

**IS THE 1979 MUSLIM BLOOD-BATH IN  
BUSHENYI HISTORY?**

A REVIEW OF THE GENOCIDE THAT WAS CALLED  
LIBERATION.

**BY Dr.ABBAS KIYIMBA**

## INTRODUCTION:

It is now coming to eleven years since the end of the war that ousted Idi Amin from the presidency of Uganda. Some people choose to identify this war by the gigantic name of "**LIBERATIONWAR**"; but as the experience we are about to review will show, **absurd** is a weak term to describe the colorful naming of this shootout whose major highlights was the convictimisation of the innocent. those who followed issues of: The "Vicegerent" in 1987 got an idea of what happened in Bushenyi (Ankole)in 1979.when the human rights commission was setup in 19987,it tried to side-truck the issues by hearing evidence on every thing else except the massacre of over sixty Muslims. If Jumba Masagazi had not exploded it, may be up to now the issue would never have been among the concerns of the commission. And when they addressed themselves to it was to pay a lip service to it because they soon jumped off it without hearing what major witnesses had to say. Instead they decide to emphasise the killing of Muslims at a mosque in Kajara.They propelled the name of Obeid Kamulegeya to prominence in association with the death of these Muslims and sought to imply that when Muslims die, it is a Muslim affair in this they were helped by the country's largely anti-Muslim press.

The authorities at Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) were not very keen on the issue; they wanted to forget anything that might put the in disfavor with the NRM government which some of them continually thank. When the Vicegerent ranking up the issue number of them were heard complaining that "**these young boys want to bring us problems**". And in another development one of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council officials told the present writer face to face "we have more important issues to deal with"

At that rate, the issue that involved the murder of so many Ugandans was steadily degenerating in a stale and misreported history .two organization refused to forget the issue; they were the Vicegerent newspaper and the Makerere University Muslim Students Association (MUMSA).We insisted that if we do not cause this issue to be redressed, then we shall soon be worthless. Our grand children would register that when Muslims are killed, it is non issue. So we decided to visit Bushenyi with two aims first to reassure the Muslims there that they were not alone in their pain, we were with them. Secondly to collect first-hand information from the survivors of the holocaust so that we may confront those who wish to forget it with the real facts. We are therefore not merely interested in ranking up unpleasant history that might destabilize peace. But we believe that the danger lies more in forgetting than remembering, if the peaces we seek is to be permanent.

## **THE TWO TRIPS:**

We made two trips to the scene of the 1979 holocaust. The first one that took place in September, 1988 was composed of the following:

1. Abasi Kiyimba
2. Imam Kasozi
3. Idris Semakula.

The second trip took place in February, 1989 and the team was composed of the following:

1. Abasi Kiyimba
2. Hassan Mwesige
3. Musa Tonda
4. Ali Konge Kyeyune
5. Ali Mwesigwa

We used MUMSA van No.UXF, 739, and the driver on both occasions was Ali Mukibi

## **THE FIRST TRIP**

The first trip was mainly a familiarization tour. It introduced us to the people, both of Mbarara and Itendero. We enjoyed the hospitality of the chairman of the Muslim Committee of the area, Mr. Abdulmutwalib. We were able on this occasion to collect the general story and sequence of events from the eye-witnesses. We also met among other venerable personalities, Sheikh Abdulmanafi Semakula, Bashir Semakula Serujuge and others. We also passed through Kyazanga in Masaka District where we made the acquaintance of several survivors who had run away from Itendero in the wake of the renewed hostilities against them. In particular we were welcomed and given first-hand briefing by Hairat Nambi Segululigamba, a Muslim woman mobiliser in the area, and daughter of the great Muslim pioneer in Itendero, Hajji Abdallah Segululigamba, who was among the first victims of the massacre of 1979.

## **THE GENERAL STORY**

The parish (Muluka) of Itendero is found in Bushenyi District. Islam has been a resident quality of the culture of the people in this part of the world since the close of the last century. For all the past years, Muslims and Christians are known to have lived together peacefully. During Amin's time some of the Christians started getting discontented by the fact that the leader was a Muslim. They nursed their grudge and threatened that if there was a change, the Muslim would "see" them. The trouble that culminated into the murder of more than 60 Muslims started long before the fall of Kampala on 11<sup>th</sup>, 1979.

### **1. March 1979**

By March 1979, the town of Mbarara had fallen into the hands of the invading forces and Ugandan opportunity to harass the Muslims without a defender. The first incident was that in which four Muslim lives ended in cold-blood. In the village of Mbagwa in Kiziba sub-parish, a hostile group of Protestants attacked and killed

2. Idi Tamukedde
3. Mansur Mutebi (son of Idi Tamukedde)
4. Mustapha Mabuye
5. Abdallah Kyegombe

They were all killed in the house of Idd Tamuzadde and the Christians kept guard over it to ensure that they were not buried. For two months, they remained unburied. They were buried in May 1979 after the bold intervention of the then chief Khadhi, the late Sheikh Mulumba. It will be recalled that this period, the leader was Yusuf Lule, a man who had converted from Islam, and saw little value in Muslim life. He therefore turned a deaf ear to the outcry of the Muslim community. When on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1979, the Late Sheikh Kassim Mulumba proclaimed over the radio that the "Liberation" meant nothing to the Muslims, Lule was irritated. He is quoted as saying in response, that reports were extremely exaggerated. The killers not only went free, but were encouraged by the lack of care from government, to kill again.

