

# Rwandan peace talks on verge of breakthrough: minister

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ARUSHA, Tanzania, March 16 (AFP) - The Rwandan government and Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels have started discussing modalities and mechanisms for forming a national army to comprise RPF forces if Kigali reaffirmed its commitment to all pacts and protocols reached so far in their negotiations.

Tanzanian Foreign Minister Joseph Rwegasira told AFP here that after a closed door session on Tuesday morning and a plenary session in the afternoon, the two sides were on the verge of a breakthrough and had agreed to hold further private consultations to find a solution on formation of the national army.

Rwegasira said Rwandan Foreign Minister Boniface Ngulinzira had assured both the RPF and foreign observers of his government's commitment to protocols reached in Arusha and provisions of a joint communique issued in Dar es Salaam two weeks

ago after a three-day high-level contact meeting on the revival of their stalled talks.

The two delegations, accompanied by observers from Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Belgium, Burundi, France, Uganda, United States and Zaire, will continue their private consultations on Wednesday, said Rwegasira, who chaired the talks on behalf of peace process facilitator President Ali Hassan Mwinyi.

The RPF had earlier demanded assurances from the Kigali government on its commitment to respecting the joint communique after President Juvenal Habyarimana denied at the weekend that French troops would be withdrawn from Rwanda as agreed in Dar es Salaam a fortnight ago.

Under the agreement, all foreign forces were to be withdrawn from Rwanda within eight days, effective March 17 and that they were to be

replaced by a neutral international supervision.  
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