

West plans evacuation of netionals from Rwanda

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PARIS, April 9 (AFP) - Western governments joined forces Saturday to prepare an operation to evacuate around 3,000 of their nationals from Rwanda.

According to information to hand, there are 1,500 Belgians, 600 French, 350 Germans, about 100 Britons, 255 Americans, 198 Italians, 200 Canadians, 175 Swiss, 135 Spaniards and some 100 Dutch nationals in the former Belgian colony.

Several countries began arrangements to airlift their citizens from the crisis-ridden country on Saturday.

Two hundred and eighty French paratroopers arrived from bases in the Central African Republic early on Saturday morning and took control of the airport at the Rwandan capital, Kigali.

Another 120 troops and a medical contingent are due to arrive towards

close of day, bringing the total French military presence in Rwanda to 400.

In addition, 330 US Marines belonging to a force stationed off the coast of Somalia arrived in the Burundian capital Bujumbura on Saturday, while two Belgian C-130 Hercules transport planes took off from military bases near Brussels to take part in the evacuation.

Belgian paratroopers were due to leave Brussels at Saturday afternoon and make a stopover at Nairobi before flying on to Kigali.

Some 2,400 men from 24 countries are already serving as part of a UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda. They were sent after an October 1993 Security Council resolution to oversee the run-up to general elections scheduled for 1995.

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