

UN forewarned of 1994 Rwanda massacre: report

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WASHINGTON, Sept 25 (AFP) - UN peacekeepers were forewarned of the 1994 massacre of Tutsis in Rwanda, but were kept from taking preventive actions by their superiors in New York, The Washington Post said Thursday.

Citing a Belgian legislative panel investigating the massacre, the daily said the top UN peacekeeper learned of the Hutu government's extermination plans from a Rwandan informant, three months ahead of the slaughter.

Canadian General Romeo Dallaire faxed the information to UN headquarters on January 11, requesting permission to confiscate hidden arms caches to be used by Hutu extremists, the location of which were given by the informant.

He also asked his superior General Maurice Baril – also a Canadian – for authorization to grant asylum to the informant and his family, but

was turned down.

Belgian Senator Alain Destexhe said in an interview with the daily that unnamed officials at the UN peacekeeping directorate refused to authorize the operation, claiming it was not within the mandate of the peacekeeping force.

The legislative commission is investigating the Rwandan massacre because Belgium was once the colonial power in Rwanda and because 10 Belgian peacekeepers were tortured and killed in the opening days of the genocide in April 1994.

In his fax, Dallaire said his informant had told him that "Belgian troops were to be provoked and if Belgian soldiers resorted to force a number of them were to be killed and thus guarantee Belgian withdrawal from Rwanda."

Belgium did pull out its peacekeepers after the death of its soldiers, and at its urgings the United Nations

reduced its peacekeeping presence in Rwanda from 2,500 troops to some 270. 500,000 and 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred by Rwandan troops and militias in 1994.

It is estimated that between fgf/db