



**King Zumbi of Palmares** (1655 – November 20, 1695) was one of the pioneers of resistance to slavery of Africans by the Portuguese, was born in the countryside near Recife, in the Pernambuco city in Brazil and believed to be descended from the Congo.

Zumbi was captured at 6 years old, in one of the communities of the Quilombo de Palmares by the Portuguese and handed over to the missionary, Father António Melo who later baptized and named him Francisco. Father António Melo educated him, taught him Latin, Portuguese and to be a Christian. Nine years later, Zumbi fled into the jungle, heading to Palmares.

At the age of 20 years old, Zumbi was recognized for his military prowess. He took part to a battle opposing the Quilombo and the sergeant-major Manuel Lopez's men. Zumbi fought and won, ruining every Portuguese offensive, showing a complete mastery and a great agility.

In 1678, the governor Pedro Almeida de Pernambuco proposed a controlled peace treaty with Zumbi's uncle, king Ganga Zumba, a proposal which Ganga Zumba favored, but Zumbi intervened, refused the treaty and asked for total freedom for Palmares and elsewhere black slaves but the Portuguese refused the proposal. Zumbi saw the proposed peace treaty as a trap set up by the Portuguese, designed to wipe out Quilombo's black people. Zumbi despised his uncle, King Ganga Zumba's willingness to accept the governor's proposal and later killed his uncle in 1678 and became the new king of Palmares. King Zumbi sought to apply a far more aggressive stance against the Portuguese, vowing to continue the resistance to Portuguese oppression.

The king of Portugal proclaimed the destruction of Palmares and the death of Zumbi, considered as a big shame for the Portuguese colonies. The Portuguese army set up a big campaign throughout the country, enlisting men for the war against Palmares. In 1694, the Portuguese army mounted an offense over Palmares, led by Domingos Jorge Velho and Vieira de Melo. Palmares was invaded and destroyed, the whole population was annihilated.

King Zumbi was harmed in the conflict but managed to evade the conflict and went into hiding. His hideout was revealed to the Portuguese army by a general of the Quilombo, who had been tortured. King Zumbi was found in his hideout and killed by the Portuguese army and his body was mutilated, kept in salt for preservation, and sent to Porto Calvo. His body showed how he had been ill-treated: over 15 bullets, numerous knife strokes, his penis cut off and placed in his mouth. His decapitated head was displayed like a trophy in Recife, to show other slaves Zumbi was not immortal and that the struggle against Palmares was over. Some people of the Quilombo. After King Zumbi's death, his fellow-countrymen kept on fighting for black freedom, against colonial oppression, creating new quilombos on Brazilian territory.

Sources: <https://www.capoeira-auvergne.com/en/zumbi-de-palmares/>

Zumbi and Palmares are considered as most important artifact in Brazil's history and a university is named after him in São Paulo as a tribute to the fighters, human rights and Black peoples' freedom.

References:

1. King Zumbi of Palmares: <https://www.capoeira-auvergne.com/en/zumbi-de-palmares/>
2. Zumbi: King of Free Men: <https://historyofyesterday.com/zumbi-king-of-free-men-c7e0eb6afa44>