

France closes its embassy in Kigali, evacuees arrive in Europe

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PARIS, April 12 (AFP) - France closed its embassy in the Rwandan capital Kigali Tuesday as hundreds of foreigners fleeing tribal warfare in the central African nation arrived in France, officials said.

A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said Ambassador Jean-Michel Marlaud had left Kigali and was on his way to Bangui, Central Africa.

The ministry said the ambassador had been asked to close the embassy in Kigali, given the "deterioration of the situation" in Rwanda.

French Cooperation Minister Michel Roussin meanwhile met 474 French, German and American evacuees from Kigali at Paris' Roissy airport early Tuesday.

Those on board the Air France Boeing 747, which arrived via Nairobi, included the Marlaud's wife and Jean-Yves Pare, French commercial attache in Rwanda and neigh-

bouring Burundi.

Pare said the French embassy's archives in Kigali had been totally destroyed during the violence between the country's majority Hutus and minority Tutsis.

"I have lived through the longest five days of my life in Kigali," Pare said. "Shots were coming from every direction. Overnight Thursday, my house was hit twice by gunfire."

The Belgian Defence Ministry also announced Tuesday that nearly 400 evacuees, mainly Belgians, had arrived at Brussels airport Tuesday from Nairobi.

They were flown in on two planes, one carrying 195 people - 186 Belgians and nine people of other nationalities and another carrying 204 people, 158 of them Belgian.

It said a total of 446 Belgians had fled Rwanda, a former Belgian colony, and about 1,000 others remained behind. It was impossible to know how

many of those wanted to be evacuated, the ministry said.

Late Monday French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said all but a "very small number" of French nationals had left Rwanda.

A ministry spokesman said Tuesday that "a very small number of French nationals had chosen to remain in Rwanda". They were mainly priests and nuns.

Earlier on Tuesday, 205 evacuees from Rwanda, including 94 Rwandan orphans, were also flown into Roissy on a French airforce Airbus.

According to the Belgian Defence

Ministry, the Belgian evacuation operation, being conducted by Belgian troops, should be completed within three or four days. Belgians made up the largest group of foreign nationals in Rwanda, with more than 1,500 living there.

Another flight from Nairobi, carrying 400 people, was expected in Brussels early Tuesday afternoon.

In Paris, meanwhile, the foreign ministry said two flights from Bangui were expected later Tuesday carrying about 55 French nationals and 30 people of other nationalities.

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