

Cartoon. Uganda's higher education system is undergoing a significant introduction of a new university curriculum.



Develop liberation struggle sites into tourism centres

Uganda possesses one of Africa's most unique and valuable tourism assets but yet to be exploited; its living liberation history. While many countries tell their stories of struggle and nation-building through museums and archives, Uganda still has the rare advantage of having many of the very individuals who shaped its modern history alive today.

Uganda's compelling liberation history has the potential to be one of the country's most treasured tourism assets, if properly documented, preserved and presented to the world. From the struggles of independence to the turbulent post-independence periods, the Idi Amin rule and the efforts to overthrow him, as well as the years of protracted Bush War struggle are a story embedded in the people who lived it.

Prominent personalities like President Museveni, Bidandi Ssali, Kintu Musoke and Israel Mayengo have lived through the country's modern history and present a valuable resource for grounded national narrative.

Modern tourism is increasingly shifting from simple wildlife and sightseeing to meaningful storytelling and documentation of human experiences. This shift reflects the growing demand for what tourism experts call experiential and narrative tourism.

According to the World Tourism Organisation, heritage and cultural tourism accounts for nearly 40 percent of global tourism travel. Uganda's tourism sector is already a cash cow bringing in between \$1.2-\$1.3 billion annually in recent years, a figure that can be tripled by simply structuring our story and attaching a commercial value on it.

In many countries around the world, visitors walk through memorial halls reading about events that happened generations ago, guided by historians interpreting the lives of individuals who passed away long time ago.

Visitors want to hear authentic stories, meet

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Tourism



people connected to the history, walk the paths where events occurred, and leave with a deeper understanding of a nation's journey. Museums, heritage trails, guided storytelling tours, digital archives, documentaries, and interactive exhibits therefore become central to modern tourism experiences.

It is important to note that this opportunity will not exist forever. As time passes, the generation that participated directly in the country's liberation struggles will inevitably fade out. Preserving their memories, documenting their experiences and integrating their story as a national narrative is not only a historical responsibility but strategic obligation we owe the future generations. And the best way to do this is to invest in liberation tourism today.

As long as this generation remains with us, Uganda possesses a lucrative experiential and

storytelling tourism advantage that very few countries in the world can claim. From a tourism perspective, this presents an extraordinary economic opportunity.

Global market research shows that the broader heritage and liberation tourism sector was valued at about USD 500 billion in 2024 and is projected to exceed USD 800 billion by 2033. This demonstrates that historical and liberation-based tourism is a rapidly growing niche within the global travel industry.

By transforming memory into opportunity and turning patriotism into an enterprise through liberation tourism, Uganda can multiply her tourism earning more than three folds.

The idea is straightforward: transform key historical locations into structured tourism circuits where visitors can learn about Uganda's journey from the real heroes and their story incorporated into a national narrative. Sites associated with major turning points in the liberation struggle could be developed into heritage centres, museums or guided historical trails.

Veterans could serve as trained interpreters of the history they helped create, offering visitors insights and emotional storytelling that cannot be found in text books. Such experiences would not only preserve national memory but also strengthen tourism as a form of education, national identity and cultural diplomacy.

For younger Ugandans who did not live through the events of the dark history, these initiatives would provide an opportunity to reconnect and better understand the country's rebuilding journey and political transformation. For international visitors, they would offer insight into one of Africa's modern liberation movements. If presented professionally, the country could create one of the most compelling historical tourism narratives in Africa.

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