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ORIGINAL: FRENCH

RUANDA-URUNDI UNDER BELGIAN ADMINISTRATION AND
TANGANYIKA UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

PETITION FROM MWAMBUTSA, THE MWAMI OF URUNDI

DATED 25 JULY 1948

In accordance with rule 84 of the Rules of Procedure for the Trusteeship Council, the Secretary-General of the United Nations transmits herewith to the members of the Trusteeship Council a communication dated 25 July 1948 from Mwambutsa, the Mwami of Urundi, concerning the Trust Territories of Ruanda-Urundi under Belgian administration and Tanganyika under British administration. This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Visiting Mission to East Africa.

No. 11

UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO EAST AFRICA

TO: Mr. Trygve Lie,
Secretary-General
Usumbura, 3 August 1948
Att. Dr. Aleksander

FROM: J. de la Roche,

SUBJECT: Transmission of Petition

In accordance with rule 84 of the Rules of Procedure of the Trusteeship Council, a written petition dated 25 July 1948, from MWAMBUTSA, Mwami of Urundi, received by the Visiting Mission to East Africa, at Kitega, on 25 July 1948 and relating to the Trust Territories of Ruanda-Urundi under Belgian administration, and Tanganyika under British administration, is herewith transmitted to the Secretary-General.

As required by rule 84, copies of this petition have been communicated to the competent local authorities, the Governor of Ruanda-Urundi and the Governor of Tanganyika.

Observations, if any, will be sent subsequently.

MWAMI WI URUNDI
"MWAMBUTSA"

KITEGA (URUNDI)

25 July 1948

Received by the Visiting Mission
Kitega, 25 July 1948

Sir:

I respectfully take the liberty of asking you to be so good as to give careful consideration to the possibility of a return of the district of Bugufi to the Kingdom of Urundi.

That district was always an integral part of my country. It was only in 1923, after the German occupation and the arrival of the Belgians, that a boundary commission established the frontier with the Tanganyika Territory, which resulted, no doubt unintentionally, in cutting off Bugufi from Urundi.

Certain circumstances which I wish to bring to your attention helped to perpetuate a mistake which has worked to my disadvantage. I was a minor, eleven years of age, and had to rely for the administration of my country on a regency council which found itself confronted with a fait accompli. To the claims subsequently made by the regency the answer given was that no favourable action could any longer be taken.

It is said that at the time of fixing the boundary the provincial chief, Kinyamazinga, was in attendance at my court and thus could not be consulted as to the nation to which his country belonged. He continued, nevertheless, to recognize me as his sovereign.

I have also enclosed copies of a historical note drawn up two years ago by one of my chiefs, and of the letter sent by me to the Resident of Urundi whereby I initiated my claim.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, that you will be kind enough to consider my just claim in all fairness, and I thank you very sincerely in advance.

I have the honour to be, etc.

The Mwami of Urundi
(signed) MWAMBUTSA

The Chairman of
The United Nations Mission
Kitega

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MWAMI WI URUNDI
"MWAMBUTSA"

MURAMVYA (Urundi)
20 February 1946

Sir:

Now that the war is over I have the honour to enquire whether it might not be possible for the Belgian Government to come to an agreement with the British Government for the return of the Bugufi district to Urundi.

Bugufi was, in fact, always a province of Urundi. After the German occupation and the arrival of the Belgians it continued to be such until 1923. At that time a boundary commission fixed the boundary between the Tanganyika Territory and Urundi, and Bugufi was cut off from my country. I do not know why that decision was made or why the regents, NDUWUMWE and NTARUGERA, let the matter go without objecting. At that time I was only eleven years old and was too young to take an active part in the Government of my country, which was ruled by a regency council. I remember, however, that in 1920 or 1921 the chief of the province of Bugufi came to pay homage to me at Muramvya. His name was Kinyamazinga.

Bugufi was always Urundi territory. The Mwami Ntare sent a chief there who was a native of Mbuye in the Muramvya district. It would therefore be just and fair for that territory to be returned to me.

If necessary, a number of old residents of the country can give more details on this question, which I am submitting to you in the hope that you will take action on it.

I have the honour to be, etc.

The Mwami of Urundi

(signed) MWAMBUTSA

The Resident of Urundi,
Kitega

BUGUFIHISTORY:

Bugufi is a small province located north-east of Urundi. It is separated from Usui by the Ruvubu River. It was founded by King Ntare II (about 1830 to 1860) and its first Chief was called MPEHE. At that time this region was overgrown with forests and thick wooded savannah, and was very sparsely populated.

