

The fire that started at a round 12pm in a garage, spread to carpentry workshops and other shops, destroying property worth millions of shillings.

BY DAVID WALUGEMBE

Traders and other business owners at Mini Triangle Zone in Makerere-Kavule, Kampala City, are counting losses following a Monday afternoon fire outbreak.

The fire that started at a round 12pm in a garage, spread to carpentry workshops and other shops, destroying property worth millions of shillings.

"We tried to draw water from the channel to put it off but we could not contain it. It then spread to the furniture workshops," Mr Umar Tende, a witness, said.

As the fire advanced, people rushed to rescue cars from the garage, furniture from carpentry workshops and goods from shops.

The Police Fire Brigade Department managed to put out the inferno, but after significant damage had already been done.

ACP Geoffrey Okobo, the Police Fire Brigade supervisor, said accessibility challenges hindered their duties.

Okobo added that the cause of the fire has not yet been established.

"We did our level best to ensure that we responded in time when we got the call

Fire destroys shops, garage



Fire fighters battle the inferno in Kampala yesterday. PHOTO/IBRAHIM KAVUMA

and managed to put out the fire. We, however, experienced challenges and poor accessibility since the place was a bit in the ghetto," Okobo said.

He urged the public to be vigilant to curb fire outbreaks.

Many owners of the gutted businesses shade tears as they narrated how they lost millions of shillings.

"Look at this chair. I had just finished

making it, ready to be picked tomorrow, but the fire destroyed it," Mr Micheal Kisembo, one of the youth who lost property, said.

Kisembo said he had invested about Shs30 million in the furniture workshop since 2021, after getting money from the Parish Development Model programme.

Kisembo said that his future and that of his six employees is now bleak.

Similarly, Ms Mary Nakityo, another victim, amid tears, said she lost merchandise worth Shs20 million.

Ms Nakityo said she was unable to save any goods from her shop.

Another affected person, Noor Mukwaaya, accused the fire brigade of arriving late, saying the firefighters came 45 minutes after they were contacted.

He urged the government and good Sa-

maritans to give support to the affected people to enable them get back on their feet after the harrowing incident.

"We need to see the government this time round coming up with a strategic plan to put firefighting tools near each parish to avoid such instances in 2026. The traders lost everything as police delayed," Mr Mukwaaya said.

He urged the government to compensate the people who lost their property, saying many were beneficiaries of the PDM programme who had organised themselves into groups and started operating carpentry workshops.

Kampala City has over the years experienced several fire outbreaks that have destroyed shops and other businesses, damaging property worth billions of shillings.

The Police Fire Brigade have in many of these cases struggled to contain the fire due to several challenges.

The challenges include a shortage of fire hydrants in the city, few fire fighting trucks and accessibility challenges accessioned by unplanned construction of buildings in the city.

TRAGEDY

After about two hours of raging fire, furniture, merchandise and other property were reduced to ashes as people looked on helplessly.