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 Rwanda-rebels, sched-1

Government used invasion to quash opponents: opposition
 by MICHEL SAILHAN

NAIROBI, Nov 2 (AFP) - President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda knew rebel would invade from Uganda last month and took advantage of the incursion to liquidate his internal opponents, members of the opposition in exile have claimed.

Their accounts, corroborated by other sources, contradict the official Rwandan line that the rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front sprang a surprise on the authorities in Kigali.

As recently as this Thursday, Major General Habyarimana said on Rwandan state radio in an interview: "Our intelligence services were telling us that they (the rebels) were unable to attack now ... the surprise was therefore complete".

A government opponent from the president's Hutu tribe who recently stood down from a major post said the head of state had been aware of preparation for the invasion and had done nothing to stop it.

The regime had exploited the situation to strike a major blow against political opposition inside the country while international attention was focussed on fighting in the north-east, the source said, requesting anonymity.

The Rwandan armed forces headquarters itself said in the early days after the invasion on October 1 that 3,500 people had been rounded up in the capital and elsewhere. Some were detained in a stadium in Kigali before going before a vetting panel.

The first signs of trouble in the north-east were reported by diplomats in Kigali in mid-September, saying people were massing in the frontier region between Rwanda and Uganda, and Rwandan officials had inspected the situation.

In the last week of September, an AFP correspondent in Uganda said about 2,000 people a month were fleeing Rwanda and heading to Uganda's Kisoro district.

At the end of June, Ngéze Hassan, chief editor of the independent fortnightly Kangura, wrote that the Tutsi minority coveted political power that Tutsi refugees in neighbouring countries were readying to return to seize power.

Tutsis, who form the bulk of the rebel movement, were chased from power the majority Hutu in a series of massacres starting in 1959.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: HARRY R. MELONE
 DATE/CASE ID: 29 JAN 2002-199500391

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Rwanda-rebels, 2-last
(NAIROBI)

Mr. Ngeze Hassan and his colleague Vincent Rwabukwisi from Rwanda's other independent periodical, Kangura, were arrested early in July for breaching state security and subversion, and were jailed for 15 years on October 22. For political observers in East Africa, it is practically inconceivable that Rwanda's security services were unaware of rebel preparations to invade the tiny country. It is well-organised administratively and controlled by a close network of civil servants and officials of the ruling and only party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development.

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