

Rwanda's Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr. Vincent Biruta this Tuesday met with his Burundian counterpart Albert Shingiro for a working visit at Nemba-Gasenyei border post in a bid to ease tensions between the two countries.

Dr. Biruta said that the tense relations between Rwanda and Burundi have had negative consequences on exchanges between the people of the two countries. He said Rwanda was ready to normalize relations. Describing the meeting, the first of its kind for five years, as a good step so that the two countries can renew their good neighborly relations.

Albert Shingiro affirmed that Burundi supports all efforts aimed at normalizing relations between the two countries. He said that re-establishing good neighborly relations between the two countries is a matter between Burundians and Rwandans, a mediator is not necessary.

According to a joint press statement, this meeting is part of the shared desire to assess the state of bilateral relations between the two countries and to agree on the modalities of their normalization.

The two Ministers noted the existence of historic relations between Rwanda and Burundi as well as the challenges they have been facing since 2015. The two agreed on the need to continue contacts in order to normalize relations between the two neighbors linked by history and geography.

Shingiro invited his Rwandan counterpart to pay a reciprocal visit to Burundi, an invitation accepted on a date to be agreed between the two parties through diplomatic channels.

Relations between the two neighbors went sour since 2015, when former President Pierre Nkurunziza, who died on June 8, 2020, accused Rwanda of supporting the politico-military movements that were opposed to his contested third term, which Kigali had always denied. Rwanda, for its part, suspects a presence in Burundi of the Rwandan rebels of the FDLR despite the denials by the Burundian authorities.