

Rwandan army battles incursion attempt by former Hutu military

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KIGALI, Jan 11 (AFP) - Tutsi-led Rwandan government forces battled for two hours Wednesday with fighters from the country's mostly Hutu former army who were trying to infiltrate from camps in neighboring 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 skirmish, which he said was sparked by an "insurgency operation into Rwanda by former government

forces."

The former army troops have been living in refugee camps inside Zaire since the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front seized power in June following three months of ethnic massacres which left at least 500,000 people dead, mostly minority Tutsis.

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

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