Rwandan rebels say talks will focus on uniting against regime

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NAIROBI, April 14 (AFP) - Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels said Thursday that they would only hold talks with government soldiers who had distanced themselves from Rwanda's "clique of killers."

"To restore peace in the country means annihilating the killers, and therefore even if the talks took place, they would not be about a ceasefire but rather to form a coalition to fight the enemies of peace," the RPF radio said in a broadcast monitored here by the BBC.

The rebel radio said "there are soldiers who dissociated themselves from the clique of killers" who "could work together (with the RPF) and plan how to get rid of the clique of killers."

The radio report added that "only those who are prepared to meet the RPF and can work with it, and had distanced themselves from the clique will be welcomed at the talks."

The report came as talks were scheduled in Kigali between Rwanda's warring factions on a ceasefire in the ethnic bloodletting that has gripped the eastern African country since the plane crash death of president Juvenal Habyarimana on April 6.

The government forces are dominated by the majority Hutu tribe while the RPF is drawn from the minority Tutsis. Habyarimana, who signed a peace accord with the rebels last August providing for power sharing, was also a Hutu.

In Kigali, a senior Rwandan government army officer said the talks, to be held under UN auspices, would go ahead despite renewed fighting between the two sides, but the meeting had not begun as of 2:00 p.m. (1200 GMT).

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