



Research Paper

The Blood Bath In Kasese District Western Uganda.

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ABSTRACT: This manuscript analyzed the aftermath of Kasese Account. A mixed method was used and both interviews and secondary information was collected from local people and secondary sources i.e., face book pages, videos, tweets, newspapers, local television stations news and political discussions. A team of research assistants interviewed, various people in the affected areas including the people representatives, local leaders, Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), some survivors and grieving families in the Rwenzori region. This research aimed to answer eight research questions; Why was the Omusinga's Palace at Buhikira attacked? Why King Mumbere was arrested? Who are the royal Guards? How many people were at the palace at the time of attacking the Palace? Did Mumbere defy president Museveni's call before the attack? What is the mystery behind the creation of the Yiira Republic? and what are the effects of the Rwenzori saga? Results indicated that, Ministerial Commission set for Kajura (2005) should be reviewed and implemented in order to solve the long standing tribal conflicts and land tensions in the Rwenzori region.

Key words; Rwenzururu Kingdoms, ethnic conflict, Kasese, Blood bath, Police and Army.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The monarch of the Rwenzururu Kingdom rules over the Bakonzo ethnic group and inhabitants of the Rwenzori Mountains. The Bakonzo are a Bantu-speaking group of people who live across both western Uganda and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s North Kivu province. According to a Kasese local Edwin Mumbere, of the Bayanda Agape Foundation, the 300,000-strong Bakonzo kingdom has had tense relationships with both the neighbouring Bwamba kingdom comprised of ethnic Bamba people and the central government of Kampala (1).

In 1966 the customary kingdoms were prohibited by Prime Minister Milton Obote, who also declared himself President under an Interim Constitution the same year. In the late 1990s, President Yoweri Museveni agreed to re-inaugurate customary kingdoms in which the Rwenzururu Kingdom was not an exception and peace finally restored in the Rwenzori region; the kingdom was rocked by violence after "anti-kingdom elders" later accused the king for siding with ADF rebels.

Rwenzururu was established in 1962 as the result of a secessionist movement by the Bakonjo people in the mountainous region of western Uganda. The revolt was led by Mumbere's father, Isaya Mukirane, who was recognized as the region's king (2). Mumbere inherited the title at age 13 and assumed the position of king at age 18. When he was 30, he made an agreement with the government of Uganda by which the government sent him to the United States for an education. In 1984, at age 30, he enrolled in business school, but his government stipend was cut off. He obtained political asylum in the United States in 1987, received nurse's aide training, and began working in a nursing home in suburban Maryland near Washington, D. C. He later moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where he continued as a nurse's aide (2).

The king who worked in a US nursing home has been crowned king of Rwenzururu in his home country Kasese Uganda. Charles Wesley Mumbere, who went to the US to study in 1984, told no-one of his royal heritage for more than 25 years. He kept his royal title secret during most of his 25 years in the United States (3). In July 2009, Mumbere mentioned his kingship in an interview with The Patriot-News, the primary newspaper of Harrisburg, and said that he was considering returning to Uganda, (2) which had recently recognized Rwenzururu and designated Mumbere as "Omusinga", or king (2).

In October 2009, Mumbere returned to his homeland, where he was crowned on 19 October (2). His authority is limited to social and cultural matters (2). Charles Wesley Mumbere is the king of the African kingdom of Rwenzururu, which is located in the southern part of Uganda and he was charged with murder (1).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

History of kingdoms in Uganda and their influence in politics

For a long period of time, the regional kingdoms of Buganda, Toro, Bunyoro and Ankole formed a major part to the political organization in Uganda. Amidst of these, the Buganda kingdom was considered the strongest and most influential. Proceeding to the establishment of Kintu's dynasty after winning the battle between him and his brother Bbemba, Buganda grew to become one of the largest and the most powerful state in East and central Africa during the eighteenth and 19th centuries(4, 5).

In the pre-colonial periods, Buganda kingdom had reflected the impact of the eighteenth and nineteenth century developments as a strong kingdom politically. A series of Kabaka's amassed military and political powers by killing rival to the throne, abolishing hereditary positions of authority, extracting higher taxes from their and also seizing Bunyoro territory their biggest rival kingdom in the west(6). One of the most powerful appointed advisers of the Kabaka was the Katikkiro, who was in charge of the kingdom's administrative and judicial systems effectively serving as the prime minister and chief justice. The outstanding structure of the governance of the Buganda impressed British officials that accelerated Buganda to become the center kingdom to become the centerpiece of the new protectorate, with a degree of control over other kingdoms: Toro, Nkore, Busoga and Bunyoro(7).

On the 9th October 1962 Uganda achieved independence with the Kabaka of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutesa II, as the first president of Uganda. However the political power of the Buganda kingdom and that of other four kingdoms was removed when the institution of kingship was abolished in the 1960's when Uganda was turned into republic state by Apollo Milton Obote after he had changed the 1966 constitution(8). On 24 May 1966 the royal palace of Buganda kingdom was attacked by the federal Ugandan army forcing king Mutesa II to flee to exile in London where he died in mysterious circumstances three years(9).

All efforts to restore Buganda kingdom were in vain and hindered by the ruling presidents by that time i.e. Idi Amin 1970s, and Obote II 1980s. Not even with the help of the Conservative Party, a marginal group that was led by the last man to serve as the Buganda's prime minister under the king contested the 1980 elections but received little support. Soon after, consistent demands were raised by the population in Buganda, the Baganda, to restore their traditional ruler and reinstate the kingdom's political power(10).

Following the consistent demands raised by the population in Buganda, to restore their traditional ruler and reinstate the kingdom's political power. Finally, in 1993 when the incumbent National Resistance Movement (NRM) government led by Yoweri Museveni decided to restore traditional rulers. Henceforth, the Buganda kingdom became the first kingdom to be restored with the son of Mutesa II, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II as its Kabaka. Following the other four major kingdoms: Toro, Nkore, Busoga and Bunyoro that were restored too in the same period of time as Buganda(11).

Since the restoration of traditional leaders in Uganda in 1993(12), the consent of the Buganda kingdom has served as an important support-base for politicians running for office in the 1996, 2001, 2006,2011 and 2016 presidential elections(13). In this sense, the Buganda kingdom has managed to influence national politics despite of its cultural character, and has re-entered the political arena as a significant pressure group more than thirty years after its abolition. The issues debated prior to the elections in 1996 and 2001 in particular related to Buganda's quest for self-determination through a federal state structure. This political kingship did not only take influence in Buganda but also other regions including the western part of the country that witnessed the breakaway and separation of power of the their subjects (6, 14). Toro Kingdom witnessed the breakaway of Kasese region that witnessed the coronation of the Mumbere that over the years became very influential in the political social and economic aspect of his region that later resulted in the creation of the alleged state with a state.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper used documentary review method, the researcher used newspapers, reports, documentaries, news from radio and television stations and supported with a few interviews. The reason for using documentary review method was due to the sensitivity of the topic since it involved central government and Kingdomship in Kasese District. The manuscript focused on answering eight questions: Why was the Omusinga's Palace at Buhikira attacked? Why King Mumbere was arrested? Who are the royal Guards? How many people were at the palace at the time of attacking the Palace? Did Mumbere defy president Museveni's call before the attack? What is the mystery behind the creation of the Yiira Republic? and what are the effects of the Rwenzori saga?The questions were designed from the themes that followed data collected by the researcher and analysis followed the interpretation of different documentaries and sources available and was discussed following the Omusinga's Palace at Buhikira following the attack.

The researcher and two research assistants gathered any documents that had a discussion on a topic of "Omusinga's Palace at Buhikira" and over one thousand (1000) sources were uploaded and deduced to eight three (83) documents. From the data collected 8 themes were generated and designed as research questions to be

answered in this study by way of understanding why the Kingdom was attacked. Analysis was done through transcribing the available few interviews and documentations in relation to the research questions. The reason a few interviews were used was just to supplement the documentary review method and also use it for validity to check whether what few people said on ground was corresponding to what documents had written. Very few locals were willing to be interviewed since the entire district was surrounded by army presence following the attack and many were not convinced that, we were collecting the data for academic purposes but rather to feed government with information. Therefore, given the sensitivity of the subject under study, the suitable and convenient method was documentary review supplemented by interviews.

IV. RESULTS

The results were analysed following the eight research questions. Each research question was analysed separately using the themes.

1-Why was the Omusinga's Palace at Buhikira attacked?

The Omusinga's Palace was attacked due to the following reasons;

Local leaders in Kabarole District told the Parliamentary Defence Committee that they engaged the militia several times requesting the king to abandon rebellion before the actual fighting with government forces but all hit a dead end. "As leaders of the region, we engaged the militia in the camps several times not to attack government forces but they refused. The last time they were engaged, was on phone before they clashed with government forces on November 24," the LC 3 chairman for Mugusu Sub-county told the MPs at Nyabuswa Health Centre III on Sunday (15).

The LC 3 chairmain also told the investigation's committee that, many people in his area lost a lot of property to the militia as they descended down the hill to loot animals. "Their target was, people in uniform, thus, government forces, not Batooro in the area. I gave them Shs100, 000 because they wanted food and money from the locals." On 24th November, he further alleged that, "the militias were dressed in three uniforms: red, black and white attacking government forces and the fighting went on for more than three hours".

