

Rwandan president on first visit to Uganda in three years

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KAMPALA, Sept 1 (AFP) - Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana arrived here on Wednesday for a one-day official visit to Uganda, the first by a Rwandan head of state since the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels invaded their country from Uganda in October 1990.

He was accompanied by seven cabinet ministers and was expected to hold high-level talks with their Ugandan counterparts on the resumption of cooperation in trade and transport and communications between the two nations.

Relations between Rwanda and Uganda nosedived after the rebel invasion, with Kigali accusing Kampala of backing the rebels, accusations Kampala strongly denied.

Kigali's accusations were prompted by the fact that the rebels, mostly Rwandan exiles who had lived in Uganda for more than 30 years, were serving in the army of Ugandan

President Yoweri Museveni which they had helped to come to power after a five-year bush war, when they deserted with their arms to invade their country.

But Habyarimana's visit indicates the beginning of a thaw in relations between the two countries and follows rapprochement between the Rwandan government and opposition groups in the country, including the RPF.

The Rwandan government concluded and signed a peace pact with the RPF rebels on August 4 after one year of tortuous on-and-off negotiations under Tanzanian mediation at Arusha in northern Tanzania that brought to an end three years of a bloody civil war in the tiny impoverished central African nation.

The implementation of the Arusha accord, with the help of the United Nations, is also expected to be high on the agenda of Wednesday's

talks between Habyarimana and Museveni.

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