

Kenya's President William Ruto arrived in Kigali this Tuesday for a two-day state visit to Rwanda. Ruto was welcomed at Urugwiro village, Kigali, Rwanda by the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) singing the Kenya, Rwanda and East African Anthem.

Sources close to Ruto say that regional trade, security and food situation will dominate talks with President Paul Kagame.

The main goal of the trip, according to a statement from State House in Nairobi, is to discuss issues of mutual interest and cooperation including integration projects on the Northern Corridor, which runs through Kenya and is the main supply route for imports from the region into Rwanda.

Other issues on the agenda for the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) include trade expansion, education, food security, innovation, ICT, and health. Together with Uganda, the two nations once led the Coalition of the willing, advancing initiatives like the Northern Corridor expansion plan and a common visa for tourists travelling to the three one-stop border posts.

However, due to relations between Uganda and Rwanda in particular, some of the projects, including the proposed railway, were put on hold or diverted.

Beyond integration initiatives, however, Rwanda and Kenya will meet to talk about regional peace and security, with the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo being the immediate, shared issue.

Kinshasa has accused Rwanda of supporting the M23 rebellion, which Kigali rejects, but Kigali has also accused Kinshasa of supporting the FDLR movement, which is opposed to Rwanda's stability. Both accusations stem from the ongoing violence.

Kenya, which provides troops to the East African Community Regional Force (EACRF), has also hosted talks between rival factions in the DRC.