

Rwandan presidential jet shot down, set ablaze

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KIGALI, April 6 (Reuter) - A plane believed to be carrying Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana was shot down as it approached the airport at the capital Kigali on Wednesday, officials said.

Diplomats in Burundi, the capital of neighbouring Burundi, said they were checking unconfirmed reports that the President of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was also aboard the downed jet.

"We are still trying to check unconfirmed reports from here that Ntaryamira was on the same plane with Habyarimana. We cannot say if they are true yet or not," a Western diplomat said.

The plane was ablaze at Kigali

airport in Rwanda but there was no immediate word on the fate of Habyarimana or Ntaryamira, who were both returning on Wednesday night from a summit meeting in Tanzania.

The Rwandan ambassador to Belgium, Francois Ngarukiyintwali, said in Brussels he had spoken to the head of the president's office in Kigali, Enoch Ruhigira, about the incident involving the plane, believed to be a French-built Mystere-Falcon jet.

"The aircraft was shot down as it approached Kigali. It is burned out," said Ngarukiyintwali, adding that he had no news of the fate of the 57-year-old Rwandan president.

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