

France to begin evacuating nationals from Kigali

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PARIS, April 9 (Reuter) - France said its troops in Rwanda would begin evacuating nationals from the capital of Kigali on Saturday evening.

A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said Paris was strongly urging French nationals to leave the central African country because of continued fighting.

“Because of continued serious troubles in Rwanda, French authorities put into place an air operation and strongly advise French nationals to leave the country,” ministry spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said.

Colonna said the presence of French soldiers, who took control of Kigali airport with Rwandan government forces on Saturday morning, would enable French nationals to leave the capital gradually.

“Beginning this evening a first flight will evacuate a certain number of our nationals,” she said. France has about 600 citizens in Rwanda.

Some French nationals outside the capital had already left the country for neighbouring Zaire and Burundi, she said. Defence Ministry officials said that on Saturday afternoon a contingent of some 120 French troops joined 280 soldiers who arrived in Kigali at dawn.

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