

Rebels, opposition parties urge ceasefire

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BRUSSELS, June 4 (AFP) - The rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front and three opposition parties ended a week-long meeting here by calling on Thursday for a halt to the fighting.

Urging the need for a ceasefire, they said the "war" waged by the front against the "dictatorial system and abuses" of the former ruling party "should give way to a joint political struggle".

They said the ceasefire should be monitored by neutral military observers. Previous ceasefire agreements have been ignored.

The three opposition parties are legal in Rwanda and have posts in the coalition government set up in April with one of their leading members, Dismas Nsengiyaremye, as prime minister.

His government and the rebels, mainly Tutsi exiles who first attacked in October 1990, are due to open negotiations in Paris on Friday.

The situation in the tiny eastern African country, the continent's

most densely populated, has become increasingly chaotic over the past few months. The capital Kigali has seen bloody demonstrations and rioting, and dozens of people have been killed by bombs set off in collective taxis.

Diplomats there said there was no doubt young militants of President Juvenal Habyarimana's former sole legal party, the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development, was to blame for last week's riots. They are often seen armed with pangas (machetes), sticks and stones.

At the weekend, soldiers went on the rampage in the north-west, killing 30 people in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, and helping themselves to 16.5 million francs (138,000 dollars) from banks in Kibuye. Some six million francs were later recovered and 23 soldiers arrested.

The Tutsi minority, in a country where 90 percent of the population are Hutu, have been systematically pursued since national radio broad-

cast a still unconfirmed report that jh-dl/jaw/nb AFP AFP SEQN-
there was a plot to eliminate leading 0124
members of the regime.