

# Dictators and terror in Uganda

The independence of Uganda was in **no way equal to democracy**. King Mutesa II continued to strive for an independent Bugandian kingdom and fought against Obote for supremacy. The result was the breakdown of the coalition government in 1966 and **Mutesa II had to go into exile**. The dispossession of the big Bugandian landowners and the removal of the Bugandian members of parliament followed.

Further attempts for separation of Buganda were frustrated by military force. Obote based his power more and more on the **army**. All kingdoms were abolished, political parties prohibited (1969), members of the opposition arrested and killed. In short: Obote managed to turn almost all ethnic groups against him in a very short time.

In **1971** the president left Uganda on the occasion of a commonwealth conference. This opportunity was used by his highest general to instigate a coup d'Etat: **Idi Amin was in power**. The reason were irregularities in the army's budget. Those would have got him into big trouble, so this coup was his best way out.

## "The last King of Scotland" reigned brutally

The 8 year reign of Amin remains the **darkest chapter in Ugandas history**. Without a trace of any democratic features, his actions were aimed solely to hold on to power by all means. Finally, since the dispossession and **forced emigration of all asians in 1972**, the economic downfall began. The supply with goods and trade couldn't be maintained by the Ugandan population. Political opposition was not possible and dissidents were killed by the thousands. An estimate of **300.000 people were killed** - even by Amin himself.

## The end of Amin

To distract from his failures as political leader, he attacked neighbouring **Tanzania in 1978** after critical voices were raised in this country. But he had to admit defeat quickly in **1979** and fled into **exil to Saudi-Arabia**. There he **died in 2003** without being brought to court or any punishment.

After Idi Amin a chaotic political time began, with frequent changes of governments. Nevertheless, mostly without violence. In the end, again **Milton Obote prevailed in 1980**, although by means of corruption and forged elections.

These circumstances were openly criticized, particularly by the leader of the newly founded **Uganda Patriotic Movement - Yoweri Museveni**. But finally, he had to flee the capital and organised his opposition in the underground. With his army, the National Resistance Army, he fought Obote for years in a **guerrilla war**, which he finally won in **1985** and took over power.

The second Obote regime was even more gruesamly than the years under Amin. Political arbitrariness, violence, murder and terror for more then twenty years combined with a shattered economy left deep wounds.

## Related Links

- Background information about the film of the presidency of Idi Amin (["The last King of Scotland"](#))
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