

Military, police and civilian personnel from nine countries have begun a two-week exercise in Rwanda to test the Eastern Africa Standby Force's (EASF) ability to deploy troops, deliver equipment and sustain operations during emergencies.

The Logistics Map Exercise (LOG MAPEX) opened on October 19, 2026, at Gako Military Academy in Bugesera District and will run until October 30.

The exercise aims to identify logistical gaps, test deployment plans and strengthen coordination among participating countries ahead of potential missions involving conflict, disasters and other emergencies.

Opening the exercise, Rwanda Defence Force Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Mubarakh Muganga urged participants to identify weaknesses and develop practical solutions to improve the regional force's readiness.

"The success of this exercise will depend on our ability to implement the lessons learned and bring about tangible changes in logistics management, planning and operational capability," Muganga said.

EASF Director Brig. Gen. Ronald Rwivanga said the exercise would assess whether member countries could translate their commitments into operational capabilities.

He said having troops available was not enough; forces must also reach deployment locations on time, carry the necessary equipment and sustain operations until their missions are completed.

Rwivanga added that testing deployment plans in advance would help identify potential obstacles before troops are sent on missions.

The EASF began demonstrating its operational capability in 2014 and regularly assesses the readiness of military, police and civilian personnel from member countries against established standards.

Rwanda is scheduled to undergo a readiness assessment from November 1 to 6, 2026, Rwivanga said.

Kenya's ambassador to Rwanda, Janet Mwawasi Oben, said regional cooperation was essential in addressing security threats, disasters and other emergencies. She stressed that effective responses depend on professional personnel as well as the timely delivery of equipment and supplies.

Brig. Gen. Robert Kabage of Kenya, who is leading the exercise facilitation team, said the programme would begin with four days of training before moving into practical activities, including group discussions and scenario-based exercises.

A further exercise is planned for Kisumu, Kenya, in 2027, focusing on disaster response. It is expected to assess pledged capabilities, including Rwanda's air medical evacuation capacity, Kenya's intelligence-gathering capabilities and Ethiopia's ability to transport personnel and equipment over long distances by air.

The EASF is a regional mechanism established to support rapid deployments for conflict prevention, emergency response and peace support operations. Its 10 member countries include Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Comoros.