By right of family, Mpehe was the king's night watchman. One night, as the result of a certain happening, King Ntare promised him a chieftainship. Returning from the hunt one day, Mpehe reminded the king of the promise he had made him, whereupon the king ascended a high mountain and with his lance showed Mpehe the province which he was giving him. The king also gave him a little drum called "MUHABURA" as a sign of the authority and power thus granted. MUHABURA comes from the verb guhatura, which means to gather together what was scattered. In the figurative sense it means that, when he beat the drum, many men would answer his call and settle in his territory, and that gradually Bugufi would become populated and be a country rich in men and cattle. It is to be noted that this drum, MUHABURA, bears the same name as the sacred bull of the royal herd of Urundi.

Mpehe set off with some other servants of the king to assist him in taking over that country, which was unknown to him.

The Chief, His Family and Descendants: As soon as Mpehe had been made a Chief, he established himself a Shungwe, chose his pages and set up his court.

By family he belonged to the Abaswere. They are Bahutu who as a result of marrying into Batutsi families acquired some Batutsi features and characteristics, but were never able to become Batutsi completely. They were ennobled and received the right to marry into the lesser Batutsi families.

After his accession, Mpehe proclaimed himself a member of the Abanyabugufi family to which was later given the synonym Abaramba. The Abaswere family exists everywhere in Urundi. In view of their former office they are usually found in the neighbourhood of the "Bigabiro" (former royal residences) of our kings, for example at Nyabiyogi, Kagomba chieftainship, Nduwumwe chieftainship. They are still found absorbed in the mass of the population as in the neighbourhood of Kitega and also in many other areas.

More Abaswere are found in central Urundi, for to be appointed Mpehe had accompanied NTARE in his travels. He also came, like the other servants of the king, from the high country (ruguru: a term currently employed to designate the part of Urundi where the Mwami preferred to live).

GENEALOGY: (1) Mpehe begot (2) Baramba, and then (3) Mpanda; Mpanda /begot (4) Ruvubi;

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begot (4) Ruvubi; Ruvubi brought forth (5) Rusengo. After Rusengo came (6) Kinyamazinga.

Kinyamazinga was deposed in 1941, and his son (7) Yarusabo succeeded him. On his accession, the latter took the name of his ancestor, Baramba, in order to create belief in succession to royal title, such as we have here.

Such succession to royal title had never been known in Bugufi before it was introduced there by Yarusabo.

Important Batutsi Families in Bugufi. Almost all of them are met with in Urundi. In most cases they are families which, having been expelled and disowned by their main branch, left to find shelter elsewhere. The families which left, originally small in number, settled down and increased in Bugufi.

These important families are:

1. Abongera or Abanyecongera: Gahanga, former sub-chief of Kaliza.
2. Abanyakarama: Ntibihirana, sub-chief at Rugarama.
3. Abasapfu: Bukomeye, Kanazi Hill.
4. Abahondogo: Muzungu, sub-chief at Ntaretare.
5. Abenerwamba: Bdahagarikiye, deceased, but his son is sub-chief at Kapingo.
6. Abashomo: Singaye, sub-chief at Nzaza.
7. Abenyagisaka: Sebihinda, sub-chief at Buga.

Nkaka, sub-chief at Shanga.

8. Avaryna: Gicunkuma, at Juruligwa.

Rugambarara, at Juruligwa.

These families are all similar to those which we know here. (Consult Mr. Simons in Coutumes et Institutions des Barundi.)

As for the Bahutu families, they are exactly the same as those which are known in the district of Kiteganyi (Butambuko, Urundi) and more particularly on the Shoza-Kasenye-Kabogo Hills (same district).

The families in question are:

1. Abajiji: Kirajagarays, Kanazi Hill. Rusengo's confidential adviser.
2. Abashubi: Banenuwonze, servant of the chief, Mabawe Hill. Nuka, family of cooks, Muhweza Hill.
3. Abahinda: Semujanga, whose son is sub-chief at Ngundusi.
4. Abymva: Mikaga, Mkanda Hill.
Gafyiki, Ngundusi Hill.
5. Abasanzu: Kiromba, Court assessor.
6. Abanyarwanda: Ruhangaza, Nzaza Hill.
7. Abaha: Mudende, Mushiha Hill.

Segakoko, Mushiha Hill.

/8. Abahanza:

8. Abahanza: Ruhwabare, Chuya Hill.

Semambu, Chuya Hill

As in ^{the} case of the others, these families are also found among the Bahutu families here.

The native inhabitants of our country have many relatives in Bugufi; parents-in-law, cousins and uncles. Thus, for example, Kikaga of the Aburva family has nephews called Ntibakiranya and Macumi at Shoza, in the Katamba sub-chieftainship. At Rumandari in the Bahama sub-chieftainship, all the Bashubi are related to those of Vuza in the Ngwebe sub-chieftainship. The Muhutu Ntibihonoye of the Abazanza family is at Kasenyi in the Katamba sub-chieftainship; a large number of his near relatives are in Bugufi, particularly in Kiromba-Ngwebo.

