

Former Burundi prime minister Alain-Guillaume Bunyoni appeared in court on Monday accused of undermining national security and insulting the president, a judicial source and witnesses said.

Bunyoni became prime minister from mid-2020 to September 2022 but was sacked in a high-level political purge after President Evariste Ndayishimiye took office.

A former police chief and minister of internal security, he was replaced by then interior minister Gervais Ndirakobuca, days after Ndayishimiye had warned of a “coup” plot against him.

He was arrested last month in the city of Bujumbura on the eve of his 51st birthday.

“Everyone was surprised to see him arrive handcuffed,” a witness told AFP on condition of anonymity, adding that he was clad in the green uniforms worn by Burundian prisoners.

Monday’s session held before a council chamber extended his pre-trial detention at Ngozi Prison in the north of the country, a judicial source who asked for anonymity to discuss the case told AFP.

The former premier was charged on Friday before a three-judge high court in a closed session, the source added.

Bunyoni is accused of “undermining the internal security of the state, undermining the proper functioning of the national economy and illegal enrichment”, according to court documents seen by AFP.

He is also facing charges of illegal possession of weapons and insulting the president.