

Government appeals for resumption of negotiations and aid

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PARIS, Feb 14 (AFP) - Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Prime Minister Dismas Nsengiyaremye called Sunday for the "immediate resumption" of peace talks after last week's rebel advance.

In a joint statement issued by the Rwandan embassy here, the two leaders condemned the Rwandan Patriotic Front's violation of last August's ceasefire and demanded that the RPF return to the previous frontline.

In three days of fighting early last week, the RPF advanced to within 30 kilometres (20 miles) of Rwanda's capital, Kigali.

The Habyarimana-Nsengiyaremye statement also appealed to the world to grant aid to the "hundreds of thousands of displaced persons" in Rwanda.

The statement added that both men had "re-affirmed" their commitment to the democratisation process, and wanted the talks with the RPF

in the Tanzanian town of Arusha to resume immediately.

Last week Nsengiyaremye's party, the Republican Democratic Movement - the leading opposition party, condemned members of Habyarimana's National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development for "the recent massacres" in which members of the majority Hutu tribe had killed people of the minority Tutsi tribe.

The RPF, which draws support from the Tutsi, justified its renewal of hostilities last week by referring to the same inter-tribal killings in which some 300 people reportedly died last month.

"We had to put an end to this ethnic cleansing," said RPF spokesman Frank Mugambajye.

The RPF began its insurrection against Habyarimana, a Hutu general who has ruled the central African state for nearly 20 years, in 1990.

Last August the government and rebels agreed on a ceasefire and to continue negotiations towards a democratic system.

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