

# Rwandan PM killed as troops wreak carnage

Lindsey Hilsum

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The Rwandan capital of Kigali descended into chaos yesterday as troops, presidential guards and gendarmes swept through the suburbs killing the prime minister, United Nations peacekeepers and scores of civilians.

Gangs of soldiers and youths kidnapped opposition politicians, and killed members of the minority Tutsi tribe, clubbing them to death with batons, hacking them with machetes and knives, or shooting them. 'It is becoming messier and messier. There are a lot of people with a lot of guns taking different orders and shooting and detaining people,' said a Western diplomat. 'A casualty toll is impossible.' 'Various clans are murdering others. There is a general score settling going on in Kigali,' one diplomat said.

Late last night several thousand soldiers of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front were moving from camps near the Ugandan border to seize power in Kigali, according to UN officials. The Front has promised to co-operate with the UN in restoring order from today. All day the sound of gunfire, grenades and mortars resounded through Kigali and plumes of smoke rose from the hills where most of the people live.

The violence followed the death of the presidents of Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi in a plane crash on Wednesday night. The Rwandan mi-

nistry of defence says the aeroplane was brought down by a rocket as it began its descent to Kigali airport.

Troops of the Rwandan presidential guard surrounded the wreckage and disarmed and detained 13 Belgian UN observers who tried to investigate the cause of the crash.

The bodies of 11 of the Belgians were later found. 'They were dead from bullet wounds. You can call it an execution,' the UN spokesman, Mukhtar Gueye, said. Two remain unaccounted for.

The 2,500-strong UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda, which is supposed to monitor the ceasefire between government troops and Front rebels agreed last August, was powerless to stop the slaughter.

'The gendarmes are preventing us from crossing into certain parts of the town,' Mr Gueye said. 'Those may be the areas where there are most casualties.'

The fighting was so heavy that International Red Cross officials were unable to venture out to rescue the wounded. Dozens of bodies are thought to be lying about in the town.

The soldiers belong to the late President Juvenal Habyarimana's majority Hutu tribe.

'There is shooting, people are being terrorised, people are inside their

homes lying on the floor. We are suffering the consequences of the death of the head of state,' the prime minister, Agatha Uwilingiyimana, told Radio France Internationale shortly before she was herself murdered.

UN officials in New York said peacekeepers guarding her had been disarmed and she had been taken by armed men from a UN aid compound where she had sought refuge.

According to the UN spokesman, in the morning soldiers kidnapped three government ministers and their families. The ministers are now feared dead. Soldiers also killed 17 Jesuit priests at a religious centre, French radio reported.

In the middle of the afternoon heavy fighting erupted around the parliament building, where under the terms of the peace agreement a 600-strong Front force is based, guarded by UN peacekeepers. It seems that some Front troops tried to leave the building under UN protection but govern-

ment soldiers fired on them. The fighting continued for about two hours and there were reports of a Front attack on the headquarters of the presidential guard.

The Front says it is not a tribal force but it is dominated by the Tutsis. Although the Front denies it shot down the aeroplane carrying the presidents, forces loyal to Habyarimana's memory blame the Front, its sympathisers and Tutsis in general for the death of their leader. Potentially the most dangerous development is the reported advance on the capital by the rest of the Front's force from its base at Mulindi near the Ugandan border. The move could restart the three-year civil war which displaced nearly a million Rwandans and devastated the economy.

Most people in Kigali were too frightened to leave their homes yesterday. But hundreds of terrified Tutsis searched for safe houses and some took refuge in the national stadium, where the UN peacekeeping force is based.