

President Paul Kagame said Thursday that the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) frequently contradicts itself on commitments made publicly, undermining peace efforts in the eastern part of the country.

Speaking to the press, Kagame cited instances where agreements reached in Washington or Doha are later reversed. "Sometimes these agreements are made publicly, and then the next day or week, someone says, 'No, we will not do this,' while other actions continue," he said.

Kagame was referring to ongoing peace talks and agreements with the DRC, which he said are often not honored. He said some people say one thing but do another which is characteristic of the situation with the DRC. "The good thing is that it happens publicly; it's not hidden, so people can see what is happening."

He added that it is especially concerning when commitments reached during talks are not implemented. "Whether you agree knowingly or not, what you commit to is what comes out of the process."

Eastern DRC Conflict

Kagame has repeatedly blamed the leadership of DRC President Antoine Félix Tshisekedi for instability in eastern DRC. He said Tshisekedi's inconsistent statements have hindered the implementation of peace agreements and other mutually agreed measures.

The two countries also exchange accusations: DRC claims Rwanda supports the Congolese rebel group AFC/M23, while Rwanda accuses DRC of sheltering the FDLR, a group formed by perpetrators of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Rwanda has stressed that its actions are purely defensive and not linked to AFC/M23 activities.

Kagame criticized DRC for frequently seeking sanctions against Rwanda in international forums instead of addressing internal governance issues. "How would punishing Rwanda solve your problems? How would it solve the problems of your citizens or your security forces?" he asked.

Despite the challenges, Kagame expressed cautious optimism about improving security in eastern DRC. He said progress has been made toward lasting solutions and pledged to explore all possible avenues for resolving the issues. He also acknowledged the support of the United States and former President Donald Trump

in regional peace efforts.

Goma Airport and Security

Kagame emphasized that until fundamental security issues in eastern DRC are addressed, cities like Goma currently under M23 control and cannot be fully restored to DRC authority. His remarks came after French President Emmanuel Macron announced plans to reopen Goma Airport to facilitate humanitarian aid.

“If I am asked to oversee Goma, I can say yes. But you must resolve the core problems first. You cannot return it to me without solving the underlying issues,” Kagame said. “People are fighting for their rights. No one should take those rights away by force.”

He reminded that insecurity in eastern DRC is not new, citing recurring violence since 2012. “This problem has been around for years. Money has been spent, missions sent, yet people are still being killed, and their property destroyed,” he said.

Kagame also warned that humanitarian initiatives must address root causes. “You cannot talk about aid without looking at the origin of the problem. Some ignore the real causes, which must be resolved first,” he said.

The president’s comments come as clashes continue in eastern DRC after AFC/M23 captured Goma and other cities in late January 2025, in fighting involving DRC forces, the FDLR, and allied militias.