

Twasazareye (“We Bid Farewell”)

(INSTRUMENTAL INTRODUCTION)

REFRAIN (*INYIKILIZO*) (0’07”):

- (1) *Twasazareye ingoma ya cyami,*
We said farewell to the drum of the regime/kingdom,¹
- (2) *Ingoyimbi ya gihake na gikolonize birajyanaaa...!*
The bonds² of *ubuhake*³ and colonialism went with it!
- (3) *Tubona demokarasi itwizihye.*
We see a democracy which is right for us.
- (4) *Muze twishimire Ubwigengeee...!*
Come, let’s rejoice for Independence!

VERSE 1 (*INTERO*) (0’25”):

- (5) *Terera amaso inyuma Munyarwanda, yeee...!*
Turn your eyes back,⁴ you Rwandan!
- (6) *Ibuka ikiboko wibuke shiku,*
Remember the whip, remember the harsh labor,⁵
- (7) *Wibuke iminsi wamaraga ukorera umutware ntanaguhembee...!*
Remember the days you spent working for the chief without any compensation!
- (8) *I maze wishimire Ubwigengeee...!*
So then, let’s rejoice for Independence!

(REFRAIN) (0’47”)

¹ The drum, or *ingoma*, is a common trope throughout Africa that symbolizes power. Like many other African royal courts, the courts of Rwanda included its own set of drums as well as a single ‘great drum’ (for the Abanyiginya dynasty, it was called *Kalinga*) that embodied and projected the king’s divine authority.

² “*Ingoyimbi*,” translated here as “bonds,” refers to ropes used to bind the hands and feet of slaves or to bind slaves together. The term is also used to refer to handcuffs. Many listeners who participated in this study heard the term, “ingoma” instead, which, as explained in the above footnote, refers to “drum” or “regime/kingship.” Bikindi urged me to emphasize that the term he used is “*ingoyimbi*,” not “*ingoma*,” because the former refers more to the experience of peasants under the harsh client-patron system rather than the monarchy itself.

³ *Ubughake* here is found in the word, “*gihake*.”

⁴ In other words, “remember the past.”

⁵ “*Shiku*,” translated here as “harsh labor,” refers to the cultivation of fallow earth. The same root word is used in the verb, “*gushikura*,” which means “to forcefully pull something out.”

VERSE 2 (1'04"):

- (9) *Ibuka imitaga wilirwaga ugenta,*
Remember how long and hard you used to have to walk,⁶
- (10) *Amajoro menshi urara rubundaaa...!*
The many nights you spent outdoors!
- (11) *Utuye i butware cyangwa se i bwami,*
Bearing things to the residences of the chiefs or kings,
- (12) *Ukabigomwa abawe babikeneye,*
Giving up things that your family needed,
- (13) *Kandi iyo ubijyanye ukabigezayo,*
And upon arriving there,
- (14) *Byagushenguye ntibanagushimeee...!*
So worn down, the receivers were not even thankful!
- (15) *Maze uze twishimire Ubwigengeee...!*
So then, come, let's rejoice for Independence!

(REFRAIN) (1'30")

ICYIVUGO (1:46"):

- (16) *Ndi Rudahunyumuruho,*
I am *Rudahungumuruho* ["One who never flees from difficulties"],
- (17) *Ikindi kandi ngira impuhwe!*
And also, I have compassion!
- (18) *Mu mpinga ya Mpanga,*
At the crest of Mpanga,⁷
- (19) *Nimanye Mpunga wa Mparirwa,*
I came to the rescue of Mpunga of Mparirwa.⁸
- (20) *Impamba imushiranye aguye isari.*
His provisions were gone and so he was nearly dead.

⁶ Part of the forced labor policies under the later monarchial and colonial eras required transporting goods and equipment for the king, high-level chiefs, and colonial administrators. Rwanda's terrain, especially in the western half of the country, is rugged and hilly, making long travel on foot an exhausting affair.

⁷ A hill near Nyanza, the seat of the monarchy.

⁸ These are fictional characters, perhaps given their names because of their alliterative relationship to Mpanga.