The Resident District Commissioner for Kabarole, also confirmed that, "He held four security meetings in those areas with other district security officials in a bid to stop the militia from fighting but failed." Referring to the LC 3 Chairman in the area, further alleged that, "the militia was opposing government and their cause was known." He continued to claim that, their issues, "range from land wrangles, different cultural institutions in the region and proposed split of Kasese District"(15).

It is possible that the security officers who died at the hands of brutal attackers tried to remain good soldiers who swore to fight until they are hit on the head. It is thus unprofound that despite the efforts to limit the war, since 2012 government security forces continued to see gangs of the so-called "royal guards" attack and kill security officers on duty. Like they say, "one life lost is one too many". It is, therefore, hard to accept that, in November 2016 the country lost dozens of Ugandans in Kasese (security officers, royal guards and civilians) in circumstances that could have been avoided (16). Government stated that, those who were responsible (the misleaders) have to take responsibility for their actions and no one should be seen to incite people into violence(17).

The attackers never appreciated the risks involved in attacking armed security personnel who are authorised to use force in self-defense(16). Where do they get the spirit to do what they do? Where will those attacking security forces run to when it is their turn to seek protection? These questions were mind-disturbing but relevant and any peace loving people must think about them seriously. Secondly, there can never be a state within a State; signifying that, you cannot have two types soldiers, armies, or two police forces or even any other establishments such as another executive, legislature and judiciary in one State. What government was worried about under the Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu was the emergence of such and there was need to stop it. It is on record that, Gen Katumba Wamala said, subsequent to his attendance in the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, which was investigating the Kasese clashes, that, the general had "distanced" himself from the attack on Rwenzururu palace.

"The general was quoted validating his statement that, "the operation in Kasese was a low intensity operation that did not require the personality and weight of the Chief of Defence Forces to be around." He added that, "since he had a capable officer at that operational level, he did not have to micro-manage the operation and that indeed did not require his presence there." (16).

The officer who commanded the attack on the Buhikira Palace in Kasese District in a bloody operation that left more than 100 people dead and 139 arrested, linked then the jailed King Rwenzururu, Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere, to subversive activities in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Further purported that, the army got information on the Omusinga, and his training camps in DRC and that an unspecified number of Congolese nationals died in the November 27 attack in the king's palace (18). He confirmed that, "the army has information that Omusinga (King Mumbere) has training camps at Masisi and Butembo (in DRC) and Mayi Mayi were involved in the Rwenzori attacks," Brig Elwelu informed journalists that, "Congolese are among

those who died at the palace, people are crying in Beni (DRC) over their relatives who died in the Kasese attacked, most dead bodies were unidentified in Uganda,” (18). The Rwenzururu Kingdom spokesperson, Mr Clarence Bwambale, refuted claims that, “the king had training camps in DRC and explained that at the time of the attack on the kingdom palace by UPDF1 and police, there were old men who kept the kingdom, children, women and young boys from the villages of Kasese who were local royal guards”(18).

The Rwenzururu King’s failure to pick calls from the president. Conferring to the commander of the attack, “the King continuously rejected repeated calls to disband the royal guards, this justified the attack on his palace. The king, however, remained in detention on accusations of murder until he was presented to courts of law where later he was given bail(19).

President Yoweri Museveni called King Charles Wesley Mumbere of the Rwenzururu kingdom before the Palace was attacked and he ordered him to disband the guards, who are believed to be part of a militia allegedly agitating for the creation of an independent republic straddling Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (20). Referring to Brigadier Peter Elweluthe commander of the operations who said that, “President Museveni incessantly called the king warning him to “withdraw and cooperate” before the attacks but he did not heed hence commander in chief ordered him to raid on his guards. He was given an hour on elapsing, he was added two more hours(saying) 'please, sort this out' and he failed, the government forces attacked the Palace when they heard the storm the palace”(20).

The king’s refusal to reduce on the number of royal guards (21). Following the attack on the Rwenzururu Kingdom palace in Kasese District in an operation that left more than 134 people dead and 139 arrested, government had ordered all cultural institutions to cut down their guard force to only nine (22). The traditional royal guards are volunteers recruited to protect the kings, their officials and cultural sites. Government also deploys UPDF soldiers to the various cultural institutions. In the case of Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu, the guards, of which majority are youth, were recruited to guard the king but both the UPDF and other security operatives had linked them to the unrest in the sub-region. The Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Bundibugyo, alleged that, the government had instructed all cultural institutions countrywide to trim down their royal guards(21). The Rwenzururu Kingdom refused to comply with government’s directive hence the attack of the kingdom.

Government forces also suspected that by March 24 2016, Charles Wesley Mumbere and others were still connected to the FFU Detach in Kidodo cell Central Division, Kasese Municipality, Kasese District (23). Government forces claimed that they had evidence that the King had linkages with the illegal forces fighting government hence the attack of the Kingdom.

The allegations of creation of Yiira state independent in Uganda by Charles Wesley Mumbere together with his counter parts from Congo. The country’s Commander-in-Chief (His excellence President Yoweri Museveni) maintained that the Rwenzururu King, Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere, rejected repeated calls to disband his royal guards (24). Why did the King Mumbere reject orders to disarm, disband and surrender the royal guards, thus justifying the assault on the palace last on November 27 leaving 110 dead.

According to his excellency the president of Uganda Museveni (25) a group of people in the Rwenzori region carried out thirteen (13) coordinated attacks against security forces and civilians as follows ; at 3.00 pm, they attacked policemen at the weigh bridge, killed one (1) policeman, injured another one and took two (2) guns, at Bigando, a UPDF soldier that was on leave, was killed and all his family burnt in a house; In Bigando, they also killed six (6) Basongora civilians; at Karugutu Police post, they injured one (1) policeman and took one (1) gun, at Kikyo Police post, they took one (1) gun, at Kirumiya Police post, they took one (1) gun; at Ntandi they took two (2) guns from Uganda Wild Life (UWA) personnel; at Kibuku, they ambushed soldiers who were taking re-enforcements to Bundibugyo, killed one of them, and took one (1) gun but three (3) of the attackers were killed including their commander; in Bundibugyo town, they attacked Bundibugyo Police Station, killed the OC station and one policeman and took one (1) gun, they attacked Stanbic Bank but three (3) of the attackers were killed; they, then, attacked, Lakwena style, the camp of thirty-nine (39) battalion at Kanyamirima, injuring one Captain and killing one (1) soldier but forty-five (45) of the attackers were killed and the attack was repelled; Attack on the Palace of the Bamba King saw one gun being taken and one policeman being injured; and, finally and the attack on the shrine where two (2) soldiers were killed and one gun was taken.

This means that eight (8) members of the security forces were killed and fifty-one (51) attackers were also killed. This is a total of sixty-five (65) Ugandans killed last by the schemes of some confused or selfish group of people. Fortunately, today Uganda has got a capable State that is able to deal decisively and expeditiously with such schemes although, of course, there was a failure of intelligence. How did these people weave such a scheme without being pre-empted? What were the GISO2 and DISO3 doing? However, their main

1Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF)

2Government Internal Security Officer

effort, which was to enter the camp of 39BN was decisively defeated. In their limited thinking, they thought it was a light matter to attack UPDF.

2-Why King Mumbere was arrested?

Mumbere was arrested because the royal guards attacked and killed police men and UPDF officials. They were suspected to be engaged the militia group to attack other tribes (15) and creating a state within a state, they had rebels who were assumed to be very many worth 350 in number with weapons and machetes in the palace. According to government, they suspected that, the King was harboring fighters. One of the senior officers in government claimed that, “the militia men set up training camps in Rwenzori mountains where they based to attack government installations and ready to create a new republic at the border of Democratic Republic of Congo”. Further he argued that, “the king was seeking for break away from Uganda which left hundreds dead and many arrested.”

3-Who are the royal Guards?

Royal guards are volunteers who provide security to the customary king of Rwenzururu(1). Permitting to government school of thought, the King Mumbere refused to surrender that is why the police and UPDF4 officers attacked the palace killing Royal Guards. Another school of thought indicates that the King requested for more time before the attack of which the King alleged that his subjects blatantly ruthlessly and callously massacred. According to Wesaka (26)who reported from Nalufenya in Jinja district, quoted the Mumbere to have stated in court that,

“My kingdom’s regalia, the parliament, traditional huts, coronation house and priceless cultural items in palace, including records were destroyed, burnt, looted during the invasion during which my subjects were blatantly, ruthlessly and callously massacred after stripping them naked and tying their hands behind and executed including women, children and royal palace domestic workers by a combined force of UPDF and the police.”

According to Brig Peter Elwelu accuses the Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere for having training camps in the Democratic Republic of Congo (18) following his refusal to surrender.

4-How many people were at the palace at the time of the palace attack?

The number of people in the palace before the attack was not known, like any other kingdom, there is a structure in place which calls for administrative leadership in the palace as well as other subjects that do voluntary works for the King. The royal guards were among the people in the palace and since the palace deals with a number of activities in support for community development, calls for diverse groups like children, servants, women and men.

I am not sure newspapers say 350 but what I am sure of is that, “It's now evident why African dictators are pulling out of the ICC. Now the Rwenzururu Palace massacre. It's so sad that as much as we've come this age, leaders still have not changed and thus why to be life presidents fearing for what inhumane they have done to their citizens”.

