

Rwandan peace talks open in Tanzania

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ARUSHA, Tanzania, July 10 (AFP) - Peace talks aimed at securing a ceasefire between the Rwanda government and rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) began here Friday with Tanzanian Foreign minister appealing for an immediate end to the 21-month old civil war in the central African country.

Opening discussions at the Arusha International conference centre in northeastern Tanzania, the minister Ahmed Hassan Diriya said Tanzania as a neighbour "could not afford to see the war go on for another day, not only for the interests of Rwanda but also those of the sub-region".

He commended both parties for their attempts to resolve the conflict amicably and called on them to maintain their commitment to a peaceful solution.

The RPF is comprised mainly of Tutsis, who traditionally ruled Rwanda until a massive uprising by the majority Hutu before independence in 1962, when at least 100,000 Tut-

si were reported to have been massacred and thousands fled to neighbouring Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire.

The rebels invaded Rwanda from Uganda in October 1990, determined to oust the government of President Juvenal Habyarimana, but are now seeking representation in a coalition headed by an opposition leader formed recently as part of a transition to multi-party democracy.

Tanzania is mediating the latest round of peace talks as agreed last week during the Organisation of African Unity summit held in Dakar, Senegal. The talks follow a first round of discussions held in Paris last month.

Meanwhile, the RPF has vowed to intensify its war against the government if the Arusha talks fail to produce a ceasefire agreement. In a broadcast on the rebels' clandestine radio monitored here Friday, the movement accused senior officers in the Rwandan army of prolonging the war.

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