governmental organizations such the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to place human rights at the top of their agenda when addressing Burundi’s latest crisis. The result of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry into the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye and the massacres which followed should be made public without delay, in order to reveal the truth behind these massacres and to end the impunity protecting the perpetrators.

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