

# Rwandan rebels declare ceasefire

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BYUMBA, Rwanda, Feb 11 (AFP) - Rwandan rebels declared a ceasefire after a three-day offensive against government forces that brought them within 30 kilometres (18 miles) of the capital Kigali, a rebel spokesman said Thursday.

But rebel spokesman Frank Mugambajye said the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) would not pull back from positions occupied in the heaviest fighting since an internationally-brokered ceasefire last August.

He said the rebels had launched the offensive to stop "ethnic cleansing" by government supporters and Hutu tribal warriors who allegedly massacred more than 300 members of the minority Tutsi tribe on government orders last month.

Despite continuing talks on implementation of the ceasefire accord in Arusha, Tanzania, fighting went into a third day Wednesday.

But Mugambajye said hostilities were subsiding as word of the ceasefire was passed to rebel units.

"We have ordered a ceasefire on our side. It's now up to the government to respond. But we shall not withdraw from areas we have captured," Mugambajye, the RPF's chief political commissar, told journalists near the Ugandan border.

The mainly Tutsi RPF attacked the predominantly Hutu government forces after government supporters allegedly massacred more than 300 Tutsi civilians in northern Rwanda last month, Mugambajye said. "We had to put an end to this ethnic cleansing," he said.

Several Kalashnikov-toting teenagers here said their parents were among those massacred.

Speaking in the chill night air soon after midnight at this border post in the hill country of northern Rwanda, he said the number of casualties from the three days of fighting was unknown.

France doubled its forces in Rwanda this week to about 300 in a move prompted by reports that an unk-

nown number of French civilians may 400 French residents of Rwanda, have been caught up in the fighting, mainly in Kigali with a minority in according to diplomats in the region. the area where the fighting has been

France said the troops were being going in.  
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