such a claim. Accordingly, Bashaija dismissed Wasajja's objection with registry on October 5, 2007 show the property is a lease registered in their file had been misplaced. Zzimbe advised them to file a new application.

Millions lost as fire guts Kibuye timber yard market

By Farooq Kasule and Martin Kitubi

Property worth millions of shillings was destroyed in a 1:00am fire that gutted the timber and furniture mart in Kibuye, a Kampala suburb .

The cause of the fire is still unknown. Over 50 traders, who have since lost their business, yesterday gave conflicting reports, with some attributing the fire to recklessness while others claim it was arson linked to controversy over traders leadership. A big section of the yard comprised wooden and iron structures. Joseph Mugisa the Police fire chief, however, suggested that the fire begun from makeshift kitchens in the complex

By mid-afternoon yesterday, some wood traders had cleared the place and started erecting their structures in order to resume business. A few others, majority of them women gathered in groups, were seen crying. Some claimed that they got bank loan to establish business in Kasumba Zone

Stanley Kigozi Matovu, the chairman of the market, said he left the timber yard at midnight, but he was shocked when he was told after 30 minutes that fire had gutted it.

"I jumped on a bodaboda and rushed here. We tried to battle the flames, but the fire was overwhelming. Some traders on site informed me that they had seen a man clad in white clothes fleeing the scene where the fire started.



Traders and other people look at smoldering merchandise yesterday after fire gutted timber stores in Ndeeba, Kampala. Photo by Mary Nambwayo

Matovu said he immediately called the Police fire brigade headquarters, which is a few metres away, but it took 30 minutes for help to arrive.

"We tried to use buckets and basins filled with water to fight the fire, but we were overwhelmed. The fire fighters ran out of water and several times returned to the station for more water," he said.

Matovu also complained over manpower shortage, saying that Police blocked civilians from putting out the fire.

"The Police stopped us from using buckets to stop the fire yet one of their trucks came without water," Matovu said.

Kibuye local council chairman, John Mweruka could not hold back tears as he was reportedly the main victim of the fire. He allegedly lost goods worth sh70m.

The visibly saddened Mweruka told *New Vision* that he also lost money amounting to sh15m, seven land titles and vital documents in his office in the fire, whose origin is yet to be established by Police.

Matovu also disclosed that items worth sh350m reportedly perished in the fire.

Meanwhile, Kampala City Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago, who visited the traders, blamed the loss of properties in the markets on Police which he said did not respond on time to stop the fire.

"We continue to see several markets getting burnt in the country, but the Police have never come up with a report on any. There is a hidden agenda behind burning markets," he said.

Efforts to get a comment from Police proved futile as responsible officers were reportedly in Kigo in Entebbe meeting the Inspector General of Police.

City traders have been victims of fire in the past ten years, with the recent on Salabed building fire in Kampala, destroying property worth millions of shillings.

Traders say the Police fire brigade took 30 minutes to arrive