

## Details of fighting, UN comment

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AFP, January 11, 1995

KIGALI, Jan 11 (AFP) - Rwandan troops battled Hutu soldiers of the ousted government army Wednesday in the most serious fighting sparked by routed troops trying to make a come-back from neighbouring Zaire, UN officials said.

UN military spokesman Stephane Grenier said the "serious exchange of fire" took place shortly after midday near Nyamasheke, on the shores of Lake Kivu in southwest Rwanda near the Zairean border.

He gave no casualty toll from the two-hour skirmish, which he said was started by an "insurgency operation into Rwanda by former government forces" who infiltrated back into the central African highland nation.

The ousted troops have lived alongside refugees in Zaire since the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) seized power in July last year following three months of civil war in which at least 500,000 people, mostly minority Tutsis, were massacred.

The bulk of the killings were

blamed on hardline Hutu militias loyal to the ousted regime, many of whom have regrouped with the soldiers in the refugee camps. Aid officials say they have sought to control relief supplies and prevent other Rwandans who fled the carnage from returning home.

"UN personnel deployed in the Nyamasheke region reported that about 50 soldiers surprised a group of 20 Rwandan fishermen during this incident. As the assailants opened fire, the fishermen jumped in the water in an attempt to move to safety. All but six made it to safety," Grenier said.

The Rwandan Patriotic Army returned fire at the same time and engaged in a two hour battle with the aggressors. Grenier said the former government forces eventually retreated after capturing several fishing boats.

"The matter is currently under investigation," he added.

The UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) has reported an

increase in violence in regions close to the refugee camps in Kukavu, which is one of the two Lake Kivu towns serving as a hub for hundreds of thousands of Rwandans, mainly Hutus.

Former government soldiers and militiamen have vowed to avenge themselves on the RPF, which set up a coalition government, including moderate Hutus, after the war that followed the death in a suspicious plane crash of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana.

The UNAMIR commander, Canadian General Guy Tousignant, said Wednesday that "it is difficult to establish who are the authors of these attacks".

But, he added, "we have strong reason to believe that the former

Rwandan government forces have now began a consolidated and well-planned insurgency campaign into Rwanda."

UNAMIR, which currently has more than 5,500 troops deployed in the country, could send more soldiers and observers to the troubled southwestern region, Tousignant added.

The UN Security Council has set up a war crimes tribunal to try fighters and officials of the former regime accused of genocide, while RPA soldiers have also been accused of a number of reprisal killings, for which the new authorities say they will be punished.

mgu-sa/nb/bm

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