

# Ex-general behind Jakarta assassination plot: Police



Retired general Kivlan Zen, who is in police custody, was allegedly behind the plot to kill four senior state officials and a high-profile pollster. PHOTO: KIVLAN ZEN/FACEBOOK

**Second suspect, believed to be involved in procurement of firearms, said to be PPP politician**

**Francis Chan**  
Indonesia Bureau Chief  
In Jakarta

Retired Indonesian army general Kivlan Zen was behind the plot to assassinate four senior state officials, as well as a high-profile pollster, during the riots in Jakarta last month, said the police yesterday.

At a press conference, Adjunct Chief Police Commissioner Ade Ary Syam Indrati disclosed that a local politician with the initials HM was also involved in the procurement of firearms for the alleged hit.

Indonesian police typically do not name suspects in ongoing investigations, but several local media reports identified the politician as United Development Party (PPP) cadre member Habil Marati.

The PPP is one of nine political parties that nominated President Joko Widodo for re-election.

Both men are now in police custody pending further investigations, said Commissioner Ade, who is Jakarta police deputy director for general criminal investigations.

"Based on facts, the testimony of witnesses and evidence, they conspired to direct the premeditated murder of four national figures and the executive director of a survey institute," he added.

Commissioner Ade confirmed that the officials on the hit list were Political, Legal and Security Affairs Coordinating Minister Wiranto; Maritime Affairs Coordinating Minister Luhut Pandjaitan; Indonesia's spy chief Budi Gunawan; and presidential aide Gories Mere.

Jakarta-based political consulting firm Charta Politika's executive director Yunarto Wijaya was the fifth target. He is also a regular TV pundit.

Commissioner Ade did not explain why the five men were targeted for assassination.

Mr Kivlan, who last held the rank of major-general, was former chief of the Army Strategic Reserve Com-



Protesters shooting fireworks at police during clashes in Jakarta last month. According to statements of suspected hitmen currently in police custody, the assassinations were supposed to take place amid the chaos of the riots. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

mand and a close ally of presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto.

The latter, himself a former army general, has refused to concede the April 17 election. The General Elections Commission (KPU) has declared that Mr Joko won the polls.

Street protests mounted by groups supporting Mr Prabowo against the KPU election results released on May 21 quickly escalated into widespread unrest across the capital, Jakarta, for two days.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the perpetrators of the riots were simply pawns and "paid thugs" in a larger conspiracy to delegitimise the vote count, Mr Wiranto said last month.

It is still unclear if Mr Kivlan, who is also facing illegal firearm possession and treason charges, orchestrated the riots, but latest develop-

FIVE TARGETS ON HIT LIST

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**ADJUNCT CHIEF POLICE COMMISSIONER ADE ARY SYAM INDRATI**, referring to the two suspects in the assassination plot – retired army general Kivlan Zen and a local politician with the initials HM. Several local media reports identified the politician as United Development Party (PPP) cadre member Habil Marati.

ments indicate that he had masterminded the assassination attempt.

Referring to statements of suspected hitmen currently in police custody, Commissioner Ade said Mr Kivlan allegedly provided 150 million rupiah (\$14,400) to one of them to procure five firearms for the assassination.

The cash was originally from Mr Habil, who had handed to Mr Kivlan a total of \$15,000 in Singapore banknotes specifically to buy firearms, including M-4 or M-16 rifles from Aceh province. The M-4 carbine assault rifle is a shorter and lighter variant of the American-made M-16.

Mr Habil was arrested in his South Jakarta home on May 29. The retired general also provided the names of the five targets to the hitmen, and gave them five million

rupiah to conduct surveillance as part of preparations for the killing.

"Mr Kivlan took out his mobile phone and showed the address and photo of Pak Yunarto from the quick count institution (Charta Politika)," said Commissioner Ade, reading out from the statement of a suspect he identified only as IR.

According to the statements, the plot was hatched as early as April this year, and was supposed to take place amid the chaos of the riots.

National police spokesman Mohammad Iqbal, who was at the same press conference yesterday, said a total of 233 police officers were injured during the riots that took place between May 21 and May 23.

Eight of them are still warded in hospital.

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Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad (far right) with Economic Affairs Minister Azmin Ali at a press conference in Putrajaya yesterday. Umno supreme council member Lokman Noor Adam has called on Malaysia's graft busters to investigate an allegedly suspicious transaction involving the bank account of Datuk Seri Azmin. PHOTO: BERNAMA

PROBE AUTHENTICITY

**I want the police to investigate the authenticity of the videos, who has been spreading the videos and also the 'actors' involved... (Their) acting was not very good.**



**UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBER LOKMAN NOOR ADAM**, who has also lodged a police report over the images.



## Mahathir unaware of sex video allegedly involving minister

**PUTRAJAYA** • Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad yesterday denied knowledge of the spread of a sex video and several lewd photographs purportedly involving a Cabinet minister, The Star reported.

The video and photos were two men – one of whom resembles a Cabinet minister – appeared to be engaging in sexual acts, began spreading via WhatsApp early on Monday morning.

