

President Paul Kagame of Rwanda joined several African heads of state in Libreville on Saturday to attend the inauguration ceremony of Gabon's newly elected president, Gen. Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema.

According to a statement from Village Urugwiro, President Kagame arrived in the West African country to witness the swearing-in of Gen. Oligui, who won the April 12 presidential election with 94.85% of the vote, as announced by Gabon's Ministry of Interior.

The official ceremony took place at the 35,000-seat Stade de l'Amitié (also known as Angondjé Stadium), marking the first time in Gabon's history that a presidential inauguration was held outside the presidential palace at Bord de Mer.

Oligui, 50, previously led Gabon during a 20-month transitional period following a military coup that ousted long-serving President Ali Bongo on August 30, 2023. Bongo had ruled Gabon for 14 years, continuing a political dynasty that began with his father, Omar Bongo, in 1967.

President Kagame was among numerous African leaders attending the event, including President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea, President Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo, President Faustin-Archange Touadéra of the Central African Republic, President Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno of Chad, President Bassirou Diomaye Faye of Senegal, President Mamadi Doumbouya of Guinea, President Adama Barrow of Gambia, and President Umaro Sissoco Embaló of Guinea-Bissau.

Also in attendance were President Félix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo and President Évariste Ndayishimiye of Burundi.

More than 40,000 people gathered to witness the ceremony, a reflection of both national interest and regional significance.

Gen. Oligui Nguema is no stranger to Rwanda. He visited Kigali in August 2024 to attend President Kagame's inauguration and made an earlier official visit in October 2023. During his meetings with Kagame, discussions focused on Gabon's transition process, regional security, and enhancing bilateral cooperation, particularly within the framework of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

Gabon, a resource-rich nation, relies heavily on oil production, timber exports, and

mineral wealth. Rwanda and Gabon maintain strong diplomatic and trade relations, including direct air transport links via RwandAir, which operates flights to Libreville. The two countries first formalized bilateral cooperation agreements in 1976, which were updated in 2010.