### **2. April 1979**

This was the month in which the government of Idd Amin actually fell in Kampala. The harassment of the Muslims intensified to nearly the entire district of Ankole. Kagango sub-county was the worst hit. Here Muslims lived in constant fear and intensive harassment. More than 400 Muslims were detained without any charges, being Muslims was their only crime. They were forced to ransom themselves

by paying dearly in form of money, cows, goats, sheep, bicycles, radios, etc. that of their property which their tormentors could not take was destroyed. For example houses and plantations were burnt and cut down respectively. A number of Muslims were forced to drink alcohol while others died resisting it. In this month of April five prominent Muslims were murdered.

They were:

1. Hajj Abasi Kayemba (former county chief Igara)
2. Ismail Mutangizi (former senior Internal auditor, Ankole district)
3. Haj Amiisi kapalaga (former county Imam, Bunyaruguru)
4. Hajj Hassan Sewanyina (former sub-county Chief Isingiro).

These were killed on different days, and apparently accoeding to an organized plan of harassment. All this time no restraining voice from government; the forces of oppression seemed to find justification and approval from this silence, and may be were not mistaken.

### **3. May 1979:**

Encouraged by the total helplessness of the Muslims, the Christians intensified their harassment in the following areas:

- Burning houses
- Slashing all banana plantations
- Looting of the property belonging to Muslims
- Taking over their land and turning it into grazing ground
- Burning down mosques.

The burning of mosques was a fresh development conceived in May as part of the great idea of completely exterminating Islam from the area. Among the Mosques burnt down in the county of Sheema were;

1. Kashekuro
2. Kiyungu.
3. Kasana
4. Kyengando
5. Marembo
6. Nyakanyinya
7. Kyamata
8. kihunda
9. Kyamushakara.

Those were the mosques burnt in only one county of Sheema; otherwise in the whole of Ankole District, a total of 27 Mosques were burnt down.

Under the intensified house burning campaign of May, the following lost their houses:

<b>No</b>	<b>Owner of the burnt house</b>	<b>Parish</b>
1	Bashir Semakula	Kiziba
2	Abbas Mugoli	"
3	Abdallah Katende	"
4	Dauda Serujunge	"
5	Hamad Katende	"
6	Hassan Hamutambo	"
7	Abbas Nsambu	"
8	Dauda Serunjogi	"
9	Ausi Semwogerere	"
10	Abdu Ishngabashiaja	Kiziba
11	Mutwalibu Turyatunga	"
12	Iddi Tamukedde	"
13	Abdallah Segululigamba	Rwabutura
14	Jafar Kibirige	"
15	Sulaiman Kapere	"
16	Hiziri Byandala	"
17	Rajab Kibadula	"
18	Abduswamad Ntate	Kinyungu
19	Habib Maloge	"
20	Imam Zikusoka	"
21	Ishaka Magezi	"
22	Ahmadda Mawanda	"
23	Elias Mugerwa	"
24	Abdu Murema	"
25	Zaid Muwanga	"
26	Umar Mutono	Rwengando
27	Haruna Musajjaakawa	Nyakabira
28	Noor Mulefu	"
29	Abdunoor Mulele	"
30	Abdunoor Sebalu	"
31	Abubakar Kadala	"
32	Ismail Balindekawa	"
33	Anat Nankya	"
34	Hajjat Hadijah(Kalijja)	"
35	Hajji Byekwaso	Ishaka
36	Idi Bintubizibu	Kigarama
37	Musa Mwebe	"
38	Abdu Katarikaawe	"
39	Kasim Barukayo	"
40	Musa Rwabihuro	Kagango

41	Muhammad Mbidde	"
42	Abbas Toronwa	"
43	Sulaiman Sengahaki	"
44	Ahmada Kasozi	"
45	Hajji Kasule	"

A number of Muslims whose houses were burnt, like Abdallah Segululigamba, Idd Tamukedde, Abdunoor Mulele, etc were also murdered earlier or later. Others only saved lives by running away in time. Other houses belonging to Muslims were burnt down in other parts of Ankole e.g. in Kijara and Mbarara town.

#### 4 June 1979.

The month of June marked the climax of the atrocities committed against the Muslims of the area. By this time Lule's government had been in power for two months. Nothing had been done to the offenders, so the same crime could be committed again with impunity. It was fuel e.g. by Edward Rurangaranga who addressed meetings in the area, in which meetings he would make it clear that the people he was addressing were in two categories: Amin's men and the others. The old Sheikh Abdulmanaf quotes Rurangaranga as saying to the non-Muslim members at the gathering that: "We have finished the stem (Amin), the branches (Muslims) are yours". The Protestants got more hostile and started by verbally harassing the Muslims. They told them they would get them, sooner or later. A plan was hatched and all the non-Muslims alerted. Some of them were not in favor of the proposed action, so they talked it to their Muslim friends. But the majority of non-Muslims agreed to the plan they waited for an opportunity to implement it.

The spark came on 25th June, 1979. Fenekansi Kamisha, a Christian was murdered in his house by assailants that have not been identified up to now. The Christian accused the Muslims of the murder, and proceeded to execute "justice". Kamisha was one of the people that had led teams of Christians to harass Muslims and collect ransom from them. On the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1979, a mob of Christians armed with spears, knives and ropes, started collecting Muslims and tying their hands at the backs. They said that they were doing it on the orders of Yoweri Museveni the then minister of defense. They were led by Bankutaha, and included Machote, Buchuku, Yoram, Kamugish, Rweizire, Rwanuma, Kategaya, Nyamugurusi, Eridadi and others. They gathered the Muslims in the home of Abdallah Segululigamba from where they marched them to Rwizi river for execution one after the other. At the Rwizi river Muslims were butchered in the most horrifying

manner. There was one whose head was cut into three pieces before being finally thrown into the river. other cases included those whose hands or legs were cut off, then thrown into the river to drown. The imam Abdallah Segululigamba was mercilessly hacked in the middle with a panga and thrown into the river. the most memorable of these cases of cruelty is the 27 year old Madiya Natende who was seven months pregnant. her stomach was ripped open with a panga and the fetus crudely torn out. Needless to add, that she die soon after. Madiya's mother watched all this, and she would retell it to the end of her earthly days she herself survived as if by a miracle she jumped into the water before being cut .

