

Burundi President in Bujumbura after Coup Attempt



Bujumbura, May 15 (RHC)-- Burundi's presidential office says President Pierre Nkurunziza has returned to the capital, Bujumbura, after a military coup attempt by the African country's former intelligence chief ended in failure.

Willy Nyamitwe, a senior communications adviser at Nkurunziza's office, said on Thursday that the 51-year-old president is back in the country but stopped short of specifying his whereabouts because of what he described as "security reasons."

Nkurunziza was in the Tanzanian capital, Dar es Salaam, where he attended a regional meeting on Burundi's political situation Wednesday.

Earlier on Thursday, gunfire could be heard in various corners of Bujumbura as rival army factions clashed around the state television and radio complex. State radio, which had gone off the air, returned after presidential loyalists took control of the broadcast center, and coup supporters withdrew from the area.

There are reports that pro-Nkurunziza soldiers are currently in control of the presidential palace, while the situation at Bujumbura's international airport remains unclear.

The developments came a day after Major General Godefroid Niyombare, who was fired by Nkurunziza as intelligence chief in February, used privately-owned radio stations to announce the president's dismissal. Nkurunziza's office says security forces are looking for the coup leaders to bring them to justice.

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