

Red Cross says Rwanda death toll may be thousands

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BUJUMBURA, April 8 (Reuter) - Red Cross officials on Friday reported up to 400 bodies in just one hospital in the Rwandan capital Kigali and said the death toll in a two-day orgy of ethnic violence there could run into thousands.

“Our medical coordinator visited the central hospital in Kigali and found it overflowing with dead and wounded. There were 300-400 corpses in the hospital, the morgue was full,” Patrick Gasser, deputy head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) there, said by telephone from Kigali.

Gasser told a Reuter reporter in Bujumbura, capital of neighbouring Burundi, that a further 80 people, many seriously wounded, were waiting to be treated. “There were only two doctors in the whole hospital,” he said.

Earlier, the head of the ICRC in Rwanda said the number of victims

who died in fighting in Kigali in the past two days probably ran into thousands.

“There have probably been thousands of dead in Kigali between Wednesday night and today,” Philippe Gaillard told France Inter radio in Paris. “There has been non-stop shooting in virtually all the districts of Kigali since Wednesday evening,” he said.

Gaillard said he had been to Kigali’s main hospital where there were 350 bodies in the morgue and an “incredible” number of injured people lying in corridors.

“These are brothers killing each other – there has been an urban civil war raging in Kigali for the last two days.” The situation in Kigali was “totally chaotic, totally disastrous and incredibly painful”, he said.

The French medical charity Medecins sans Frontieres said several thousand wounded needed urgent treat-

ment in Kigali's central hospital, in dispensaries and in city streets. "The hospital is overstretched by several hundred wounded, many of whom need surgery," a statement said.

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