

41 die in northwestern Burundi clashes as army regains control: army

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CIBITOKÉ, Burundi, April 12 (AFP) - Forty-one militant Hutu tribesmen were killed and about twenty were captured in recent clashes with the army, according to the commander of the Cibitoke army camp, Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Bikomagu.

He said the Burundi army was now in control of the north-west after repelling what he called "armed terrorists who came from Rwanda", Burundi's northern neighbour.

Two soldiers were killed and three wounded in Thursday's clashes, Bikomagu said.

A schoolgirl wounded in a grenade attack died on Saturday morning.

The assailants attacked targets in Buganda, Gasenyi, Ndava and west Cibitoke, Mabayi and Butahana, near the border with Rwanda. These areas have been designated emergency "red zones" by the army.

By Saturday the rebels were fight-

ing a rearguard action, the army said, but journalists were unable to visit the region.

Among rebel weapons captured, journalists identified Russian-made assault rifles, Belgian FAL automatic rifles, and weapons and ammunition for South-African made R4 rifles.

The prisoners - who all admitted belonging to the Palipehutu movement seeking autonomy for the majority Hutu tribe - wore amulets and ritual scars to deflect bullets, and two pairs of pants, two pairs of trousers and three shirts.

They said they were trained at camps at Nyarushishi and in the Nyungwe forest (south-west Rwanda), protected by the Rwandan army.

Last week Rwandan journalist Andre Kameya was released from jail in Kigali on bail. He had been detained on charges of endangering state security after report-

ing that the Palipetutu had military training camps in Gisakura, southern Rwanda, and was preparing for a large-scale attack on Burundi. more AFP AFP SEQN-0196