

Kinshasa [The government of former Zaire renewed restrictions on a UN inquiry]

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KINSHASA, Sept 27 (AFP) - The government of former Zaire Saturday renewed restrictions on a UN inquiry into alleged massacres and threatened to throw out international organisations working in the region bordering Rwanda.

Democratic Republic of Congo Interior Minister Kongolo Mwenze told a press conference that a travel ban on a UN mission currently in Kinshasa would be maintained and that any foreign non-governmental organisations in the eastern Kivu region on the Rwandan border would be expelled.

Many of the organisations set up camp in the region in 1994 to help the Rwandan refugees but "today there are no more refugees," the minister insisted, implying they no longer served any purpose.

"The non-governmental organisations which don't have any useful function will be thrown out," he war-

ned, and added the others would have to "renegotiate their stay in DR Congo."

Mwenze said also there was no question of the three UN investigators seeing their request to go to northwestern region of Mbdandaka allowed.

The team, which has seen its mission stalled several times by President Laurent Kabila since its arrival August 24, has received reports of serious human rights abuses in that region.

"It's not responsible for the United Nations to ask that the mission deploy over the entire territory. It is against the protocol agreement. The UN must respect our country's sovereignty," Mwenze said.

He complained that the United Nations was victimising his country.

"There are blacks who are killed in the United States and people exterminated like flies in Congo-

Brazzaville but there is never any inquiry," he said. "Why do they have to hound us?"

The minister said the protocol with the United Nations only allowed for the team to investigate claims in the east of the country, near the Rwanda border, where many witness accounts of massacres had been received.

The spokesman for the team, Jose Diaz, said Friday that they were awaiting further instructions from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The mission faces a year-end deadline for submitting a report which is supposed to shed light on atrocities allegedly committed in the country beginning in 1993 and covering the period when Kabila's forces fought their way to Kinshasa, unseating the regime of the late president, Mobutu Sese Seko.

Kabila's conquering armies have been accused of murdering thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees who remained in the country after hundreds of thousands of others went back home after a three-year exile following Rwanda's genocidal civil war.

Mwenze added that the DRC go-

vernment had started its inquiry into foreign non-governmental organisations on Tuesday.

"We'll have the results in eight days," Mwenze said.

Mwenze said he had travelled to Goma and Bukavu, near the Rwandan border, this week. He did not have the total number of non-governmental organisations in the area nor how many were under investigation, but he said there were 24 such organisations in Goma alone.

The interior minister also announced Saturday that a military tribunal had condemned to death eight soldiers accused of mutiny.

The soldiers were among 50 who went on trial on Monday after an insurrection last Saturday night over pay in the Badiadingi camp west of Kinshasa.

Mwenze did not say what penalties were handed down to the other 42 members of the group judged with the eight but chief police inspector Raus Chalwe told AFP later that they were sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour.

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