

France warns against political, military activity in safety zone

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PARIS, July 15 (AFP) - France on Friday warned Rwanda's ousted Hutu-led interim government against political or military activity in the French-declared humanitarian safety zone in the southwest of the country, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

"If members of the interim government engage in such activities France will take all steps (necessary) to ensure the respect of the rules which are in force in the safety zone," the spokesman said.

The French authorities "will not tolerate any political or military activity in this zone, whose aim is strictly humanitarian," the spokesman added.

A French military spokesman in the Zairean border town of Goma confirmed late Friday that the speaker of the Rwandan parliament and three members of the ousted interim government were in Cyangugu, in the zone.

"We were surprised by the arrival of the Rwandan leaders in Cyangugu," the southern base of the French military intervention in Rwanda, said Colonel Perruchot.

The French government "does not want the interim government in the safety zone," the colonel added.

The foreign ministry comments came after the military chief-of-staff of the victorious rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), Paul Kagame, said he was prepared to enter the French-declared zone to catch fleeing government members.

"If necessary, we will enter the safety zone. The French cannot stop our progress, they can only slow us down," he added.

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