

Arusha [France denies allegations by the RPF that it is propping up Habyarimana's 17-year rule]

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France denies allegations by the RPF that it is propping up Habyarimana's 17-year rule, but has agreed to pull its troops out at an unspecified time in the future.

Tanzanian officials mediating in the talks said they would start Tuesday, a day later than scheduled, because the delegates had arrived only on Monday afternoon. The two sides were to meet Monday evening to finalise arrangements for the meeting, they said.

The internationally-mediated talks are aimed at ending Rwanda's 28-month civil war which has uprooted a million people, nearly a seventh of the population of the landlocked, highland country.

The rebels are fighting for the right of exiles of the minority Tutsi tribe to return to Rwanda, and to oust Habyarimana.

A ceasefire was signed after talks

in July, but negotiations stalled after fighting flared last month. Both sides have since accused each other of tribal slaughter and ceasefire violations.

U.N. envoys who spent five days in Rwanda last week also arrived here Monday to meet RPF representatives and observers at the talks from the United States, France, Belgium, Uganda, Zaire and Burundi, the officials said.

The U.N. team held talks last week with President Yoweri Museveni of neighbouring Uganda about setting up a monitoring force on the border after Habyarimana accused Uganda of sheltering and arming the rebels.

The envoys are to leave Arusha on Wednesday for a meeting with OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim in Addis Ababa.

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