

Kampala [French troops in Kigali should not obstruct FPR]

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KAMPALA, April 9 (AFP) - French troops in the Rwandan capital should not "stand in the way" of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) troops marching on Kigali, an RPF spokeswoman said in the Ugandan capital Saturday.

Spokeswoman Christine Umutoni Nyinawumwami said the FPR "had taken it upon themselves to move to Kigali, but would not allow French troops to stand in their way during this mission."

"We understand that there are some French troops in Kigali, but they are warned that they should not break our way to this mission. If they do it, we are ready to face them, as they have blood and can be killed," Nyinawumwami, who is a member of the FPR political bureau here told AFP.

She was referring to some 300 French troops which took control of the Kigali airport early on Saturday

amid preparations to evacuate the 600 French nationals in Rwanda.

Nyinawumwami, who was supposed to participate in the transitional government agreed before the plane crash death Wednesday of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana which sparked a new round of ethnic bloodletting, warned that the French had never played a neutral role in the Rwandan crisis.

"If their role is to evacuate their nationals from Kigali, they should stop there, but not to go to the extent of dictating to us what to do," she said, reiterating: "We have made a decision to advance and we are doing that."

"We cannot allow the people who killed the president because they wanted to kill the peace arrangement to succeed. We shall, therefore, take whoever stops us as the number one enemy of our country," Nyinawumwami warned..

She also said that the new government announced on Saturday by Rwandan parliamentary speaker Theodore Sindikubgabo, who said he had assumed the presidency of the country, "was illegitimate and unacceptable."

Charging that the new government was composed mainly of people who opposed last August's Arusha peace accord signed by the government and FPR, Nyinawumwami declared: "We do not agree with this type of government that puts itself in power after killing thousands of innocent people."

She said that the FPR's move on Kigali was aimed neutralising the Rwandan army and to try to put in place an administration that will ensure peace and stability.

Sindikubgabo announced Saturday on radio Rwanda, monitored in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, that he had assumed the presidency and formed a new government whose priority would be to restore peace in the war-torn tiny central African nation

and to talk to continue talks with the FPR rebels to achieve that end.

Its other priorities would be to tackle the famine in some regions of the country and to resettle the thousands of Rwandan refugees made homeless by three years of civil war.

Rwanda was thrown into turmoil on Wednesday night following the plane crash at Kigali airport in which Habyarimana, Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira and several top aides were killed.

The Rwandan government has claimed that the plane, which was flying back the two presidents from a summit convened in the Tanzanian capital, Dar es Salaam, was shot down by a rocket.

The FPR has denied involvement in the attack on the plane.

The fighting since the crash has killed at least 1,000 people, including 22 Roman Catholic missionaries and several UN peacekeeping personnel currently stationed in Rwanda.

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