

# Kinshasa [The government of the DRC again blocked a UN probe of alleged massacres of Rwandan Hutus by its troops]

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KINSHASA, Sept 16 (AFP) - The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on Tuesday again blocked a UN probe of alleged massacres of Rwandan Hutus by its troops in the former Zaire, a UN team spokesman said.

The spokesman, Jose Diaz, said the government had banned the mission from heading on Wednesday for Mbandaka in the north of the country, one of the alleged sites of the slaughter of hundreds of Rwandan Hutu refugees.

A major row has blown up between the regime of President Laurent Kabila and the United Nations, which on Monday said that its team would head for Mbandaka on Wednesday after sitting in Kinshasa for more than three weeks.

Diaz said that on Tuesday morning, DRC Emergency Planning Mi-

nister Etienne-Richard Mbaya had met the UN team and told it that the government would not allow it to go to Mbandaka.

"Mbaya told us we'll not be going to Mbandaka on Wednesday," Diaz said. "We are going to meet today to decide what to do."

The UN mission, headed by Togolese lawyer Atsu Koffi Amega, has run into constant obstacles from Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation (AFDL) in its bid to look into allegations that rebels massacred many Hutu refugees from Rwanda before ousting Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko.

Marshal Mobutu died in exile in Morocco this month.

His army had routed as the rebels steadily advanced westwards between September and May and numbers of Rwandan refugees fled before them

while hundreds of thousands of others poured back into Rwanda.

A previous UN mission chief, Roberto Garreton, said that in December and March he had discovered undeniable evidence that Kabila's alliance, which began as a mainly Zairean Tutsi force, had massacred Rwandan refugees.

More than a million of the latter had fled Rwanda in 1994 as the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front marched on the capital Kigali, ousting Hutu former government troops and extremist militias held responsible for the genocide of up to 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates between April and July that year.

Kabila's new regime earlier on Tuesday denounced what it described as a UN "ultimatum" to allow the rights team to look into the alleged massacres in Zaire and accused the United Nations of engaging in politics.

"Issuing ultimatums is unacceptable to us," DRC Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha said in Brussels after talks with his Belgian counterpart Erik Derycke.

The minister said that the UN

team has "not been stopped from going wherever it wants", but adding that protecting its members requires "a minimum of organisation."

Fred Eckhard, chief spokesman for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, said at UN headquarters in New York on Monday that the UN team will travel to an alleged massacre site despite government resistance.

However Eckhard stopped short of calling the move an ultimatum to recalcitrant officials.

The UN investigators have "informed the government of their intent," said Eckhard, adding, "This is their fourth week in Kinshasa, they're eager to get into the field."

The regime has been particularly vigorous in stalling investigations in the eastern part of the country, where thousands of Hutu refugees are believed to have been killed in the first stages of Kabila's sweep across the country.

"What we are hoping is that the ministers will simply comply with the president's written approval to the secretary general that this team could get under way," said Eckhard.

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