

Rwandan rebels claim large territorial gain from government

AFP, April 29, 1992

KAMPALA, April 29 (AFP) - Rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) said Wednesday they had captured large areas of Byumba, near the Ugandan border, and Ruhengeri districts in a week-long offensive against government troops.

A rebel spokesman who refused to be identified told AFP that three quarters of Byumba and the whole of Butaro county in Ruhengeri district were fully under RPF's control.

He said rebel forces had overrun Kasheshe, Bushara, Mabare, Muraha, Mutojo and Nyamirama counties in Byumba district.

"Let me tell you that for the first time since November 1990 we are now able to hold on to territory captured," he said.

About 5,000-member rebel force comprised of Rwandan refugees invaded northern Rwanda in October 1990 from neighbouring Uganda.

The Rwandan Government said

the rebels were pushed back to Uganda one month after the invasion but the Ugandan authorities denied the allegation saying the rebels were waging a guerrilla warfare inside Rwanda.

The latest offensive began when the rebels laid siege to government troops' strategic positions around Runyinya and Mabale hills near the Ugandan border.

The spokesman said the rebels had killed about 200 government troops during the fighting at Runyinya and Mabale. The rebels lost six men.

A reporter for the New Vision newspaper who visited the scene of the fighting spoke of a "horrificing spectacle" with decomposing bodies scattered all over what was the troop's campsite at Runyinya.

The rebel spokesman said RPF had captured a number of machine-guns and 60-mm. calibre guns.

Thousands of Ugandans living from the Rwandan border, that 1,500 near the fighting areas have fled in people had fled to Bukinda village fear. on the main road linking Kabale and

A government official told AFP Kampala.
in a telephone conversation from Ka- eo/jnm/ns AFP AFP SEQN-0168
bale town, 23 kilometres (14 miles)