

Army up against rebels for four days

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KIGALI, Dec 24 (AFP) - Rwandan government troops battled rebels in the northwestern Ruhengeri region for four days from Friday, state-run Rwanda Radio reported late Monday.

The insurgents of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) have fallen back across the border into Uganda's Ayushi forest after clashes at Nyabizi and Kavumu in Butaro district, the radio said.

The radio gave no details of casualties on either side.

On Saturday, Rwandan authorities said the rebels had attacked Rutovu, Kinyababa, Chindonyi and Rugenda areas in Butaro, killing many people and forcing many others to flee their homes.

Butaro is 80 kilometres (50 miles) west of the Volcanic Mountains on the Rwanda-Uganda border, which are home to Rwanda's rare species of mountain gorilla.

The rebels are mostly Tutsi refugees who deserted the Ugandan army with their weapons and unsuccessfully invaded Rwanda on October 2 last year in a bid to oust the minority Hutu regime of President Juvenal Habyarimana.

About 400 rebels took control of parts of Ruhengeri last January, but were driven back over the border into Uganda by Rwandan government forces.

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