

53 killed in north Rwanda clashes

AFP, January 26, 1993

KIGALI, Jan 26 (AFP) - Political and ethnic violence has left at least 53 people dead in Rwanda's north-western Gisenyi province in the past week, Prime Minister Dismas Nsenziyaremye said Tuesday.

Youths of the ruling Hutu majority had attacked members of the Tutsi minority and the Bagogwe herding clan, Nsenziyaremye said, citing a provisional official toll.

Gisenyi is the birthplace of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, whose National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRNDD) opposes a peace deal reached with the Tutsi rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Backers of the formerly sole, ruling MRNDD and members of the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR) had attacked opposition party supporters as well as people from the ethnic minorities, the prime minister said.

Six other people died last Wednesday and Thursday during protest de-

monstrations in Kigali and provincial towns.

Last week, at least six people were killed, according to official figures, in clashes between the MRNDD youth wing and backers of the opposition over the peace pact with the rebels.

Initial accords signed in Arusha, the Tanzanian capital, on January 9 provided for the RPF to join the government.

The Tutsi were traditional rulers in Rwanda before they were driven out in an uprising in the early 1960s, forcing thousands of them into exile in Uganda and neighbouring countries.

The RPF rebels invaded their country on October 2, 1990 in an attempt to overthrow Habyarimana's regime, now 19 years old.

Habyarimana at the weekend said his defence minister and ally James Gasana would henceforth head the government team at the ongoing talks in Arusha, since they concerned mainly military matters, a presiden-

tial aide said.

The premier rejected the decision, saying he had not been consulted, and said Foreign Minister Boniface Ngu-rinzira had been mandated to head

the government team at Arusha until the talks' conclusion.

mgu-jpc/nb AFP AFP SEQN-0261