

Rwandan vice president says France blocks aid

AFP, December 7, 1994

LONDON, Dec 7 (AFP) - A senior member of the new Rwandan government bitterly criticized France on Wednesday for blocking international aid to his country and for associating with the former regime, now overthrown, which he accused of genocide against the Tutsi minority.

The accusations came from Paul Kagame, the country's vice-president, at the start of a two-day official visit to London. After a bloody civil war, in which at least half a million people are believed to have died, the Hutu-dominated government was overthrown by a mainly Tutsi rebel army.

"The French don't want to forgive the present government for having removed the regime," he told reporters.

"It has been very clear that the French have participated" in blocking international humanitarian aid, Ka-

game said. He criticized the way aid was distributed, alleging that "assistance is still given selectively" and priority is given to "camps under the control of the very people that conducted the genocide."

He added : "The people in Rwanda need assistance, not the criminals who took power in the camps outside Rwanda."

Kagame arrived in London from Brussels where he met European Commission officials. He said that France's European partners had tried to soften the French position and that there were signals that European Union aid might soon be released to Rwanda.

In spite of his criticisms of the French, Kagame said he hoped that the new Rwanda government could overcome its differences with Paris.

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