

# Politician in Burundi escapes assassination attempt

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BUJUMBURA, Dec 13 (AFP) - A senior official of President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya's political party escaped an assassination attempt Monday, the party said.

A gunman tried to open fire on the official, Claudette Kibasha, as she was taking her children to school but his gun jammed.

The man then hit her in the head and fled, the Hutu-led party said. It said the assailant was a member of the minority Tutsi tribe.

Kibasha was a senior member of the Front for Democracy in Burundi.

Burundi has a similar ethnic makeup as neighboring Rwanda, a Tutsi minority and Hutu majority, but has largely avoided the widespread

slaughter that swept Rwanda when the presidents of both countries were killed in a plane crash in April.

But Burundi has its own political crisis brewing, and two politicians were assassinated last month in Bujumbura.

The main Tutsi-dominated party, the Unity for National Progress of Prime Minister Anatole Kanyenkiko, is threatening to leave the coalition government to protest the appointment of a parliamentary speaker it accuses of leading Hutu massacres of Tutsis.

The speaker, Jean Minani, was appointed by president Ntibantunganya.

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