

Uganda's Tooro Kingdom on Tuesday crowned former television journalist Edward Rukidi Kijanangoma as its new king, weeks after the death of King Oyo Nyimba Kabamba Iguru Rukidi IV triggered a dispute over who should inherit the throne.

Kijanangoma, 56, took the royal name Edward Rukidi Nyabongo I after being selected by a 21-member committee of the Babiito royal clan, the traditional institution responsible for choosing the Tooro monarch. He is a cousin of the late king.

The coronation at Karuziika Palace in Fort Portal included traditional rituals, including a mock battle before Nyabongo was ushered into the palace. President Yoweri Museveni attended the ceremony.

His accession has remained contested by members of Oyo's immediate family. Queen Mother Best Kemigisa and Princess Ruth Komuntale have said the late king left a young son and a will naming the child as his successor.

The Babiito clan has said it was not aware of such an heir and proceeded with the selection of Nyabongo under Tooro's established succession customs. Uganda's government said the recognised traditional institutions had completed the succession process.

Oyo died in the United States on Aug. 27 at the age of 34 while receiving treatment for cancer. He became king in 1995 at the age of three following his father's death and became internationally known as one of the world's youngest monarchs.

Nyabongo has a journalism career spanning Rwanda and Uganda. In Rwanda, where he was known professionally as Eddie David Nkurukenzire, he worked at Rwanda Television when it operated under ORINFOR, serving as a deputy chief news editor and news anchor. He had earlier taught English at Kigali International Academy. He later worked as a news anchor and editor at Uganda Broadcasting Corporation.

Tooro is one of Uganda's traditional kingdoms. Its monarch has no formal governmental authority, but the institution retains an important cultural role among the Batooro people.