

# First Belgian paras land in Rwandan capital

Reuters, April 10, 1994

BRUSSELS, April 10 (Reuter) - Belgian paratroops sent to evacuate Westerners from the fighting in Rwanda have landed at the airport of the capital Kigali, Belgian officials said on Sunday.

The officials said eight aircraft carrying troops had now landed at the airport.

Planes carrying equipment and most of an 800-strong paratroop contingent left Brussels on Saturday to protect some 1,500 nationals in the former Belgian colony and help evacuate them if needed.

Rwandan troops had closed the airport to the Belgian aircraft for most of the day.

Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes said earlier assurances had been obtained from the Rwandan government that the troops, reported to number between 400 and 600, would be able to land at Kigali.

Tens of thousands of people have died in fighting and ethnic violence since the Rwandan president was assassinated last week.

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