### War with Ottoman Egypt[Edit](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Yohannes_IV&action=edit&section=5)

*Further information:*[*Ethiopian-Egyptian War*](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian-Egyptian_War)

Throughout his reign, Yohannes was embroiled in military struggles on his northern frontiers. First was from [Khedive](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khedive) [Isma'il Pasha](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isma%27il_Pasha) of [Egypt](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt), who sought to bring the entire [Nile River](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nile_River) basin under his rule. The [Egyptians](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptians) flirted with encouraging Menelik of Shewa against the King, but earned Menelik's enmity by marching from the port of [Zeila](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeila) and occupying the city-state of [Harar](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harar) on 11 October 1875. Both Menelik and Yohannes had regarded [Harar](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harar) as a renegade province of Ethiopia, and Egyptian seizure of the Emirate was not welcome to either of them. The Egyptians then marched into northern Ethiopia from their coastal possessions around the port of [Massawa](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massawa). Yohannes pleaded with the British to stop their Egyptian allies and even withdrew from his own territory in order to show the Europeans that he was the wronged party and that the Khedive was the aggressor. However, Yohannes soon realized that the Europeans would not stop the Khedive of Egypt and so he gathered up his armies and marched to meet the Egyptian force.[[12]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yohannes_IV#cite_note-12) The two armies met at [Gundet](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Battle_of_Gundet&action=edit&redlink=1) (also called Guda-gude) on the morning of 16 November 1875. The Egyptians were tricked into marching into a narrow and steep valley and were wiped out by Ethiopian gunners surrounding the valley from the surrounding mountains. Virtually the entire Egyptian force, along with its many officers of European and North American background, were killed. News of this huge defeat was suppressed in Egypt for fear that it would undermine the government of the Khedive. A new Egyptian force was assembled and sent to avenge the defeat at Gundet. The Egyptians were defeated again at the [Battle of Gura](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Gura) (7–9 March 1876), where the Ethiopians were led again by the Emperor, and his loyal general, the capable (and future *Ras*) [Alula Engida](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alula_Engida). This victory was followed by Menelik's submission to Yohannes on 20 March 1878, and in return, Yohannes recognized Menelik's hereditary right to the title of King (*Negus*) of [Shewa](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shewa), and re-crowned him on 26 March. Yohannes took this opportunity to tie the Shewan King more closely to him by arranging for Menelik's daughter [Zewditu](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zewditu) (the future Empress of Ethiopia in her own right), to be married to his own son and heir, *Ras* [Araya Selassie](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Araya_Selassie_Yohannes).[[13]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yohannes_IV#cite_note-13)

Emperor Yohannes also convened a general council of the [Ethiopian Church](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_Church) at [Boru Meda](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Boru_Meda&action=edit&redlink=1) later in 1878, which brought an end to the [ongoing theological dispute](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Christological_disputes_in_Ethiopia&action=edit&redlink=1) in the local church; Christians, Muslims, and pagans were given respectively two, three and five years to conform to the council's decisions. Non-Christians were forbidden from participating in the government unless they converted and were baptized; the Muslims were given three months, while the pagans had to become Christians immediately. "Having concluded that Wollo was worth a mass," as Harold Marcus wryly puts it, his retainer *Ras* Mohammed of Wollo became disobedient of the tax rules, which he and the entire Wollo refused to pay tax to the government in which Emperor Yohannes had discovered, *Ras* Mohammed was conspiring with the Turks the Ottoman empire because of his Muslim affiliation. *Ras* Mohammed was brought to Emperor Yohannes and was confronted of his conspiracy in helping the Muslim colonizer and to bring down the Judeo Christian empire. *Ras* Mohammed was siding with Muslim Affiliates of Turkey. After meeting with King Yohannes and in learning that if he were to assist the Turks, in the end, he and the rest of Ethiopia would become a slave to the Arab/Muslim world. *Ras Mohammed* then chose to become a Christian to later inherit a Christian name (later *Negus*) [Mikael of Wollo](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikael_of_Wollo), the Emperor stood as his godfather at his baptism. The new convert was given Menelik of Shewa's other daughter, [Shewarega Menelik](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Shewarega_Menelik&action=edit&redlink=1), as his wife. Yohannes went one step further and pressured Menelik to expel all of the Roman Catholic missionaries from Shewa.[[14]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yohannes_IV#cite_note-14)

However this time, instead of a single Archbishop, he requested that Patriarch Cyril send four to serve the large number of Christians in Ethiopia, who arrived in 1881. They were led by *Abuna* [Petros](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Abuna_Petros_VII&action=edit&redlink=1) as Archbishop, *Abuna* [Matewos](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abuna_Mattheos_X) for [Shewa](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shewa), *Abuna* Luqas for [Gojjam](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gojjam) and *Abuna* Markos for [Gondar](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gondar). *Abuna* Markos died shortly after arriving, so his diocese was included with that of *Abuna* Atnatewos. It was the first time that the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria had appointed four Bishops for Ethiopia.[[15]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yohannes_IV#cite_note-15)

When [Muhammad Ahmad](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Ahmad) proclaimed himself the [Mahdi](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahdi) (a prophesied Islamic leader who would precede the [Day of Judgement](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Judgement#Islam)), and incited [Sudan](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan) into a long and violent revolt, his followers successfully drove part of the Egyptian garrisons out of Sudan and isolated the rest at [Suakin](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suakin) and at various posts in the south. Yohannes agreed to British requests to allow these Egyptian soldiers to evacuate through his lands, with the understanding that the [British Empire](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire) would then support his claims on important ports like [Massawa](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massawa) on the [Red Sea](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Sea) to import weapons and ammunition in the event that Egypt was forced to withdraw from them. This was formalized in a treaty signed with the British at Adwa known as the [Hewett Treaty](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hewett_Treaty). According to the treaty, the Ethiopians would allow the Egyptians to safely evacuate out of certain cities such as [Kassala](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kassala), which aggravated the Mahdists even more. [*Ras*](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_aristocratic_and_court_titles#Ras) Alula defeated an invading Mahdist army at the [Battle of Kufit](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Battle_of_Kufit&action=edit&redlink=1) on 23 September 1885. About the same time, [Italy](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Italy_(1861%E2%80%931946)) took control of the port of Massawa, frustrating Ethiopian hopes and angering Yohannes.[[16]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yohannes_IV#cite_note-16) Yohannes attempted to work out some kind of understanding with the Italians, so he could turn his attention to the more pressing problem of the Mahdists, although *Ras* Alula took it upon himself to attack Italian units that were on both sides of the ill-defined frontier between the two powers. Domestic problems increased when the Neguses of both Gojjam and Shewa rebelled against Yohannes, and the Emperor had to turn his attention from the encroaching Italians to deal with his rebellious vassals. Yohannes brutally crushed the Gojjame rebellion, but before he could turn his attention to Shewa news arrived that the Mahdist forces had sacked [Gondar](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gondar) and burned its holy churches. He marched north from Gojjam to confront the armies of the Mahdi.