We shall never learn the full story of the manners of death and the nature of the suffering that the dead people went through because it can only be told by them. The following were the people who were killed at the river Rwizi in June 1979.

No	Names	No	Names
	<b>ADULT MALES</b>		<b>ADULT FEMALES</b>
1	Abdallah Segluligamba	1	Haliima Kinana
2	Abubaker Katongole	2	Hayrat Namakula
3	Abdu Ishangabashaija	3	Hadija Namayanja
4	Nashir Semwogerere	4	Aisha Kasule
5	Ismail Sempa	5	Hadija Mukibi
6	Bruhane Sentende	6	Sania Nalubega
7	Idris Serujunge	7	Haliima Nabatanzi
8	Umar Nsamba	8	Hadija Nanteza
9	Hussein Serunjogi	9	Zuhra Namakula
	<b>CHILDREN</b>	10	Naira Nabunya
1	Nuliat Namakula	11	Mariam Tibanagwa
2	Abdu Katende	12	Bint Juma Nakayenga
3	Madina Nabukalu	13	Mastula Nakato
4	Luuba Namakula	14	Layusa Bakazibaguma
5	Zainab Nakayinda	15	Nafsi Nabatanzi
6	Aisha Nantende	16	Nuliat Mbabazi
7	Madia Namakula	17	Aisha Nalongo
8	Taha Habyalimana	18	Zaituna Namakula
9	Mariam Nabukalu	19	Zaina Namakula
10	Madina Nakawesa	20	Aidat Kenyana
11	Hamida Nansamba	21	Amana Nantande
12	Naziru Nsamba	22	Nuliat Kaweesa
13	Muzida Nsamba	23	Hadija Kayinda
14	Ibrahim Kabuye		
15	Zinab Nabunya		
16	Rehema Nakachwa		



17	Luub Magala		
18	Muzaphar Kabuye		
19	Ismail Kato		
20	Khamiyat Nabukalu		
21	Hadija Nassaka		
22	Haliima Nbatanzi		
23	Bitijuma Nakayanja		

It cannot be proclaimed that these atrocities in any way took the form of political struggle. It was pure murder because some of the people killed were very old men and women and others very young children. Abubaker Katongole was 80 years old, Segululigamba was 75, Haliima Nbatanzi was 80, Aisha Katendewa was 85, Nuliya Nmakula was 2 years, Hamida Nansimab was 1 half years and most of the children were generally below 5 years old. It should also be noted that the list here includes only those people from one county and not all of them were recorded. The names of the rest of the people who died throughout Ankole District are not available to us. In addition, it was not even possible to recover all the bodies of the people known to have died. For example, of the sixty four people we recorded here, only 36 bodies were recovered from the water in which they were thrown. They were buried in a time of fear and distress, with intimidation being carried out by soldiers (the supposed liberators) and other government officials whose duty should be to protect all **citizens**. It was not possible to bury them in their homes as this was "a danger zone"; so they were buried in mass graves at Nyamitanga mosque. The survivors fled the area and went to settle in Kyazanga in Masaka District, leaving their land to be occupied by their **tormentors**.

### **1980-85**

This was the time that has come to be referred to as Obote 2. People like Ruranganga who had directed the persecution of Muslims assumed offices of responsibility in government. A minister in the Obote 2 government, and together with him in government were a number of people of ill-will for those Muslims who chose to stay in the area, harassment continued; it took the form of psychological harassment, intimidation, denial of participation in public affairs etc. Every year, under the pretext of Bushenyi 1, Bushenyi 2, Bushenyi whatever, Obote and his men gathered in Bushenyi to mark Obote's return to Uganda.

For the Muslims, this event was also a reminder of the time when they were deprived of their rights as citizens of this country. Moslem founded primary schools were abandoned, mosques neglected and

orphans went without education, food, and dress. The leaders of Uganda Muslim Supreme Council were busy quarrelling among themselves and seeking the support of non-Muslims in their factional struggles. For all practical purposes, the world seemed to have forgotten these unfortunate people. The events of 1979 were not even history, because history is recorded. The question that tormented those of us that bothered to think about them was: Is it possible to forget these people and rest with a free conscience? The answer is **no**, it was necessary for us not just to record the general story, but get the minute details, that is why it was necessary to make a second trip.

## **THE SECOND TRIP:**

By the time we made the second trip, we had managed to publicize the plight of these unfortunate people, and obtained some financial assistance from the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) for them, which we delivered. We first made a stop over at Kyazanga where we were taken around Kakuuto primary school by its proprietor, Sheikh Mbajja. This is a school for Muslim orphans.

It has a total of 15 orphans and out of these, 96 are children of the victims of the 1979 holocaust. They study free of charge but they are completely helpless when it comes to scholastic materials and dress. They also do not have any form of bedding. MUMSA made some contributions towards their dresses from the funds provided by WAMY, but it was meager compared to the need.

The following day Friday we continued to Itendero. After Juma prayers we talked to the Muslims and gave them words of solidarity. Among other points we encouraged and thanked them for insisting on upholding the banner of Islam in the area in spite of the wishes of their enemies. We were impressed to note that a new mosque had been erected at the site and would soon be ready for prayers.

