

Rwandan army admits killing 12 civilians

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NAIROBI, Jan 9 (AFP) - The Rwandan army on Monday admitted that its soldiers killed 12 civilians and wounded 36 others at a camp for displaced people in southern Rwanda during the weekend.

A spokesman for the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) Colonel Frank Mugambage said in an interview with the BBC, monitored here, that authorities had arrested two senior military officers, including Major Silbert Rwigamba, in connection with the killing in Busanze, Gikongoro province, on Saturday.

Major Rwigamba is the RPA's commander in the Gikongoro region.

A team of investigators had been sent to the area to find out why the shooting occurred, Mugambage said.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda announced the killings on Saturday without saying

who was responsible.

The mainly Tutsi RPA seized power in Rwanda in July after defeating troops loyal to president Juvenal Habyarimana, who was killed when his plane was shot down over the Rwandan capital Kigali in April.

Ethnic massacres pitting Habyarimana's majority Hutu ethnic group against the minority Tutsi erupted in the tiny central African country soon after his death, leaving an estimated half a million people killed, most of them Tutsi.

The RPA has in the past been blamed for carrying out revenge killings against the Hutu population, but authorities said soldiers responsible for the "few isolated" cases of reprisal murders would be punished.

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