

President Paul Kagame, who also serves as chairman of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) Inkotanyi, praised citizens for their unity and resilience in the face of external pressures, saying he knows of no country with people as committed as Rwandans.

Speaking to more than 2,200 party members at the 17th National Congress of the RPF Inkotanyi, Kagame reflected on Rwanda's history, including the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, which left the country deeply scarred. He said Rwandans "did not remain prisoners of history" but instead chose to unite around a shared vision for sustainable development.



"Considering where we came from—divisive politics and genocide—yet today the people are united, even as the whole world keeps trying to push us backward," Kagame said. Outsiders have even tried to use Rwandans themselves to create conflict, but the people have defeated them.

Experts say the genocide was fueled by a combination of colonial legacies and bad governance that promoted ethnic division. Kagame noted that after the genocide, Rwandans committed themselves to building a society where every citizen is equal under the law.

The president also addressed the role of African youth in demanding rights and accountability, urging RPF leaders to proactively meet citizens' needs rather than waiting for protests. "These current events you see here and there—youth rising up politically to demand their rights—are legitimate," he said, referencing unrest in other countries, where hundreds have died in recent protests. "But for us in RPF, should we wait for people to remind us that we owe them something?"

Kagame stressed that leaders must set an example for the younger generation, which closely observes how current officials exercise their responsibilities. "The youth are watching," he said. "The example leaders set today is what will be followed now and in the future."

The congress, held in Kigali on December 17, brought together party members to reflect on Rwanda's progress and discuss strategies for the country's ongoing development.