A three-day meeting of military officials from Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, and Rwanda began in Kigali on January 8, 2025. The gathering aims to tackle key security issues in the region, including arms trafficking, cross-border crime, and other threats that could undermine development projects shared by these nations.

The meeting is hosted by the Defence Cooperation Cluster's Technical Committee of the Northern Corridor Integration Projects (NCIPs). It brings together representatives from the four countries to strengthen military cooperation and coordination.

Brigadier General Patrick Karuretwa, the Director General of International Military Cooperation in Rwanda's Ministry of Defence, officially opened the meeting. He encouraged the participants to work on refining and updating important documents, addressing any past discrepancies. "I urge you to produce refined documents that tackle these issues effectively," Brig. Gen. Karuretwa said.

Brigadier General Patrick Karuretwa officiating at the meeting

The discussions are set to focus on key topics, such as coordinating defence and foreign policies, strengthening peace and security, and creating mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

Lt. Col. Francis Odhiambo Walwa, a senior official from Kenya's Ministry of Defence, emphasized the Northern Corridor's vital role in promoting peace and fostering good relations among its member states. He also pointed out that security is essential for driving economic growth in the region.

The Northern Corridor, launched in 2013, is a regional development initiative aimed at boosting infrastructure, trade, and political cooperation among Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and South Sudan. The initiative seeks to foster deeper regional integration and accelerate growth.

The current meeting builds on decisions made in 2023, when the heads of state of the Northern Corridor member countries approved joint projects to ease trade, improve infrastructure, and promote the free movement of goods and people.

The outcome of these discussions is expected to strengthen security and foster long-term regional development. The collaboration between these nations will continue to play a critical role in ensuring stability and growth in the region.