We met the headmaster of Itendero Primary School, Mr. Ismail Senyonga and discussed general issues relating to the orphans. We were given a list of 44 orphans in the school. Of these, 16 were completely helpless and could neither afford the fees nor the scholastic materials. The delegation cleared all their fees obligations for the year 1989 and made some contribution towards the scholastic needs of some of the pupils.

The following morning, we proceeded to Kiziba parish. Our mission here was two fold – to talk to the survivors of the event of 1979 and get their personal, detailed testimonies, and to offer some official financial relief for the orphans in distress. We paid the fees of 32

orphans in Kiziba primary school, and for five students in secondary schools. We then proceeded to talk to the survivors of the massacre. In all, we were able to talk to about 20 survivors. A part from Mzee Hassan Hamutambo (81) who we had met earlier at Itendero, we met the rest of the home of Sheikh Abdul-Manaf Semakula. Each narrated to us a peculiar experience involving his/her personal survival, but their stories collaborated the general story already given.

The people interviewed included:

1. Hassan Hamutambo; an old man of 81 years who lost a 34 year old son and himself survived narrowly.
2. Abdul Manaf Semakula; the deputy District Kadhi of Mbarara. He is the oldest man in the area. He refused to leave because, he says if he leaves, others will leave and then the word of Allah will be rubbed out from the area..
3. Twalib Kasule; an elderly gentleman that suffered greatly during the massacre.
4. Bashir Semakula Serujunge; a young man in his early 30's that jumped into the river before being cut and swam to safety. He is credited with removing many of the dead bodies from the water and helping to prepare them for burial.
5. Yudaya Baryanengwe; an old lady in her sixties. She was cut three times by Buchunku and then thrown into the water. She survived miraculously, through the intervention of non-Muslims who found her floating but had no knowledge of how she had come to be there.

Other survivors included Asia Kishiki, Mayi Nabukalu, Habib Rutwinda, Mastula Segululigamba, Ishaq Magezi, Jalia Semwogerere, Hamid Semakula, Mrs. Kayinda, Mrs Muzamiru Kangave, Abdu Hakim Luyima, Kinani Mutyaba, Abasi Sebadda, Fati Nanyonga, Sulaiman Semakula, Hairat Nambi, Yunus Tumwenda, Abdallah Katende, Sulaituna Nanyonga and others. (Some of these were interviewed in Kyazanga where they now live). The full texts of their personal testimonies are available in both MUMSA and Vicegerent office.

Of particular interest in these testimonies is the fact that these people know exactly who killed who as some of them were looking on when their friends, parents, children, wives and husbands were butchered. Here below we present the list of the people that killed 37 of the victims and inflicted injuries upon two of those that miraculously survived.

<b>No</b>	<b>Victim</b>	<b>Killer</b>	<b>Present state</b>
1	Bumbakali Katongole	Byarutsya	In Prison, Kyamugolanyi
2	Mwajjuma Nakyaja	''	''
3	Burhane Sentende	''	''
4	Naziiru Nsamba	''	''
5	Nuliat Mbabazi	Buchunku	''
6	Hariat Namakula	''	''
7	Nuliat Kyokusaba	''	''
8	Zaituni Namakula	''	''
9	Rehma Nakachwa	''	''
10	Abdallah Segululigamba	Machote	''
11	Hadijah Nasaka	''	''
12	Kalijja Nanteza	''	''
13	Madiya Nantende	''	''
14	Saniya Nalubega	Kamugisha	''
15	Nashir Semwogerere	Ndeezi	Free at Home, Nyakachembe
16	Umar Nsamba	''	''
17	Asiati Nantende	''	''
18	Afusa Nabatanzi	Mugyenyi	''
19	Abbasi Mugisha	''	''
20	Haliima Kinaana	''	''
21	Mariam Nabukalu	Rweizire	''
22	Muzinda Nsamba	''	''
23	Aramanzane Serunjogi	''	''
24	Idris Serunjogi	Ruboha	Free at Home, Bunyangabo
25	Masitulla Nakato	''	''
26	Muzapharu Kabuye	''	''
27	Layusa Bakazibaguma	''	''
28	Aidat Kenyana	Rufigi	Free at Home, Kihunda
29	Abbas Kayinda	''	''
30	Ismail sempa	''	''
31	Hadija Nakayinda	''	''
32	Ibrahim Kabuye	''	''
33	Abdu Ishangabashaija	Rusasana Rutagasa	At home, Rwengando
34	Aisha Kalule	Kyanyabanda	''
35	Kamiida Nansamba	Matayo	Free at home, Nyakaoemba
36	Zuula Namakula	Tom Mayanja	Free at home, Byanyagonga
37	Tibanagwa	Kakyanga	Free at homa, Kihunda

Mariam Nakitende and Yudaya Baryanengwe were brutally cut by Nsangeki and Buchunku respectively. Nsangeki died but Buchunku is still alive. The actual killers of the other victims are not specifically known; but it is known that in addition to the above list of murders, Mwesigye, Renshana are known to have participated in the killing.

The other information that the people of Kiziba hold as sacred were names of the people who still occupy the land they snatched from them 11 years ago in spite of the claim that sane government had returned to Uganda.

