

France says Rwandan ministers killed

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PARIS, April 8 (Reuter) - France said on Friday that several Rwandan government ministers and leading figures, as well as Belgian, Ghanaian and Bangladeshi U.N. peacekeepers, have been killed in ethnic violence in the central African country.

The Foreign Ministry declined to identify the victims, who were in addition to President Juvenal Habyarimana and Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana.

"We are dismayed by the assassinations, that of the prime minister, those of ministers and of several leading figures," Foreign Ministry spokesman Richard Duque told reporters at a regular briefing.

"France pays tribute to the work of U.N. peacekeepers, some of whom - Belgian, Ghanaian and Bangladeshi

- have paid with their lives serving peace in Rwanda," Duque said.

It appeared to be the first official indication that ministers other than Uwilingiyimana and U.N. peacekeepers other than Belgians had been killed. Ten Belgian soldiers were killed trying in vain to protect the prime minister.

On Thursday a United Nations spokesman in Kigali said members of the presidential guard abducted Information Minister Faustin Rucogaza, Labour and Social Affairs Minister Landuard Ndasingwa and Agriculture Minister Frederic Nzamurambaho. The ministers' families and three U.N. military observers guarding them were also seized.

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