

Dutch prepare evacuation of nationals from Rwanda

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AMSTERDAM, April 9 (Reuter) - Dutch citizens living in Rwanda are to be included in Belgian operations to protect and evacuate foreigners as the central African state slides towards civil war, the foreign ministry said on Saturday.

“We are in contact with Belgium and we have agreed that Dutch citizens staying in Rwanda can be taken into the programme for Belgian citizens,” a spokesman said.

Belgium has sent an advance detachment of crack paratroops, including eight C-130 transport planes packed with military equipment, to Kigali, the capital of its former colony.

The spokesman said a final decision to evacuate Dutch nationals had not yet been taken.

“Whether it involves security measures by the Belgian military or a real evacuation has yet to be seen,” he said.

One Dutch Hercules C-130 plane with a combined Dutch and Belgian crew has also departed from a Belgian airbase for Rwanda, the spokesman said.

The foreign ministry estimates around 100 Dutch citizens live in Rwanda, around 30 of them in Kigali.

The United States, France and Germany have also said they are preparing to evacuate their citizens from the tiny African country, which has been swept by an orgy of tribal blood-letting since the presidents of Burundi and Rwanda were killed in a rocket attack on their plane on Wednesday.

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