Belgian peacekeepers to leave Rwanda soon

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BRUSSELS, April 17 (AFP) - Belgian UN peacekeepers based in strife-ridden Rwanda will leave Kigali probably Tuesday, a Belgian military spokesman said here Sunday.

The 430 Belgian members of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda are likely to leave the country by road to Tanzania but not before Ghanaian peacekeepers – now deployed in north Rwanda – arrive in the Rwandan capital.

The Belgian government announced the withdrawal Thursday after 10 Belgian peacekeepers were killed in fierce fighting between Rwandan Patriotic Front rebels and government troops following the death of president Juvenal Habyarimana in a plane crash believed to have been caused by a rocket attack.

The UN assistance mission numbers 2,500 men.

Belgian paratroopers who were sent to Rwanda to evacuate foreigners trapped in the African country and who have left for Kenya since will not return to Europe before the Belgian peacekeepers' evacuation is complete, the spokesman added.

The Belgian peacekeepers are grouped at Kigali airport.

In Bucharest, the Romanian news agency Rompres reported that five Romanian officers who had participated in the Belgian UN mission in Rwanda returned Sunday to Bucharest.

Pointing out that it was the first time Romania had sent observers to take part in such a mission, Major Adrian Musat told the agency he had been "horrified by the massacres" he had witnessed.

Meanwhile in Geneva, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Sunday its personnel would stay in Kigali in spite of the ongoing fighting in the city center.

Forty expatriates including 26 ICRC delegates and personnel of the relief group Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) are un-

der ICRC protection in the Rwandan capital.

The ICRC has not evacuated any wounded from Kigali streets for several days but it is assisting two downtown hospitals, said spokesman Pierre Gauthier.

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