

Belgium urges adherence to Rwanda ceasefire

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BRUSSELS, Feb 24 (AFP) - Belgium has called on Rwandan government forces and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) to observe the ceasefire, the Belgian foreign ministry said Wednesday.

A ministry spokesman said the RPF's Brussels representative, Jacques Bihozagara, was summoned to the ministry Tuesday, and his attention was drawn to "reports of reprisals and human rights violations".

"We expressed our concern and disapproval regarding the flagrant violations of the ceasefire, and stressed the need for the RPF troops to return to their positions as defined by the ceasefire accords", the spokesman said. The ceasefire was first agreed last summer.

The Rwandan ambassador to Brussels, Francois Ngarukiyintwali, was also summoned to the foreign ministry Tuesday. Senior Belgian officials expressed concern that some broadcasts on Radio Rwanda called for "ethnic conflict and ethnic hatred", the spokesman said.

Three days of peace talks between representatives of Rwanda's ruling coalition and the RPF are due to begin Wednesday in the Burundian capital Bujumbura.

Earlier this month the RPF, which draws support from Rwanda's minority Tutsi tribe, launched an offensive which brought the rebels to within 30 kilometres (20 miles) of the Rwandan capital Kigali.

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