

Heavy shelling echoes around Rwandan capital

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NAIROBI, April 25 (Reuter) - Heavy shelling boomed around Rwanda's capital Kigali on Monday with rebels tightening their hold on the city ahead of a promised ceasefire with government troops.

"I don't know from which direction it is coming, but it is heavy and intermittent," Abdul Kabia, deputy head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda, told Reuters.

Kabia said Monday's fighting followed a heavy exchange of fire on Sunday night.

The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels this weekend said they would observe a unilateral ceasefire from midnight (2200 GMT) Monday.

Sources close to the RPF said the offer was intended to demonstrate to the international community the government side no longer controlled large sections of the armed forces, held responsible for the slaughter of thousands of civilians.

"The shootings, the killings will go on," said one RPF member.

The rebels, most of them from the minority Tutsi tribe, say the Hutu-dominated army has slaughtered thousands of people since the Hutu presidents of Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi died in an aircraft hit by rocket fire on April 6.

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