

## Rwandan rebels and government discuss proposals for change

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ARUSHA, Tanzania, Aug 14 (AFP) – The Rwandan government and the rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) have started discussing proposals aimed at introducing sweeping democratic changes in the central African country, a Tanzanian official at the talks said Friday.

The draft proposals by the two sides focus how best democracy, national unity and respect of human rights should be restored, said senior Tanzanian foreign ministry official Ami Mpungwe.

“We are increasingly narrowing down the gap between the two sides, so far no major hitch has come up,” he said, but added “there are a few minor problems arising out of a long history of mistrust between them”.

The conflict in Rwanda is based on ethnic differences between the Hutu dominated government and the mino-

rity Tutsis who were driven out of power in 1959 following an uprising Hutus.

The mainly Tutsi RPF invaded northern Rwanda from Uganda in October 1990 in an attempt to overthrow the 19-year-old government of President Juvenal Habyarimana.

“We are optimistic of reaching agreement on political matters before going to the issue of power sharing and merging our armies,” Rwandan ambassador to Tanzania Thomas Munyaneza told AFP.

Political negotiations which opened here on Tuesday follow a ceasefire agreement in this northern Tanzanian town last month.

The two sides said the truce was holding.

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