

UN peace efforts, reported rebel advance on Kigali

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KIGALI, April 11 (AFP) - UN commanders in Rwanda renewed efforts Monday afternoon to secure a truce between rebels and government forces, amid fresh fighting in Kigali and reports that rebel reinforcements had advanced to the outskirts of the city.

General Romeo Dallaire, the commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (MINUAR), led peace negotiations Monday, shuttling between government headquarters and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) base, the UN said here.

But sporadic heavy arms fire continued Monday afternoon, concentrated around the RPF base, while bursts of small arms fire were reported in other sectors of the capital.

Meanwhile the interim government appointed after the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana held a cabinet meeting and negotiations

with civic leaders "to see what can be done to calm the situation," government spokesman Eliezer Niyitegeka told AFP.

A MINUAR officer added that the presidential guard "seems to be under a little more control now."

The guard has been blamed for the murder of several government officials and hundreds of civilians including the prime minister after Habyarimana and his Burundian counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira died in a plane crash in Kigali on Wednesday, believed to have been caused by a rocket attack.

Earlier Monday RPF spokeswoman Christine Umutoni said in Kampala that the rebels had reached the outskirts of Kigali and were poised to march on the city to reinforce colleagues besieged there. "We are about to storm Kigali," she told reporters.

There was no independent confir-

mation of the advance by the rebels, who are dominated by the minority Tutsi tribe.

She said the front would try to capture all members of the presidential guard and try them for war crimes.

Umutoni said the rebel front did not recognize a ceasefire announced by the UN at the weekend.

She denied claims by the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic – a pro-Hutu extremist group – that the RPF leader and military commander had been killed, and accused the CDR of attempting to sow disarray within the RPF.

In a statement broadcast on rebel radio monitored in Nairobi RPF leader Alexis Kanyarengwe vowed Monday to fight what he termed a "government of killers" in Kigali and invited government troops, dominated by the majority Hutu tribe, to join in the war against the interim administration.

Meanwhile the ethnic bloodletting sparked by the plane crash, and which has claimed thousands of lives since Thursday, continued.

An AFP journalist watched soldiers at Kigali hospital push two youths towards a pile of bodies lying in front of the morgue, and stab them with bayonets, leaving them for dead.

The general staff said the soldiers were uncontrolled troops, and that security at the hospital had now been

assured.

The UN said a private UN hospital in Kigali had been hit late Sunday by a shell, killing 27 and wounding about 100.

The MINUAR officer said the UN mission's first priority was "to persuade the warring parties to cease firing on humanitarian grounds."

The International Committee of the Red Cross said it had succeeded Monday in evacuating around 100 wounded victims from the overrun Kigali hospital to a smaller medical centre in Kabgaye, about 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of the capital.

Meanwhile the multi-nation operation to evacuate foreign nationals from Rwanda neared its end.

France completed the evacuation of its nationals Monday in two flights to Bujumbura, capital of neighbouring Burundi, said foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duque in Paris. Some 130 foreigners joined the French flights as 620 French nationals were evacuated, 120 by road.

Some 250 Belgian citizens were also evacuated from Kigali on Monday.

The German foreign ministry in Bonn said 11 of its nationals, employees of Deutsche Welle radio and their families, were trapped in Kigali and could not reach the airport. Around 120 Germans were evacuated from Rwanda Sunday.

Under a peace accord signed last

year in an effort to end three years of tional administration. The deal has
civil war, the government is charged never been implemented.
with bringing rebels into a transi- at/jms/bm