

Rebels massacre 500 civilians: report

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KIGALI, Feb 19 (AFP) - Rebels in Rwanda have massacred 500 civilians in a refugee camp, sources close to the Rwandan army high command said here on Friday.

They said the killing took place on Wednesday at Rebero in the north-east, at a camp for people displaced by the civil war.

There was no immediate independent confirmation of the massacre.

In Paris, the French Foreign Ministry, without specifying the reported Rebero incident, said it had information that there were massacres in rebel-held areas, and was checking.

"The situation is worrying and is being followed hour by hour," said spokesman Maurice Gourdault-Montagne.

At the Nairobi regional office of the International Committee of the Red Cross, an official said he was unable to confirm the report. The Red Cross is looking after half a million displaced people in Rwanda.

The military sources said rebels

of the Patriotic Front had also apparently rounded up groups of civilians by the dozen and killed them at Kabuye in the Ruhengeri region in the north-west.

They said rebel attacks continued on Thursday in the Kirambo, Ruhengeri and Byumba sectors of the north. The sources repeated allegations that soldiers from the army in neighbouring Uganda were fighting for the rebels. The French intelligence service has made the same claim.

General Ekundayo Opayele, Nigerian head of a neutral military observer group, said earlier in the week he could neither confirm nor deny the Ugandan involvement.

The Patriotic Front, composed mainly of the minority Tutsi tribe, launched its first attack in October 1990, operating out of Uganda, in a bid to topple military ruler Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana, whose 19-year regime is dominated by the majority Hutu.

The latest round of laborious negotiations produced a ceasefire and a peace agreement under which the rebels would form part of a coalition government. But supporters of Hab-
yarimana's former ruling party last month slaughtered scores of their opponents and Tutsis in protest at the deal.

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