

Italy flies 50 Europeans out of Rwanda

Reuters, April 11, 1994

ROME, April 11 (Reuter) - Italy said on Monday it had flown 50 Europeans and a group of Rwandan nuns out of the central African nation where thousands have died in a bout of tribal bloodletting over the past few days.

"A C-130 from the Italian air force left Kigali for Nairobi this afternoon carrying 50 European Union citizens, including 21 Italians. There was also a group of Rwandan nuns on board," the Italian foreign ministry said in a statement.

Italy has sent three C-130 transport planes to Nairobi to join an evacuation effort coordinated by American, French and Belgian troops.

Italy said at the weekend that around 190 of its citizens were in Rwanda but the statement added some of these had already managed to get out of the country on earlier airlifts.

The statement said the evacuations would continue as groups reached the airport in the Rwandan capital Kigali.

Rwanda has a history of bloody clashes between rival Hutu and Tutsi tribesmen. The latest killing started after President Juvenal Habyarimana and his Burundi counterpart were killed in a rocket attack on their plane last Wednesday.

His fiercely-loyal presidential guard unleashed a campaign of terror against all Tutsis, suspected of involvement in the murder.

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