

President Paul Kagame on Sunday met with professional boxer Carlos Takam, who presented him with a world champion belt after launching a boxing academy in Kigali.

The Office of the President, Village Urugwiro, said in a statement that Kagame received Takam on September 28, shortly after the conclusion of the UCI Road World Championships.

“This week, the Carlos Takam Foundation inaugurated the Carlos Takam Boxing Academy in Kigali, with the goal of promoting boxing in Africa. Takam also presented President Kagame with an authentic World Boxing Council (WBC) champion belt as a gesture of appreciation to Rwanda and the mission of the foundation,” the statement said.

Takam, 44, was born in Douala, Cameroon, and now holds French nationality. He represented Cameroon in the 2004 Olympic Games before turning professional. Over his career, he has fought 48 professional bouts, winning 40, losing seven and drawing once.

He is best known for taking on elite heavyweights, including Anthony Joshua and Joseph Parker, and in 2017 challenged for the WBA, IBF and IBO heavyweight titles.

The symbolic belt presentation comes as Rwanda prepares to host major combat sports events. On October 18, Kigali Arena will stage the semifinals of the Professional Fighters League (PFL), featuring international stars in kickboxing and mixed martial arts.

Kagame has long championed the role of sports in opening opportunities for Africa’s youth, saying investment in athletics is also an investment in the continent’s future.