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- Europe
- Middle East
- South Asia
- UK**
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- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- Business
- Politics
- Health
- Education
- Science & Environment
- Technology
- Entertainment
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- Video and Audio
-
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- In Pictures
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- Special Reports

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Dictator Idi Amin dies

Former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin has died of multiple organ failure in hospital in Saudi Arabia.

Amin, who was variously described as 78 or 80 years old, had been in a coma at King Faisal Specialist Hospital in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah since 18 July.

He was forced from power in Uganda in 1979 by Tanzanian troops and Ugandan exiles, after one of the bloodiest rules in African history.

Human rights groups and Ugandan government officials have expressed disappointment that Amin never faced trial for his alleged crimes.

Up to 400,000 people are believed to have been killed under his rule.

Amin's family recently appealed to the Ugandan Government to allow him return home.

But President Yoweri Museveni said that Amin would face charges of human rights abuses if he returned to Uganda alive.

His body will be allowed back to Uganda for burial if the family want it, the government says.

The Associated Press news agency quoted one of Amin's sons, Ali Amin Ramadhan, as saying he was "very sad and confused" at the news of his father's death.

Brutal regime

The son of a self-proclaimed sorceress, Amin had little formal education and joined Uganda's British-led colonial army as a young man.

Amin was appointed head of the army and navy under President Milton Obote in 1966, but overthrew Mr Obote five years later and declared himself president for life.

The eight-year rule which followed was characterised by bizarre and brutal behaviour.

A convert to Islam, Amin took five wives, fathered dozens of



Amin seized power in a coup

AMIN: MAIN EVENTS

- 1971: Amin seizes power in coup
- 1972: Expels Ugandan Asians
- 1976: Israel frees hostages in raid on Entebbe
- 1979: Amin ousted by Tanzanian troops and Ugandan exiles
- 2003: Dies in Saudi Arabia



“ He was a brutal dictator yet a very remarkable man ”

Manzoor Moghul, Ugandan Evacuees Association

WATCH AND LISTEN

The BBC's Mike Wooldridge
"To this day there is no accurate figure of how many died [during his rule]"

▶ VIDEO

John Nagenda, Adviser to President Yoweri Museveni
"If his family wish to return him to Uganda nobody will stand in their way"

▶ VIDEO

DEATH OF IDI AMIN

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- UK considered killing Idi Amin
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Life of Idi Amin
Pictures of the life and times of a dictator

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children and insisted on being called "Big Daddy". **Life of a tyrant**

In 1972 he expelled the entire Asian population of Uganda, blaming them for controlling the economy for their own ends.

Manzoor Moghul, one of tens of thousands of Asians expelled by Amin, told BBC News that in the long-run this benefited many because they settled so well in Britain.

"Ugandan Asians have no reason to grieve at his death but at the same time have no reason to celebrate or be jubilant," he said.

"He was a brutal dictator yet a very remarkable man."

Amin murdered hundreds of thousands of real and perceived opponents during his rule, reportedly feasting on the bodies of some of his victims and throwing corpses to crocodiles.

“ He was a byword for cruelty, during his reign hundreds of thousands of people were killed ”

John Nagenda, Ugandan presidential adviser

Ugandan presidential adviser John Nagenda told BBC World that it would have been a "good thing" to have put him on trial, but that many Ugandans who suffered through his rule would have a feeling of closure with his death.

George Ngwa, a spokesman for Amnesty International said Amin's death was "a sad comment on the international community's inability to hold leaders accountable for gross human rights abuses".

The UK Anglican Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Reverend Dr John Sentamu, who was beaten up on Amin's orders before fleeing Uganda in 1974, said the former dictator should have been extradited to Uganda to ask his victims for forgiveness.

Toppled

As Amin consolidated his rule, Uganda plunged into economic chaos as a result of mass expulsions, gross mismanagement and rampant corruption.

The United States cut off aid to Uganda in 1972 in protest at Amin's policies, which former US President Jimmy Carter said "disgusted the entire civilised world".

In 1976, Amin apparently colluded with a Palestinian group which hijacked an Air France jet and held its Israeli passengers hostage at Entebbe Airport.

Israeli commandos rescued all but one of the hostages in a daring raid under the cover of darkness and flew them back to Israel.

Amin repeatedly sent his troops to invade neighbouring Tanzania, and in 1979, Tanzanian troops and Ugandan exiles counter-attacked, sending Amin into exile.

Amin fled to Libya, then Iraq, before finally settling in Saudi Arabia, where he was allowed to remain provided he stayed out of politics.

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