Below is a list of the owners of pieces of land that are still illegally occupied:

<b>Land owner</b>	<b>Illegal occupant</b>	<b>Location</b>
Hajj M Serunjogi	Nsangeki's family	Nyakacemba
Dauda Serunjogi	Muheirwe	"
Hajat A. Nakayenga	Kashaija A	"
Kasule Kapere	Gibamanya	"
Mustapha Ddungu	Bachondooza	"
Zamuda Nabukalu	Ruhema T	"
Hajj K. Katende	Bakweta E	Kiziba
A. Mugooli	Mwesigye	"
A. Mugooli	Kishakiizi	"
Hajj A Katende	Rutendana P	Bunyagonga
A Katamba	Nkwitsi	Rwengamdo

The Muslims of the area are aware that the Banyarwanda whose pieces of land were taken away during the Obote 2 regime were returned to them when the NRM government came to power: but theirs which were taken in six years earlier have not. They are also grieved by the fact that the known murderers of their people, 13 of whom appear in the list above, were free and even leaders of the people under the RC system. They have also had that some senior ranking officials in the NRM government are involved in attempts to free the four jailed killers.

### **THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:**

The NRM government set up the human rights commission; we thought this was a step in the right direction as it meant that the criminals of the past were to be brought to justice. But we are dissatisfied with this commission for several reasons:

1. There is no Muslim representation. It is not possible that matters of Muslim interests can be adequately handled without any one

- to speak up for them with some feeling that arises out of identification.
2. The only person that has been detained after appearing before the human rights commission is a Muslim, Jumba Masagazi.
  3. The commission did not allocate enough time to listen to witnesses on the 1979 Muslim holocaust. They have given three times as much time to listen to witnesses on Ben Kiwanuka's death than they have to that over 64 Ugandans.
  4. They have attempted to divert the attention of public from the killing of 64 Muslims by Christians to the death of two Muslims in Kajara by the Uganda police supposedly at the instruction of Abdul Obeid Kamulegeya, a prominent Muslim.
  5. President Yoweri Museveni was implicated by the testimonies. We are not satisfied that he chosen to give his evidence in a closed session whereas this is an issue of interest to all Ugandans of good conscience.
  6. Witnesses like Rurangaranga whom even the president himself implicated as responsible for directing the murderers, has not been summoned to appear before the commission.
  7. Murderers who have been unequivocally named to the commission still walk free. This continues to be an embarrassment to the commission and to the government.

## **WHAT DO WE WANT?**

A senior NRM official has made an irritating comment in reference to those who blame the government for not bringing the 1979 killers to justice to the effect that: "we can not bring them back to life, can we?" Of course he is right, they can not be brought back to life, and we are aware of this. So what do we want? We are not irresponsible agitators seeking to re-open wounds of the past that are better forgotten. We are patriots who would like their country to start again on a road of meaningful peace.

As president Yoweri Museveni himself has said more than once, you can not have peace with out justice. We want justice. We would like all murderers to be apprehend and for trial. We have been to the area and talked to the people. All the orphans know who killed their parents. They talk of revenge twice a day, and constantly await their chance. If we satisfy them that there is another more civilized way of getting justice done, we might be able to avert another crisis in the area. Otherwise, we do no see the atmosphere clearing. And it comes to that, we do not think it is desirable for the crisis to clear from the atmosphere before it is positively addressed from above. The longer this is delayed, the closer we come to denoting the time bomb that with it laid under the ideal of peace in this country.

For this reason, the murder of over 64 Muslims in Bushenyi can not become history. It is still a live issue that will affect the destiny of this nation, whether we like or not. If we choose to re-address the future. If we wish to push it prematurely into historical records, albeit often erroneously made, we shall have made no difference between us and those that came before us, in choosing to sign death rather than life warrants for our nation.

## **PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF SURVIVORS OF THE 1979 HOLOCAUST IN ANKOLE.**

The following are the personal testimonies of the Muslims who survived the massacres committed during the 1979 war.

### **MZEE HASSAN HAMUTAMBO (BORN 1908)**

Born in 1908 in Kigezi district. In 1925 he migrated with his parents to Rwengando in Kiziba sub-county Ankole district. By then he had not married. He fought the Second World War and returned to the same place in 1946. his father was not a Muslim and was married to 10 wives. In 1946 Hassan Hamutambo became a Muslim. He later married a non-Muslim lady and in 1975 people wanted him to convert to Christianity. He however refused. From then his wife misbehaved and even refused to convert to Islam. He divorced her.

Asked how Muslims behaved during Amin's regime, Mzee Hamutambo said, "generally the Muslims behaved well, save for two men, one of whom is currently in jail". It were mainly the Christians who held high positions of responsibility. For example all the chiefs, save for then Gombolola chief, Abas Kigozi, were Christians.

Asked on how the massacres started, Mzee Hamutambo said that it was all started by the Christians holding continuous meetings. There after they went to Muslim homes and demanded cows as ransom for having misbehaved during Amin's regime. Among the people whose cows were eaten are Jafari Kibirige, Miuro, Hajji Katende, Serunjogi and Hamidi. The following the Banana plantations belonging to the Muslims were destroyed. All these events took place in June 1979.

The ring -leaders in this merciless action included Kyankaga who was currently shifted to Bugongwe in the sub-county of Shuku and Katete who acted as secretary. He is still in the village and is now RCI Rwengando. Kabanda is also RC chairman in the area, Kigambe is RCII chairman, George Gachibayo now removed from RC leadership. All these are there unarrested.

The following day was for collecting Muslims from their places or homes at around lunch time. They were called out of their homes by people with spears, dogs and banana fibers being told that they were needed by Yoweri Museveni to explain certain things. On coming out of their houses, they were hand tied with the banana fibres and led to River Rwizi where they were cut with "Pangas" and thrown into the water.

Asked whether he lost his family member, the old man said that he had lost his eldest son Abdu Isangabashaija who left three sons of whom two are currently in primary four and one in primary two. Another one is the son of Abdulmanaf who was his in-law. The worst experience of all, was that of the lady who had been married to Ali – Madiya Namutebi who was seven months pregnant. Her belly was opened by use of a Panga, fetus removed and thrown in water. Madiya was decapitated and thrown in the water. So said the old man. Abdallah Segululigamba the Muslim pioneer in the area was also killed.

