

On warm evenings in a popular Kigali Suburb of Gisementi, the soft hum of Sudanese music floats through small cafés tucked along the busy streets. Inside, young Sudanese men and women are ordering their drinks and others gather around steaming cups of tea, sharing stories that drift between memories of home and the hopes they carry for the future. These cafés are part meeting place, part cultural refuge have become small sanctuaries, where laughter, debate, and familiar rhythms offer comfort far away from the turmoil back in their homeland.

Rwanda has become, unexpectedly, a place where they can breathe again. A place to study, to work, to rebuild and to rediscover the rhythm of ordinary African life after war fractured everything they knew.

When conflict erupted in Sudan in April 2023, millions were displaced as fighting between tore through neighborhoods and futures alike. Many fled with only what they could carry. Among them were young Sudanese determined not to let the war block their path to education and opportunity.



In the quiet corners of Kigali, two university students Osama Muhammad and Mariam Yahia are among those rebuilding their lives step by step. Osama still remembers the terror of the first days of war. “Half of us were trapped inside the hospital for days,” he recalls. “We thought we might never graduate.” After a difficult escape through Egypt and Tanzania, he arrived in Rwanda with his mother and younger sister, grateful simply to have survived. Now, he continues his studies at the University of Medical Sciences and Technology’s Kigali campus, founded by former Sudanese Minister of Health, Professor Mamoun Homeida to help displaced students continue their education.

Mariam’s story mirrors Osama’s, uncertainty, and the courage to leave everything behind. Rwanda, she says, has given her something she feared she might never feel again: safety. “Here, I feel safe as a woman and as a student. I’ve learned so much, and I hope to take these skills back home one day,” she says. Yet her voice trembles when she speaks of Sudan. “I hope someday we can return, when it’s safe.”

Elsewhere in Kigali, other Sudanese youth are discovering new paths. After seeing injustice firsthand during the conflict, Muhammad Zay switched his studies from accounting to law, to be part of Sudan’s future healing. “Rwanda is safe, welcoming,

and full of opportunity,” he says. “It’s a model not just for Africa, but beyond.”

For some, rebuilding means entrepreneurship. Fatim Hassan, an optometry graduate with a passion for beauty and wellness, launched a small skincare business in Kigali offering facial treatments and training programs for women. “Rwanda is the first safe and developed country I’ve lived in,” she says. “Starting a business here is straightforward, people collaborate. I want to empower women through mentorship.”

But life in Kigali isn’t all work and study. Sudanese culture thrives in the city’s cafés, homes, and shared gatherings. Evenings often bring music, dance, poetry, and warm conversations. In one Sudanese-run café filled with the aroma of cardamom tea, students, teachers, business owners, and artists meet to unwind. The kindness, humility, and easy warmth among them speak to a community that has endured hardship but refuses to lose its spirit.

While building new lives, many Sudanese in Rwanda remain deeply connected to the crisis back home. At a recent community gathering, they stood in solidarity with civilians still caught in the conflict. Ambassador Khalid Musa Dafalla urged international attention, while women shared powerful testimonies about the disproportionate impact of the war on families, particularly mothers and children. Others called for increased humanitarian aid and sustained support for those who cannot leave.

“Peace begins in the small acts of courage every day,” Osama says. “Here, we are building the foundation for the Sudan we hope to see.”

In Kigali’s classrooms, clinics, cafés, and small businesses, Sudanese youth are living proof that resilience is not simply survival. It is the courage to keep learning, the boldness to start anew, the joy found in music and friendship, and the unwavering belief that one day, home will welcome you back.