

Uganda arrests mercenaries hired to fight in Burundi: Museveni

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KAMPALA, Dec 23 (AFP) - 1990.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said Friday his security forces had arrested several people hired as mercenaries to fight in strife-torn neighbouring Burundi.

Museveni told a news conference here former Ugandan soldiers and Burundian refugees were among those arrested.

He declined to give further details but vowed he would not allow dissidents from neighbouring countries to operate from Ugandan territory.

The mercenaries were being detained in an army barracks near Kampala, he added.

The Rwanda Patriotic Front, the Tutsi-dominated former rebel movement which captured power in neighbouring Rwanda in July, invaded Rwanda from bases in Uganda in

Museveni appealed to Burundi's government to "restructure" its army, which is currently dominated by soldiers from the minority Tutsi ethnic group, in order to ensure an ethnic balance.

Burundi's army is frequently at loggerheads with the majority Hutu population and clashes pitting soldiers and civilians are common.

Museveni confirmed that his government was detaining nine former Burundian army officers alleged to have staged a foiled coup bid in Burundi last year in which president Melchior Ndadaye was killed.

The men were arrested last month after they defied an order to leave the country.

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