

Fighting between Hutu and Tutsi leaves 300 dead

AFP, February 8, 1993

KIGALI, Feb 8 (AFP) - About 300 people have died in tribal fighting between Hutu and Tutsi in the past eight days in northwest Rwanda, where fresh violence erupted Monday, officials said.

The officials gave no death toll for the insurrection in which Rwandan Patriotic Front guerrillas are fighting government forces around the town of Ruhengeri, in the northwest, and in the northeast region of Byumba.

Speaking on the telephone Monday morning, a Ruhengeri official said the RPF, which draws support from the Tutsi minority, was battling the national army in the villages of Nyamagumba, Musanze and Gashangiro.

Rwandan radio said Monday that the RPF had launched attacks on the northeast town of Nyabishambi and Karambi.

Several hundred refugees have fled the area, said local sources.

Meanwhile in Dakar, Senegalese

President Abdou Diouf, this year's chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, has condemned the breakdown of the ceasefire in Rwanda, which was agreed last July, and appealed to the RPF and President Juvenal Habyarimana to continue their negotiations.

Speaking to the press, Senegalese Foreign Minister Djibo Ka said that the talks between the two sides "had made progress towards the principle of sharing power and of integrating the RPF in the Rwandan army".

Ka added that the talks would not be called off "for the moment".

In Kigali the prime minister's office said that the clashes between the Hutu and Tutsi, the minority tribe in Rwanda, have forced some 4,400 people to flee their homes.

Fighting, often leading to massacres, has periodically broken out between the Hutu and Tutsi since Rwanda received independence from

Belgium in 1962.

On Friday, ambassadors from Germany, Belgium, France, Switzerland, the United States and Canada – who provide the bulk of Rwanda's foreign aid – met with Habyarimana and urged him to take steps to end

the violence.

Habyarimana expressed his regrets and assured his visitors that steps were being taken to bring peace to the affected area.

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