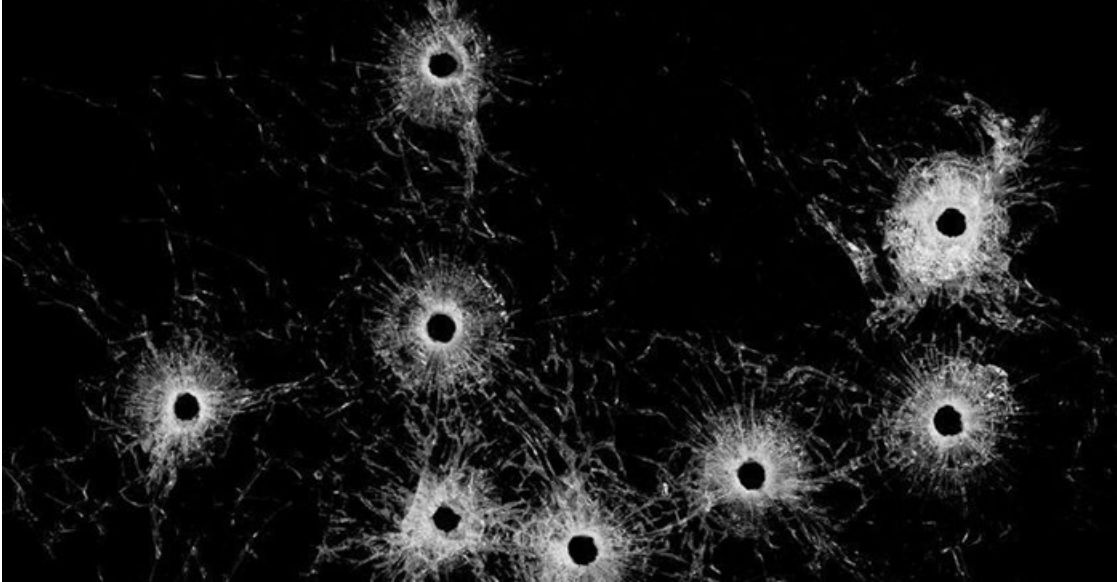


Mali YouTube activist hurt in assassination bid

BAMAKO, Mali - A Malian activist whose fierce criticism of politicians and religious figures on YouTube has made him a cult figure, survived an assassination attempt on Tuesday, his family told AFP.



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"Marshall Madou", real name Madou Kante, was driving in the capital Bamako around 1am when a gunman fired several bullets at him, according to a family member. "The bullets hit him mostly in the chest. He is in hospital," the family member told AFP, requesting anonymity.

Malian media published images of Kante shirtless and standing upright in hospital, with dressings covering his chest and upper right arm.

Kante took part in protests this month organised by opponents of a constitutional referendum framed by the government as an important step towards enshrining a peace deal in the national charter.

Critics say the referendum, which has been indefinitely delayed to cool tensions following massive protests, is a tool for President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to consolidate his own power, especially by giving him the right to appoint senators.

But Kante has made many enemies with his popular show the "Madou Ka Journal", notably attacking corruption and nepotism in Mali. One of his close associates, Oumar Diakite, told AFP he would not "accuse anyone without proof".

Government sources said several ministers had visited him at his bedside, and he remained in hospital on Tuesday.

Source: AFP.

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