Rwanda Polytechnic faced sharp questioning from lawmakers on Friday, July 3, 2026, over more than RWF 252 million in unrefunded student security deposits, a long-running issue that has repeatedly appeared in national audit reports without resolution.

Members of Parliament sitting in the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) raised concerns during a hearing on findings from the Auditor General's report for the 2024/2025 fiscal year, which flagged inconsistencies and delays in refunding students' "caution" fees.

The caution fee is a refundable deposit paid by students upon enrollment in higher learning institutions, intended to cover any damage incurred during their studies and returned after graduation if no loss is recorded.

Lawmakers said the issue has persisted for years despite repeated appearances in audit findings, questioning why the institution has failed to put in place a reliable system to manage refunds.

"This is a problem that keeps coming back in audit reports," said MP Niwemuremyi Marie Claire, who questioned why no lasting solution has been implemented.

PAC Chairperson MP Muhakwa Valens also criticized the institution, questioning how a university with detailed student records could be unable to trace graduates to refund their money.

"You teach someone for three years and then say you cannot find them when it is time to refund their money," he said.

Rwanda Polytechnic Deputy Director General in charge of finance, Jean Pierre Nkuranga, told lawmakers the challenge is tracing graduates, some of whom completed their studies up to 15 years ago.

He said many former students have changed addresses or phone numbers, making it difficult to reach them.

"We have information on some students who graduated long ago, but finding them is difficult because their contacts are no longer active or they moved," Nkuranga said.

He said the institution has so far refunded RWF 8 million this year to graduates it has been able to locate and said recovery efforts will be included in staff performance targets to improve follow-up.

Nkuranga added that where graduates cannot be traced, the institution may consult relevant authorities on procedures to write off the outstanding amounts from its books.

However, lawmakers rejected the explanation, arguing that the issue reflects weak administrative systems rather than an inability to locate former students.

PAC members questioned why basic student records, including names, national identification numbers and contact details, could not be used to trace graduates and process refunds more efficiently.

The Ministry of Education also weighed in, with Permanent Secretary Karakye Charles saying the matter should be reviewed closely, noting that national ID information and student records should normally make it possible to locate graduates unless contact details are outdated.

He said the ministry will work with Rwanda Polytechnic to ensure recent graduates receive their refunds, while older cases continue to be traced.

Rwanda Polytechnic did not provide lawmakers with a breakdown of the number of students owed refunds or the specific amounts paid per individual, a gap MPs said limits effective oversight of the issue.