Rulindo [Kagame says French are supervising government troops on the front line]

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Barely two kilometres (just over a mile) to the south, Antoine Kabanda stood outside his shack, using a rolled umbrella to keep two goats away from the bodies of his four children, his sister, father and mother.

Kabanda, 38, also a Tutsi, was away at a prayer meeting on Saturday evening when attackers broke down the door of his shack and massacred his family.

The body of one of his children was burned black, curled into the foetal position. Another body, apparently that of a woman, was mutilated beyond recognition by machete wounds.

"This is part of a pattern of tribal killings," said a Roman Catholic priest at the funeral of the family. "You've seen 15 killed, but this kind of thing is going on all over this area."

French troops patrolled in jeeps nearby as the two journalists left the scene.

France has quadrupled its troops in Rwanda to 600 since the RPF launched a major offensive on February 8 which brought its fighters within 30 kilometres of the capital and displaced a million civilians – nearly a seventh of Rwanda's population.

Paris maintains the French troops are here solely to protect some 400 French residents of Rwanda. But RPF military commander Paul Kagame says they are supervising government troops on the front line.

Kagame maintains that the rebels were forced to break a seven-month ceasefire to stop the massacres of more than 300 Tutsis in northern Rwanda by supporters of the Hutu-dominated government.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has confirmed the massacres. Independent human rights groups say the RPF murdered scores of civilians during its advance.

Prime Minister Dismas Nsengiyaremye left Kigali on Tuesday for the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam, where the two sides will open a new round of internationally-mediated peace talks on Friday. The talks were originally scheduled for Wednesday but were postponed after an RPF delegation failed to arrive.

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