

Khalili Yahia Ibrahim gently arranges a colorful display of spices and imported goods at Sudago Multi Activities shop in Kigali as customers from Sudan, Middle East and Rwanda browse the shelves. Every purchase comes with a warm smile and a friendly greeting.

For a man who left Sudan just two years ago amid a conflict that disrupted daily life and accelerated his family's relocation—these small interactions symbolize stability, hope, and a new beginning.



Khalili Yahia Ibrahim, Founder of Sudago Multi Activities Rwanda

“When we left Sudan, we had to start over,” he says. “Everything collapsed, but here, we are rebuilding. Rwanda gave us a safe place to start again.”

Encouraged by stories of safety, economic order, and Rwanda's growing reputation as a magnet for foreign investors, Ibrahim and his family settled in Rwanda in 2023. “Among all African countries, we selected Rwanda. We heard about the people here, the safety, the opportunities,” he recalls.



From Machinery to Food Imports

As an entrepreneur in Sudan, Ibrahim was dealing in agricultural machinery, importing tractors, cultivators, and other farm equipment from Turkey and China. Leaving Sudan meant walking away from years of investment and a business he built from the ground up.

In Kigali, he quickly reinvented himself, established Sudago Multi Activities Rwanda, a business that imports specialty foods from Egypt, Sudan, and Turkey. Today, his customers are Sudanese, Middle Easterners and a growing number of Rwandans are discovering his products and returning for their quality and unique flavors.

“The Rwandans are very welcoming,” he says. “They are helpful, kind, and friendly. It makes settling here easier.”



He credits Rwanda's administrative efficiency with making his transition smooth.

“Institutions like Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) are transparent and helpful. That gave us confidence to start our business here,” he notes.

As business picked up, demand extended outside the capital. Ibrahim now works with partners and operates branches in Gisenyi and Musanze, supported by the large population of Sudanese students living there. He also supplies a variety of products to refugee communities in Mahama camp, strengthening both business ties and human connections.

Although he once exported Rwandan fruits and other produce to Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Middle East, high air-cargo costs made expansion difficult. He believes upcoming regional infrastructure such as the proposed East African railway could dramatically reduce transport costs and revive export opportunities.

“If the cost drops even by half, we will be able to export again,” he says with optimism.

Beyond trade, Ibrahim brings expertise in agriculture and petroleum engineering. He sees significant untapped potential in Rwanda’s irrigation systems, fertilizer production, and mineral exploration. He envisions introducing solar-powered irrigation technology that could boost crop yields from one ton per hectare to ten and more.

“The government needs expertise, and I am ready to contribute,” he says. He also notes that Rwanda’s hills contain mineral potential, and that knowledge from neighboring countries could help unlock it responsibly and efficiently.

Resilience and a New Beginning

Nearly two and half years after arriving, Rwanda has become a second home. Ibrahim’s children are settled in school, his business is stable, and he feels embraced by a community that values hard work and peaceful living.



He reflects on the contrast between life in Sudan and Rwanda. “In Sudan after the revolution, safety was always uncertain. Here, we can plan, work, and dream,” he says.

For Ibrahim, Kigali represents not only a chance to rebuild a life but also an opportunity to contribute to Rwanda's growing ecosystem of African entrepreneurs.

"Rwanda has given us safety and dignity. Here, we can plan, work, and dream," Inshallah, we will stay," he notes with conviction.

From his troubled country, Ibrahim's journey is a testament to resilience, adaptability, and the possibilities unlocked when opportunity and determination meet. His story captures why Rwanda is increasingly becoming a destination for those seeking a new chapter—one where beginnings don't just happen, they thrive.