

Burundi: 'General Adolpe's' assassination means war

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After an expected victory in the recently concluded Burundi elections, President Pierre Nkurunziza would never have seen this coming. A key lieutenant and close ally of the two-term president has been murdered in a [drive-by shooting](#) [2], raising fears of instability as the opposition becomes even more relentless.

Gen Adolphe Nshimirimana, a former army chief of staff and the current senior security adviser to the president, was shot dead on Sunday as he commuted through the Kamenge neighbourhood in Bujumbura—the nation's capital. The assailants also threw a [grenade](#) [2] into the car.

Carina Tertsakian, from Human Rights Watch, described Gen Adolphe as “one of the key hardliners around the president.” She also stated that he had in fact become more influential as Mr Nkurunziza faced regular street protests. But with the president's spy chief gone, this may just be the perfect time for the opposition to strike back.

One of the four possible outcomes of Burundi's controversial elections according to [ventures Africa](#) [3], highlighted the opposition's increased violence as opposed to succumbing to further oppression. It was predicted that the president would most likely increase his clampdown on those who oppose him and double his dismissive attitude towards the urgings of the international community.

However Nkurunziza has not only made an open threat, but may have also prompted a death warrant himself. In a live radio and television address on Monday, Mr Nkurunziza urged restraint and warned that revenge attacks could “wipe out an entire generation.” “Burundi has just lost a great servant, Gen Adolphe Nshimirimana was a hardworking man,” he said. Considering the gravity of this ‘offence’ and murder, investigators were given only a week to find the culprits.

This death comes after there had been warnings [last month](#) [2] by an exiled military leader involved in a failed coup against the president. It was stated that the struggle against Nkurunziza's regime would not cease. The military group has not claimed responsibility for the assassination.

The violence has already begun, and not even the quelling of the coup in May managed to stop it. There are already clashes between protesters and government supporters that have caused dead bodies to turn up in the street. Given that the country's civil war scars are still fresh and that the divisions along ethnic lines are still deep, Nkurunziza's hang on to power may ignite another war.

If the perpetrators could get close enough to the Burundian security chief, who may be next?

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