

Rwandan rebels accuse government of ceasefire violations

Hamidu Bisanga

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ARUSHA, Tanzania, July 11 (AFP) - Rwandan rebels on Saturday accused the government of prolonging the 21-month civil war by violating ceasefire agreements, sources close to peace talks between the two sides said.

On the second day of closed-door negotiations in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha between the government and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), rebel delegates said the war could have ended much earlier if the government had not repeatedly broken earlier truces, the sources told AFP.

The delegates did not give details of the alleged ceasefire violations.

The talks, due to close Sunday, are being held amid an upsurge in violence in the tiny central African country, with the government accusing the RPF of shelling a refugee camp, a charge denied by the rebels.

Pasteur Bizimungu, heading the

RPF's eight-member delegation to the Tanzanian-mediated talks, said the rebels would stop fighting if the transitional government agreed to absorb rebel fighters into the army and allowed refugees to return.

The RPF is drawn mainly from the minority Tutsi tribe which ruled Rwanda until an uprising by the majority Hutus in the 1950s and 1960s culminated in the massacre of at least 100,000 Tutsis and sent thousands of others fleeing into neighbouring Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire.

Bizimungu said the government should resolve tribal conflicts and allow the refugees to return home safely "without any threats."

Rwanda, a former Belgian colony, has one of the world's highest population densities and a severe shortage of housing and farmland.

Bizimungu also called for RPF guerrillas to be integrated into the national army as a precondition for

ending the fighting, which has wrecked the impoverished country's economy.

The rebels invaded Rwanda from Uganda in October 1990 with the avowed aim of ousting the Hutu-

dominated government of President Juvenal Habyarimana, but are now seeking representation in a coalition recently formed as part of a transition to multi-party democracy.

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