

President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi has died, the government of Burundi announced his passing in a statement posted online.

According to the government statement this Tuesday, Nkurunziza died of a heart attack after he was admitted to a hospital overnight Saturday. He appeared better Sunday but “to very great surprise” his health abruptly worsened Monday morning, and several hours of effort failed to revive him.

Nkurunziza took office 15 years ago, and his decision to run for a disputed third term in 2015 led Burundi into turmoil that exiled and left hundreds dead.

His death comes after elections on May 20 to replace him where his hand-picked successor, Gen Evariste Ndayishimiye won the election and the constitutional court upheld the results last Thursday.

President Pierre Nkurunziza was scheduled to leave office in August when Gen Ndayishimiye would be sworn in.