

Rwandan peace talks postponed

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PARIS, June 5 (AFP) - Peace talks between Rwanda's interim government and rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) were postponed Friday until Saturday, French foreign ministry spokesman Daniel Bernard said.

Rwandan Foreign Minister Boniface Ngulinzira was delayed in the Senegalese capital by a strike that has closed down the airport, Bernard explained.

The talks, hosted by the French government, will aim to establish an agenda and timetable for future negotiations in an African country, as well as the means of establishing a ceasefire, informed sources said.

The rebel delegation is headed by FPR foreign affairs spokesman Mazi Mpaka.

Ngulinzira met Mpaka last month in the Ugandan capital Kampala, in the first contact since Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana let opposition parties into a coalition government in April.

Also on the agenda for the Paris talks will be the role that could be played by France and the United States, which have recently stepped up peace-making efforts, and by Rwanda's neighbours - Uganda, Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi, sources said.

Opposition parties and the FPR guerrilla front met in Brussels earlier this week and said in a joint statement that retired general Habyarimana must be "forced to leave".

They accused his "terrorist regime", in place since 1975, of "seeking to destabilise the transitional government and above all of blocking the peace and democracy process".

Since March, a spate of unclaimed bomb attacks has killed and wounded dozens of people in Rwanda. The opposition has accused the regime of seeking to spread "insecurity" and undermine the government.

The small east central African highland nation has also seen bloody strife between the Tutsi minority,

formerly Rwanda's traditional rulers, and the majority Hutus. in northern Rwanda in October 1990.

The army cracked down on Tutsis after the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), composed mainly of Tutsi exiles who had served in the Ugandan army, launched an insurrection in northern Rwanda in October 1990. Rwanda's new national unity government is led by opposition leader Dismas Nsengiyaremye as part of a transition from military dictatorship to multi-party democracy.

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