- (21) *Nimanye Ruhara mu Ruhango.*
I came to the rescue of Ruhara in Ruhango.
- (22) *Uruboho rw'itabi rumugize imbohe.*
He was exhausted from bearing a heavy load of tobacco.
- (23) *Yibaza ukuntu arugeze i Nyanza.*
He asked himself how he could make it all the way to Nyanza.⁹
- (24) *Nimanye Gatsitsi i Gatsibo.*
I came to the rescue of Gatsitsi at Gatsibo.
- (25) *Umutsama yagomba gutura utuzuye.*
The pot of honey he should be taking [to the king] was not full.
- (26) *Ndi Urukinabarenzi,*
I am *Urukinabarenzi* ["One who admires/imitates the wise"],
- (27) *Ruhanga bankikana kuw'inkike.*
Ruhanga, praised for his selfless dedication.
- (28) *Ndi umuhungu urengera ingabo*
I am a boy who protects the army
- (29) *Iminsi igeze mu mahina!*
During the days of troubles!
- (30) *Ndi Rusakaranamisakura,*
I am *Rusakaranamisakura* ["One who brings out the arrows"],
- (31) *Mugucubya akarengane kariho icyo gihe,*
In stopping injustices during that time.
- (32) *Mvunyishiriza mu ntambara.*
I announce myself [ready for] war.
- (33) *Ingabo ntwara ni igitare,*
[My] shield is a "white rock,"
- (34) *Itontoma nk'iya bene Gahutu,*
Loudly moaning like the children of the lowliest Hutu,¹⁰
- (35) *Ndi inkiranyi ya Nyagahinga.*

⁹ Nyanza was where the royal palace was located

¹⁰ "Gahutu" refers to those Hutu at the very bottom of society or those who were the most oppressed during the monarchial era.

I am a talented fighter from Nyagahinga.¹¹

(36) *Ndi Nyiringango mwene Nyagahinga.*

I am Nyiringango, son of Nyagahinga.¹²

(37) *Ndi umugemanshuro wa Kirenga.*

I am a famous warrior from Kirenga.¹³

(38) *Ndi imbabaza abafizi.*

I am the one who makes the archers¹⁴ suffer.

VERSE 3 (2'18''):

(39) *Ndi muto cyane ibyo sinabonyeee...!*

I am very young and did not witness all this!¹⁵

(40) *Narabibiwe ndanabisoma,*

It was told to me and I read about it,

(41) *I maze kubyumva ndamya Rurema*

And then upon understanding it I praised the Creator

(42) *Yo yandinze uwo muruhoo...!*

For sparing me from such grief!

(43) *Ngiyo impamvu itumye by'umwihiriko*

And for this particular reason,

(44) *Njyewe nishimira Ubwigenge!*

Me, I rejoice for Independence!

(REFRAIN) (2'37'')

VERSE 4 (2'56''):

(45) *Ndashimira rwose byimazeyo*

I am thankful with all my heart¹⁶

(46) *Abarwanashyaka batubohoyeee...*

¹¹ Nyagahinga is an area located in the far west of Rwanda near the banks of Lake Kivu, an area that long remained outside of the central monarchy's dominion and would continue to put up resistance after being annexed.

¹² Again, these names were created for their alliterative relationship to Nyagahinga. See fn. 19.

¹³ Kirenga is near Nyanza.

¹⁴ Archers may refer to the king's soldiers. Anti-Tutsi propaganda cartoons often featured archers as symbols of Tutsi. See Taylor 1999.

¹⁵ Born in 1954, Bikindi was 31 or 32 at the time he composed this song.

¹⁶ More literally, "with all my effort."

[For those] militants who liberated us!

- (47) *Uwari ku isonga akaba Kayibanda,*
At the head of whom was Kayibanda,
- (48) *Nkazirikana cyane Mbonyumutwa*
I think especially of Mbonyumutwa
- (49) *N'izindi ntware bari kumwe,*
And the other heroes/brave ones who were with them,
- (50) *Aribo dukeshya ubu Bwigenge.*
Those from whom we received this Independence.

