All French troops to leave Rwanda Thursday, minister says

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PARIS, April 14 (AFP) - French Defence Minister Francois Leotard said on Thursday that all 500 French paratroopers in Rwanda to help evacuate foreigners from the strife-torn central African country would leave the capital by the end of the day.

Leotard told a press conference the men had helped 1,238 people – 454 of them French nationals – flee the country, where thousands have died in a week of savage ethnic, political and criminal violence.

The bodies of two French soldiers killed in the fighting were flown home to France, Leotard said, along with the corpse of a woman and three French pilots killed in the plane crash a week ago in which the heads of state of both Rwanda and Burundi died. Their deaths triggered the current violence.

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