

Red Cross federation evacuates staff from Rwanda

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GENEVA, April 11 (Reuter) - The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said on Monday it had evacuated almost all of its expatriate staff from Rwanda.

The federation, which groups 161 national societies around the world, said in a statement that 12 of its 14 staff had managed to reach neighbouring Zaire or Burundi.

Another staff member was to be evacuated later on Monday, leaving just one federation official in place to monitor the situation in the country and assist the Rwandan Red Cross.

The Central African state has been awash with tribal bloodletting since the killing of its president last week. Rebels from the minority Tutsi tribe claim to have since captured large parts of the country.

The federation said it had received unconfirmed reports that "large numbers" of local Red Cross workers have been killed.

The federation said its joint relief with the Rwandan Red Cross, set up last October to help over 200,000 refugees in Rwanda from neighbouring Burundi, had come to a complete halt.

"With the suspension of relief activities last Thursday for this very vulnerable refugee population, the Federation expects the worse. The refugees of Rwanda are totally dependent on international assistance," the statement said.

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