The Mzee also said that before all this took place, there were some four people who were killed in the house and the Muslims were refused to bury them until after three months when a delegation from the headquarters of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council headed by the Late Kassim Mulumba came to the place.

Those were:

1. Idd Tamukedde
2. Abdallah Kyegambe
3. Mustapha Mabuye
4. Out of his memory

All of them were neighbours. Buried later by were only skeletons. "we placed two in each grave", said Mzee Hassan.

Asked how he managed to escape, " I cannot exactly tell how I escaped". It was a horrible experience, but somehow I managed to escape to Zaire where I stayed for sometime in Muslims' homes. In the same year I came back because of my people I had left behind, but I found they had gone to Mbarara.

On property, the old man said he had lost almost everything. His house was also burnt. "As if that was not enough, in 1982 during Obote II regime, when they started chasing the Banyarwanda, my house was burnt alleging that I was a Nyarwanda. I later went to Mbarara and cleared myself by producing evidence." When Lutwa took over in 1985, they again came to his place at around 4.30pm and burnt everything within the grass thatched house. In it were 30 bags of coffee, 30 bags of maize, 4 bags of beans, 4 bags of ground nuts



and 3 granaries of millet. They alleged that my son Mutwalib Dimba who had on many occasions stolen money and a radio cassette; then they wanted him to give testimony to the police. "However, some of the people who did it were arrested", Mzee Hassan said.

When NRM came to power and Resistance committees were formulated, he resumed the issues. As regards responsibility, the old man said that he has 10 children in primary school, three of whom are orphans. He has three in secondary school. Asked whether he knew about the other orphans, he said he did not know much, except those of Abdallah Kachwa. People had dispersed into different places after the tragedy, he noted sadly. He however, said that many are with Sheikh Abdulmanaf Semakula at Kiziba, "he lost many children about 10 and his wife was cut on the head but still lives". So that was the experience of the old man, Mzee Hassan Hamutambo who is now approximately 81 years.

### **MR. IBRAHIM KANGAVE**

He stays in Kiziba village. He asserted that people killed in the 1979 Muslim massacres were not politicians. He said that soon after the meetings made by non-Muslims especially Protestants in Itendero and eventual asking and the eventual asking of ransom from Muslims and demolishing of banana plantations. Fenicance Kamisha was killed by bandits during the night. Others say that this was the origin of the Muslim massacre as they thought it was the Muslims who had killed him in retaliation. He contended, however, that they wanted to use this as an excuse to finish Muslims in the area which seemed to have been their wish for a long time.

He also said that some government officials were sent to the area in 1980 during Binaisa's regime but were chased away by throwing stones at them. That marked the end of the Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> 1989 research and the delegation spent the night at the Itendero Mosque chairman's home.

### **SHEIKH ABDULMANAF SEMAKULA.**

Currently, this is the oldest Sheikh in the area and one of the earliest settlers in the area. He came to the area while very young at about the age of 5 years with his father. They came from Kyaggwe to Nakasambya and to Kiziba when he was 20 years.

Asked whether during Amin's regime, he had problems with non-Muslims. He said, "there were no problems at all. We even married from them", he added.

Concerning the atrocities done to Muslims, Sheikh Abdulmanaf, said that it seemed that Amin's having been a Muslim and a president of the time, had caused the protestant to nurse a silent grudge against all Muslims. Sheikh Abdulmanaf recalls that, Rurangaranga came to the area and called for a meeting, he (Rurangaranga) told the people separate "those of Amin here and those of not there". They refused to separate. But the Muslims were told to separate, which they did. He addressed them separately. There after he addressed the other group. It is reported from people who were in the other meeting that Rurangaranga said "We have finished the stem (Amin) and the branches are yours". This was in 1979. It was not long thereafter before the non-Muslims especially Protestants started asking for ransoms, burning houses and destroying gardens. "On the 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1979, they started collecting all the Muslims from their houses in broad day light and took them to River Rwizi". Said the old sheikh.

Some of those involved in the process of collecting were:

1. Machote currently in Prison
2. Rwezire
3. Bucunku - Currently in prison
4. Yoramu - Currently in prison
5. Kamugisha - Currently in prison
6. Kyankaga - Not arrested

The Muslims were cut, thrown into the river, and those who managed to survive, ran to the district commissioner. A meeting was convened at Kagango. President Yoweri Museveni was there in person. He ordered them to be arrested and imprisoned but some of them were released soon after. Kyankaga was not arrested and stayed at his home.

Another meeting was held at Kiziba to try and put out the fire and to seek compromise. At the meeting a resolution was passed that whoever shall be seen doing an act again would be fined. This meeting turned the matter from open operation to secret one which was more destructive. They could come in the night take all the things. So the Muslims ran to Kabwohe; those who remained were forced to sell their land at take away prices. For instance;

1. Musa Serunjogi sold his land and now he lives in Kyazanga. It was bought by Nsangaki who had disguised himself as a Muslim.
2. Hajj Katende was also chased away after the killing of his mother and three children.
3. Hajj Dauda was also chased.
4. Hajati Hadijah was killed and her land taken.
5. Hajati was thrown into River Rwizi. She survived but her four children and a daughter did not.
6. Abubaker was killed and his land was taken.
7. Abasi Mugoli's land was taken.

