

Rwandan bishops to miss opening of African synod

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VATICAN CITY, April 9 (Reuter) - A Rwandan Roman Catholic bishop said on Saturday his country's delegation could not take part in the opening of the Vatican's synod of African bishops on Sunday.

Monsignor Jean-Berchmans Nterere told the Italian news agency ANSA that "the grave situation in Rwanda" would prevent the country's delegation from attending Sunday's ceremonies.

Nterere, who arrived in Rome on Friday, said the delegation, made up of himself and four other bishops, would join the synod later only if the situation in the central African country improved.

Rwanda lurched towards all-out civil war on Saturday after two days of tribal fighting following Wednesday's assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana and his counterpart from neighbouring Burundi.

The Vatican's synod of African bishops will go on until May 8 and will discuss the political, economic and religious problems of the world's poorest continent.

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