

Bastille Day: Celebrating the event that made France a republic

The French revolution started with the storming of the Bastille prison. A few weeks later, France adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen as its constitution. France was inspired by the American Declaration of Independence that contained the iconic statement: "Men are born free and remain free and equal in rights."

The declaration ushered in a change of leadership and independence for France, with the creation of a modern French Republic.

How it all started

It was on July 14, 1789 when angry French peasants, tired of the absolute power of their king, stormed the Bastille prison east of Paris.

France, at the time, was under the rule of King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette. It was an absolute monarchy, meaning that whatever the king and queen wanted, they got. It did not



French ambassador Stephanie Rivoal with traditional dancers at Namboole stadium, Kampala. Bastille Day celebrations will be held at the French embassy on Lumumba Avenue, Nakasero in Kampala, today

matter that the French people were starving on the streets, so long as the royal banquet tables were full. The nobles were invited to

dine at the royal table or stay at the palace. The peasants, on the other hand, were starving on the streets. Antoinette is recorded

to have shouted: "If they can't afford bread, let them eat cake." This was in response to a question of what starving people should eat. Such disregard of the people's suffering only sparked more anger.

Growing anger towards French rulers

Revolutionary fervour had been saturating France for at least two years prior to the storming of the Bastille.

There were fermenting tensions over the weak monarchy, persistently high taxes and rising food prices. Old-fashioned nobles still ruled over the peasants.

However, ideas of philosophers of the French enlightenment were beginning to saturate public consciousness.

In 1789, resentment towards the bankrupt Bourbon monarchy reached a grand climax.

The anger climaxed when Louis XVI called a crisis meeting of the common French population on May 5, 1789, in a bid to raise taxes further.

Furious at the prospect, the commoners formed the National Assembly on June 17. They took oath three days later, vowing not to separate, but to assemble whenever circumstances require, until the constitution of the kingdom was established.

When a bemused King Louis XVI was told of the development, he asked one of his advisors: "Is this a revolt?" to which he replied: "No Sire, this is a revolution."

As July arrived, an angry and aggressive mob decided

Origin of the Bastille Day

Official celebrations were held in Paris on June 30, 1878, to honour the Republic of France. On July 14, 1879, more official celebrations were held. Politician Benjamin Raspail then proposed that July 14 should be made a holiday in France in 1880.

The law was enacted on July 6, 1880 and the Bastille Day was a public holiday for the first time on July 14, 1880.

In France, Bastille Day is celebrated as a national holiday. The 18th century revolt was the first step to establishing a republican government.

French commoners, in a turn of events, finally claimed victory after a long struggle to overturn centuries of royal rule.

The Bastille Day will be marked today. And as the culture, it is celebrated worldwide with French champagne, wine and is a fun-filled day of party, food, music and movies. The French Embassy in Uganda will today deliver the same fun-fare for their guests.

to target the feared Bastille prison, although it contained just seven inmates in 1789,

including the famous writer, Voltaire.

It was chosen as a target because it was a symbol of oppression at a time when the poor were starving.

Revolutionaries surrounded the prison, demanding the huge stash of arms and ammunition stored inside the prison's walls.

The guards resisted, so the attackers surged forward and, after a violent battle, captured the building, pulling down its walls and releasing the inmates. The governor was also seized and killed.

End of monarchy

Only a few weeks after the storming of the Bastille, the National Assembly abolished feudalism and adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen as its constitution.

In October, Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette, who lived protected in their area of luxury at the Palace of Versailles on the outskirts of Paris, were removed from their home by 4,000 rioters.

The king and queen were moved to the Tuileries, in the heart of Paris, where revolutionaries kept watch over them.

After a failed attempt to flee to Austria in 1791, tension continued to rise between the protectors of the king and the revolutionaries, and even among the revolutionaries themselves.

It culminated into the storming of the Tuileries by a new mob and the arrest of Louis XVI in 1792.

France was finally declared a republic in September that year, bringing the 800-year-old monarchy to an end.

But before it ended, the revolution and the reign of terror would claim hundreds of lives, including those of the king and queen.

The guillotine was the method of execution. It was developed during the French Revolution and used to behead thousands of people during the revolutionary era.

Following his arrest in 1792, in January the following year, Louis XVI was executed on the grounds of treason.

But the revolutionaries were to be overthrown. In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte led a coup that seized power from the early revolutionaries and in 1804, he became the first emperor of France.

This ended the revolutionary period and the nation entered a 15-year dictatorship under his military rule. France would never be the same again.

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UGANDA ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LTD

FRENCH NATIONAL DAY MESSAGE

The Board of Directors, Management and staff of Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL) congratulate the French Ambassador to Uganda **His Excellence M. Rene' FORCEVILLE** and the entire French Community on this occasion to mark the **French National Day**

UETCL appreciates the value support given by the French Government through the French Development Agency (AFD) to strengthen and expand the transmission capacity in order to meet the needs of the country.

Project	Objective	Achievement /Status
Nkenda -Hoima 220kV Project -substation component.	Provision of adequate Transmission capacity to improve power supply to the South - Western and Western regions of Uganda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financing extension of the 132kV Nkenda and Fort portal Substations and construction of new 132/33kV Hoima Substation. Engineering design for all the substations is complete. Installation of outdoor equipment is ongoing
Masaka -Mbarara 220kV Transmission line Project	Improvement on reliability, availability, quality and security of power supply to the Western regions of Uganda.	Financial support for the feasibility study.

The above projects will support the Government of Uganda (GoU)'s effort to implement the National Development Plan (NDP) and achieve the objectives of Vision 2040.

Our Vision

"Electricity transmission for sustainable regional development"

Our Mission

"To Buy, transmit and Sell Bulk quality power supply"