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Anarchy Rules Rwanda's Capital And Drunken Soldiers Roam City

By DONATELLA LORCH,

Food had run out, drinking water was scarce and the streets of this capital city, empty of residents, was a terrifying obstacle course today of drunken soldiers and marauding gangs of looters dressed in a patchwork of uniforms, armed with machetes, spears, bows and arrows and automatic weapons.

Children carried hand grenades, and open-back trucks, loaded with angry men waving weapons at passing cars, sped through the city. As night fell, screams could be heard coming from a church compound where more than 2,000 Rwandans had taken refuge. A short time later, after the sound of machine-gun fire, the screaming stopped.

As tribal and political violence that began last week continued unabated, with tens of thousands of deaths reported, the evacuation of foreigners, most of them Belgians, was completed today by Belgian troops. Rwanda is a former Belgian colony. The French and Belgian troops were still at the airport but were to leave on Thursday in accordance with an ultimatum by rebel troops that required all foreign soldiers to be out of Rwanda by midday.

As soon as the foreign military pulls out, Rwandans and officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross expect rebel troops to begin a major offensive to take Kigali. On Tuesday the interim government fled to the town of Gitarama, about 30 miles southwest of the capital.

Rebel officials said the attack was meant to end the chaos and bloodshed in the capital, but many here worried that it would only provoke another cycle of violence and killing.

"And the tragedy is that I don't know whether anyone will be able to stop it," said Philippe Gaillard, the head of the International Red Cross here. "When you negotiate with people with machetes, how can you make them understand about humanitarian neutrality?"

Tens of thousands of refugees who left the city during the past few days still lined the road south toward neighboring Burundi, walking with little more than the clothes they wore and a few bags. Although the thousands of rotting bodies that have littered the streets were cleared up with bulldozers and trucks on Tuesday, the streets of each neighborhood are barricaded by roadblocks -- some belonging to the Rwandan Army, others to the presidential guard and still others to looters.

Officials of the International Red Cross, the only foreigners left in Kigali except for journalists and the 2,500-member United Nations military contingent, said the tension and terror in the city had steadily increased since the fighting began last Wednesday. It was virtually impossible for anyone to move around in the capital.

"There is nothing these people can do," said Mr. Gaillard. "The only thing left to do is to save your skin. Many, many people have been killed. I guess every Rwandan is fighting against his own

brother and this is very sad. I asked the Minister of Transport to organize the pickup of the bodies. He looked into my eyes. He said, 'It is impossible to say how many died because it is so awful.' "

Fighting broke out last Wednesday after the Rwandan President, Juvenal Habyarimana, was killed in a suspicious plane explosion here that also took the life of Burundi's President, Cyprien Ntaryamira. Both men were members of the Hutu, the majority tribe in both countries that has long been subject to the political domination of the minority Tutsi tribe, members of which make up the rebel army. Their deaths fed a centuries-old tribal hatred that erupted into an all-out battle for political control and spawned a terror campaign in Kigali by troops loyal to Mr. Habyarimana.

As the showdown for Kigali approaches, this city of gently rolling lush green hills has become the site of a free-for-all. No one is in control and discipline is nonexistent, even within the Rwandan military ranks.

The rebels control at least three neighborhoods of the city, and officials say there are some 2,000 of them in the capital out of a total force of about 20,000. The Rwandan Army also numbers in the tens of thousands, many of whom are highly undisciplined conscripts. A Game of Chance

For many, survival in Kigali is a game of chance. With food stores closed and then looted, food is a rarity. Today, for the first time since the battle began, the Red Cross distributed 30 tons of food to 6,000 people. Many city residents have either fled or taken refuge in churches or hotels.

Eighteen Belgian nuns and lay brothers abandoned a hilltop hospital for the insane, leaving behind 200 patients, The Associated Press reported. As the Belgians were picked up by an armored Belgian convoy, the hospital administrator, Gerard Van Selst, said he had no illusions about the fate of the patients or of the 500 Tutsi refugees camped out there.

"They're finished," he said. "A huge number will be killed."

At the Milles Collines Hotel, in the heart of the city, there is CNN, but no food. The rooms are full of Rwandan military families who have taken refuge here and who tend to stay in their rooms or huddle and talk in dark hallways.

