They will be talking about this one in Kigali for years to come. In what can only be described as the most agonizing, heart-stopping finish imaginable, the Zimbabwe Women’s High Performance side were crowned champions of the 2026 Kwibuka T20I Tournament after edging out hosts Rwanda by just a single run at the Gahanga International Stadium.

Chasing a target of 127 for glory, Rwanda looked completely buried early on before a masterclass in lower-order resilience transformed a brewing blowout into an instant classic.

Things could not have started much worse for the hosts. Inside the first ten overs, Rwanda’s top order completely crumbled under a relentless opening spell from the Zimbabwean attack. Adel Zimunu, Kudzai Chigora, and Lindokuhle Mabhera ripped through the front lines, leaving Rwanda down and out at a miserable 36/6.

But Henriette Ishimwe refused to let the tournament end quietly.

Staring down a hopeless situation, Ishimwe launched an extraordinary, boundary-laden counter-attack. She blasted an unbeaten 60 off just 38 deliveries, smoking six fours and three towering sixes that shifted the panic entirely back onto the bowling side.

Finding a vital ally in Murekatete Belys, who chipped in with a gritty 13, Ishimwe dragged Rwanda by the scruff of the neck all the way to 114/8 heading into the final over.

Last-Ball Heartbreak

With 13 runs needed off the last six balls to pull off a miracle, Zimbabwe turned to Kudzai Chigora to defend the total against an in-form Ishimwe. Chigora didn’t flinch.

As the equation tightened ball by ball, it came down to pure desperation. On the very final delivery of the match, Rwanda needed three runs to tie and force a Super Over. They scrambled for the first, pushed hard for the second, and desperately turned for a suicidal third. But the cricket gods weren’t smiling on Kigali. The throw from the deep came in sharp and true, running Rwanda out just short of their ground.

By the barest of margins, Zimbabwe held on, sparking wild, jubilant celebrations among the visitors while leaving the home crowd entirely shell-shocked.

How Zimbabwe Set the Tone

Earlier in the afternoon, Zimbabwe’s competitive total of 126/5 was anchored by a brilliant, unbeaten 45 from Runyararo Pasipanodya. She found excellent support in Lorraine Pemhiwa, who provided a brisk 31 at the top of the order. Showing tactical aggression, captain Adel Zimunu even chose to retire out after making a quickfire 20, sacrificing her wicket specifically to accelerate the scoring rate, a decision that ultimately proved to be worth its weight in gold.

It’s a bitter pill to swallow for Rwanda, but this thrilling finale solidified the 12th edition of the Kwibuka tournament as one of its most memorable yet.

Match Summary

- **Zimbabwe Women HPC:** 126/5 (20 overs) | *R. Pasipanodya 45*, L. Pemhiwa 31, A. Zimunu 20*
- **Rwanda Women:** 125/8 (20 overs) | *H. Ishimwe 60*, M. Belyse 13*
- **Result:** Zimbabwe Women HPC won by 1 run.