

Dar es-Salaam [Tanzanian government optimistic about breaking the stalemate]

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Mpungwe said the Tanzanian government, which is mediating in the talks, was optimistic about breaking the stalemate.

"Some few fears have been eliminated, and some few areas of common thinking have been identified... With more clarifications, we are likely to get a common understanding," Mpungwe said.

Optimism also prevailed among observers from the former colonial power Belgium, France, the United States, Germany and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which is seeking a more muscular role in ending Africa's conflicts, the conference sources said.

OAU assistant secretary-general Tobias Mapuranga expressed confidence Tuesday that the talks would eventually end the war, which has uprooted a quarter of a million people

and shattered Rwanda's fragile economy.

"We are optimistic that obstacles would be overcome because there is no other alternative to negotiations," Mapuranga told reporters.

The current fourth round of talks was convened to iron out differences over the structure and powers of the presidency before tackling RPF demands for the integration of rebel guerrillas into the army and the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees.

The RPF, which invaded Rwanda from neighbouring Uganda in October 1990, is formed mainly of refugees from the Tutsi tribe whose families fled ethnic massacres in the 1950s and 1960s as the majority Hutu seized power from the Tutsi, Rwanda's feudal rulers.

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