

MUSEVENI BUILDS HOUSE FOR OLDEST MAN

BY WILSON ASIIMWE

President Yoweri Museveni has fulfilled his pledge of building a house for the man believed to be the oldest in Uganda. Yohana Ahuluma early last week received the keys to his new house constructed in Bundibugyo district. Rev. Fr. Fabias Bainakanama, who introduced him to *New Vision*, handed him the keys.

In July, last year, Fr. Bainakanama of St. Padre Pio, Nyahuka Parish, in Bundibugyo, said there was a man in Busunga parish, Babandi sub-county, who was 131 years old. *Sunday Vision* visited him and wrote his story.

We found the frail old man seated by his mud and wattle home, which sits on a three-acre-piece of land. The President read the story and decided to meet Ahuluma. He asked him what he wanted and Ahuluma asked for a new house. The President gave him sh20m for the construction of the house. The money was handed over to Fr. Bainakanama.

Ahuluma, who has been living with his son-in-law, could not hide his joy.

"I am happy I have finally left my son-in-law's house, where I have been living with my daughter for the last 30 years. I am relocating to my own house, which was constructed by money given to me by the President," Ahuluma said.

Ahuluma, who has become a tourist attraction in Bundibugyo district, told *Sunday Vision* he receives, on average, 10 to 20 guests,



Ahuluma (wearing hat) next to his grandson, Buluzi, pose for a picture outside the house which was constructed for them

who want to interact with him.

"I have invited my grandson, Buluzi, 69, who has been living in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to live with me because I am too weak to talk to all the visitors," he said. Fr. Bainakanama said he used the sh20m to buy a plot of sh8m and used the rest, sh12m, to construct the two bedroom house and buy a mattress.

"I am grateful the President trusted me to care for the old man," he said. "Ahuluma has been sleeping on bare

ground but, with the money, we now have a cemented house and a mattress."

Kahigwa Obote, the LC3 chairperson for Bubandi sub-county, said as local leaders, they will continue to support Ahuluma because he has made the area popular.

"As a sub-county, we shall ensure that we support him in some of the needs because he is now weak. We also want to limit his interactions with people because he needs time to

rest. We are going to schedule days and time within the week when he can meet with the people," Kahigwa said.

Ahuluma does not know his exact date of birth, but he was baptised when the first missionaries landed in Virika in 1895, 121 years ago. *Sunday Vision* saw his baptism card, prepared by Catholic missionaries indicating that he was born in 1885.

"In 1895 when I was being baptised, the missionaries estimated my age to be about 10 years and they

WHO IS AHULUMA?

Yohana Ahuluma, who did not attend school, grew up in Toro and was good at playing the flute. The Omukama of Toro, Kyebambe III, lent him to Buganda's Kabaka Daudi Cwa II, who took him to his palace in Buganda in 1905, where he spent over 60 years before returning to Toro in the late 1940s.

While in Buganda, Ahuluma was part of the Buganda royal family, from where he married his first wife and joined the King's African Rifles (KAR) in 1942. KAR was a multi-battalion British colonial regiment raised from Britain's various possessions in the present-day African Great Lakes region from 1902, until independence in the 1960s.

At the age of 35, he participated in the World War against Adolf Hitler of Nazi Germany from (1934-1945) and fought in Sri Lanka and later Burma in Asia.

He returned to Toro after Muteesa succeeded Chwa as Kabaka of Buganda and bought land in Bundibugyo.

recorded my year of birth as 1885," says Ahuluma.

Ahuluma had 30 children, 70 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren and 15 great-great grandchildren. Most of them died and currently, he only has one daughter who is taking care of him.