

Rwandan rebels and government to discuss ceasefire

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UNITED NATIONS, April 13 (Reuter) - The rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and the country's recently installed interim government have agreed to meet Thursday under U.N. auspices to discuss a ceasefire in the civil war-torn nation, the president of the Security Council said late Wednesday.

Council President Colin Keating of New Zealand said the meeting would take place at the headquarters in Kigali, the Rwandan capital, of the 2,500-man U.N. force sent in last year to help implement an accord which temporarily ended a three-year civil war.

"That is the first optimistic sign we have seen perhaps since the beginning of this crisis and the Security Council wants to welcome it very much and encourage that process," Keating told reporters.

He said the council attached great importance to the RPF living up to its statements of peaceful intent and that it wished to establish a broad-based government and stop the killing. "The council's response to that is we will judge you by your actions, not your words, and we want you to act right now to stop the killing. And that means a ceasefire, and we want it soon."

The latest round of violence, estimated to have killed thousands of people, erupted a week ago after Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, together with President Cyprien Ntaryamira of neighbouring Burundi, were killed when their plane was shot down as it was landing at Kigali after a flight from Tanzania.

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