

The Rwandan government has pledged support to repair GOICO Plaza after a major fire damaged the commercial building in Musanze, as President Paul Kagame sent a message of encouragement to residents and traders affected by the incident.

Northern Province Governor Maurice Mugabowagahunde said on Monday, October 12, that Kagame had urged residents not to lose hope and to remember the cooperation that made the market possible.



Speaking to Rwanda Broadcasting Agency, Mugabowagahunde said the President's message was intended to encourage people to work together despite the losses caused by the fire.

The blaze broke out on Saturday, October 10, and spread through much of the building before being extinguished on Sunday morning. Police firefighters, members of the Rwanda Defence Force and residents took part in the response.

GOICO Plaza housed more than 2,000 traders and was one of the main commercial centres in northern Rwanda.

Preliminary estimates indicate that goods worth about Rwf30 billion were affected by the fire. The building itself is valued at Rwf17 billion, the governor said. Authorities have yet to complete their assessment of the damage.

The fire caused no reported deaths. Two people sustained minor injuries, while 15 others experienced psychological distress. Most of those who sought medical attention for distress had been discharged by Sunday, according to Musanze District authorities.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the Ministry of Local Government said government would support rehabilitation of the building so that businesses could resume operations.



Mugabowagahunde said local authorities were also responsible for listening to traders and assessing their individual needs, regardless of the size of their businesses or whether they had insurance.

The assessment is expected to help officials establish the extent of the losses and determine the assistance needed by affected traders as efforts to restore commercial activity continue.