

Former Japan PM Abe Dies After Being Shot at Stump Speech in Nara

By <u>Kyodo News</u> Global Research, July 08, 2022 <u>Kyodo News</u> Region: <u>Asia</u> Theme: <u>History</u>

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Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, one of Japan's most influential postwar leaders, died Friday at the age of 67 after being shot while delivering a stump speech in the western city of Nara two days ahead of a national election.

Japan's longest-serving leader was shot by a 41-year-old man who approached him from behind at around 11:30 a.m. as he was speaking in front of Kintetsu Railway's Yamato-Saidaiji Station, police said, adding he collapsed on the ground after two shots were heard. He was rushed to a hospital with blood seen on his shirt.

A doctor with the Nara Medical University Hospital later said at a press conference that Abe was pronounced dead at 5:03 p.m. and the wound was deep enough to reach his heart, adding the cause of death is believed to be blood loss.



Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (C) lies on the ground on the side of a road after being shot by a gunman while delivering a stump speech in Nara, western Japan, on July 8, 2022, ahead of the July 10 House of Councillors election. (Kyodo)

Tetsuya Yamagami, a resident of Nara, was arrested at the scene on suspicion of attempted murder, the police said. The suspect was formerly a member of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, apparently for about three years through 2005, according to government sources.

"It's not a grudge against the political beliefs of former Prime Minister Abe," the Nara prefectural police quoted Yamagami, whose recent occupation remains unknown, as saying. His home was later searched by the police, who found an item that could be an explosive, they said.

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Featured image: Image from video footage shows former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe delivering a stump speech in Nara on July 8, 2022, shortly before he was shot by a gunman. (Kyodo)

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