



Rwanda to probe foreign involvement in genocide

KIGALI

PRESIDENT Paul Kagame said yesterday he plans to set up an inquiry into the role of other nations in Rwanda's 1994 genocide, an apparent jab at France which Kagame has accused of being involved in the killings.

Kagame gave few details of his proposed investigative commission, saying only that unspecified countries should admit involvement in the genocide - and that because some had not, Rwanda would shortly begin its own investigation."

"We had left it to other people to come clean, but we might have to investigate the responsibility of different people, mainly foreigners, in the genocide," he told a news conference.

He was speaking two weeks ahead of the 10th anniversary of the start of the mass killings, when the Hutu government led the slaughter of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 100 days.

Rwanda and France have been at loggerheads recently over each other's role in the genocide, with a French judge accusing Kagame of ordering the downing of a plane carrying President Juvenal Habyarimana, triggering the bloodletting. Habyarimana died in the clash along with the French aircrew.

Kagame, who led the Tutsi rebel army that swept to power and ended the genocide in July 1994, said on Thursday that he could "no longer pretend to ignore the facts" against France.

"I went to France in 1992 and was told by a foreign affairs official that if we did not stop fighting, by the time we reached Kigali, we would not find any of our relatives alive," he said. "Two years later, genocide takes place. I'd have to be stupid not to link these two events."

France has long denied Kagame's accusations, saying it sent troops to intervene and even saved many Rwandans.

"The French say they saved Rwandans. Yes, they saved those who were killing, not those who were being killed. They opened a path for the killers to escape to Congo," Kagame said.

Kagame repeated that an inquiry by the French magistrate, Jean-Louis Bruguiere, into the downing of Habyarimana's plane was politically motivated and that the judge's "integrity and judgement should be questioned."

The fate of the plane's missing black box flight recorder, mistakenly thought to have been discovered recently at the U.N. headquarters in New York, needed to be addressed too, he said.