

President Paul Kagame says the problems in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) must be addressed by focusing on the basic facts, evidence, and reality of the situation.

Addressing the diplomatic corps on Thursday at Kigali Convention Centre, a traditional event where he speaks on Rwanda's policies on the international stage, Kagame criticized the long-running UN peacekeeping mission for failure to resolve the issues, and accused some international leaders of distorting the facts to serve their own interests.

"Rwanda will not back down in the face of threats, and that those responsible for the genocide in Rwanda still operate in the DRC with impunity," Kagame said.

Kagame's comments come amid a recent UN report accusing Rwanda of deploying troops in the DRC, which he has strongly denied.

He further stressed the importance of addressing the underlying issues, stating, "If you want to really address a problem there is no better way of doing that, than bothering to look at and addressing the root cause of that problem. It doesn't matter how powerful you are, you just stick to the basics, of facts, of evidence of reality."

He talked about the presence of the UN peacekeepers in DRC for close to three decades, questioning their failure to address the area's problems, including the initial problem they were sent to fix.

"Normally it should take you five to 10 years to exit because you would have addressed the problem," he said.

Kagame pointed out that the people responsible for the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi still operate in the DRC, armed and continuing their genocidal ideology, despite the presence of the international community.

Kagame particularly said that those values and interests are beneficial for some while they exclude others.

"If you have taken a global responsibility that there are some values you are going to insist on and interests that come with it...it's fine but it also gives you a responsibility to really walk the talk, mean what you say."

Kagame questioned why the values and interests that the international community claims to uphold often become incompatible with the truth, facts, and evidence.

He also talked against the expertise of the UN group of experts, stating that they don't actually need to be experts in anything but to be inline of those putting them in place, including the very people from whom this problem originated since colonial times.

"If you are going to have an expert who is associated in the wrong way with this history to come and say the problem is something else, not what it is exactly, don't you have a problem? Are you going to be able to address the root cause of this problem...when the first step is to distort the facts and evidence?" he asked.

Kagame emphasized that statements or threats will not make Rwanda back down, as the country has already paid the price of lives lost in the genocide and will never go back to that, no matter how powerful anyone is.

"This is a matter of life and death for me and my people... Please try to understand us and the people you are dealing with. We are not the same 'idiots' you dealt with 50 years ago."