

Thousands of bodies unearthed near Kigali hospital

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KIGALI, March 1 (AFP) - The bodies of thousands of victims killed by suspected Hutu extremists during Rwanda's inter-ethnic war have been unearthed near the main hospital in the capital Kigali, local authorities said Wednesday.

Witnesses who saw the bodies said they included both Hutus and Tutsis, the country's two main ethnic groups which waged a vicious war last year that claimed up to one million lives.

Local radio said the bodies identified include two Hutu leaders - former agriculture minister Frederick Nzumurambaho, who was also the head of the Social Democratic party, and Felicien Ngango, Nzamurambaho's deputy.

The bodies found in the common grave near the hospital were clothed and had identification cards - which in Rwanda carry the bearer's ethnic group.

The country plunged into inter-

ethnic warfare last April after the death of president Juvenal Habyarimana, who was killed in a suspected rocket attack on his plane as it was landing at Kigali airport.

Most of the killing has been blamed on Hutu death squads, or Interahamwe, many of whom are now in refugee camps in neighboring Zaire.

The fighting stopped in July after the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front took control of the capital.

Since then authorities have unearthed numerous common graves and the UN has set up an international tribunal to try those implicated in the massacres.

Local radio said Wednesday that local authorities have appealed to the capital's residents to help unearth the bodies found near the hospital, so that they can be identified and then reburied at the capital's main cemetery.

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