

Rwandan president warns of civilian massacre

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KIGALI, Feb 24 (AFP) - Rwanda's president called Wednesday for "national union to maintain the peace and security of the country" and charged that the Uganda-supported rebels are preparing to "massacre the civilian population."

President Juvenal Habyarimana said in a broadcast that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) is preparing "another large-scale attack whose objective is to massacre the civilian population by infiltrating spies into the capital."

Meanwhile, a military source said that the RPF pounded with heavy artillery Tuesday the regions of Nkumba and Kabuye in northwest Rwanda and the northeastern city of Byumba.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd reassured his French counterpart Wednesday that Britain would use its "influence" on Uganda to paci-

fy the situation in neighboring Rwanda, wracked by violent fighting for the past few weeks.

Habyarimana criticized the Tutsi rebels for violating the ceasefire emphasizing they did so "at the moment when the Rwandans and the whole world were confident of a return to peace through negotiations."

According to the president, the scale of the rebel attack that began 15 days ago in the north "proves that it had been well-prepared."

"The world has just become convinced that the RPF benefits from strong Ugandan support," Habyarimana added. The demobilization of the Ugandan army, whose manpower has been reduced, "has fattened the ranks of the the RPF," the president said.

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