

# Troops from defeated Rwandan force join revamped army

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KIGALI, Jan 25 (AFP) - A broadcast ceremony Wednesday marked the integration into the new Rwandan army of 1,011 troops of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), defeated in last year's minority Tutsi rebellion.

The ceremony bringing the troops into the fold of the new army took place at the Gako military camp in the southeastern town of Bugesera before the country's main leaders. Most of the soldiers were forced into exile in Zaire following the rebellion.

Colonel Marcel Gatsinzi, a Hutu who was the FAR's chief of staff for 10 days following the April 6 death of president Juvenal Habyarimana which preceded last year's bloodletting, was meanwhile appointed the new army's deputy chief of staff.

In all, 73 officers and 938 NCOs and other troops from the former FAR are being integrated into Rwanda's new fighting force after

completing four months of "training" in Gako led by officers of the mainly minority Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), victorious in the civil war.

The UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) welcomed the integration of the troops as a "first step towards national reconciliation."

A further 993 Hutu troops from the FAR, currently undergoing training in the Rubara camp near Butare in the south, are also set to join the new army soon.

General Paul Kagame, vice-president and defence minister, declared at Wednesday's ceremony that a distinction had to be made "between war and genocide," referring to the deaths of some 500,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus which followed the death of Habyarimana in an air crash last April in Kigali.

Kagame said there was "no question of granting an amnesty to those

responsible for the genocide," and added that "Rwanda's military authorities are going to continue to welcome those of the former FAR who have distanced themselves" from those directly behind the bloodshed.

President Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu member of the former rebel FPR, for his part hit out at suggestions from abroad that the government should look to reintegrate leading members of the ousted regime, saying that would be "compensating Rwanda's Nazis."

Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu, a Hutu and a non-member of the FPR, said he believed integrating former FAR members was an "important stage on the road to reconciliation."

He added that the new army now undergoing training was not an "army for the president, or for the vice-president or for a given region, but a national army." The premier called on the armed forces not to forget that "the rifles we are giving them must help them to aid the population, not to kill them."

Another former member of the FAR, Colonel Deogratias Ndirwami, was appointed police chief of staff. His deputy is Colonel Kayumba Nyamawasa, of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (APR).

The distribution of leading positions within the new force between FPR and FAR members was agreed

on in the Arusha accord signed in August 1993 in Tanzania by the government and the then exiled FPR, many of whose members had fled to Uganda following a Hutu uprising in 1959.

The power-sharing accord to stem ethnic unrest has never been fully applied and the death of Habyarimana plunged the country into civil war last April.

UN sources in Kigali earlier revealed that 19,000 people had over the past month left refugee camps in southwest Rwanda and gone back to their homes, and UNAMIR military spokesman Stephane Grenier said "displaced Rwandans now have the freedom to choose" whether to go home or not as conditions slowly improved.

But several hundred thousand mostly Hutu displaced persons remain in camps, fearing Tutsi reprisals for last year's carnage if they venture home.

Those fears are heightened by Hutu hardliners insisting their ethnic group faces death or imprisonment on suspicion they fuelled the killing of Tutsis.

Grenier warned that "displaced persons in camps are routinely subjected to mischievous misinformation by those who oppose the normalisation process presently taking place in the country."

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