

Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on February 12, 2025, began a two-day hearing at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR) in Arusha, Tanzania.

The case centers around accusations that Rwanda has supported the M23 rebel group in North Kivu, DRC, leading to serious human rights violations in the region.

The case was first filed by DRC on August 21, 2023, during a time when the M23 rebels had made significant territorial gains in North Kivu. Tensions between the two countries were rising, with DRC claiming Rwanda was providing support to the M23, causing harm to the people of the region.

Rwanda has strongly denied these allegations, stating that it does not support the M23 rebels. The government argues that M23 is a Congolese group fighting for their rights and that Rwanda has no involvement.



Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Dr. Emmanuel Ugirashebuja, pointed out flaws in DRC's case, saying they failed to provide proper evidence and explanations for their claims.

In addition, Dr. Ugirashebuja highlighted an incident in August 2024, when a DRC official visited the court in an attempt to intimidate the judges. He said, "This was an act that seemed to pressure the judges into taking sides with DRC."

Rwanda's legal team, led by Professor Dapo Akande, argued that the African Court does not have the authority to hear this case. They emphasized that the court should only handle issues that directly affect the country's territory, and in this case, the issues raised by DRC should be addressed between the two countries, not in a regional court.

DRC has asked the court to order Rwanda to stop supporting the M23 rebels, withdraw its forces from Congolese territory, and pay reparations for the human rights violations. However, Rwanda continues to reject these claims, saying there is no proof of their involvement in supporting M23.



The case is part of a broader series of legal battles between the two countries. In

September 2024, DRC filed a similar case with the East African Court of Justice (EACJ), accusing Rwanda of violating its sovereignty. Rwanda has consistently rejected these accusations, insisting that the security problems in DRC should be solved by the Congolese government without blaming Rwanda.

Rwanda's Foreign Minister, Olivier Nduhungirehe, has condemned the ongoing hostility from DRC and said that Rwanda will continue to reject the violence and hate speech coming from DRC, and it will stand firm against any false accusations.

DRC has made multiple military moves that have affected Rwanda's security, including a border shooting incident in January 2025. This ongoing hostility has only added to the strained relationship between the two nations.

The African Court is now tasked with hearing both sides with just one chapter in the complex and tense relationship between Rwanda and DRC, where both countries continue to struggle with finding a long-term solution to their differences.