

Belgian paras will not land in Kigali for now

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BRUSSELS, April 10 (Reuter) - Belgian paratroops sent to protect foreigners from the fighting in Rwanda will not fly directly to the capital Kigali but to neighbouring countries, a military spokesman said on Sunday.

Colonel Freddy Van de Weghe told Reuters the Rwandan government had dropped objections to the arrival of Belgian troops at Kigali airport but they would land elsewhere for now, possibly in neighbouring Burundi.

Planes carrying equipment and most of an 800-strong paratroop contingent left Brussels on Saturday to protect some 1,500 nationals in the former Belgian colony and help evacuate them if needed.

Van de Weghe said it was not certain whether Rwandan armed forces based at Kigali airport would go along with reassurances the government had given that the paratroops could land there.

“Our analysis is that at the moment we don’t have a green light,” he said.

He declined to say where the planes would land but said Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, was one possibility.

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