Incumbent President Paul Kagame issued a stern warning, condemning any foreign attempts to destabilize Rwanda's security. He reiterated the country's unwavering resolve to defend itself, emphasizing that it would not seek permission from anyone to take such actions.

Mr. Kagame made the remarks at Kagano playground during a campaign rally in Nyamasheke district before thousands of RPF-Inkontayi supporters on Saturday, June 29, 2024.

The Head of State thanked the people of Nyamasheke for not accepting to be ensnared by MRCD-FLN militias from DR-Congo in 2019, emphasizing that being Rwandans is what we strive for most. It is your right to be anything you want as long as it does not endanger others' safety and security.

National security and the tension between the neighbors is playing an outsize role than ever in the 2024 local elections.

Mr. Kagame said, "When these rebels wanted to attack Rwanda through Nyungwe Park, they had lied to the people that they were many, that they were supported by foreign countries, and that they wanted to remove Rwanda's leadership."

In 2018 and 2019, Nyamasheke district bore the brunt of terror attacks by the MRCD-FLN group. This outfit ambushed passenger buses within Nyungwe forest, tragically leaving a trail of casualties and injuries.

President Kagame pointedly addressed the ongoing threat, highlighting that even today, and individuals in neighboring countries reoffering to DR-Congo and Burundi harbor ambitions to destabilize Rwanda through attacks. These actors boast of their ability to orchestrate such actions remotely.

"Although there have been problems, Rwanda has continued to rebuild itself, and is now in a safe position," Kagame said adding that those who want to attack Rwanda are still in neighboring countries and that they are supported by the leadership of these countries.

The DR-Congo President Felix Tshisekedi threatened to attack Rwanda several times during his campaign last year, but he has not yet done so. According to many, these pledges were an attempt to gain nationalist support.

Burundi severed relations and closed its border with Rwanda early April this year,

accusing Kigali of backing Burundian insurgents in DR Congo.

The closure came about two weeks after Burundi's President Evariste Ndayishimiye accused Rwanda of backing the Red-Tabara rebel group, a charge Rwanda denies.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame warned that anyone who wishes for the destruction of his country "will be faced with it instead" in response to Mr Tshisekedi's pledge last year.

Regarding Tshisekedi's bellicose rhetoric during the election campaign, Mr. Kagame said those who say they will attack Rwanda are soon forgotten since they have tried so many times to do so. He said, "But people like that forget quickly. They have tried many times but they forget what we tell them often."

DR-Congo President accuses Rwanda of supporting the M23 rebel group. A UN group of experts made a similar observation in a 2023 report, with the US backing its findings.

Rwanda has always denied the claim and accuses its neighbor of backing Hutu rebels who stage attacks in Rwanda.

Kagame continued, "We will find them where they are and we don't need any permission from anyone to defend our country." "We are prepared to meet any threat, wherever it may arise. Defending our nation is a right, not a privilege that requires permission."

The candidate of the RPF Inkotanyi told Rwandans that security is the most important thing and to achieve it, everyone has a role to play.