8. Abasi Binyansi's four children and his wife were killed. He ran to Bunyaruguru and his land was taken.

Asked whether the cases were reported to the Police, Sheikh Abdulmanaf said, they had reported and that the cases were now in court, " the other side hired a lawyer and the Muslims were called upon to hire one but they could not raise it because the lawyer wanted shs. 400,000/= (four hundred thousand shillings)!!

On the current situation and relationship between the Muslims and Christians, Sheikh Abdulmanaf said, it is cool though there is no good relationship because as none visits the others and "many do not greet us. They of ten threaten that when Museveni's government is overthrown, they will kill us". So he said in sorrowful but firm voice. An example of such a person who threatens them was given to be Thomas Mayanja a brick layer. He is known to have been in three religions so far, one of which is Islam.

The old sheikh said, most of his people were killed, leaving only the following three old people.

1. Hajji Ausi Semwogerere born in the area in 1918
2. Mayi Nabukalu – their sister, and
3. Himself, Abdulmanaf Semakula.

Notable among the atrocities, include Yudaya Balyanengwe's head was cut to the extent of removing the bones. She was thrown into the water but later put ashore by the waves.

On whether they involved themselves in the resistance council politics, the old sheikh said they did.

The following Muslims are on the RC Executive:

Bashir – Secretary

Muzamil – secretary for defense

Abdulkarim Luyima – Secretary for rehabilitation.

He added however, that these positions can become meaningless as the important decisions are taken by Christians, including those without office, some of whom were the authors of the unforgettable atrocities.

The sheikh added by saying that he is not impressed by the work the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council had done. It may even be that some assistance was sent but this assistance did not reach them.

## **KINANA MUTYABA**

He is 50 and a son of Abdulmanafi. He contends that there was no problem between the Muslims and non Muslims before the war of 1979. On the day when Amin was disposed, to the country sheikh, sheikh Musa and on his way back, he met a lady. He did not know her neither did she know him. She asked him whether he had gone to Mbarara. He said he had not. Then she told him not knowing that he was a Muslim, "we want to kill all the Muslims. We shall find them in their houses; we need to go with pangas, dogs and spears. In Kiziba we shall use a mob", Kinana recalled this very clearly.

Soon after the war, to the area came Rurangaranga as a district commissioner to the country headquarters. He came at about 4:00pm and said he would for four hours. "I want people of our group those who follow me and those of Amin in the other group", Rurangaranga said. There after people turned to Muslims saying those are Amin's people. "we were disappointed and walk away at around 5:00pm". His brother Ahmed Katamba went to the country chief- ford a catholic and spent a night there.

That very night kamisha the chief of ransom collection and destruction of banana plantations was killed at his home. "we did not know who killed him". The following morning they started killing muslims. For him, he had gone to work at kitagata in the ministry of works. "my family was all killed in river rwizi". 4 children and the wife of his brother were also killed. Miss banyobwire was the one who told him that all his people had been killed.

On being informed he went to kabwohe where he came to know that the bodies recovered were in mbarara. So he went to mbarara. "we went to the river to get other bodies. We got eight bodies of 5 children, one man and two women. In the night we took them to the mortuary in mbarara". After they had got the bodies they were told that they were wanted by the army men for having got the bodies from the river. So they ran and slept in the bush. "very early in the morning, we went and got the bodies and took them to nyamitanga. We buried three bodies in each grve. The bodies were twelve. After the burial he went to kabwohe. Yoweri museveni came to address the people and he also condemned the act and ordered the arrest of the ringleaders. In that meeting dauda serujunge talked on behalf of the muslims. Yoweri museveni called a meeting in the conference hall. All departmental leaders were cautioned about the act as yoweri museveni said that it would lead to amin's coming back.

When kinana mutyaba came back from kitagata, he went to mrs muhandu's home where he met E. Rurangaranga who had come to see that lady as she was his personal friend. Rurangaranga asked about her daughter, mrs muhandu said she had got married to a muslim in buganda. The rurangaranga said, " she got married to a muganda

who we are going to kill.” Then the woman asked whether he loved Muslims, to which question he answered “yes”. Then she asked him why he had killed Mutyaba’s people. Rurangaranga did not answer but went away with his body guards. “What helped the Muslims in Uganda was that they started with us here for they had intended to do it throughout the country”, commented Kinani Mutyaba.

## **ISHAQ MASAGAZI**

He is a son of the late Abdallah Segululigamba, a peasant with a family of one wife and two children. According to him the Muslims and Christians of Kiziba village had good relations with each other before the war. He however commented that things took a different course in early 1979 after the non-Muslims had conducted a meeting conspiring to antagonize Muslims. From then, ransoms in form of cows were demanded from Muslims. The cows were eaten and even the banana plantations were cut down, houses were burnt and eventually people killed. “My father and I were at home when people came after lunch. They came with dogs, spears and pangas. We were to come out of the house that they were taking us somewhere. This we did immediately”, said Ishaq. His father asked where they were being taken; ‘We are taking you for a meeting’ was the reply. They were tied with banana fibres together with their fellow Muslims and then driven to river Rwizi. On arrival on the river side, they were collected just at the river side. “My father had received some whipping on the way to the river and by the time we were there, he was too weak! They started cutting one by one. “This indeed saved us!” said the young man. Those whom we saw cutting people’s necks included: machete, Rwenzire, Bankutaha who was a parish chief then.

Asked how he survived, the young man said that on jumping into the river, he swam and when he reached the far end, he got out and ran to Kabwohe where he stayed for two days. While there he heard that the bodies of those killed had been taken to Mbarara. The following morning he went to Mbarara and found the bodies in the mortuary. “At that time there was chaos”. Army men were looking for those who had got the bodies from the river. They were looking for my brother Kabuye who was the leader of the group that recovered the bodies from the water. I therefore had to run for my life to Kasese”, said Ishaq.

