

Rwandan talks continue as France announces troop pullout

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DAR ES SALAAM, March 18 (AFP) - Rwandan peace talks went into a third day Thursday after France said its troops would withdraw and the rebels reportedly agreed to pull back from recently captured territory.

Nearly 700 French soldiers protecting foreigners will start pulling out from the central African state on Saturday under an accord between rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and the government, a French government spokesman said in Paris.

The French are to be replaced by forces of the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity.

The RPF had initially refused to pull back from territory captured in the latest upsurge of fighting last month. But sources close to the negotiations in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha said they had since agreed to at least a partial withdrawal, though the timetable was still uncertain.

"There are delays in mapping out positions of government forces and in the withdrawal of RPF forces to positions they occupied prior to renewed hostilities on February 8," said a Tanzanian foreign ministry official.

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