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Rwanda: Government Troops Said Running Out of Ammunition

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[Excerpts] Brussels, Oct 4 (AFP) -- Belgian paratroopers were preparing Thursday to leave for the east central African state of Rwanda, where government troops have since Sunday been fighting a rebel incursion, a private Belgian television channel reported.

[passage omitted]

Diplomatic sources in the east African region have reported that Rwanda's tiny army faces the rebels less than 70 kilometres (44 miles) from Kigali. The rebel force, led by former Ugandan Deputy Army Chief Fred Rwigyema, had formed a front between Gatsibo and Gabiro, northeast of the capital.

Government troops were beginning to run out of ammunition, the sources said, but there were no details of casualties.

Commander Rwigyema on Wednesday told a Ugandan official close to the border that his men had killed 30 government soldiers in the Kagitumba valley on Monday and captured dozens of prisoners, including three officers, with military equipment, according to an AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE reporter on the Ugandan side of the border.

Several diplomats said the rebel leader, a member of the minority Tutsi people who has reportedly set up his base at Kagitumba in the Matara region, was out to oust the majority Hutu government in Kigali. He was reported to have at least 1,500 men, but told the Ugandan official he had "more than 7,000" at his disposal.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman here confirmed Wednesday that the rebels were advancing, but said "you mustn't dramatize things. It's easy to make progress because there's nothing but savannah in the north."

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