

More than 100 former members of the FDLR militia have completed a government-supported reintegration program, taking their first steps toward rebuilding civilian lives after years of armed conflict in eastern Congo.

The participants, many of whom spent decades in the forests, received vocational training, educational support, and essential supplies to help them start anew. The program is part of Rwanda's broader efforts to promote reconciliation and social reintegration for former combatants.



At a ceremony in Mutobo, Musanze District, the former fighters were welcomed warmly by local leaders and government officials. The event included traditional celebrations and opportunities for participants to meet those overseeing the program. Organizers said the reception symbolized Rwanda's commitment to helping individuals return to peaceful, productive lives.

"Here, we feel safe. We no longer fear attacks or gunfire in the night," one participant said. Many described a stark contrast between their previous lives in the forest, where they faced constant danger, malnutrition, and ideological indoctrination, and the security and support they now experience in Rwanda.

The program also includes lessons in vocational skills, aiming to provide sustainable livelihoods. Officials emphasized that every Rwandan, including former combatants, has the right to live in peace and dignity.

Observers said the initiative not only addresses immediate needs but also challenges the beliefs that fueled years of conflict. "It's a chance to start over, learn new skills, and rebuild trust in the community," said a government coordinator.

For the former fighters, the program represents more than material support. It is a symbolic homecoming a chance to reconnect with society, embrace peace, and contribute to the country's development.

Rwanda's reintegration program continues to focus on both returning residents and those who have lived abroad, offering guidance, training, and support to help former combatants transition safely into civilian life.