How could the police get the royal maids were undressed and paraded for shame!!! Thank you Police for the great work of keeping law and naked order!

Well the number is only known to the government and the administration of the palace but political unity is a matter of intricate and complex interpersonal relations and discussions between the ‘dominant’ and the ‘dominated’ peoples!! President Museveni, who is reputed to have studied Political Science to Degree-level, should have really discovered this from his basic studies and knowledge about Democratic Governments and Governance!! Unfortunately, since he has been hell-bent at advancing his hopeless, feudal dynastic interests, he has been emboldening the interests of the separatist movements all over the entire Country. He has nurtured and sowed reactionary political tendencies; and now he fatally thinks the use of brutal force will quell the newly balkanised Country. Let him dream on!! But he is obviously quirked in his pants!! What a great shame? We had hopes that he was a new political brush and his politics will not be divisive. But those hopes started melting and evaporating once and when he started twitching with the Constitution that he ‘birthed and authored’!! Now, Good Riddance!!!!

How nobody knows the numbers? And how come this is not as evil, or news worthy as the so called attack on Lubiri in 1966? Are we witnessing Western media double standard raise its ugly head, or is it because the Lubiri or Baganda for that matter are more equal than other human creatures? Shame upon humanity with their naked hypocrisy, selective memory and double standard.

Whether numbers or not, when Museveni stumbled in power in 1986, he was faced with the reality of two political parties which had sold social bases as well as political organisations. He could not compete with these political parties. He initially banned them, leaving them to operate at their headquarters. To delegitimise them he categorised them as sectarian. Rather than do this, he should have recognised identity as the principal basis of our politics. By trying to conceal the real issue of our politics, Museveni was trying to conceal it under the word sectarian. Now the identity issue has come in the open and he is trying to dismiss it. The identity issue is real and it should not be dismissed. It is folly to try and dismiss it.

Uganda as well as the entire world does not desire to listen to wars around it and as much as possible wars should not be given thought in Uganda.

You are free to remain complacent about the present Twalire atrocities!! Unfortunately, deep your head in the filth will not save you from judgement. Even if you are beyond the hand of the legal law, you are an emotionally dead man, cursed are you; and cursed you shall die!! Good riddance!

The war was in the north for two decades and now it is others' turn to receive their share, Sir.

HUM!! Simply, because some mad man and some beyond-psychopathic-peoples around him decided to rake havoc on some people in the North, it does not make that behaviour admirable or justifiable. If we want to create a Nation, out of our fragmented 'whole', we must learn to share in each other's joys and sorrows. Unless we are anticipating for the tinder from the Rwanda Genocide to light the simmering Rwenzururu volcano and spread it below our depths, we must learn to love and respect each other. Museveni, like our past short-sighted leaders, has created this catastrophe!! No section of Ugandans need to be brutalised!!

Why Ugandans just do not install M7 as King of Kings of Uganda and the simplest answer is this: Some Ugandans are not blue-blood minded and what was happening in this area must have been something we are not aware of.

5-Did Mumbere defy president Museveni's call before the attack?

According to Brigadier Peter Elweluthe, the commander of the operations said that, "President Museveni continuously called the king warning him to "withdraw and cooperate before the attacks but he did not comply and kept requesting for more time". He ordered him to disperse the guards, who are believed to be part of a militia allegedly disturbing and demanding for the creation of an independent republic overlapping Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Further Peter alleged that, "the king was given an hour, it elapsed. So the president called again this time, he gave him two more hours (saying) to sort this out," unfortunately the time elapsed before the king was ready So the police had no option, other than storming the palace and get the terrorists, and that is what we did." It was further stated that, "We kept on watching this group; we kept on reaching out to them. Things were not working out and we had to take a decision," to attack the palace (20).

6-What is the mystery behind the creation of the Yiira Republic?

The Rwenzururu Kingdom, located in the Rwenzori Mountain Region of the South Western part of Uganda spans into the Democratic Republic of Congo among the Bakonzo / Banande, Bamba and Basumba people who dwell in the mountain region. A Banya Rwenzururu (The people of Rwenzururu) the term Banyarwenzururu refers to the people of Rwenzururu (Rwenzori Mountains). Banyarwenzururu also means the mountain covered with snow, which was mistakenly re-named by explorer H.M, Stanley as Ruwenzori the Mountains of the Moon. The Rwenzururu Kingdom is a monarchy of the inhabitants of and people descending from the Rwenzori Mountains.

The Bakonzo/Banande, Bamba and Basumba are ethnic groups that originally lived and still live on and around the Rwenzururu Mountains. Currently, the Bakonzo alone are about 6,000,000 people with an estimated 1,000,000 on the Ugandan side of the Mountain and 5,000,000 on the Democratic Republic of Congo side and are more commonly known as Banande. Both the Bakonzo and Banande belong to the Bayira community, a Bantu speaking people. On the Ugandan side the Bakonzo occupy the Rwenzururu Mountains cut across the District of Kasese, Kabarole and Bundibugyo. Those in Congo are found in North Kivu province with Butembo and Beni as their major towns. The Bamba who are sub-divided into Babwisi, Babutoku, Vonoma and Babila predominantly occupy the plains of Bundibugyo district (27). Since there is lineage in Congo government suspects that, Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere was having training camps in the Democratic Republic of Congo (18). Many times the Omumbere kept denying the allegations of creating a Yiira Republic in Kasese(28).

8-What are the Legal Framework of kingdoms in Uganda?

In the late 1960's the new government of Milton Obote forcefully disbanded all the traditional kingdoms. The constitution introduced in 1967 went a step further and fully outlawed them(29).

The famously violent regime of Idi Amin of the 1970's was no better and it was until the democratically elected government of 1993 that re-established Kingdoms. Then in 1995, the new constitution fully recognized the ancient kingdoms by law and the powers of their leaders or Kings. The 2005 amendment of the constitution re-affirmed the position of the Kings, further confirming their status in Ugandan

society(30). Though the reinstated Kingdoms are fully recognized by law, they are not fully sovereign politically. However, they do have considerable political influence and regularly meet with government leaders.

An Act to give effect to article 111A of the Constitution of 1967 and to restore to traditional rulers assets and properties previously owned by Kingdoms or connected with or attached to their offices but which were confiscated by the State and to make other provisions relating or incidental to, or consequential upon, the foregoing existence(31).

Since the restoration of traditional leaders in Uganda in 1993, the consent of the Buganda kingdom has served as an important support-base for politicians running for offices both in the 1996 and 2001 presidential elections. In this sense, the Buganda Kingdom has managed to influence national politics despite of its cultural character, and has re-entered the political arena as a significant pressure group more than thirty years after its abolition. The issues debated prior to the elections in 1996 and 2001 in particular related to Buganda's quest for self-determination through a federal state structure. Other emerging areas in the center of politics in Uganda include Kasese.

When the NRM attempted to expand the initial interim period, the Kingship issue became intertwined with the NRM's wish to prolong the Movement System. A prolongation of the Movement System implied the continued ban on political party activity, and due to this the NRM opposed the introduction of multipartyism. The role of political parties was laid down as one of the issues that would be debated in the Constituent Assembly⁵ (CA), and in order for the NRM to secure the continued ban on party politics, the NRM needed support in the CA (14, 32, 33). In their need for a collaborating force in the CA, the NRM approached Buganda, the area with the largest percentage of voters. The most prominent factor that could help the NRM acquire increased support from Buganda in the CA, was the issue of Kingship (34). Hence, when discussing why the NRM changed its position on the Kingship idea, the NRM's wish was to secure their position in power and the NRM's view on political parties has to be considered. By looking into the CA deliberations it becomes evident that giving in to the Baganda and allow the restoration of Kingship, the NRM achieved a collaborating force against the opponents of the Movement system.

The constitution (1967) which was amended by the National Resistance Council (NRC) to enable the coronation of Prince Mutebi not forgetting that it was the constitution that abolished monarchs with political power. Later President Museveni argued that it's not appropriate to retain a constitutional provision that denied people their Cultural Rights', and stated that the NRC would amend the provision (34, 35)⁶(3). This announcement implied a turning point in the restoration debate, hence evident that Museveni and the NRM would facilitate the restoration of Kingship in Uganda.

The Uganda Constitutional Commission, popularly known as the Odoki-commission⁶, was established in 1989 to draft a new constitution for Uganda. Among the constitutional issues raised, the issues of traditional rulers.

The situation in Kasese during the month of the attack (November 2016)

On the 21st of Nov 2016, a regional security meeting was convened at Kabarole District Local Government Headquarter which was attended by RDCs⁷, District Chairpersons and security leader from the seven district of Rwenzori. The meeting resolved that all camps which had been established by Kilhumira Mutima in Kamabale village of Nyabiswa subcounty in Kabarole, Ihandiro subcounty in Kasese, Kakibuta and Kakimiara both in Hima Division of Kasese be dismantled by security forces (36). The cultural guards learnt about impending operations and started attacking police stations and police posts. These attacks were carried out in a similar manner across the district where sixteen (16) policemen were killed and six (6) guns stolen.

