

Former mayor of Bujumbura found tortured to death

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BUJUMBURA, March 15 (AFP) - Burundian gendarmes on Wednesday found the body of the former mayor of the capital, Colonel Lucien Sakubu, crucified and tortured to death, in an alley two days after he was kidnapped.

The paramilitary police announced that Sakubu's eyes had been gouged out and his nails, heart and intestines torn out by his attackers in the north of the capital.

The announcement came amid great tension between majority Hutus and minority Tutsis in the strife-prone central African nation.

Sakubu, a Tutsi who was mayor under president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, ousted in 1987, had been serving as an advisor to the ministry of the interior and security at the time of his assassination.

One of Sakubu's employees, who was with him when he was abducted on Monday, said two men, riding bi-

cycles, forced the colonel to stop his car in the northern Kinama suburb of the city, boarded it and made him drive towards the Kamenge district.

Kamenge is a stronghold of the Hutu majority, while the army is dominated by minority Tutsis, who have frequently been locked in bloody strife with the Hutus both in this central African highland nation and neighbouring Rwanda.

Both political assassinations and kidnappings have been regular occurrences in Burundi for more than a year. Another senior officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Bernard Kabwari, was kidnapped a year ago and has never been seen since. In January, security forces discovered a detention centre and a small cemetery in Kamenge.

On Saturday, Energy and Mines Minister Ernest Kabushemeye was assassinated and his body is due to be buried on Thursday. A period of offi-

cial mourning has been declared until then.

But grenade explosions were heard in working-class districts of the capital on Saturday night, after the minister was murdered and at least three people were killed in conflict in the centre and northwest, officials said on Monday.

One of Kabushemeye's attackers died in hospital of his wounds Saturday after being shot by one of the minister's bodyguards, and an injured bodyguard also died Sunday, national radio reported Monday.

Police Sunday said they had arrested two suspects over the unclaimed attack on the minister, who was shot as he was driving his car in the centre of the capital Bujumbura. At least one passer-by was hurt.

No further information has been released on the arrests, which were confirmed by President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, or on the identities of the assailants.

The Burundian government is a coalition linking parties of the Tutsi minority with moderate Hutu parties under an agreement reached last year

to stave off mass ethnic bloodshed in the traditionally unstable nation.

In October 1993, more than 50,000 people died in massacres sparked by the assassination in a failed military coup bid of the first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, elected in Burundi's first multiparty elections that year.

Political parties across the board have condemned the assassination of Kabushemeye, who headed the Burundian People's Rally, a small party allied to the president's mainly Hutu Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU).

Last April, crisis struck when Ndadaye's successor Cyprien Ntaryamira died with Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana in a suspicious plane crash which sparked a bloodbath between Hutus and Tutsis in the neighbouring country.

Ntibantunganya, a Hutu, was named to office late last year following negotiations between the political parties, which agreed that the situation in the country was too tense for a vote to take place.

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