

Name: Alert ID: TMML2024037941105 Perence Shiri born Bigboy Samson Chikerema on 11 January 1955 died on the 28th of July 2020 Shiri was a Zimbabwean air officer and government official who served as Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement in the Cabinet of Zimbabwe from 1 December 2017 until his death in 2020. He was the commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe and member of the Joint Operations Command which exerts day-by-day control over Zimbabwe's government. Perrance Shiri was a cousin of former President Robert Mugabe, he called himself "Black Jesus" because according to an anonymous claim on BBC Panorama documentary "The Price of Silence", he "could determine your life like Jesus Christ. He could heal, raise the dead, whatever. So he claimed to be like that because he could say if you live or not." On 30 November 2017, Shiri was appointed Minister of Agriculture by President Emmerson Mnangagwa. On 18 December he was promoted from Air Marshall to Air Chief Marshall upon retirement. Shiri was widely criticized by human-rights organizations for his part in masterminding Zimbabwe's Gukurahundi massacres. The killings, which took place between 1982 and 1985, left as many as 20,000 dead in the country's two Matabeleland provinces and the Midlands Province. At the time, Shiri commanded the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade, which is accused of mass executions and torture. Shiri died on 28 July 2020. It is believed that the minister succumbed to COVID-19 and died after having being hospitalised two days earlier. In 1992, Shiri was appointed as the commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe, taking over from Air Chief Marshal Josiah Tungamirai. Shiri was in command of the Zimbabwean troops at the start of the Second Congo War. It was Shiri who decided that the Zimbabwean contingent would defend N'Djili and its airport. This was in order to maintain an air route for resupply and reinforcements if needed. In the late-1990s and early-2000s, Shiri was reported to have organised farm invasions by war veterans. In 2002, in response to the subsequent food shortage, Mugabe dispatched Shiri to South Africa to purchase maize. This undertaking was backed by a credit note for the equivalent of £17 million from the Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi. Shiri was ambushed on 13 December 2008, while driving to his farm. According to police, he was accosted by unknown people who shot at his car. Thinking one of his tyres had burst he got out and was subsequently shot in the arm. It has been speculated that the assassination attempt may have been a response to Shiri's attacks on illegal diamond miners in 2008 or because of his role in Matabeleland in the 1980s. In October 2013, Shiri's son, Titus Takudzwa Chikerema, died at the age of 21.