

Rwandan rebels accuse government of pre-talk attacks

AFP, July 9, 1992

BRUSSELS, July 9 (AFP) - A group of armed rebels accused the Rwandan government of opening fire on their positions on Thursday, the day before peace talks start.

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) claimed government forces had attacked their artillery, based in Ruhengeri and Byumba in the northeast of Rwanda.

The FPR also denied attacking civilian instalments : "The targets of the fighting forces of the FPR are solely the positions or installations of the government armed forces." According to government sources, the FPR bombarded a civilian camp of 40,000

people in Miyoye, Byumba.

The FPR claims come on the eve of peace negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania.

In its statement, the FPR further accused governmental forces of using civilians as "human shields." People are often forced to set up camps between the opposing lines, the FPR added.

Furthermore, said the FPR, government forces use civilians in joint patrols which sometimes come under attack from the guerrillas.

jh/jg/hl

AFP AFP SEQN-0338