

Arusha [RPF accused French troops of propping up Habyarimana's 17-year rule]

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Patrick Mazimhaka, the RPF's international spokesman and a member of the rebel delegation, told AFP that Habyarimana had no authority to go back on the agreement, which also called for a ceasefire that took effect on March 9.

The RPF has accused the French troops of propping up Habyarimana's 17-year rule. Paris has denied the allegations, but has agreed to pull its troops out in agreement with Rwanda's government at an unspecified time in the future.

France boosted its military presence in Rwanda, a former Belgian colony, after fighting flared early in February.

The government and the rebels accused each other of violating a seven-month ceasefire agreed at a previous round of peace talks last year, also held in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha.

The new talks, chaired by Tan-

zaniaan Foreign Minister Joseph Rwigasira, are meant to be the final negotiations before a peace agreement to end the 28-month civil war that has uprooted a million people and wrecked Rwanda's fragile economy.

They are to focus on the integration of RPF guerrillas into the army, and the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees.

The rebels are mainly exiles of the minority Tutsi tribe whose families fled Rwanda after losing a power struggle to the majority Hutus in the 1950s. They are fighting for the right to return.

Habyarimana accuses Uganda of arming and sheltering the RPF, which invaded from Uganda in October 1990.

Foreign Minister Boniface Ngulinzira is leading the government delegation. Pasteur Bizimungu, a senior RPF official, heads the rebel team.

International pressure is mounting on the two sides to reach a peace agreement, with observers from the United States, France, Belgium, Uganda, Zaire and Burundi attending the talks.

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