"I do not know anything. I have just heard, I would have to read up on it," Tun Dr Mahathir said in response to a question by a reporter during a press conference in Putrajaya.

The Malaysiakini news website said the video and pictures were shared in a number of WhatsApp group chats with reporters, adding that the participants in the group chats included several Parti Keadi-

lan Rakyat (PKR) leaders in Sabah and Sarawak.

The authenticity of the images could not be verified. The website said that the name of one of the creators of the group chats was listed as "Saifuddin Abdullah", while another was identified as "Tian Chua".

But PKR vice-president Tian Chua, who was attending a conference in Geneva, Switzerland, told Malaysiakini that the WhatsApp group chat did not belong to him, while fellow PKR member, Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah, said he was not the person behind the WhatsApp group.

Meanwhile, Umno supreme council member Lokman Noor Adam has lodged a police report over the images, The Star reported. While he did not name any names, he told the media that it was clear which politician one of the men in

the video resembled.

"I want the police to investigate the authenticity of the videos, who has been spreading the videos and also the 'actors' involved," he said after arriving at the district police headquarters in Putrajaya, adding that their "acting was not very good".

Datuk Lokman, who was at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) headquarters earlier, also called on the graft busters to investigate an allegedly suspicious transaction involving the bank account of Economic Affairs Minister Azmin Ali.

He said the alleged transaction of around RM3 million (\$983,000) occurred in December 2017, when Datuk Seri Azmin was still the Menteri Besar of Selangor.

"I make this report hoping that the new MACC chief will act without bias and will take action against

any parties, including those from her (former) political party," he said, referring to Ms Luthfeha Koya, who resigned as a member of the PKR after being appointed head of the anti-graft agency on June 1.

Mr Lokman said that the office of Attorney-General Tommy Thomas should act on the allegations if they are true.

Mr Lokman also alleged that Dr Mahathir was seeking to make opposition party Umno an illegal party, while poaching its members over to his Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia in a bid to boost its dominance in the ruling Pakatan Harapan coalition.

"This is for them to be the dominant party in Pakatan Harapan. I call my fellow friends in Umno to think this through and thank those who have been approached by Tun but rejected his offer," he said.

## Abe on high-stakes two-day visit to Iran

**Walter Sim**  
Japan Correspondent  
In Tokyo

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrives in Tehran today for a high-stakes two-day visit, as world leaders scramble to defuse rising tensions in the Middle East and to stop a nuclear deal from blowing up.

He is the first Japanese premier to visit Iran in 41 years.

While Japan and Iran tout their positive ties and mark the 90th anniversary of diplomatic relations this year, generations of Japanese leaders have been caught in the political crossfire between Iran and its security ally, the United States.

Mr Abe, joined by Foreign Minister Taro Kono, will meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani this evening and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei tomorrow.

"The Middle East is of crucial importance to Japan's energy security, and Iran is essential to the stability of the region," a senior Foreign Ministry official told reporters yesterday on condition of anonymity.

Mr Abe's trip follows a visit by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas this week in a bid to salvage the 2015 nuclear pact. During Mr Maas' visit, Iran's top diplomat Mohammad Javad Zarif warned: "Reducing tension is only possible through stopping the economic war by America. Those who wage such wars cannot expect to remain safe."

The unfurling crisis stems from US President Donald Trump's decision last year to withdraw from the nuclear pact, and reinstate tough sanctions on Iran that have led to sharp inflation and a devaluation of the Iranian rial. This has hurt livelihoods and wiped out earnings.

Mr Trump has also threatened sanctions on any country that buys Iranian oil. Japan, which previously bought 5 per cent of its oil from Iran, has since stopped doing so.

Iran, in retaliation, has followed through on a threat last month to speed up its production of enriched uranium, International Atomic Energy Agency chief Yukiya Amano said on Monday. It has also threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, through which a third of all crude supplies traded by sea passes.

Japan has split with the US to back the nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was signed by Iran, Russia, China, Britain, France, Germany and the United States.

Mr Abe, who has won Mr Trump's support for the visit, said last month with the US leader beside him: "The tension needs to be mitigated and alleviated, and should not culminate in armed conflict."

Still, Japanese officials, in a bid to tamp down expectations, have bristled at recent media portrayal of Mr Abe as a mediator or an interlocutor.

Dr Yasuyuki Matsunaga of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies told The Straits Times that Japan's influence is limited as it is not a signatory of the JCPOA.

He added: "Since the fundamental problems that Iran is facing today is caused not by Iranian action or inaction, but by unilateral (actions by) the US, the true mediating work needs to be done in Washington DC, not in Tehran."

Keto University Professor Koichiro Tanaka sees Mr Abe as caught between a rock and a hard place.

If Mr Abe is to show Japan's sincerity as a partner to Iran, he may have to "defy existing US sanctions on Iranian crude oil (as) anything short of that will not be sufficient to portray Japan's independent role".

If the trip does not go well, Prof Tanaka warned, "the hawks within the Trump administration could well (claim) that all diplomatic channels have been exhausted, and that the time for diplomacy is over".

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