

# Belgium considers pulling troops out of Rwanda

AFP, April 11, 1994

BRUSSELS, April 11 (AFP) - Belgium may pull its UN peacekeeping troops out of Rwanda, where ethnic warfare has left thousands dead, Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene said Monday.

Conditions in the war-torn African state were no longer conducive to Belgium's continuing participation in the UN's peacekeeping mission there, Dehaene told the parliamentary foreign affairs committee.

Belgium sent 450 UN troops to its former colony of Rwanda last year to uphold a peace agreement signed in Arusha, Tanzania, between the Hutu-dominated government and the mainly Tutsi rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front.

But the agreement was torpedoed by savage bloodletting between Hutus and Tutsis following the deaths of Rwanda President Juvenal Habyarimana and his Burundi counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira in a plane crash

in Kigali Wednesday.

Ten Belgian soldiers were killed Thursday by the Rwandan presidential guard, and at least three Belgian civilians have been reported killed in the fighting.

Radio stations and government-supporting groups in Rwanda have accused Belgium of supporting Tutsi rebels, and claimed Belgian troops shot down the presidential plane.

Dehaene said Belgium Foreign Minister Willy Claes would meet UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in Geneva in 48 hours to discuss Belgium's role in peacekeeping forces.

"All will depend on what happens to the Arusha agreements," said Dehaene. "If the Arusha agreements are abandoned, the problem will have to be addressed by the United Nations itself, because the peacekeeping troops were sent to Rwanda within the framework of the agreements."

"If there is still a will to apply

the agreements, we must question the sion is appropriate.”  
general role of peacekeeping troops hr/jub/jms  
and whether our own role in the mis-