

# British aid agencies condemn UN Rwanda withdrawal

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LONDON, April 22 (Reuter) - Two of Britain's biggest aid agencies on Friday condemned a United Nations decision to withdraw all but a skeleton force of peacekeepers from Rwanda.

The U.N. Security Council decided on Thursday to slash its force in Rwanda to a minimum of 270 troops – despite fears it would only increase the carnage in the central African state.

Rwanda has been plunged into a tribal bloodbath since President Juvenal Habyarimana was killed in a rocket attack on his plane on April 6. Hundreds of thousands of people are believed to have been slaughtered in the conflict.

“We are outraged at this short-sighted, callous decision,” Oxfam Director David Bryar said in a statement. He urged the United Nations to reverse its decision to slash the force to a tenth of its former strength.

In a separate statement Christian Aid said the move would lead to increased bloodletting among the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi tribes in the former Belgian colony.

“The decision to withdraw the U.N. troops means that the fighting will spread unchecked and thousands more will be murdered and have their homes destroyed,” Christian Aid's Rwanda Project Officer Abiy Hailu said.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned on Thursday it would be a mistake for the U.N. forces to pull out, adding it had rarely witnessed massacres on such a scale.

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