

A total of 367 Rwandans returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo on Thursday, Oct. 8, entering the country through two border crossings as authorities prepared to provide temporary shelter and help reunite them with families.

The returnees, comprising 113 families, crossed through the La Corniche border post linking Rubavu District with Goma and the Rusizi I crossing connecting Rusizi District with Bukavu.

La Corniche received 314 people from 99 families, while another 53 people from 14 families entered through Rusizi I.

The returnees are expected to stay temporarily at the Kijote Transit Centre in Nyabihu District, where they will receive basic assistance as arrangements are made to help them resume normal lives and reconnect with relatives.

Some said they had spent years in eastern Congo facing insecurity and hardship.

Théoneste Nsengiyumva said he had struggled to support himself because he lacked freedom and access to farmland, while crops he managed to grow were sometimes taken by armed groups.

“We were told there was peace in Rwanda, so we returned and found that there is peace,” he said.

Another returnee said recurring conflict had made it difficult to build a stable life. He returned voluntarily with four of his children, while four others had married and remained in Congo.



Rubavu District Vice Mayor for Economic Development Déogratias Nzabonimpa welcomed the returnees and said the government would support them as they settled back into their communities.

He said assistance programmes would cater for older people, while those able to work would be encouraged to pursue activities that could help them improve their livelihoods.

Nzabonimpa also said the continued presence of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), an armed group operating in eastern Congo, remained

an obstacle to the return of some Rwandans.

The latest arrivals join more than 7,000 Rwandans who, according to reports, had returned in previous groups.