

# French Troops Enter Rwanda In Aid Mission

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France sent troops into Rwanda today, beginning a complex mission to protect civilians in a conflict that has produced horrendous blood baths in the past 11 weeks and shows no sign of ending.

French troops in armored vehicles and helicopters crossed from Zaire this afternoon to assess the situation of 8,000 Tutsi threatened by troops of the Hutu-dominated Government and irregular Hutu militias, Defense Ministry officials said.

The soldiers, who advanced 60 miles into Rwanda, reported no clashes and said the refugees they found, near Cyangugu, were not in immediate danger, the officials said. Marine and Foreign Legion units are to go deeper into Rwanda on Friday.

In response to the military operation, rebels of the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front expelled French aid workers, medical personnel and journalists from areas under rebel control, including parts of Kigali, the capital. They also expelled some French-speaking West Africans serving with the United Nations.

A rebel spokesman in Paris said the front did not want the death of any French citizen to serve as an excuse for a full-scale military intervention.

France, which once supported the Government, insists that it has no mi-

litary or political objectives, but that it is forced to act because no other nation is willing to stop the violence, in which hundreds of thousands are thought to have been killed.

But the rebels denounced the troops as "invaders" who, under the guise of humanitarianism, have come to give "breathing space" to Government troops, who have been ousted from large swaths of the country.

Because of the rebels' hostility, top military and civilian officials in Paris have described the mission as complicated and risky, all the more because French troops are under orders not to seize any areas or set up bases in Rwanda.

"Our troops will be making incursions but they will set up no bases in Rwanda," said Gerard Araud, an aide to Defense Minister Francois Leotard. He said the troops are to assess the needs of refugees regardless of ethnic origin.

## Searching for a Refuge

"If groups of refugees are in danger, the soldiers will move them if possible," Mr. Araud said, for example, by escorting Tutsi refugees to areas controlled by the rebels. It may be more difficult to protect anti-Government Hutu from pro-Government troops and militias.

“We prefer to move in and out of the country from Zaire,” Mr. Araud said. “But if it is really necessary, if people are in danger of being massacred, we will stay and protect them.”

But French strategy, he explained, would not be to move refugees into neighboring countries. Zaire, for example, is already overwhelmed.

The French troops have been given a clear mandate to fight in order to protect civilians and themselves. Some French soldiers who helped evacuate foreigners from Rwanda in April said they had been horrified by having to stand by while gangs attacked and murdered civilians; the soldiers had orders not to intervene.

The Defense Ministry said more than 700 troops were at three bases in Zaire close to the Rwandan border; the rest of the 2,500 troops are to arrive by the weekend to set up field hospitals near Goma and Bukavu while medical teams travel with paratroopers into Rwanda.

### Rebels Are Critical

Jacques Bihozagara, a representative of the rebels, said after talks today with Foreign Minister Alain Juppe that he had told Mr. Juppe that the plan was “commendable” but that as a matter of principle, the front could approve military intervention only by the United Nations.

“France is not neutral,” he said. “It has been in Rwanda for three years. It has seen massacres and not stopped them.” During the past three years, France has provided money, troops and military advisers to the Government.

“We will not go out of our way to fight French soldiers,” he said. “But

if we come across them, we will treat them as invaders.”

### Few Allies Help France

NAIROBI, Kenya, June 23 (Special to The New York Times) – The French military intervention in Rwanda has attracted only limited international support, and a highly skeptical response from diplomats and relief workers.

Three of Rwanda’s neighbors, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi, denied France permission to stage operations from their territory. And Zimbabwe said today that France’s action might prompt African countries that had pledged troops to a United Nations peacekeeping force to rethink their position.

On Wednesday, the United Nations Security Council approved France’s intervention, but there were 5 abstentions among the 15 members. Only Senegal has promised to send troops; Egypt and Italy have offered unspecified assistance.

“I have not talked with anyone who thinks this is an intelligent exercise,” said one diplomat here, who like other diplomats and relief workers would speak only on the condition of anonymity. “Let me be more diplomatic – it is fraught with danger.”

What support there is stems from frustration with the United Nations and the feeling that something had to be done to stop the carnage. But whether the French action will do that is questioned by diplomats and relief workers, who fear it might instead lead to more killing because of France’s earlier support for the Rwandan Government.