

# POPULAR ATTRACTION IN UGANDA: KASUBI TOMBS RISE FROM ASHES



In March 2010, a yet unknown arsonist burned down one of Uganda's most treasured heritage sites: the Kasubi Tombs. As the search continues, local authorities plan to raise the sacred site from its ashes.

The African country of Uganda longs to attract more tourists, since like many other African countries, it is well aware of the impact of tourism on any economy. Nearly all visitors have always paid their respect to the Kasubi Tombs, a sacred place and burial ground of the Kingdom of Buganda, where four kabaka, or kings, were buried.

**The UNESCO proclaimed the Kasubi Tombs a heritage site in 2001.** On 16th March, however, a group of unidentified arsonists set the tomb buildings on fire. Luckily, the tombs of the four kings remained intact; however, the rest was burnt to the ground. As the Kingdom of Buganda mourns, local authorities start planning the tombs' resurrection.

It is not going to be a simple reconstruction and considering the loss of nearly all the artifacts, priceless mementos and collections of great value, it will be quite a challenge. It is very difficult to imagine the restoration of the tombs at this moment. However, UNESCO is very supportive of the rebuilding of the tombs and fundraising initiatives have already emerged to help the government fund the resurrection of the Ugandan national treasure.

**As the planning proceeds, local authorities hope to make the Kasubi Tombs a bit more accessible and friendly for the tourists.** However, such plans are making many locals uneasy as Kasubi became a heritage site because it presented the rich cultural traditions of the kingdom and did credit to the fine Ganda architecture. It is crucial these qualities are preserved or recreated. Good will and determination, however, will surely bring this project to a successful end and Uganda will be back on the heritage map of the world cultural treasures.

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