

President Paul Kagame on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 delivered a strong message on protecting the nation's security, declaring that he won't ask for anyone's permission to act when necessary.

The Head of State delivered the remarks during the opening of the 19th National Dialogue Council, commonly known as 'Umushyikirano' a forum in which Rwandans discuss issues of national importance including national development, unity, and youth empowerment.

Kagame's unwavering stance throws the spotlight back on the simmering conflict with the DRC regarding the M23 rebel group and the FDLR terrorist group.

The crux of Kagame's address centered on two armed groups operating in eastern DRC: the M23 and the FDLR.

Regarding the M23, composed of Congolese fighters operating within Congolese territory, Kagame expressed bewilderment at its constant association with Rwanda.

He recounted past attempts to engage regional leaders, highlighting the group's Congolese origin and Rwanda's role in disarming and repatriating them in 2012-2013, albeit without resolving their underlying grievances.

He highlighted previous encounters with leaders where he questioned the attribution of M23 to Rwanda, emphasizing their Congolese origin and territory of operation.

He further questioned the inaction towards M23 leaders who fled to Rwanda in 2012-2013 and were eventually disarmed and repatriated with no resolution to their grievances.

Kagame raised concerns about the downplaying of the FDLR threat, a Rwandan genocide-linked terrorist group operating in eastern DRC.

The Head of State cited a past conversation with the Congolese President who initially denied the FDLR's presence despite evidence of their roadblocks and taxation activities. This highlights a perceived lack of urgency towards a serious internal security threat within DRC.

President Kagame's message on security was clear and resolute. He emphasized that Rwanda's past suffering has instilled a self-reliant stance when it comes to

national security.

He asserted that protecting Rwanda against external threats wouldn't require anyone's approval, stating, "When it comes to protecting this country that suffered for a long time, no one will come to help, I don't need permission from anyone, to do what we have to do in order to avoid..."

Observers say that President Kagame's assertive stance reflects Rwanda's determination to safeguard its security amidst regional turbulence. His message serves as a warning to potential aggressors and underscores Rwanda's commitment to taking decisive action when its safety is at stake.