



Nbada Waterfalls

Located

Rwanda-Tanzania border

Nbada Falls (French: *Chutes Rusumo*) is a waterfall located on the Kagera river on the border between Rwanda and Tanzania, part of the most distant headwaters of the river Nile. The falls are approximately 15 m (49 ft) high and 40 m (130 ft) wide and have formed on Precambrian schists and quartz–phyllites. Although the falls themselves are not of significant height in comparison to other waterfalls, they have played an important part in the history of Rwanda because they form the only bridging point on the river in that area.

In history

The falls were the scene of the first arrival of Europeans in Rwanda in 1894, when the German count Gustav Adolf von Götzen came across from Tanzania (Rwanda had been considered part of German East Africa since 1885 but no German had yet entered the country). He continued from there to the palace of the Mwami at Nyanza, and onward to the shores of Lake Kivu.

The Belgians also entered Rwanda via the falls, when they took over the country during World War I in 1916. The bridge at Rusumo was the only feasible crossing of the river at the time, and the Germans had entrenched themselves on the

Rwandan side. By taking up positions in the surrounding hills, the Belgians were able to remove these guards using mounted artillery opening up the route by which they invaded the rest of the country.^[1]

The falls gained international fame during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, as thousands of bodies flowed underneath the Rusumo Bridge while a simultaneous stream of refugees crossed over it, fleeing into Tanzania to escape the slaughter. This was one of the first mass outflows of the Great Lakes refugee crisis. The Kagera drains water from all areas of Rwanda except the far west, and consequently carried all the corpses which had been discarded into rivers nationwide. This led to a state of emergency being declared in areas around the shore of Lake Victoria in Uganda, where these bodies eventually washed up.

In 2013 the African Development Bank Group approved funding for the Regional Rusumo Falls Hydropower Project which will increase renewable power generating capacity and access to electricity in Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. The project has two components: an 80 MW hydropower generation plant and transmission lines and substations. The Bank finances the transmission facilities of Rusumo Falls Hydropower Project.

Significance

Although the waterfall might seem insignificant when compared to the other aquatic wonders across the continent, it has played a crucial part in the history of Rwanda.

The falls were the first welcoming committee to the Europeans that arrived in Rwanda back in 1884 as although the country was part of the German East Africa since 1885 but no European had ventured to the country until 1884.

The falls also acted as an entry point for the Belgians when they occupied the country in the events of world war 1.

The river however gained international notoriety with the events of the 1994 Rwanda genocide where due to the fact draining water from all areas of Rwanda except the far west which leads to the bodies resulting from the massacre to be carried by the river.

Despite that unfortunate event the falls are now a vivid tourist attraction and help provide a renewable energy source as a result of the regional Rusumo falls hydropower project.

Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric Project

The Regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric Project (RRFP) is a hydropower project run by the Governments of Republic of Burundi and Republic of Rwanda and United Republic of Tanzania through a commonly owned Rusumo Power Company (RPCL).

The three governments entered the joint development through a Tripartite Agreement which was signed on 16th February, 2012.

The project is situated at Rusumo Falls, at the common border of Rwanda and Tanzania on River Kagera, whereas the power production facilities are located on the south side of the bank of the Kagera River in Tanzania. The substation is located on the northern side of the bank of the river in Rwanda.