

Rwanda to hold free elections in 1992: minister

AFP, February 19, 1992

GENEVA, Feb 19 (AFP) - Free elections will be held this year in Rwanda, Justice Minister Mathieu Ndirumptase said here Wednesday.

The authorities in Kigali are engaged in talks with Rwanda's 12 political parties on securing approval for a forthcoming electoral law, he said.

"In the present transition period, free elections should get under way as soon as possible, Ndirumptase said, indicating that polling in some elections could be completed as early as July.

The minister, in Geneva to defend the East African country's record before the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, was critical of the "national conferences" on democracy which have taken place or are in progress in several African countries.

He said such conferences were frequently "fixed" and had functioned properly only in the West African state of Benin.

The Rwandan state would finance political parties during the election campaign. The parties were already entitled to broadcasting time, Ndirumptase said.

Under the Rwandan constitution, the current president, Jevanal Habyrimana, who has held power since 1973, may stand for re-election only once more if he wins a new five-year term in this year's presidential poll.

While in Geneva Ndirumptase is to discuss the repatriation of Rwandan refugees with U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata.

jms/bb/hn AFP AFP SEQN-0466