

# Rebellion against Yuhi V Musinga persisted despite Muhigirwa's defeat

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King Musinga poses for a picture with the Ecole des sous-chefs EP.0.0.1100, collection RMCA Tervuren; unidentified photographer, s.d. All rights reserved

Although the south was subdued and the east showed reluctance to continue fighting, rebellion against King Yuhi V Musinga raged on, particularly in the northern regions of Rwanda.

One notable rebel leader, Mutwewingabo of the Abateke family, recruited forces around Nyabishambi (now part of Gicumbi District). His movement, named "Muyaga y'Abateke," gained traction as the deter-

mined warriors swept through Buliza (in present-day Rulindo District) and into Masoro.

As these events unfolded in the east and north, the court at Kamonyi became increasingly threatened. Militias that had previously engaged Muhigirwa in the south were recalled.

Rather than halting at Kamonyi, these forces crossed the Nyabarongo River to confront the rebels advancing from the east and north.

The already mobilised Abarasa militia pushed toward Buyaga (Gicumbi District), ultimately defeating the rebel forces. Mutwewingabo was forced to retreat to his point of origin. The final confrontation occurred at the Mulindi Swamp, near the current Mulindi Tea Factory in Gicumbi.

Following their victory, the royal militia turned westward, targeting Basebya, son of Nyirantwari, a member of the Abashakamba militia. After defeating him, the expedition returned to Kamonyi. According to historical accounts, Basebya fled to Kabale, in what is now Uganda.

The tense atmosphere also affected Balyinyonza, who, alongside his brother Bulabyo, attempted to flee to Uganda. However, they were captured at Cyinjojo in Rutare Sector (Gicumbi District) by Sahaha, the son of Rugangazi and chief of the area.

Balyinyonza and his brother were taken to Kamonyi, where they were sentenced to execution by drowning in Rwabayanga.

Meanwhile, European involvement in the region continued to grow. Captain Bethe, following in the footsteps of Captain Ramsay, assumed leadership of the Ujiji administration, which included Buha, Burundi, and Rwanda.

He sought to formalise Rwanda's northern border, crossing the Kagera River at Rusumo and travelling along Lake Muhazi's southern shores to Muhura (now in Gicumbi District).

From Kagitumba, he entered Mpororo (now in Uganda), eventually reaching the Muhabura volcano, and seeing Lakes Burera and Ruhondo, as well as Ntaruka Falls. He passed through the centre of the country, visiting the Gatwiko royal court (now in Muhanga District), before returning to Burundi through present-day Bugesera District.

Another notable European, Dr. Richard Kandt, who left a lasting legacy in Rwanda, arrived during Musinga's reign. He visited the new royal residence at Mukingo (Nyanza District) in 1898, where he met Ruhinankiko and his nephew, Rwidegembya.

In 1899, the royal court moved to Nyanza, opposite Mwima Hill. Around the same time, four Europeans—Bishop Hirth, accompanied by Brard, Barthelemy, and Anselme—arrived

in Nyanza, seeking permission to settle permanently.

They were received by Mpamarugamba, the son of Prince Mutijima (son of Yuhi IV Mazimpaka), who had been selected through divination to greet the foreigners on behalf of the king. King Musinga, wary of bad luck, avoided direct contact with the newcomers.

On Ruhinankiko's advice, Mpamarugamba granted the Europeans permission to settle in the southern region. After scouting the area, they chose Save, in present-day Gisagara District, as their base.

The Save diary notes that in July 1900, the king had to present himself to the Europeans. Dr. Kandt, who had earned this honor, shared the moment with the missionaries.

Once they learned of Mpamarugamba's identity and the fact that the king was still a teenager, Dr. Kandt appeared at the royal court in Nyanza one morning, threatening to kill Mpamarugamba if he continued impersonating the king. This forced the court to comply, and from that point on, Mpamarugamba's role ended.

European influence continued to undermine the King's authority. When Rukura attempted to proclaim himself sovereign of Gisaka, claiming to be a descendant of Kinyenzi IV Getura, Father Barthelemy, stationed at Zaza (now in Ngoma District), ordered him to leave immediately and return to Bushubi in present-day Tanzania.

The presence of Europeans on the scene signalled the erosion of King Musinga's power.