

Italian evacuation planes leave for Rwanda

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ROME, April 10 (AFP) - Three Italian aircraft due to help in the evacuation of foreign nationals from Rwanda took off from Pisa airport Sunday afternoon en route for Nairobi.

The three Hercules C-130 transport planes of the Italian armed forces left the military base in the central Italian town at around 3:00 p.m (1300 GMT), the Italian defence ministry said.

The planes, carrying 24 paratroopers, will participate in the evacuation of European and US citizens

from the Rwandan capital Kigali as soon as conditions at the city's airport permit, the ministry said.

The ministry earlier said it was in permanent contact with the Belgian and French general staffs, which it said had set up a centre in Nairobi to coordinate the evacuation of westerners from Rwanda.

More than 1,000 people have been killed in the east African state in a wave of ethnic bloodletting which began Thursday.

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