

Security Council authorizes steps to protect UN troops

AFP, April 9, 1994

UNITED NATIONS, April 9 (AFP) - The Security Council authorized Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali Saturday to take all necessary actions to protect the 2,500 UN troops in Rwanda.

Citing a significant deterioration of conditions in Rwanda, Colin Keating of New Zealand, this month's Security Council president, said, "The Secretary General has our blessing to take whatever decision he feels is necessary in the light of the security of UN personnel."

Ten UN personnel from Belgium were executed after fighting broke out Wednesday.

Earlier, a rebel spokesman in New York said Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) troops would attack any foreign troops not conducting humanitarian efforts who remained in Rwanda after foreigners were evacuated.

Rebel spokesman Claude Dusaidi

said foreign troops should be able to conclude their operations within 10 to 12 hours.

Keating said the evacuation efforts would take longer. "We will accept a reasonable time, but we haven't given a time frame," he said.

Dusaidi reported three RPF columns were heading toward the Rwandan capital, Kigali, to attack Rwandan army forces.

The Security Council made no decision on the future of the UN mission for assistance in Rwanda, but will meet on Monday for discussions.

Hundreds of French, Belgian and US troops have been dispatched to the central African nation and neighboring countries in an effort to evacuate their citizens.

In Brussels, a Belgian Defense Ministry spokesman said Saturday that Rwandan army units have blocked the runway of the Kigali airport, raising doubts about the

mission of 800 Belgian paratroopers bound for Rwanda. Deweghe said.

Elements of the Rwandan presidential guard at Kigali airport had ordered vehicles onto the runway on Friday so that aircraft could not land, spokesman Colonel Freddy Van He said they removed the vehicles to permit the landing of aircraft carrying 300 French troops in the early hours of Saturday, then blocked off the runway again afterwards.

ltl/jz/mla