

# Did Paul Kagame order the 1994 assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana.

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The United States has declined to comment on whether Washington will push for further investigation into a statement by a former top aide to Rwanda's Paul Kagame implicating him in the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana.

The death of [Habyarimana](#), whose plane was downed by a missile on April 6, 1994, sparked several weeks of massacres that claimed an estimated one million lives.

Now Gen. Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, Rwanda's former chief of military staff claims Gen. Kagame had ordered the downing of the presidential plane. He first made the claim on June 21 at the start of a trial in South Africa of gunmen who are accused of trying to kill him. Gen. Nyamwasa has repeated those claims about Gen. Kagame's role in Habyarimana's death in recent media interviews.

"The Department of State does not have a comment on this," a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department told *The Black Star News* via e-mail message, when asked whether an investigation of Gen. Nyamwasa's comments was warranted. The U.S. has been Kagame's major supporter over the years.

Nyamwasa has been living in South Africa where he fled in February 2010 after a falling out with Gen. Kagame. In June 2010, he survived a spectacular [assassination](#) bid that resembled an episode from a James Bond film, in South Africa.

Gen. Nyamwasa was reportedly waylaid by a gunman near the entrance of the garage of their home. He survived shots to the stomach and says he only lived because the would-be assassin's gun jammed.

A total of six alleged gunmen, including three Rwandan nationals and three Tanzanians, were captured by South African security officials. The men are now on trial in a Johannesburg court.

Gen. Nyamwasa claims the suspects are part of a hit squad sent by Gen. Kagame to kill him because he knows state secrets that could land the Rwanda president in trouble. "There are facts in my knowledge that the president of Rwanda ordered the killing of the former president of Rwanda, President Habyarimana," Gen. Nyamwasa said, on June 21 during testimony in court.

Gen. Nyamwasa told the court he was sitting next to his driver as he and his wife returned to their Johannesburg apartment complex after shopping when the shooter, holding a pistol

reached in through the driver's window. When Gen. Nyamwasa opened his door he was shot in the lower abdomen. He then made a futile grab for the gun as the gunman stepped back to finish him off; but the weapon jammed. The gunman later fled; Nyamwasa's driver is also on trial as a conspirator.

The Rwandan government has denied Gen. Nyamwasa's allegations. Rwanda says Nyamwasa fled to South Africa because he was implicated in acts of terrorism inside Rwanda. He was later tried in absentia in Rwanda and convicted.

Separately, in May 2011, British newspapers also reported that the Kagame government had sent assassins to London to pursue [Rwandan](#) dissidents there.

Separately, on November 17, 2006, a French investigative judge, Jean-Louis Bruguière, indicted Gen. Kagame for the assassination of Habyarimana. The French had taken an interest because the pilot and crew of the presidential plane shot down were French citizens. Also dead in the doomed flight was Burundi's President Cyprien Ntaryamira.

Jean-Louis Bruguière claims Kagame did not care that the ethnic Tutsi minority would be massacred after the killing of Habyarimana, who belonged to the majority ethnic Hutus. He claimed Kagame wanted to foment maximum chaos and carnage in order to justify seizing power, which he did, shortly thereafter. Kagame and his Rwanda Patriotic Front invaded Rwanda from Uganda in 1990 with the support of President Yoweri Museveni.

Gen. Kagame also denied the charges by [Jean-Louis Bruguière](#) and said the French wanted to deflect their role in the Rwanda genocide, having supported the Habyarimana regime. Kagame's supporters maintain that Hutu extremists shot down the plane.

One theory on the Habyarimana assassination reported by *The New York Times* was that the missiles used to down the presidential jet came from an old soviet stockpile shipped to Uganda, which then gave them to Kagame's RPF.

For years, the U.S. had offered Gen. Kagame a blank check, ignoring gross violations of human rights in Rwanda and involvement in atrocities in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

There has been a serious crack in this relationship since the recent release of a United Nations report implicating Rwanda in the upsurge of violence, including massacres, in Congo. The UN found that Rwanda armed and trained some of the fighters in the insurgent group, M23, and the U.S. has suspended military aid to Rwanda following the report's publication.

Washington was also pushed into an odd spot when it was revealed that U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, had tried to initially block the UN report's release.

Congolese activists say the M23 uprising was fomented by Kagame who prefers chaos in Congo to justify repeated military invasions in order to plunder Congo's resources, while working with warlords such as Bosco [Ntaganda](#) who is wanted by the International Criminal Court at the Hague.

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