⁵Elections for the Constituent Assembly were held in Uganda on 28 March 1994. 284 independent delegates were elected to the Assembly, which was tasked with drawing up the country's new constitution. After it was completed, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in 1996.

⁶Justice Benjamin Odoki, with Prof. Dan Mudoola as Deputy, and Fr. John Mary Walligo as Secretary. After nationwide consultations, the Odoki Commission produced a draft constitution in 1993.

7 ARTICLE 203. Resident district commissioner:

- (1) There shall be for each district a resident district commissioner who shall be appointed by the President.
- (2) For a person to be appointed a resident district commissioner he or she shall be a citizen of Uganda and qualified to be a member of Parliament.
- (3) The functions of a resident district commissioner are:-(a) to monitor the implementation of central and local government services in the district;(b) to act as chairperson of the district security committee of the district; and(c) to carry out such other functions as may be assigned by the President or prescribed by Parliament by law. In principle the RDC office at districts enjoy a luxury life with two vehicles and their drivers, 2 armed security guards!!

They also ambushed and burnt a police patrol vehicle which had gone to Kiburara to reinforce the unit there. In all these incidents, the attackers used assault rifles, petrol bombs, grenades, machetes, spears and daggers. In response to these attacks unfortunately, forty-six (46) cultural guards have lost their lives while one hundred forty-nine (149) have been arrested. Most of the attackers (Kilhumira Mutima) retreated into the palace with their weapons.

This led to the negotiations with His Highness by both security and political leaders for the attackers to surrender and handover the weapons. In this operation, an assortment of weapons was recovered from the palace, including, seven (7) Sub-Machine Guns (SMGs), pistols, ammunition, machetes, spears improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and sixteen (16) petrol bombs.

It should be noted that, the security forces ensured the safety of his Highness, the Omusinga. The King was arrested and was taken in safe custody at Nalufenya police station. It is expected that His Highness will cooperate with the Police and help in explaining his role in these criminal attacks.

The joint security forces are continued with investigations in this matter. Appropriate legal action was taken on all those who had been apprehended and the people of Kasese were thanked for their continued cooperation with government investigators. Since then, security was beefed up in Kasese town as police transferred the Kasese massacre suspects from Kasese police to Nalufenya police station in Jinja district(37).

8-The manner in which the operation was done?

- The manner in which the army and police were believed to have carried out the attack, continued to inspire demands for an inquiry into what was being labelled a massacre.
- Kasese District representatives in Parliament, regime opponents, local and international human rights agencies, and civil society were also pushing for the officer(s) who commanded the onslaught in which the palace was set on fire to face the law.
- Even in security circles, suggestions of disquiet at the Kasese killings had been seen. Senior presidential advisor on security in Buganda, Brigadier(Brig) High ranking official Kasirye Ggwanga, also observed that, Brig. Peter Elwelu, the highest-ranking officer visible on the ground during the palace raid could not escape justice.
- They committed murder against unarmed civilians. What they did was dehumanizing!!! The commander was expected to face International Criminal Court due to the trouble he caused, he will never escape this if now not ever. One day he will be tried in courts of Law. The evidence in Kasese was overwhelming. He will be tried for this criminally reckless conduct.”
- The army institution was embarrassed, since there was overwhelming force and disproportionate firepower deployed in the attack, resulting in the bloodbath, which was not necessary.
- Other strategic options, including laying siege on the palace, would have achieved the desired effect of neutralising the situation at a much lower cost to human life.
- Kasese winded from the carnage amid demands for an inquiry into the killings, from Human Rights Watch Uganda, parliamentary committee, local people, Non-Governmental Organisations and human rights bodies and the search was done at all levels of government.
- The president of Uganda Mr. Museveni was reported to have promised for a meeting with elders of the Abasiita clan of Rwenzururu Kingdom, and argued that, he shares ethnic linkages with them and will embrace dialogue to find a lasting solution to the long-running crisis in the Rwenzori sub-region.
- A week after that attack, Rwenzururu Kingdom Spokesman Clarence Bwambale said that, President only called King Mumbere to issue an ultimatum of “hours”, insisting that there was no attempt at “convincing” him to disband the royal guards. He further confirmed that, President called the king giving him hours to have handed in the royal guards, not convincing him per se. The followed instructions of one- two hours and not a discussion among the two(24).

Blame game ideology

Accusations followed the NRM ruling party supporters from opposition leaders and supporters of orchestrating the clashes, while opposition supporters threw the blame back to the government (38). A probe by MPs into the clashes between a joint military force and the Rwenzururu royal guards that left at least 100 people dead on November 27 degenerated into a blame game, with supporters of rival parties accusing one another of inflaming the situation.

MPs on the Defence Committee of Parliament, who ended their two-day fact-finding tour in Kasese, heard mostly one-sided tales from the residents, who accused people they called “opposition supporters” of intimidating them from testifying. The MPs led by Mityana District MP Judith Nabakooba had to supply pieces of paper for some residents who said they feared to speak openly to write down their submissions. Perhaps in

anticipation of what the fact-finding meetings could turn out like, Mr KitsumbireThembo, the Prime minister of the Rwenzururu kingdom had on warned the committee against being “hoodwinked.” “I want to warn that after we have talked to you, you will hear a lot of stories and lies, just be objective and pick out the truth,” Mr Kitsumbire, who is charged with holding together the Rwenzururu Kingdom as King Charles Wesley Mumbere, serves out his remand pending trial. King Mumbere was charged with murder and remanded after being arrested when the army stormed his palace in Kasese Town on November 27. An estimated 100 people were reported to have died in the clashes, most of them the king’s royal guards. The police said, 137 royal guards were arrested during the military assault on the palace and were detained at the high-security police detention centre at Nalufenya in Jinja District (38).

NRM ruling party supporters accused opposition leaders and supporters of orchestrating the clashes, while opposition supporters threw the blame back to the government for the attack that left many dead yet another option would have been taken.

An observer in Kasese said, “the meetings convened by the MPs were mainly attended by ruling NRM party supporters as most of the opposition supporters “remained in hiding”. A research assistant, who on Sunday attended one of the meetings at Bwesumbu Sub-county, Busongora County North, Kasese District, said, “some known opposition supporters who tried to speak out during the meeting were shouted down by ruling NRM party supporters”. Ms Nabakooba, the chairperson of the Defence Committee, who chaired the meetings, later said: “During our interactions with different people, they said that too much politics in the area is derailing peace efforts”(38).”

The opposition shadow minister for defence, who was part of the visiting team, said that, “they had gathered some concrete facts,” which he said they will use to write a report and make concrete recommendations to government and to the people of Rwenzori and their leaders.”

Police officers abandoned the police station for fear of their lives

Police officers in Kasese district abandoned police posts over fear of being attacked by the militia group. Though they said that, “the move is aimed at proving safety for the officers, some of the police officers said that, the Omusinga’s detention angered hundreds and this can prove an attack.” Other sources of information revealed that, “some police officers are even fearing to put on police uniforms so that they can look like civilians”. Police confirmed that, early November, “the Police and the UPDF attacked Rwenzururu palace of Buhikira in Kasese municipality and between the clashes over 60 people lost their lives, the King Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere and other hundreds of his royal guards were finally arrested for the act”(39).

Unclaimed dead bodies of royal guards

By the end of the attack, more than 140 royal guards and King Charles Wesley Mumbere were arrested during the military offensive. His Highness Omumbere had since been charged with murder. According to the army, “the preparations to release the bodies of the dead Royal guards to their families for burial is managed carefully.” However, locals remained worried since the army delayed to release and they kept in the local area. On November 30th the army handed over the bodies of the police officers who were killed in the clashed (40).

Army warned that, “recently killed Rwenzururu King, Charles Wesley Mumbere’s royal guards of Rwenzururu King that will not be claimed by relatives are to be buried in a mass grave.” Police said that, “at least 100 people were killed in fierce fighting between militias and Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) in a joint operation with police. About 46 royal guards were killed on during the force’s raid on Mumbere’s Buhikira Royal Palace in Kasese town”. According to former IGP⁹ Andrew Felix Kaweesi by 29th November Tuesday, “relatives of civilians and royal guards killed in the clashes had started picking bodies of their relatives from Kasese hospital mortuary where they were collected for postmortem and This did not exclude the “bodies of fourteen (14) police officers killed during the clashes.” At least one hundred thirty-six (136) people, including King Mumbere were arrested following the clashes. Mumbere was on 29th Tuesday November charged with murder at Jinja Magistrates Court and remanded to Kirinya government prison (41).

The Kasese Woman MP, Hon. Winnie Kiiza also called upon Ugandans to go to their nearest police stations/prison and search for people who were arrested from the palace (42).” Although it was noted that, “On 28th November, the Police had dispersed relatives who flocked Kasese hospital to pick the bodies of the deceased until 29th-30th November 2016 when police acknowledged the giveaway of bodies to their relatives for burial”(43).

