

Rwandan President Paul Kagame on Monday officially opened Zaria Court Kigali, a \$25 million sports, culture and entertainment complex located in Remera, Kigali, as the country pushes to position itself as a regional hub for sports and tourism.

Developed in partnership with Giants of Africa, a non-profit organization founded by Masai Ujiri, president of the NBA's Toronto Raptors, the facility sits near Rwanda's major sports venues, including BK Arena, Amahoro Stadium and Petit Stade.

Speaking at the launch, Ujiri praised Kagame as a visionary leader who recognizes the role of sports in national development.

"President Kagame understands that sports can be more than recreation it's a tool for economic growth, for unity, and for youth empowerment," Ujiri said. "Not many leaders on this continent give young people the opportunities they need through sports. He does."

Construction of Zaria Court began in August 2024 and was completed in less than a year. The complex includes an 80-room hotel, restaurants, a rooftop dining area, a gym, a media studio, co-working spaces, a multi-sport court, and a modern marketplace.



It is designed to serve as both a leisure destination and a professional environment for athletes, performers, and entrepreneurs. Officials say the facility will also provide a boost to small businesses and tourism in the area.

Zaria Court opens amid a basketball renaissance in Rwanda, with growing investment from the private sector and increased fan interest. Bank of Kigali sponsors the national basketball league and manages BK Arena, which has hosted several high-profile tournaments including the Basketball Africa League (BAL), AfroBasket, and the FIBA Intercontinental Cup.

Basketball has also expanded in schools and institutions nationwide, from high schools to universities. But experts say the next step is establishing community-based clubs independent of academic or corporate institutions to foster more fan engagement.

"Basketball in Rwanda is no longer just a sport — it's becoming a national movement," Ujiri said.

As Rwanda continues to invest in world-class infrastructure and host international events, officials hope Zaria Court will serve as a model for how sports and culture can fuel economic and social transformation across Africa.