

Secretary-general wants UN peace troops to remain in Rwanda

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BONN, April 13 (AFP) - UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Wednesday said he hoped the Security Council would decide to continue the UN troop presence in civil war-torn Rwanda.

The United Nations has a peace-keeping force of 2,500 soldiers and observers from 23 countries in the little central African state, and the Security Council is due shortly to make a decision on the mission's future.

Boutros-Ghali laid out three possible courses of action.

The first would be to maintain the UN presence and continue with UN-brokered negotiations between the government and rebel forces, the secretary-general said. On this his special representative for Rwanda was "optimistic".

The second would be to withdraw Belgian troops and all other forces under the UN flag.

The third solution, he said, would

be to maintain the UN troop presence while adding to it in order to replace the Belgians if they were withdrawn.

Belgium, whose nationals have been a target in the bloody reprisals of the last three days in its former colony, has 450 soldiers with the U.N. mission in Rwanda.

Speaking in Bonn after talks with Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes and German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, Boutros-Ghali stressed the need to contain the conflict and prevent it spreading to neighbouring Burundi.

He noted that so far the situation in Burundi had remained stable.

The warring Hutu and Tutsi peoples are present in both of the former Belgian colonies, and the latest upsurge in their long conflict was sparked by the death of the presidents of both countries in an aircrash in Rwanda.

Their plane was reportedly shot

down.

The secretary-general said the first priority was to obtain a ceasefire, then to promote reconciliation and implementation of the Arusha peace accord reached between government and rebels for a new power-sharing regime.

What had happened in the last three days was horrible, he said.

The UN needed more troops, but the question of whether this was to be under the same mandate or a new

one was for the Security Council to decide, Boutros-Ghali said.

Belgium, Germany and other countries evacuated most of their nationals from Rwanda at the weekend because of the rampant violence.

Eleven German technicians of a Deutsche Welle radio relay station still in the country were in a safe zone and would be evacuated by helicopter when possible, Boutros-Ghali said.

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