

France may use troops for Rwanda evacuation.

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PARIS, April 8 (Reuter) - France is considering using troops stationed in the Central African Republic to evacuate its nationals from Rwanda, military sources said.

“We are studying the possibility of evacuating French nationals,” one official said. “We are considering using troops in the Central African Republic to lend help in Rwanda but to my knowledge no decision has been taken.” There are about 600 French nationals in Rwanda, most in the capital Kigali.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Richard Duque told reporters France was “extremely concerned” by the situation in Rwanda.

“Our countrymen have been advised to stay at home,” he said. “All necessary measures have been taken to prepare for a possible evacuation if the situation requires.”

Two French humanitarian aid groups, Medecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) and Pharmaciens Sans Frontieres (Pharmacists Without Borders), said they were evacuating workers from Rwanda because of massacres and chaos.

France has a total of some 8,600 soldiers in central and west Africa, about 1,000 of them in the Central African Republic capital Bangui.

Rwandan Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and at least 10 Belgian U.N. peacekeepers were killed in violence sweeping the country after the killing of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi in a rocket attack on their plane.

Duque said several Rwandan government ministers as well as Belgian, Ghanaian and Bangladeshi U.N. peacekeepers, had died in the ethnic violence. The Ministry did not identify the victims.

On Thursday a U.N. spokesman in Kigali said members of the presidential guard abducted Information Minister Faustin Rucogoza, Labour and Social Affairs Minister Landuard Ndasingwa and Agriculture Minister Frederic Nzamurambaho.

The ministers’ families and three U.N. military observers guarding them were also seized.

Belgium, the former colonial power, has put a unit of crack paratroops on alert for a possible evacuation of foreigners from Rwanda, government sources in Brussels said. Duque said Paris was in close contact with Belgium, and French officials said Paris was likely to follow Belgium’s lead.

Fighting raged for a second day in Kigali and around its rebel-held parliament as rival tribes and political groups battled for control.

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