⁹Inspector General of Police

Government intervention

Following the various incidents and attacks, several political initiatives and security engagements were undertaken and some were still on going by the time the study was carried out in 2016(36). These included; the Rt Hon Kajura Commission of Inquiry report of 2005 set up by Government brought to light useful insights to the situation in the Rwenzori region. Among the recommendations was the need for government to recognize the Kingdom of Rwenzururu as a cultural institution. This wish was granted by an endorsement of cabinet on 17th Mar 2008. Subsequently, His Highness was Coronated in 2009(44), meetings by Senior Security officials with His Highness the Omusinga and OBR Officials, meetings by the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee of Parliament with the Omusinga and OBR officials, meetings by the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee of Parliament with the Omusinga and OBR officials and in several high level meetings with the Omusinga, it was agreed that the cultural guards should be disbanded and the UPDF and police should provide security to the Omusinga in the palace and other areas, like is the case with other cultural leaders.

President Museveni ordered security be deployed in all areas to ensure that peace prevails in the area (45).

President Yoweri Museveni visited Kasese district 27th November 2018 and his visit followed Saturday's terrorist attack on Kasese town which caused for rescheduling of the Kasese district and this enabled him to offer condolences(46).

Kasese religious and civic leaders stand against violence (47). "The NRM¹⁰ government was believed to be strong and shall trace the people behind the insecurity incidents that took place in the Rwenzori sub-region and bring them to book" (48).

There was a group of MPs who fled from Mumbere's palace during the raid by security forces and complained about conditions of the King at his detention centre(49) and requested government to intervene.

The counts accused on the king

The Forum for Democratic Change's former presidential candidate Dr Kizza Besigye was arrested at the Jinja magistrates court after trying to force his way into where Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere was being tried. Under heavy security escort, Mumbere was on November 29 transferred from Police's special operations base at Nalufenya to Jinja Chief Magistrate's Court (50).

Rwenzururu King Charles Mumbere spent 2016 Christmas in jail after he was charged afresh, this time with terrorism, and remanded to Luzira Maximum Security Prison until December 28, 2016. Rendering to the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2002, terrorism is an act for "purposes of influencing the government or intimidating the public or a section of the public and for a political, religious, social or economic aim, indiscriminately without due regard to the safety of others or property" (51).

The king was jointly charged with more than 100 suspects, mostly his guards, before Jinja court. The last charges against the king, which came a fortnight after he was indicted for murder, stemmed from attacks on police officers and police installations in western Uganda in March. Prosecution alleged that, King Mumbere and a dozen others, including five royal guards, a royal native doctor and one cultural leader, orchestrated the onslaught(51) planned the attack.

In Jinja, the police blocked former presidential candidate Kizza Besigye from accessing the Magistrate's Court to show solidarity with the incarcerated king, this prompted the presiding magistrate to admonish the Force and demanding unimpeded access to court by well-wishers. Police also preferred to interrogate Dr John Baluku, the father of journalist Joy Doreen Biira, whom police had separately preferred charges of "abetting terrorism" (51).

Mumbere's co-accusers include Nelson Bwambale, Gideon Bwambale, Alex Bakulha, January Kule, John Sibanza, Katekwamahwa, Juma Muliki, Elias Muhindo, Thembo Jafar Maate, Johnson Kahuju and Almon Mbahimba. The lawyers also expressed to court the difficulty that they faced in accessing the King in prison. "The accused person was lobbied to have a small fridge in prison where he can keep his medicine. The person who prepared special meals for the accused person should be allowed access to the prison to take the food to the accused," said presiding Chief Magistrate John Francis Kagwa (52). "This is not strange because most of the

10 National Resistance Movement was founded as a Liberation Movement that waged a successful protracted people's struggle that liberated Uganda from fascist and dictatorial regimes. The National Resistance Movement restored political stability, respect for human rights, national unity, peace, security, law and order, Constitutionalism and the rule of law.

high profile inmates Luzirahoused, normally had cooks who prepare food for them, the likes of Dr. Besigye. The other orders of the court allowed the king's personal doctor, next of kin, and lawyers to regularly access him in prison alongside unrestrained public access when the king appears in court.

More than 150 suspects including Rwenzururu king Charles Wesley Mumbere were charged with treason over the recent Kasese clashes that left more than 100 people dead and scores injured. The suspects mainly in youthful age between eighteen (18) and thirty-five (35) appeared before the Jinja Chief Magistrate John Francis Kagwa, a day after Omusinga Mumbere was charged with several other counts including terrorism and robbery. The defence lawyers, Evans Ochieng requested clients to access treatment while in police cells (53). Government was quick to deny the torture allegations saying all the suspects who have woundssustained them during the gun fire exchange between government security forces and the royal guards. Bagheni a royal guard was second to die in Luzira and another guard, Bosco Mbusa Bwambale (54).

Synthetizing the saga

One of Uganda's most decorated army men and current minister for security Gen. Henry Tumukunde has spoken out on the conflict in the Rwenzori sub-region, saying all lives in the Rwenzururu kingdom matter, be it that of the Omusinga or his lowest subject. The Uganda People's Defense Forces attacked the Buhikira royal palace (55).

As tension continued to rise in Kasese over what next after King Mumbere was remanded to Luzira, opposition put government to the task of accounting for what transpired in the district. Accordingly, opposition felt that, government is hiding the number of the dead civilians and refused to release some information to the citizenry (56).

Uganda's leading opposition party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) officials and supporters had gathered at party headquarters in Najjanankumbi to hold prayers for Kasese; they had to postpone regional conferences and rallies. FDC's chief mobilizer ladies wing Ingrid Turinawe alleged that, the government had persecuted the people in the Rwenzori area, particularly Kasese district(57).

Honorable Betty Nambooze Bakireke a Member of Parliament (MP) for Mukono Hon. Betty Nambooze Bakireke openly attacked several government officials in relations to the Kasese clashes. In an inflammatory statement posted on her Facebook page, Nambooze attacks Vice President, Inspector General of police and the other top officials for remaining silence yet Ugandans are being butchered innocently (58). The MP in her detailed comment about the 'Kasese massacre' Betty Nambooze was quoted to have said that;

I have reserved my detailed comment on the Kasese Massacres for another day but meanwhile let me ask; in all what the country is going through where is;

"Vice President Ssekandi? The President was away for a two days visit to South Africa and people would expect the Vice President to deputize his boss at least by giving a comment on BBS Terefayina eyaffe (one of the local broadcasting television station in the central region)".

"Inspector General of Police Kale Kaihura- We all know how Kaihura loves the Cameras where is he"? This is the right time for the Security Minister Henry Tumukunde to be useful to the Country its either now or never...but not even cheapest new paper quotes writing about the soft spoken General".

Defence Minister Adolf Musigye- could have referred to this as the first "battle" under your command code named "Usalama Rwenzori" but chaali Amooti kobuzire (literally meaning you are lost in the scene where you are?)".

Brigadier oba Major Muhozi Kainerugaba- You are known to command successful operations, like the one that saved Mutagamba from the" terrorists" who had invaded her with a knife or when you almost captured Kony;that day you "captured" his (kony) coat...surely Major we are missing you in action...Nenchi mwana?!

Crispus Kiyonga – while it's true you lost an election and also you were dropped from the cabinet but still you are a senior officer, an leader and rich experience in the Rwenzori region who was anticipated to tell your kinsmen and the Country some words of wisdom at this critical moment your silence is felt.

Christopher Kibazanga- The former Forum for Democratic Change FDC member also brother to King Mumbere now Minister of State for Agriculture, how can you be so silent when your very Kingdom is being torn into pieces...a whole Prince of Rwenzururu...at least get out and appear to be mobilising for reconciliation...or just pay a visit to your incarcerated brother....GUNDI naawe (literally meaning also you) blood is more thicker than friendship.

Role of traditional leaders

Milita smeared with herbal concoctions and where made to believe they could not be hurt (59). The falsehood of herbal information. Theywere blind folded,"they were made to believe that, nothing will happen to them because they brought witch doctors from Congo." They added that,"if a solider fires a bullet they will not be hurt"(60). It was claimed that, "Milita smeared with herbal concoctions and where made to believe that all is

well.”The country cried while many perished in the latest skirmishes that initially began in the neighbouring Kabarole District culminating into an attack of a whole Kingdom(61).

Earlier warnings

Eighteen years before Rwenzururu King Charles Mumbere was arrested and detained after government forces raided his palace, President Museveni proclaimed that, the former rebel as a killer. The bizarre premise was outlined in President Museveni’s address to Members of Parliament in 1998 on the security situation in the Great Lakes Region, where he warned the Mumbere (62).

In June 2016, words went around from security briefing rooms into newsrooms that President Yoweri Museveni’s elite intelligence agencies had detected a secret plan to create a bloodbath and civilian havoc in some part of the country. The alleged revolution plot was supposed to kick off in June 2016(63).

According to Brig Elwelu’s allegation, there were reports that, a section of the Rwenzururu royal guards who had so far evaded arrest were regrouped and very soon had planned a launch of a massive attack on the security forces(64).

Dr. Kiyonga, a former MP for Bukonzo west staged a spirited fight against the recognition of the kingdom but later decided to support fellow Bakonzo at the time of recognition in 2009 (42).

The government claimed that, they had information concerning the Rwenzururu Kingdom royal guards attacking military installations, killing and injuring several security personnel since 2013(42).

Several meeting with several stake holders such as, Rwenzururu King Charle Mumbere Irema-Ngoma, security officers, political leaders on how to handle this issues in the region. Resolutions were reached but stake holders went contrarily to what was discussed which has continued to disatablise peace in the region (65).

