

Italy sends troops to help guard Kigali airport

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ROME, April 12 (Reuter) - Italy said on Tuesday it had sent 80 troops to help guarantee security at Kigali airport as the evacuation of westerners from the blood-stained central African country of Rwanda continues.

The 80 marines and paratroopers would work with French and Belgian troops protecting the airport in the Rwandan capital, the Italian foreign ministry said in a statement.

Italy despatched the troops and three C-130 transporters on Sunday to Nairobi. The evacuation effort is being directed from the Kenyan capital.

A further 80 troops are on their way from Italy to Kenya.

Forty Italians were flown from Kigali to Nairobi on Tuesday while another 20 left on a Belgian flight, the statement said. A further 21 Italians were evacuated on Monday.

The Italian foreign ministry said at the weekend there were around 190 Italians in Rwanda.

Many foreigners in Rwanda have watched in horror as drunken soldiers from the majority Hutu tribe have hunted down and killed anyone suspected of being opposed to slain president Juvenal Habyarimana.

Most of the dead come from the minority Tutsi tribe, once the country's feudal overlords, but many Hutus have been singled out as well.

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