

# Rwanda rebels accuse government of massacres

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NAIROBI, Dec 6 (AFP) - Rwandan rebels have accused government forces of massacring civilians to undermine the formation of a broad-based coalition government under peace accords signed in August.

The accusations by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) followed allegations by the government that the rebels had violated the ceasefire a week ago by attacking army positions and killing 20 civilians during a raid on a village in northern Rwanda.

The RPF, which strongly denied launching the attack, retaliated with accusations that government troops were themselves responsible for the killings.

In a statement received here Monday, the movement also accused soldiers of slaughtering 37 people in another attack in northern Rwanda last month.

"The strategy is always the same," the statement said. "Soldiers of the government forces massacre

people using the double pretext of an RPF attack and a search for spies."

The RPF accused supporters of President Juvenal Habyarimana of launching a "campaign of destabilisation and disinformation to hinder the setting up of the broad-based transition government."

Rwandan state radio had accused rebel guerrillas of murdering civilians while looting their villages, charges dismissed by an RPF spokesman last week as "part of the campaign of defamation and intimidation.

The RPF, which draws its support from the minority Tutsi tribe, Rwanda's feudal aristocracy, attacked the government, dominated by the majority Hutus, in October 1990.

The two sides agreed in August to form a broad-based transitional government and a joint army after months of Tanzanian-mediated negotiations.

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