(REFRAIN) (3'11")

VERSE 5 (3'37"):

- (51) *Uzaba intwari ntibabara imyaka yeee...!*
Among those heroes/brave ones, you don't count their years, yes!¹⁷
- (52) *Habyarimana muri icyo gihe*
Habyarimana at that time
- (53) *Yari ku isonga ayoboye ingabo,*
Was at the top, leading the army,
- (54) *Yakunze amahoro kuva mu mavuko,*
He loved peace from the day he was born,
- (55) *Na n'ubu akiyaharanira. [*impundu*]*
And now continues to strive for it. [*cheering*]
- (56) *Tuguhaye impundu shema ry'abato,*
We cheer for you, pride of the youth,
- (57) *Ukomeze umurego uyobore ingabo!*
Continue to valiantly lead the army!

(REFRAIN) (4'04")

¹⁷ In other words, age does not matter.

CALL-AND-RESPONSE BETWEEN BIKINDI AND CHOIR (4'20''):

(58) *Tumaze ingahe mbe Banyarwanda? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Hey, Rwandans, how many [years of independence] has it been for us?!¹⁸ (Twenty-five!)

(59) *Tumaze ingahe mbe Banyarwanda? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Hey, Rwandans, how many has it been for us?! (Twenty-five!)

(60) *Rubyiruko rw'u Rwanda aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Young people of Rwanda, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)

(61) *Yemwe bahungu aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

You boys, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)

(62) *Yemwe bakobwa aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

You girls, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)

(63) *Yemwe bahungu aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

You boys, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)

(64) *Rubyiruko rw'u Rwanda aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Young people of Rwanda, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)

(65) *Tumaze ingahe mbe Banyarwanda? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Hey, Rwandans, how many has it been for us?! (Twenty-five!)

(66) *Bagabo b'ibikwerere murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Grown-up men,¹⁹ do you know this? (Twenty-five!)

(67) *Bagore b'amajigija aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Grown-up women,²⁰ do you know this? (Twenty-five!)

(68) *Murayibabwire yemwe basaza! (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Tell them, you old men! (Twenty-five!)

(69) *Bakecuru namwe murayibabwire! (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

Old women, tell them! (Twenty-five years!)

(70) *Nimwe mwaraye ayo majoro! (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

None of you will spend those nights [again]!²¹ (Twenty-five!)

(71) *Yemwe bahungu aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*

You boys, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)

¹⁸ More literally, "How many have we spent?"

¹⁹ *Abagabo*, translated as "grown-up men" usually refers to men who are married, which, according to Rwandan custom, denotes those who are fully mature adults. If men are not married, they are often still considered as "*abagabo*," young, unmarried boys not yet fully mature, even if they may be in their 30s or older.

²⁰ As in fn. 14, "*abagore*" refers to married women; that is, women who are fully mature adults. Otherwise, they are referred to "*abakobwa*."

²¹ Referring to the long nights spent outdoors bearing goods to kings and chiefs. See line 10.

- (72) *Yemwe bakobwa aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
You girls, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)
- (73) *Bagabo b'ibikwerere murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
Grown-up men, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)
- (74) *Bagore b'amajigija aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
Grown-up women, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)
- (75) *Abangavu ingimbi aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
Teenage girls and boys, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)
- (76) *Abangavu ingimbi aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
Teenage girls and boys, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)
- (77) *Yemwe bahungu aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
You boys, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)
- (78) *Yemwe bakobwa aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
You girls, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)
- (79) *Rubyiruko rw'u Rwanda aho murayizi? (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
Young people of Rwanda, do you know this? (Twenty-five!)
- (80) *Imitaga nk'iyu ntimukayitunge! (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
Such hardships are not easy to discuss! (Twenty-five!)
- (81) *Amajoro nk'ayo ntimukayarare! (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
May such nights never be mentioned again! (Twenty-five!)
- (82) *Imitaga nk'iyu ntimukayitunge! (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
Such hardships are not easy to discuss! (Twenty-five!)
- (83) *Amajoro nk'ayo ntimukayarare! (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
May such nights never be mentioned again! (Twenty-five!)
- (84) *Ibihe nk'ibyo ntimukabitunge! (Makumyabiri n'itanu!)*
May such times never be experienced again! (Twenty-five!)

(REFRAIN) (6'27'')