In a press briefing with other Kings who had visited the palace of Omusinga, attributed the Yira issues on the Bakonzo in Eastern Congo who claimed that, the government of Uganda continued to marginalize them yet they subscribe to Uganda including services delivery(66, 67).

The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) continued to express deep concerns about the continued clashes reported in the Rwenzori region and particularly in the districts of Bundibugyo, Ntoroko and Kasese since 2013(68).

Rwenzururu Kingdom had officially rejected the newly appointed Royal Guards commander for the Buhikira Royal palace Capt. Fabian Kule Mabunda (69). The government had passed a resolution that provided security to all monarchies countrywide and sent UPDF¹¹ officer to command the royal security. The Chairman of the Rwenzururu Veterans Development Association Yolamu Mulima former fighters rejected Capt. Mabunda because he was not loyal to the Omusinga and the Obusinga as an institution. Capt. Mabunda who had also worked in the palace for nearly one month was accused of being part of a section of Bakonzo who publicly opposed the recognition of the Obusinga. The Kingdom decided to lock him outside the gate following instructions from the Minister of Security who implemented a directive from the Rwenzururu King who also requested the government to take back Capt. Mabunda and second another UPDF officer to take his position.

Causes of fighting in the Rwenzori region

The attacks conducted by cultural guards “Kirumira Mutima” who were said to be his creation and under the command of the King on the 26th of November 2016, the cultural guards of Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu attacked the joint security patrol team in Kasese town with a petrol bomb, stabbed and injured a soldier. This was immediately followed by simultaneous attacks in Ihandiro Sub County, at Kagando hospital in Kisunga sub county, Bwesumbu, Kyabarungira, Mubuku in Maliba Sub County and Ibanda in Bugoyi Sub County. In all sixteen (16) policemen lost their lives and six (6) guns were taken by the attackers.

Government was depriving the King and his subjects (Banyarwenzururu) of enjoying their constitutional right to cherish their culture in a kingdom that is recognized (70, 71).Article 37 states that, every person has a right to belong to, enjoy, profess, maintain and promote any culture, cultural institution, language, tradition, creed or religion with others (72).

The Rwenzururu Kingdom in Kasese wants the constitutional court to interpret Article 37 of the Constitution.He was stopped from travelling to Bundibugyo district to officiate over celebrations to mark the kingdom’s peace day which means a lot to them since it was the day the Bakonzo and Bamba broke away from Toro Kingdom. The celebrations were supposed to take place on June, 30, 2013. The government directed the Rwenzururu King, Charles Wesley Mumbere, to cancel his visit to Bundibugyo District to prevent possible tribal clashes between the Bamba / Babwisi and Bakonzo.(73).The government was quoted, “it is the decision of

11The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), previously known as the National Resistance Army, is the armed forces of Uganda. From 2007 to 2011, the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated the UPDF had a total strength of 40,000–45,000 and consisted of land forces and an air wing.

government and it was final with no bargains, it must be well considered; not negotiable and must be respected. It is taken for the good of nation and the region at large,” (73).

The incident in 2016 was not any different from what happened on June 30, 2012 when King Charles Mumbere visited Bundibugyo District and among other things set up a royal shrine and a flag at Kirindi Village in Bwamba County. As soon as he had left, clashes between the Bakonzo and Baamba-Babwisi communities erupted, as the latter declined paying allegiance to the Rwenzururu Kingdom. This left one person dead and hundreds of Bakonzo displaced. Omusinga Mumbere requested government to constitute an independent commission to investigate into the matter and conclusively come up with sustainable solutions to the tribal clashes (45, 67).

Rwezeruru people attributed the fight to affecting factors and marginalisation in the Rwenzori region (66). Conferring to Mumbere, he argued the president not to look at the Bakonzo as bad people (66). Omusinga added that, it took long to recognise the obusinga not because the government didn't want but the enemies of the kingdom have continued to attribute Yira to the Bakonzo in Uganda, those enemies have continued to design maps, and create its cabinets so that when one looks at it, they felt as if its true (66, 67).

Malicious statements that injures the reputation of the kingdom including the former minister of defence Crips Kiyonga. He publically warned president Museveni not crown Rwezeruru a Kingdom.

On July 1 2016, the Basongora community, one of the minority tribes in Kasese District installed their King, Ivan Rwigi IV Kabumba Agutamba Bwebale Rutakirwa on grounds that they do not share culture and norms with the Bakonzo (74). In the same 30th, 2016 a section of the Batuku tribe in Ntoroko District wrote to President Museveni banning the visits of both King Oyo of Tooro and of King Charles Mumbere of Rwenzururu in their area (74).

Also pointed out is the creation of new districts that has sub-divided the area into tribal territories. Prince of the Rwenzururu Kingdom Christopher Kibanzanga said: “There is something deeper in the Bundibugyo conflict than what meets the eye, therefore, we must also go deeper and investigate it because the Bamba and Bakonzo have lived together and intermarried for long without any problem” (74).”

Expansionist factor although the current districts are divided into tribal lines, cultural analysts argued that, this should not be the consideration by government to recognise a cultural institution (74) does it any way solve the problem? “Kingdoms should not be based on the territorial factor but culture, this is just expansionism at play” an elder in Bundibugyo observed. In their petition against what they call “the territorial cultural expansions of Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu and Obukama bwa Tooro over Batuku community,” the Batuku argue that, “the constitution regards them as a tribe”. They since formed an agenda called the “Anti-Kingdom interference Batuku community that continued to fight for their cultural rights”. They further argues that, “We do not have the same cultures and customs with Batooro or Bakonzo” the group argued and adds, “It is factual that, there has not been a king of different indigenous inhabitants in Uganda (74)”.

On August 3, the Banyabindi, one of the minority tribes in Kasese district, “also secretly installed their cultural leader, Isebantu Elisa Mugisa Entare ya Banyabindi”. They requested the government to recognise their King. King Mumbere believed that, “the abundance of the mineral deposits in his kingdom is driving minority groups to rise against his leadership in Kasese and Bundibugyo districts” (74). The King expressed fears that, “many more ethnic groups will raise to overrun the Bakonzo in order to take control of the rich areas of our Kingdom, especially the oil potentials”. Further the King argued that, “this explains why the current crisis is politically motivated” (74).

Rwenzori region had been earmarked for oil and gas production as exploration is already under way in Ntoroko district and some studies have been concluded and more studies being carried out in the Queen Elizabeth National Park in Kasese. The Batuku in their letter to the President alleged, “Our sincere analysis is based on why now get interested in Butuku community when there is oil prospects in Ntoroko district” (74).

The Batuku have warned government that there might be clashes between Tooro Kingdom and Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu because of early signs and interests to “colonise Ntoroko district”. About 2.5 billion barrels of oil were discovered from 40 percent of the entire Albertine Graben. The King of Bunyoro is demanding for 12.5 percent shares of profits accruing from oil and other minerals in the Kingdom (74).

The indifferences and discordant relationship between the Bakonzo and Baamba continue to be of daunting costs to the region's peace (45) and government must find a lasting solution to the problem.

There are groups that have pushed for sectarianism and these are the real enemies of not only security but also the prosperity of Ugandan people (25). It is this firm belief of ours that propelled us to sow the mustard seed of non-sectarianism that, eventually, became the mighty tree of NRM/NRA and the present peace in the whole country. It was on account of our non-sectarianism and always working for the unity of the people that, started with a small force, that eventually witnesses the construction of a very powerful force (75).

Omusinga Mumbere, castigated the people he described as self-seekers who he said were creating superficial situations that are seen as conflicts among the people in his Kingdom. “But the good news in that

these self-seekers will never succeed”, the Omusinga declared, attracting applause clapping and ululations from the crowd (76).

On April 14, 2016 the King and his subjects were blocked for over four hours from travelling to Kasenyi to celebrate the Kingdom’s environment day. Following the brief history of the Bakonzo, Bamba, Basongora, Banyabindi, Babwisi and other minority ethnic groups broke away from Toro Kingdom in 1962 accusing the pre-dominant Batoro Kingdom of oppressing them (76).

Agreeing with the Internal Affairs Minister, Gen. Jeje Odongo (36) who pointed out Political Causes. The talk of cessation and creation of the Bakonzo state of Yiira had been publicised in among the public domain for quite some time. Government took a position which was very clear, that, this dream is an impossibility in the present times. Government however needs to investigate the drivers behind the behavior of violent actions of Obudingiya Bwa Bwamba (OBR) and Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR)

Tensions between Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR) and Obudingiya Bwa Bwamba (OBB). The creation of Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR) and later Obudingiya Bwa Bwamba (OBB) cultural institutions was hinged on achieving political and social harmony. However, this created jurisdictional and control tensions between the two cultural institutions. Government continued to investigate the causes and determine a lasting resolving to end the enduring tensions (44).

Land factor serious claims after claims over land rights between the Bakonzo and other communities. It is alleged to be one other cause of the conflict. Indeed, the Kajura Commission of Inquiry report strongly recommended government intervention on the matter. This factor will further be investigated in order to provide lasting solutions to the land problem.

Economic factors where many of the local communities, especially those in the hard to reach mountainous areas are prone to exploitation, and misguidance by influential and powerful individuals to further their selfish and divisive political interests. Most of the youths participating in attacks are being assured of false promises of economic emancipation by these individual.

