Tensions on the DR Congo and Rwanda border eased slightly over the weekend with the repatriation of the remains of Corporal Anyasaka Nkoy Lucien, a DR-Congo soldier who died after crossing into Rwandan territory.

Two other soldiers, Sergeant Assuman Mupenda and Bokuli Lote, who were detained in Rwanda, were also returned home in a process overseen by the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM).

While this marks a positive step towards de-escalation, questions remain about the circumstances surrounding the incident and the state of relations between the two countries.

According to the DRC armed forces (FARDC), Cpl. Nkoy Lucien and the other two soldiers crossed the border illegally on January 16, 2024.

Rwanda' Defense Forces (RDF) claims the deceased soldier opened fire before being fatally shot. The DRC has not yet commented on this version of events.

The presence of the EJVM, mandated to monitor the ceasefire agreement between Rwanda and the DRC, indicates a coordinated effort to manage the situation. However, tensions remain high due to ongoing accusations of Rwandan support for the M23 rebel group in eastern DRC. Rwanda denies the claims.

"The return of the soldiers and the body is a welcome development," said a local analyst who wished to remain anonymous due to the sensitive nature of the situation. "But it doesn't erase the underlying issues that fueled this incident. We need thorough investigations and transparency from both sides to prevent similar tragedies in the future."

The incident highlights the complex and fragile security situation in the Great Lakes region.

While the repatriation and EJVM involvement are positive signs, addressing the root causes of the conflict and rebuilding trust between the two neighboring nations remain crucial for lasting peace.