The Rwandan government has raised fuel prices effective Saturday, citing higher international oil costs and transport challenges, but officials say the government is taking steps to prevent the increases from putting too much pressure on consumers.

The Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA) said the price of a liter of petrol rose to 1,989 Rwandan francs (about $1.55) from 1,862 francs, while diesel increased to 1,900 francs from 1,808 francs. The new prices will remain in effect for two months.

Minister of State for Infrastructure Jean de Dieu Uwihanganye said the hike was largely caused by disruptions along the Central Corridor, Rwanda's main import route through Tanzania, and by rising global fuel prices.

"Transport along that corridor has been slower than usual, which delayed deliveries and drove up costs," Uwihanganye said. "Still, the government decided to absorb part of the increase to keep prices, especially for diesel, as stable as possible."

Uwihanganye said the impact on transport fares will be minimal, with rates in Kigali expected to rise by less than 1%. Fares between provinces are still under discussion, he added, since they have not been adjusted for some time. He noted that the Rwandan franc's depreciation against major currencies also played a role in the adjustment but said the government's intervention prevented a sharper spike.

Trade and Industry Minister Prudence Sebahizi said the 5% rise in diesel prices should not trigger an increase in food or commodity prices.

"Because diesel is widely used in transport, we expected a bigger impact," he said. "But the government covered much of the cost to protect consumers, so we don't foresee major price changes."

Sebahizi said the government is expanding its fuel storage capacity to help the country build reserves when global prices drop. Rwanda is also negotiating with Kenya to use the Eldoret fuel pipeline, which would lower transport costs from the port of Mombasa.

He said other long-term measures are being rolled out to reduce dependence on imported fuel and limit exposure to price swings. These include promoting electric vehicles, converting methane gas from Lake Kivu into fuel for domestic and

industrial use, and boosting local production to reduce imports and stabilize the currency.

Sebahizi urged traders not to use the fuel price hike as an excuse to raise prices unjustifiably and called on consumers to report abuses. “Any price adjustment should be based on real costs, not speculation,” he said.

Fuel prices in Rwanda are reviewed every two months. Despite the latest increase, officials said the government’s intervention has kept prices among the lowest in the region.

“We understand how crucial fuel prices are to the cost of living,” Uwihanganye said. “That’s why we’re making sure these changes don’t hit Rwandans too hard.”