It should be noted that the current security situation has no connection to claims of political persecution by some area leaders. The government lost elections in several areas in the country and there has been no such violence occurrences in those areas. In any case the attacks in Rwenzori region occurred in 2012 and 2014 yet there were no elections during that period. The occurrences are a matter of security and criminality to which some individuals have to take responsibility for them (17).

Occasioned attacks by cultural guards of Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR) across the Rwenzori region against security installations (36) as follows; in Kasese, the cultural guards attacked the police at the Weigh Bridge along Kasese Mbarara highway, two police officers were killed and their guns taken; in Bigando sub-county, 11 people including a UPDF soldier, his wife and a child were killed; in Kibuku Ntoroko district, they ambushed a UPDF patrol truck and cut a soldier on the headed. They also they attacked the main police station in Ntoroko and took 3 guns; in Bundibugyo they attacked a Uganda Wildlife Authority post and took 2 guns. They went ahead and attacked the Central Police station, killed four police officers including the OC station and made away with 6 rifles; at Kanyamwirima UPDF Barracks they killed 4 soldiers and injured one. Here they also took one a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG).

In 2014 the attacks were conducted by “Isyomango Syo Businga” (Youth wing of the Kingdom), in the past wave of violence the attackers had graduated into a militia which is trained, uniformed, armed, camped, and under a command and control structure. This new structure is composed of “Kilhumira Mutima” (the strong hearted and keepers of a secret) who have occasioned the most recent attacks (77) violence.

It should be recalled that in 2014 a total of 68 attackers lost their lives in the violence (17). Additionally, 23 civilians died and 10 members of the security forces. Those who were arrested and prosecuted totaled to 179. Of these 155 suspects were leniently pardoned by government. Over 500 others who had fled after the attacks benefitted from the government amnesty returned and were rehabilitated and re-integrated into the community. Note that, among them were two ministers of Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu In the year 2016 alone, many civilian killings were noted to have been conducted by the same criminal groups (36) as followed; fifteen people died in Bundibugyo after the Feb 2016 election, 139 houses were also set ablaze in a period of 04 days; as the Bundibugyo clashes subsided, a similar situation developed in Kasese district following the Local Council III Election in Hima Town Council. On the night of 10th March 2016, in Hima Town Council, a group of 30 people armed with machetes, knives and clubs injured 04 UPDF soldiers; on 11th March 2016, the attackers critically injured 02 police officers and grabbed a gun from one of them; on the evening of 15th March 2016, the GISO of Kyabarungira sub county and his brother were attacked and stabbed in Kasese town, by suspected OBR Youths leaving them seriously injured; on the 23rd March 2016, clashes in Ntoroko sub county of Bundibugyo left 20 people killed, sparking a fresh wave of IDPs, approximately 5000 who sought refuge in Bubukwanga Camp; on 23 Mar 2016, a gang of criminals associated to OBR cultural guards, armed with pangas, attacked Kidodo Police post in Kasese Municipality, leaving 01 police man killed and 01 gun taken; these were many including incidents where they critically injured a Commissioner of Police in Buhuhira Sub County in Kasese.

The raw deal for Kasese municipality status; in 2015, the people of Kasese district were promised by the Government that Kasese town would be elevated to the status of a municipality in 2016. This excited many people especially politicians who wanted to take up office in a municipal administration. To our surprise and the entire community Kasese was not among the list presented by Local Government Ministry and fresh promises were made for Kasese and Mukono. Why has Kasese continued to be a raw deal (78)?

Effects of the Rwenzori saga

As interpreted by the local people, there were a mass exodus from the restive Kasese town as bodies of policemen who died in clashes with the guards of the king of Rwenzururu were transported to the main police station in the area. There were more corpses than refrigerators at the health facility's morgue, leaving others to decay locals say (79).

Research has indicated that over sixty-five (65) orphans and fourteen (14) widowers were stranded on what next since of the men killed were the bread winners to their families.

The future of sixty-five (65) children, five of them sickle cell sufferers, remained gloomy after their fathers died in bloody post-election clashes in Kasese district (80).

The turn of a political resistance movement into a monarchy. The King's group insisted on the issue of monarchy although there was a big group in Kasese that also opposed the idea until withdrew their objection including the Bamba leaders of Bundibugyo were totally opposed to the idea of the monarchy (25) following the operationalization of Mumbere being Omusinga, marked the beaming of cultural institution in Kasese.

Chauvinistic positions from some of those who claim to be supporters of Obusinga. They seem to insist that the Omusinga, apart from the Omukama of Tooro in his area, should be the only cultural leader in the Rwenzori region. Yet, there are other ethnic groups in the Rwenzori region: Bamba, Basongora, Banyabindi, etc. They have different ideas about this issue and have, in several meetings, made this categorically clear (25).

Arrest of journalists (81) KTN Television, former employer, of Joy Doreen Biira and one of the biggest stations in Kenya vowed to fight what it she called violations of journalists' rights. "We must stand up against dictatorship and journalists' violation". Doreen Biira a journalist ended up in detention and appeared first on Eagle Online.

Coffering to Najibu Mulema, Police in Kasese arrested the father of Kenyan based Ugandan Journalist, Joy Doreen Biira who worked for KTN. Through social media posts, the journalist was charged of terrorism (82)

Thirty Royal guards who were arrested during the clashes and transferred from Kasese to Jinja and joined those arrested earlier during the climax of the blood bath (83). King Mumbere was later charged again along with his 152 royal guards (83) with treason (84).

Royal guards of Rwenzururu King Charles Wesley Mumbere were detained and many had succumbed to the injuries during the fight at the king's palace on November 27, 2016. According to the late police spokesperson Andrew Felix Kaweesi said the injured guards were evacuated to Bombo Military Hospital for treatment (85). Following the law, a suspect is supposed to be held in police detention for a maximum of 48 hours (two days) after which he is either produced in court or released on police bond. Mr Mumbere, who was also arrested on the day of the assault on his palace and detained in Nalufenya, was charged with murder of a policeman which occurred months before the assault on the palace and was remanded in Nalufenya Police Station. While appearing on NBS TV, presidential spokesperson alleged that, "fresh charges waited to be slapped" on the Omusinga (85).

Elders, religious and traditional leaders

The religious Committee held a meeting in the trading centre in Buhuhira kasenyi village, where the bereaved families asked the government to compensate them (80) and the religious leaders agreed to present their proposal to the president.

Elders in buhuhira passed a decision to chase the GISO from the village including his relatives following residents' negative reaction on issues related to destruction of peoples' houses, plantations after killings took place in the Buhuhira Sub County during post-election violence that left wounds on hearts of many residents in Kasese (80).

The Inter Religious Council Uganda (IRCU) tried several times and managed to bring the families together but families that lost people are not ready to share same roads with persons who ordered the killing yet most of those killed were not connected to the clashes that started in Hima after elections.

Elders called for the removal of security forces from the area saying, "there is no rebel here but personal, family and social conflicts."

Religious leaders requested the Police officer in charge of Kasenyi police post, Oleke, the area Community Liaison Officer, Joseph Otiyo and the their UPDF counterpart, Second Lt SirajNassur Ijaga, to apologize for the sad events which was done for peace to prevail in the area.

The religious leaders urged the residents to use legal procedures of settling disputes after the attackers injured a Commissioner of Police, Jacob Opolot and a Special Police Constable (SPC) Joel Mbusa and even tried to disarm the SPC of his AK 47 assault rifle, forcing the security forces to fire in the air to disperse the group but in vain.

The leaders requested for calm as government and other stake holders try to settle the matter. Inhabitants alleged that, No rebel has killed our people but government security personnel's did according to the women member of parliament Kiiza Winfred (80).

Leaders prayed for peace to prevail in the area although they complained that during the prayer, only "First Lady Janet Museveni mentioned Kasese killings in passing, when she prayed for the "people of Kasese" while delivering the closing prayer at the annual National Thanksgiving service (19).PastorsDr Joseph Serwadda, a top Pentecostal cleric, conveyed the sermon of the service and Pastor John Mulinde of World Trumpet Mission, who gave the prayer of the nation, both did not hint on the matter of the killings in the Rwenzori sub-region(19).Kasese religious, civic leaders stand against violence (47) and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda visited Ruwenzori region clashes victims (47) and prayed for them. Similarly, Lango cultural heads urge government to 'forgive' Kasese King(86), they strongly warned subjects not to defy government's orders.

Aftermath of the attack by UPDF in the rwenzururu palace

Kasese in focus, months after the UPDF attacked the Rwenzururu kingdom's palace in Kasese, we meet with a former royal guard who witnessed first-hand what happened;

"On the 27TH November 2016 royal guards whose duties included guarding the King and the Kingdom institution, received training from IGP for one week. Being royal guards you cannot guard the king without training. It was 7:00pm late evening they saw some police and UPDF outside the palace and they didn't know what they had come to do, the King told them prepare so that you are not caught off guard. There was tension in the palace that Saturday 26th,2016 the eve of the attack there were some signs of government strategy and it seemed a long night since nobody knew what would happen that night. On Sunday 27TH November 2016 the Palace was attacked by UPDF and police for one hour and place was put on flame. The booms started killing royal guards. According to the late AIGP¹² Andrew Felix Kaweesithere were two formations in the palace, one was to get the Omusinga safe and the hurt in the inner ring was were criminals were hiding and he claimed that, there were 1000 royal guards and that is where the focus for government was. The royal guards wished that they tried fighting but their rudimentary weapons desired soil to swallow them since they could not match the technology and fire power that government employed. There were questions to be answered;what happened to the children and women in the palace and whether they were removed before the attack. The government insisted that, children and the king were brought out. The guard insists that the palace had many children who were orphans and being taken care of by the King's administration. One and half years later the guards were still hiding, some died and imprisoned since that fateful day." (87).

