

Regional News

Kamuswaga's 22 years of resilience

The Kamuswaga has consistently preached peaceful co-existence despite political and cultural disagreements, positioning himself as a defender of cultural dignity rather than conflict.

BY AMBROSE MUSASIZI
& AL MAHDI SSENKABIRWA

For 22 years, the Kamuswaga of Kooki, His Royal Highness Apollo Isansa Kabumbuli II, has presided over one of Uganda's most closely watched cultural reigns — a leadership defined by cultural revival and identity assertion.

Since ascending to the throne in 2004 following the death of his father, Edward Mazinga, Kabumbuli II has transformed the Kooki cultural institution from a largely quiet traditional setup into an assertive institution seeking recognition of its autonomy and heritage.

Rebuilding Kooki identity

One of the defining moments of Kabumbuli II's reign came in 2009 when Kooki introduced its own flag and anthem.

To Kooki loyalists, the move symbolised the rebirth of a distinct cultural identity and the restoration of pride among the Bakooki.

The institution intensified efforts to preserve customs, clan structures, and traditional leadership systems.

Youth were mobilised into cultural activities while community gatherings increasingly promoted Lukooki heritage and values.

In later years, Kooki translated its anthem, Ettendo Iya Kooki, into Olukooki as part of broader efforts to revive the language.

Cultural leaders argued that preserving language was essential to protecting the institution's identity from extinction.

Kabumbuli II also expanded communication structures within the kingdom. A radio station (Kooki Broadcast-



The Kamuswaga of Kooki, His Royal Highness Apollo Isansa Kabumbuli II, waves to his people. PHOTO/ AMBROSE MUSASIZI

ing Services), was established to improve communication with subjects and promote cultural programmes across the region.

Under his leadership, Kooki promoted community-driven initiatives in education, health awareness, and household income improvement. Cultural events gradually attracted participation from both local residents and members of the Kooki diaspora.

The Kamuswaga consistently preached peaceful co-existence despite political and cultural disagreements, positioning himself as a defender of cultural dignity rather than conflict.

Development campaigns

Kabumbuli II has championed development and environmental conservation.

THE CORE MATTER

As Kabumbuli II marks 22 years on the throne, his reign stands as a story of cultural assertion, resilience, and survival.

Royalists argue that Kabumbuli II's greatest achievement lies in preserving Kooki's identity in an era where smaller cultural institutions struggle for recognition. The Kamuswaga embodies their struggle for recognition, identity, and preservation of a heritage.

The Kooki administration has been pushing for the restocking of Lake Kijanebarola with new fish species in partnership with the line ministry following directives from President Museveni, although the programme is yet to be fully implemented.

Supporters credit the Kamuswaga for sustaining cultural structures despite limited financial resources available to traditional institutions in Uganda.

Observers note that unlike political leaders, cultural rulers operate without direct state authority or substantial government funding, making it difficult to maintain programmes and institutions.

Yet through mobilisation and symbolism, Kabumbuli II managed to keep Kooki visible within Uganda's cultural

landscape.

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The day was marked under the theme: "Plant a tree to preserve the environment".

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For many Bakooki, the Kamuswaga represents more than a traditional ruler. He embodies their struggle for recognition, identity, and preservation of a heritage they believe deserves an independent voice in Uganda's cultural history.

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