

Rebels massacre civilians: government

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KIGALI, Feb 17 (AFP) - Rwandan Prime Minister Dismas Nsengiyaremye will head a team for talks with Rwandan rebels, who have been massacring civilians in the north of the country, officials said here Wednesday.

The decision to hold a meeting at Dar es Salaam in Tanzania at an undisclosed date was made at a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, the officials said.

The cabinet accused the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), made up mainly of the Tutsi minority ethnic group, of systematically murdering innocent families after breaching a ceasefire on February 8.

The rebels on Tuesday shelled the northwestern town of Ruhengeri and captured two new districts in the northeastern Byumba region, informed sources said.

Apart from Nsengiyaremye, the government delegation will include Interior Minister Faustin Munyazesa, Labour and Social Affairs Minister

Landoald Ndasinwa and Agriculture Minister Frederic Nzamurambaho, officials said.

The four men come from different parties in the coalition government formed as part of a transition to multi-party democracy. In January, Nsengiyaremye had a disagreement with Rwanda's military ruler, General Juvenal Habyarimana, as to who should head the government team in talks.

Munyazesa is a member of Habyarimana's formerly sole, ruling National Republican Movement for Development and Democracy (MRND), whose supporters last month slaughtered scores of their opponents and Tutsi people in protest at a deal already struck with the rebels, which would bring them into government.

The RPF invaded their country in October 1990 in an attempt to overthrow Habyarimana's 19-year-old regime, dominated by the Hutu people.

The Tutsi were traditional rulers

in Rwanda before they were driven out in an uprising in the early 1960s, forcing thousands of them into exile in Uganda and other neighbouring countries.

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