

Zambia's president Edgar Lungu 'tries to kill' Hakainde Hichilema

Written by Administrator

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Christina Lamb – February 10 2019, 12:01am, □ The Sunday Times

Zambia's opposition leader, Hakainde Hichilema, has accused the country's president, Edgar Lungu, of trying to kill him.

Hichilema, 56, warned that the international community's failure to act on state-sponsored violence in Zimbabwe is encouraging other African regimes to crack down on opponents.

The opposition leader said he was holding a rally on Friday in Sesheke, southwest Zambia, when police and activists from the ruling Patriotic Front opened fire.

President Edgar Lungu was 'ruthless', Mr Hichilema said.

"We were having a peaceful meeting when about 100 heavily armed men from the ruling party arrived, escorted by police, and started firing live ammunition on us," he told The Sunday Times yesterday.

Video obtained by this newspaper shows terrified men and women cowering behind vehicles and fleeing through the bush amid the crack of automatic gunfire.

"It was clearly an assassination attempt on me," said Hichilema, who leads the United Party for National Development. He accused Lungu, who has been in power for four years, of being

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Zambia was long regarded as one of the most stable countries in Africa but is currently going through a debt crisis. Much of the money is owed to Chinese companies contracted to carry out road-building.

Hichilema claims Zambia is going the same way as neighbouring Zimbabwe where, according to Amnesty International, more than 1,000 people have been detained and at least 15 killed over the past month by security forces suppressing protests over high fuel prices.

“You see what happened in Zimbabwe and no one did anything . . . so it is creating a ripple effect,” Hichilema said.