

# Rwandan rebels withdraw from conquered territory

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KIGALI, March 20 (AFP) - Rwandan rebels have completely withdrawn from territory they conquered last month in the northern part of the country, the Group of Neutral Military Observers said here Saturday.

The rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) agreed to leave areas it conquered around Byumba and Ruhengeri as part of a deal negotiated this week in the Tanzanian town of Arusha under which France would pull its soldiers out of Rwanda, and troops of the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity would establish a demilitarised zone between the rebel and government forces.

But a source close to the Rwandan general staff said here that, according

to many soldiers and local residents, the rebels were still occupying many places in Byumba and Ruhengeri.

The Rwandan government and RPF have also agreed to form a joint army after they sign their peace agreement next month.

The RPF, which draws support from the Tutsi minority, seized control of the regions in northern Rwanda in an offensive launched on February 8, ending a seven-month ceasefire.

It launched its rebellion against President Juvenal Habyarimana, who hails from the majority Hutu tribe, in October 1990 with an invasion from Uganda.

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