

Rwanda and Belgium have agreed to restore diplomatic relations, 18 months after Kigali severed ties with Brussels over their differences on the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The decision was announced in a joint statement by Rwanda's Foreign Minister Olivier Nduhungirehe and Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot. The two countries agreed to restore relations on September 22, 2026, following months of meetings and informal contacts.

The ministers said they would maintain an "open, candid and transparent dialogue" to address bilateral differences and disagreements over international issues.

Prévot said the restoration followed a process of frank discussions.

Both countries also thanked Qatar for facilitating their first meeting in Doha in June 2025. The two governments agreed to reopen their embassies soon, initially under chargé d'affaires. Ambassadors will be appointed later.

The two sides also agreed to continue discussing areas where differences remain, including the conflict in eastern DRC.

The diplomatic rupture came as fighting intensified in eastern DRC in early 2025, with the M23 armed group capturing Goma and Bukavu.

The United Nations and other international actors have accused Rwanda of supporting M23, a charge Kigali denies.

Belgium was among the countries that criticised Rwanda over its alleged support for the group and backed tougher measures against Kigali.

On February 18, 2025, Rwanda suspended development cooperation with Belgium, accusing Brussels of taking sides in the conflict with the DRC.

A month later, on March 17, Rwanda announced that it was cutting diplomatic ties with Belgium and gave Belgian diplomats 48 hours to leave the country. Brussels responded by ordering Rwandan diplomats to leave Belgium. Belgium subsequently closed its embassy in Kigali.

The restoration of relations now opens a new channel for dialogue, although the disagreements over eastern DRC remain unresolved.