Intermarriages are numerous: affidavits for marriage between persons from Bugufi and those living here are often registered with the Mwhinga native courts.

Allegiance of the Chiefs of Bugufi.

Before the British authorities took over Bugufi, the various chiefs always recognized the sovereignty of our kings:

1. Presents offered to the king in certain circumstances: the presents offered to the king were numerous, some being in the form of hoe rents, and others consisting of cattle. If these presents were sent as a spontaneous gesture, they were called "ingorore", and if they were part of the booty taken in raids on neighbours, they were called "umwiri".

In the time of King Mwezi, Ruvubi sent these rents through BICEZEHI, of the Abanyakarama family. The son of Ruvubi, Rusengo, also maintained relations with Mwezi through Bigezehe and then through MUKUBANO of the Abarimbanya family. MUKUBANO was often accompanied by NTAMBWE, of the Abashubi family.

In the time of King MUTAGA, Rusengo continued to send Mukubano, who even received five head of cattle from the king. After the death of Mukubano, he sent Senyambo, Semuhomye and Chabakanga, Rusengo's young brother. These last three continued to carry out their duties after the accession of MWAMBUTSA. On the death of Rusengo, his son Kinyamazinga sent five head of cattle to announce the death of his father by the same three messengers named above. Like his forbears, Kinyamazinga continued sending these political presents to the King until the British took possession of that province. It even appears that Kinyamazinga continued doing so for the first few years after the separation.

/2. Like other chiefs,

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2. Like other chiefs, they used to go and spend a few days at the royal court: gushengera. According to what older people say, Ruvubi and Rusengo came to the court of Mwezi on several occasions. To report only a more recent happening: On one occasion Rusengo did not share the cows obtained by raids on the chieftainships of Busokoza and Mbanzabugabo, who had become unruly and rebellious. Fishing in troubled waters, Rusengo wished to keep all the cattle he had been able to take. When Mwezi learned of this he requested help from the Germans, and they sent soldiers who arrested and despoiled Rusengo. Together with much of his cattle he was brought before Mwezi. Rusengo asked for pardon and solemnly promised not to offend again. As a sign of pardon the king gave him 30 head of cattle and a bull.

From then on Rusengo regularly paid homage to the kings, Mutaga and Mwambutsa. Once Rusengo went to visit Mutaga with Kalibwami, sent on that occasion by his old father, Busokoza.

Later, Kalibwami went with Rusengo's son, Kinyamazinga.

The last to attend Mwambutsa's court was Kinyamazinga, but only after the taking over of Bugufi by the British.

3. They used to receive cows from our kings. It is established that Ruvubi and Rusengo received cows from Mwezi. Rusengo received some from Mutaga and the queen mother. When he was in attendance at the court of Mwambutsa, Kinyamazinga received some, as did chief Mbanzabugabo.

4. They used to take part in various feasts and public rejoicings. The last to participate was Kinyamazinga (around 1921), and it was then that he received the last cow from the Mwami. This was at the feast for the sowing of sorghum: Umuganuro. It was likewise on the occasion of these feasts that the other chiefs also received cows.

5. In time of war they always took their places in the royal army.

When Kanugunu and Mbanzabugabo, later Busokoza, rebelled, King Mwezi appealed to the army of Rusengo in order to fight the rebels.

Language:

The principal language spoken in Bugufi is Kirundi. Swahili is now taught in the schools, and there are many natives who have come from other areas and have introduced some foreign words.

Manners and Customs:

As the families are the same, almost all the customs and beliefs are the same.

Note: Many cattle raisers in both territories have abagabire from one or the other side of the border. Moreover, in 1944 the territorial court settled many cases in which inhabitants of Bugufi claimed "an Inyokorano" from the natives living here. There are now many barundi who have abagabire in Bugufi /and who would like

and who would like to make kwokoza. There is movement back and forth across the border of abagabire that are with their shebuja, and not much of such activity is seen along other borders.

Economic Relations between Bugufi and Urundi:

It cannot be denied that trade is constantly carried on between the natives of Bugufi and those of the adjoining area in Urundi (the Butambuka). This consists of native products such as hoes, foodstuffs, earthenware, and so forth. Traffic in European manufactured goods and in cattle and other livestock is prohibited by the Customs regulations, but is known to be carried on unlawfully.

In short, trade among the natives across the border has developed to such an extent as to be more like inter-provincial traffic in the heart of Urundi.

The present boundary between Urundi and Bugufi is only of very recent origin (1922) and is a purely European affair. The traditional north-east frontier of our State has always been the Ruvubu, a river which has always served as a boundary between Urundi and Usüwi.

MUKENKE,

23 March 1946

Chief of Province, J.B. NTIDENDEREZA

(signed) J.B. Ntidendereza