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Muslim museum opened

By Farooq Kasule

It was a moment of joy as the first Muslim museum in Uganda was being opened last week in Kitende on Entebbe Road.

According to Sheikh Jawadi Mbogo, the founder and director of the Uganda Islamic museum, the facility will help counter the misrepresentation of the Muslim heritage in the country.

Mbogo said they are aiming at preserving Islamic heritage.

"Although the Islamic religion was introduced in Uganda in 1844, there has not been a centre where people could get accurate information about the faith," he noted.

Mbogo said he developed the idea of a museum in 2012, when he attended a function where he heard some facts about Islam being misrepresented.

"Our aim is to get artefacts and manuscripts out of the dusty archives and make them accessible to the public in order to tell the true story," he said.

The museum

The museum has a library that comprises many images, including manuscripts dating as far back as the establishment of the Islamic religion in Uganda in 1844.

It has a Haj gallery, with names and pictures of the first Ugandans to go to Mecca to perform the Haj.

The information from the gallery indicates that Uganda registered the highest number of pilgrims to Mecca in 1977. Over 4,450 Ugandans performed Haj that year.

In the library, there is also an international hall of fame, which contains the history of Ugandans that have risen to

international level.

It also has an Islamic hall of fame, with names of people who have worked for the Islamic religion in different sectors, and an Independence gallery for all people who contributed to the independence of Uganda, Muslim PhD holders, sports personalities and pioneer Muslims.

Presiding over the event, Eng. Ammar Waheed tasked Mbogo with devising means of inspiring people to embrace the museum.

"I appreciate this initiative because there are people who are interested in their heritage. There is, therefore, a need to write and preserve it for future generations," Waheed said.

However, he noted that there must be unity between the people and the Government in protecting and preserving heritage. He added that the museum will contribute to the development of tourism in the country.

Mbogo revealed that they want to establish a mobile museum intended to make tourism accessible to all people in their localities.

He appealed to those who have information about Islam to volunteer it.

Dr Abdunoor Anas Kaliisa, a senior Muslim scholar, implored Mbogo and his team to collect all the Islamic heritage properly, regardless of their religious feelings.

He advised that the museum be digitalised so that people can view it online.

Ibrahim Lubega, the headteacher of Kampala High School, said the establishment of the museum is timely because, currently, people tell stories in accordance with their beliefs, not facts, leading to distortion of information.

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