The hotel is also the headquarters for about 20 foreign journalists, whose presence the families hope will somehow protect them from attack by the rebels. Looting for Food

The only way to get food or cars and gasoline is by looting houses and embassies. Many Rwandans have taken to sewing homemade scarves with a Red Cross emblem, hoping it will save their lives.

"We came here because of the security," said a woman who would give her name only as Agnes and said she had traveled with five other families from the northern suburbs of the city. "There was so much killing and everybody was running so we ran also." A Plea to Outsiders

About 30 Red Cross workers and a half-dozen members of Doctors Without Borders are the only relief workers left in the city. Besides distributing food, the Red Cross brought in surgical teams and five trucks with 25 tons of medical equipment by convoy from Bujumbura, Burundi. Starting Thursday the Red Cross planned to set up its own hospital in Kigali as well as help pick up the wounded from churches.

The doctors also brought a surgical team, but it has been difficult for them to work here. On Tuesday the Hutu radio station accused the Red Cross of using its convoys to help only Tutsi wounded. The Red Cross suspended operations for a day until the radio rescinded its broadcast.

"We haven't been able to evacuate the wounded to a hospital," said Mr. Gaillard. "It is not possible to

go everywhere because fighting is high. They have been gathered in churches and many haven't eaten for six days or a week. Trucks will go out with food to the churches tomorrow and try and bring the wounded to the hospital. I hope the international community and the donors will not forget this little country in Africa and will come once more to help the people."

But even with good contacts on all sides, nothing can be taken for granted by the Red Cross. Its convoy from Burundi had no trouble until it reached Gitaram, where it met up with two cars from the Kigali office that came to help talk it through the roadblocks.

At first the barricades were manned mostly by relaxed army soldiers. But the roadblocks multiplied as the convoy approached Kigali and were often little more than half a mile apart. No one seemed to be in charge.

At one barricade, as a soldier waved on the trucks, two others demanded that they stop and pointed their stick grenades at the lead car and truck. A Rwandan soldier, brandishing a knife, threatened to slash the truck tires unless all the vehicles were immediately unloaded. By midday most of the soldiers seemed drunk, many swigging beer and homemade whisky. Rwandans fleeing the fighting filled the roads. 'Do Not Panic'

The most difficult area to navigate, even with the help of a Rwandan Army colonel as a guide, was the last mile or so on the outskirts of Kigali, where there was sporadic heavy fighting today.

"You will hear the whistle of bullets over your head," said Mr. Gaillard to the convoy passengers as he briefed them beforehand. "Do not panic. Duck down."

A few dead bodies were lying on the side of the road, which was empty except for the militia and looters at the checkpoints. The groups of men at the barricades brandished machetes, guns and spears, surrounding the passing cars and peering threateningly through the windows. The last several hundred yards were driven crouched down in the car to avoid any shooting.

In town all the stores were barricaded and closed down, and many streets empty of cars. But everywhere -- on doorsteps, in driveways and along the road -- were men with knives and guns. -----

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UNITED NATIONS, April 13 -- The Rwandese Popular Front has agreed to hold peace talks with Government representatives on Thursday in Kigali, Colin Keating, this month's Security Council President, announced tonight, Mr. Keating, New Zealand's representative to the Council, called the announcement the "first encouraging development" since the crisis began.

The peace talks have been arranged by the United Nations mediator in Rwanda and the commander of the 2,500-member peacekeeping force there.

Earlier today, Belgium informed the United Nations that it planned to withdraw its 400 soldiers from the peacekeeping force "at the earliest possible date."

Belgian diplomats said the move was necessary because of a strong current of anti-Belgian feeling in the strife-torn capital.

As a result of Belgium's decision, Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the Security Council tonight that he was drawing up contingency plans to withdraw the entire force "should this prove necessary."

Photos: Rwandans ran to seek help from Belgian soldiers who arrived to evacuate foreigners from Kigali yesterday. (Associated Press) (pg. A1); Under fire from rebels, Belgian paratroopers evacuated workers yesterday from a psychiatric hospital in Kigali, Rwanda's capital. (Agence France-Presse) (pg. A12) Map of Rwanda showing locaiton of Kigali. (pg. A12)

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