# IDENTITY CARD

**NAME**
King Ngwenyama Sobhuza II

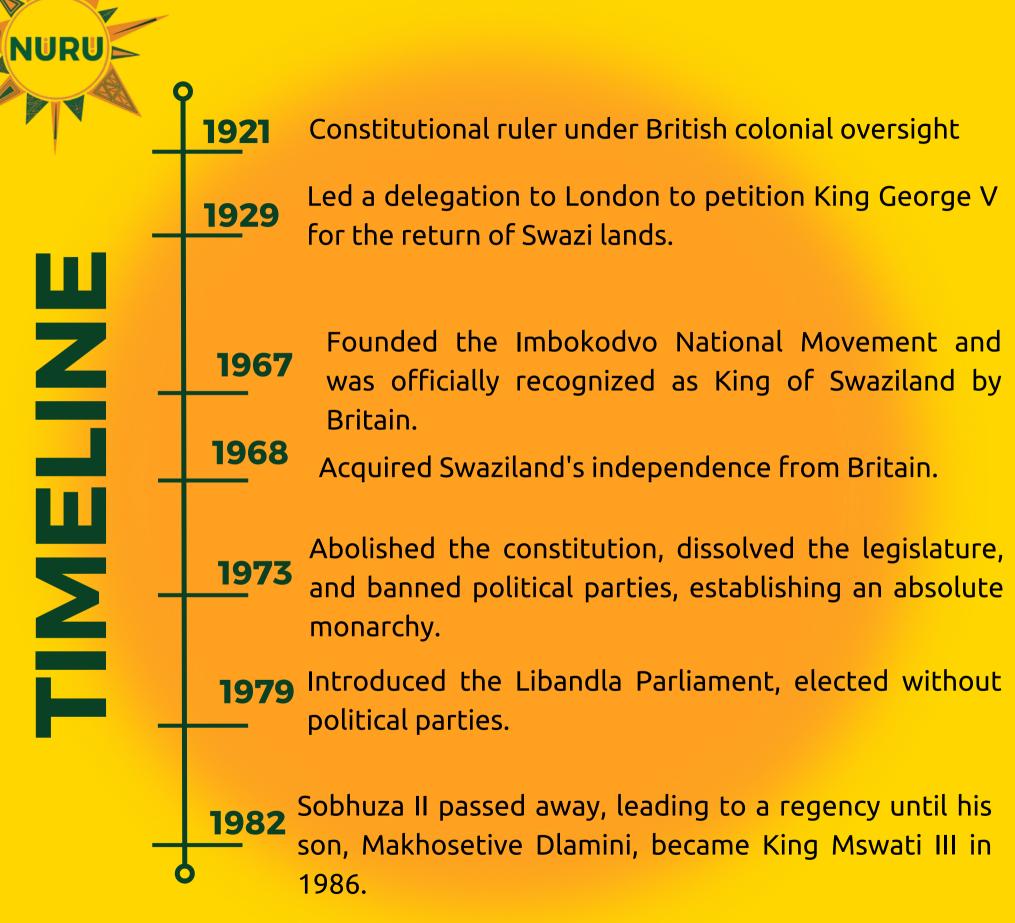**BIRTH - DEATH**
1899-1982

**PLACE OF BIRTH**
Zombodze, Swaziland (now Eswatini)

**OCCUPATION**
King of Swaziland

Sobhuza II became king as an infant after his father's death. The regency was led by **Queen Mother Labotsibeni**, who ruled until Sobhuza was old enough to assume power. Reigning for **61 years** from 1921 to 1982, this monarch was one of the **longest-reigning in history.**

**NURU**

# TIMELINE

**1921** Constitutional ruler under British colonial oversight

**1929** Led a delegation to London to petition King George V for the return of Swazi lands.

**1967** Founded the Imbokodvo National Movement and was officially recognized as King of Swaziland by Britain.

**1968** Acquired Swaziland's independence from Britain.

**1973** Abolished the constitution, dissolved the legislature, and banned political parties, establishing an absolute monarchy.

**1979** Introduced the Libandla Parliament, elected without political parties.

**1982** Sobhuza II passed away, leading to a regency until his son, Makhosetive Dlamini, became King Mswati III in 1986.

Sobhuza II's 61-year reign was marked by stability, cultural pride, and strategic modernization.

# HIS BACKGROUND

NURU

## EDUCATION

The king was educated in Swaziland and Lovedale College in Cape Province, South Africa, a prestigious institution for African leaders.

## FAMILY

Sobhuza strategically entered into **approximately 70 marriages** to unite clans and secure loyalty, especially among the Dlamini clan, which comprised about 25% of the population.

With an estimated **500 children,** he extended his i**nfluence across the nation**, reinforcing his power through widespread familial ties.

# Early Reign and Challenges under British Rule

In 1921, Sobhuza became the constitutional ruler under British colonial rule. He unsuccessfully **petitioned King George V** in 1929 to reclaim Swazi lands taken by settlers, facing legal obstacles. Despite limited political power, he remained a significant **traditional leader.**

Known by the title **"Ngwenyama," meaning "Lion,"** he was revered as both a protector and leader of his people.

# Leading Swaziland to Independence

In the 1960s, Sobhuza II opposed British plans to limit his power with a Westminster-style constitution. He founded the **Imbokodvo National Movement**, winning all seats in the 1967 elections. Recognized as King by Britain that year, he peacefully **secured Swaziland's independence in 1968**, establishing a constitutional monarchy.

On **April 12, 1973, Sobhuza II abolished the constitution,** dissolved the legislature, and banned political parties, establishing an absolute monarchy.

In **1979, he introduced a new advisory parliament, Libandla, elected without political parties.** He also supported African liberation movements, aiding South African anti-apartheid efforts and **aligning Swaziland with the Non-Aligned Movement.**