A good number of royal guards died in prison (88) and many who managed to escape were still in hiding fear to be imprisoned or tried in courts of law (87) and others about 167 royal guards surrendered (89). This followed an amnesty extended by government to royal guards suspected to have been involved in clashes with government forces since September in Kabarole and Kasese districts that culminated into the palace attack by the army.

Museveni faced under criticism for his role in ordering the attacks. At least 116 people were confirmed to have died during the raid, which also reportedly left an unknown number of both adults and children either injured or missing (90). Mr Museveni is only quoted as having told army high command members that King Mumbere refused orders to disarm, disband and surrender the royal guards, thus justifying the raid on his palace and no regrets.

Way forward

According to Katumba Wamala, following denial of involvement in the raid of the Palace, he clarified, "the operation in Kasese was a low intensity operation that did not require the personality and weight of the Chief of Defence Forces to be there. I added that since I had a capable officer at that operational level, I did not have to micro-manage the operation and that indeed I wasn't there" This statement as we saw in Daily Monitor of December 9 was carried under a rather misleading headingtwisted to read; "I wasn't involved in attack on Mumbere palace"(16) and media was advised to report responsibly.

In 1994, hate over the radio broadcasts in Rwanda according to Mille Collines of Rwanda, played an important role in inciting ordinary citizens to take part in the massacres of their Tutsi and moderate Hutu neighbours. It is estimated that about 51,000 could have been killed following these hate speech broadcasts. The media must work with everyone else to jealously guard the nations' peace and stability through peace-building reporting (16).

Efforts to amicably settle tribal tensions in the Rwenzori region continues as work in progress although there has been poor follow up with little or no implementation. In 2005 a Ministerial Commission (Kajura Commission) was set up with emphasis of investigating into the long standing ethnic conflicts in the Rwenzori sub region. Hitherto its recommendations have never been implemented. Government should also review the territorial boundaries of the ethnic groups within the region; this shall be a premise for settling land disputes in the region. Through the Parliament, Article (246) of the Constitution should be reviewed to clearly define the powers and functions of all cultural institutions in Uganda; this will therefore reduce on the ethnic clashes in Rwenzori and elsewhere (45).

"I don't think anything can be solved in Rwenzori without including the affected people in the Rwenzori Region, cultural leaders, elders, religious leaders and other stake holders", the Omusinga commented. Human rights organizations should also intervene in a peacebuilding mission in the Rwenzori region.

Ensure that government organs of DISO and GISO strengthen to management the security of the country effectively and efficiently.

Strengthen democracy, strengthen the restored human rights of the different cultural groups in Uganda, if they so wished, to restore the traditional cultural institutions or even create new ones on condition that they did not meddle in partisan politics, administration and legislation for two reasons:

First, in a democracy, the population govern themselves through elections. They are not governed by anybody else except themselves. The prime ministers of the cultural institutions that were restored speak with authority because the government has failed to put things into perspective not that they have insisted to speak as if it the people do not govern themselves. Government needs to dialogue with cultural leaders since they trust that they are influential in determining leaders at the local level although many of them have failed to sing the songs of central governments especially the message of non-sectarianism (25, 75).

Over decentralisation has created conflict at the lower level, the DISOs and RDCs are clashing with cultural leaders, elders, LCs¹³, and the community.

We need to build non-sectarian student bodies to the local level. The president recalled his non-sectarian student Movement, during Amin's time, metamorphosed into FRONASA that was part of the coalition that fought Idi Amin and, eventually, evolved into NRM. Right from the beginning, NRM opposed and despised sectarianism because it was illogical and, obviously, run counter to the interests of the people. The core interests of the people are prosperity and security for each individual family and for the entire society. When we talk of prosperity and security, we mean prosperity through production, not through parasitism (25).

For fair play the 10th Parliament should approve a law where in an both private and public organization must share equal numbers of jobs for the tribes then this will be non-sectarianism.

Reconciliation between Tooro and Kasese. The Rwenzururu King has marked his 47th coronation anniversary during which he extended an olive branch to his Toro Kingdom counterpart. In his address, the Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere Irema-Ngoma demanded for a meeting between himself and King Oyo of the Toro Kingdom so that together they could discuss and forge a united strategy to develop the Rwenzori region (76).

latest clashes in the Rwenzori subregion have once again attracted renewed demands for setting up a commission of inquiry which stakeholders belief could find lasting solutions to the crisis(91). What could have happened to the findings of the 2005 kajura commission and later government instituted talks with the leadership of the region.

Dialogue - Meanwhile, the MPs on the Parliament's Committee on Defense and Internal Affairs, should continue investigations into the killings in the region through holding meetings with the stakeholders in Kasese, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko and Kabarole districts. They should continue scheduling for meetings within the Palace and meet kingdom officials and local leaders in the affected districts.

Government should reinstate confidence and remove fear from the Rwenzururu people for dialogue to prevail. There is need to understand how the Region will be re-built given the status of the status of the palace, administration block, accessibility and uncertainty of charges against the King.

Harassing of people by government operatives in the area must stop since the populace is grieved and still in fear yet life must continue and the only hope is in these dialogues(18).

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V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE PRESSURES IN RWENZORI REGION

Irumba (68) argued that, the Uganda Human Rights Commission recognizes the interventions so far made by government and other stakeholders aimed at restoring peace in the Rwenzori region since the 5th July and the 27th November attacks. The following are the recommendations:

The Ministerial Commission set for Kajura (2005) should be reviewed and implemented in order to solve the long standing tribal conflicts and land tensions in the Rwenzori region and the following should also be considered; establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to comprehensively and holistically address the grievances of all the ethnic groups in the Rwenzori region(28); complete the resettlement program of the Basongora, Banyabindi and Bakonzo within the Rwenzori region with a clear map and land titles of the resettled land; initiate development programs for the idle youth who are susceptible to engaging in unlawful activities; expedite the extension of social amenities and infrastructure such as roads, water and electricity in the Rwenzori region and ensure that security prevails in the region by maintaining law and order within the communities in the region.

The Parliament: For fair play the 10th Parliament should approve a law where in both private and public there must equal numbers of tribes taking and occupying jobs then this will be non-sectarianism and a holistic solution to the ambiguities in Article 246 of the Constitution by reviewing it clearly define the powers and functions of all cultural institutions in Uganda.

Security, care must be taken when dealing with cultural related matters, people have a strong attachment to culture and some views have been presented below; strengthen public sensitization through community policing programmes; strengthen and adequately equip security agencies in the Rwenzori region with intelligence gathering mechanisms and response capabilities within the region in order to forestall the occurrence; expedite the process of investigating cases of suspects with a view to respecting the legal provisions of the 48-hour rule; expedite the court hearing process and police internal disciplinary processes in order to ensure a fair and speedy trial for the suspects; and expedite the process of investigating the cases of the six police officers still under detention with a view to releasing those found innocent and expeditiously prosecuting those having cases to answer.

Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) should closely monitor all activities of both local and international media houses, networks, radio stations in the region and ensure that they used inciting violence and manipulate/misinform the public yet they are dealing with an already polarized communities;

Judiciary and other Courts, should ensure that the Court processes are transparent and that justice prevails for the suspects in the Rwenzori incident. Also ensure that the exercising of judicial powers in an impartial way and human rights of the suspects are respected through the trial, counting contact to legal representation and access by family and treated with respect.

Politicians and cultural leaders should avoid politicizing sectarianism for political gains but instead, work together with all stakeholders to inform the communities on the need to exceed denominational and narrow-minded tribalism by looking at everybody as a Ugandan. Need for all leaders to expound unity and co-existence among the communities of the region, and to work together to promote harmony, understanding and development in the region; and cultural leaders within the Rwenzori region ought to form a group where the several cultural leaders and their themes can meet, deliberate and decide on various issues to do with cultural accomplishments in their region.

The communities in Rwenzori region to appreciate that it is their civic duty and accountability to respect the rule of law, appreciate co-existence with other tribes in the same region and to attempt to address their complaints through the lawfully recognized processes and discourse instead of resort to ridiculous and damaging, violent and illegal activities.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Rwenzori region has under gone ethnic divisions for the major part since independence. The region faces frequent instability hence a cracked community with uncertainties as a result of cultural and ethnic lines. While the present Army and Police presence shaped security assurances in the areas, there is still need to discover all other potential avenues of safeguarding the co-existence of the different ethnic groups in the region for greening a safe stay with all neighbors. There is thus an urgent need for a resettlement programme in the region amidst other short and long term involvements, in order to ensure unity in the culturally differentiated region. The need for continued sensitization programmes intended to create consciousness on people's privileges, rights, duties, tasks and the need for co-existence among the different communities in the Rwenzori Region.

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