In 1981 he came back from Kasese; and in 1984 he married. Asked whether all Muslims ran, he heard that some persisted but were always threatened and eventually sold their lands to those who used to threaten them at a take away price.

The following lost their land:

1. Abdallah Katende
2. Mugo
3. Hajj Mukibi Muhammad
4. Ali
5. The later Hajji Miiro

All these went to Kyazanga. Others went to Itendero such as Hajj Bumbakali. Swamadu Ntali, Hajj Kamadi and Mulere. Amisi Kapere went to Mbarara. Asked whether anybody whose family was completely eradicated, he mentioned Abubakar Nduguno remained only with two sons and one daughter.

Muwalimu sulaiman semakula

He is the son of Sheikh Abdulmanaf Semakula. He has been in the area since 1968. he is married to one wife and father to 5 children of whom two are girls. He is a mosque imam leading about forty Muslims. He also teaches Islamic knowledge at Itendero Muslim primary school.

He said that there was no friction between the Muslims and non-Muslims before 1979. but when Amin was overthrown in 1979 things took unexpected trend. It started by people organizing a meeting in which it was suggested that Muslims pay ransom on allegations that Muslims were writing names of non- Muslims who were taking money to Tanzania. So they made this a major reason to justify their desires. There after gardens belonging to Muslims were destroyed, burning houses followed and the killings of Muslims crowned up the whole process.

He recalled that on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1979, some of the non-Muslims especially protestants, made a meeting at Mbabu hill near a trading center at Mutubasi and by midday they had resolved to kill all Muslims and they went ahead to fulfill their plan. There after the Muslims were collected. "My wife and the children were taken, but when they were pushing the women into the river my wife ran and hid in the papyrus reeds from where she came back". Sulaiman himself had run before hand to Kabwohe where he spent a month. His wife and child went to his uncles at Mitegyero after a month she also came back. This was after Yoweri Museveni had come to the area where he conducted a meeting and cautioned people against harassing others. Thereafter we stayed but getting threats each day. "We shall work on you", said Rwizire intimidating

Some Muslims felt uneasy and decided to sell their land to secure transport – for instance Hajati Hadija Nanteza was killed and her

people given transport money out of their land by Tubamanya of Itendero; hajji Dauda Serujunge's land was bought by Charls who came from Igara and was not involved in the killings of the Muslims. Hajjati Zamuda's land was bought at take away price by Rukema, she then went to Kyazanga; Hajj musa Senyozi sold his land to Nsandeki from Igala; Haji Nyindo sold his to Kabanankye his neighbour and went to Kyazanga. Asked whether they got involved in resistance committee meetings, he answered in the affirmative and said he was RCI secretary for education Nyakayemba village.

## **YUNUSU TUMWENDA**

He is 50 years. He is a son of Ruzundura, in Kabutsye village, Kigarama sub-county, Sheema County.

Asked about the relationship between the Muslims and non-Muslims before 1979, the old man answered that, it was all well except that the Christians especially the Protestants were not happy with the Muslim being the leader of Uganda. "However, there were other Muslims who elevated themselves above other people for instance Mwere and Muku of Itendero who were always arresting people and taking bribe".

On how he saw the situation, Yunus said that during that time of the war, he saw some people running through his village for example Abdallah Kachura, katende and the late Miiro. They were running for their lives. They hid in Kigarama sub-county. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1979, Amos Babuchukunya a saved man went to Yunus' home late in the night and told him not to go to work the following morning. He told him that people were plotting to kill him (Yunus). Amos was a friend of Yunus and co-work in banana selling business. Among the people involved in plotting against Yunus was Eridad Kanyuma who bought his land at a take away price only to secure transport for his migration to Kyazanga where he is currently settled.

"On the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1979, he went on to narrate, things got worse. They sent my brother Idris Ruzundura to me with the message that they want a ransom in form of a cow. A gang of people went to his home. Among them were a teacher Kagarura, and Rwanyama, a teacher who demanded of thus: "Tell us why you always mistreated people. We want you to give us two Calabashes of beer (Mwenge). There were some Catholics in the gathering who rejected the demand and suggested that they first listen to what I had to say. This request was rejected by others in the group who stood up and went away to the trading center". "They later called for and for and said that they would burn me" said Yunus. He went to the trading centre where he met Kategaya, Nyamugurusi the current headmaster of Maseruka, who told

him "We have been sent by the sub-county chief – Bazareki to analyse your problems". They then narrated to him the history of writing people's names for Amin. Yunus was now surrounded by an unsympathetic crowd. Some people tried to ask for evidence to justify the evidence but they were not given audience. The chairman of the Mob Nyamugurusi called for silence inconclusively asked Yunus, "do you decide to give us a cow and two calabashes of beer or not?" But before Yunus could respond to the question, Mbas a man said not to belong to any religion, stood up and shouted to the gathering thus: " You people why do you want to eat Yunus's cows which he sweated to get? You did not want to sweat, come and eat my dogs". On this statement they calmed down. The chairman then said, "Let us vote", those who feel that we should eat a cow and those saying that we should not"? Those in support were to put up their hands first. However Amos the saved man said that he would count the votes. The votes were 19 for those who wanted to eat a cow. Then Amos said, "by comparison those remaining are many therefore there is no eating of Yunus's cows. On this the chairman of the gathering told Yunus that he has to report himself daily at the chairman's home.

After a few days, Yunus's house was burnt down at about 3.00am in the night. Sulaiman his soon took out the windows and the goats, other things got burnt therein. No person came to his rescue. Early in the morning the parish chief went to Yunus's place ...