For decades, Rwanda and Sudan have shared a quiet but resilient bond—one shaped by liberation struggles, humanitarian solidarity, and peacekeeping missions far from the spotlight. Today, that relationship is undergoing its most profound transformation yet. In Kigali and Khartoum, a new diplomatic energy is reshaping old alliances into modern engines of trade, investment, and cultural exchange. From Sudan's growing stake in Rwanda's economy to Rwanda's peacekeeping legacy in Darfur, the two nations are crafting a blueprint for African-led cooperation at a time when the continent needs it most. This is the story of how history, ambition, and shared values are forging a powerful partnership across the Nile Basin and the Great Lakes region.

Inside the fast-growing trade, people-to-people links, and $50m investment boom

Sudan and Rwanda have enjoyed excellent diplomatic ties for now decades and the opening of embassies was a landmark achievement along the diplomatic journey of the two AU nations. Sudan opened its embassy in the capital, Kigali in 2011 as Rwanda reciprocated by opening its embassy in Khartoum in 2015.

The relations between Sudan and Rwanda trace to the Continent's decolonization era when Sudan supported liberation movements across Africa.

Moreover, Sudan was one the countries in the region to provide humanitarian assistance to Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Rwanda significantly contributed to peace efforts in Sudan in 2003 through its peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

Both countries share common values including commitment to peace, stability, and African integration, and Sudan lauds Rwanda's role promoting African-led solutions to continental challenges. President Paul Kagame championed and popularized the creation of one African market dubbed African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Sudanese Embassy in Kigali

Now the relation are stretching to greater movement of people, trade, and cultural

and educational exchange with an increasing number of Sudanese people living and working in Rwanda. The trade has led to growth in investment by the Sudanese business community, and integration of the peoples from the two AU nations.

Sudan’s investment in Rwanda has experienced significant growth in recent years, reflecting a deepening economic partnership and bilateral relations between the two countries.

Building on this solid foundation, the Sudanese government has expressed keen interest to further penetrate the fast-growing Rwandese coffee market as the Northeast African country becomes one of the top destinations for Rwanda coffee export.

Latest official figures released by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) show that Rwanda exported $6.23M to Sudan where the main export products were Tea ($5.54M), Coffee ($443k), and Other Oily Seeds ($139k).

Estimates show that exports from Rwanda to Sudan have increased at an annualized rate of 3.74%, growing from $5.19M in 2017 to $6.23M in 2022.

In U.S. dollar terms, the total estimates of Sudanese investments in Rwanda has today reached about $50 million, since the opening of Rwanda’s diplomatic mission in Khartoum and the formal opening of Sudanese diplomatic representation in Kigali in 2013

The Ambassador of Sudan to Rwanda, Khalid Musa Dafalla, told Rwanda Dispatch that Investment links between the two countries are also growing where by Sudanese investors have of recent injected over $20 million into Rwanda’s economy, particularly in sectors like education, healthcare, construction, and infrastructure.

“In the past six months, the trade value for coffee exceeded four million dollars, making Sudan one of Rwanda’s major buyers of these products,” Ambassador Dafalla said in an exclusive interview.

Ambassador of Sudan to Rwanda, Khalid Musa Dafalla

South-south cooperation for trade

Currently, Sudan and Rwanda are leveraging major projects to steer their cooperation, develop exemplary south-south cooperation projects, and promote deep-level integration of interests.

The two countries are both members of a number of regional and continental blocs including the African Union, ICGLR, COMESA, EAPCCO, Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), Africa's longest river that brings together 10 upstream and downstream countries many other platforms.

As Africa's third-largest country by area and among the top five with natural and agricultural resources such as mineral, livestock and other kinds of resources, Sudan is currently seeking to strengthen its trade ties with Rwanda through various initiatives.

During the visit to Rwanda in March 2025, Rwandan President Paul Kagame and the Vice President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of Sudan Malik Agar agreed to activate joint cooperation mechanisms to achieve the mutual interests of the two countries and peoples.

Reaffirming the significance of bilateral ties, the two leaders agreed to meet in person to further develop relations, whereby authorities in Khartoum are also calling on President Paul Kagame to intervene and lead an African effort to end the current conflict in Sudan.

Rwanda has since 2005 deployed peacekeepers in Sudan's Darfur region as part of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and before that, Rwanda was the first country to deploy peacekeepers in Sudan under AMIS.

The African Union and the international community have warned against the prospect of a parallel government over fears that it could further split the country into two.

President Kagame received Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan in August 2024 during the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony in Kigali

Despite current prevailing security situation, the readings speak volumes for Rwanda-Sudan ties. Apart from huge investments across different key sectors in Rwanda, Sudan currently ranks among the top on list with the largest diaspora

population in Rwanda with about 6,000 Sudanese living in the country, where half are students which represents around 25 percent of all international students in Rwanda.

According to the Sudanese Ambassador to Rwanda, the two countries with great cultural affinity, have in recent years, expanded collaboration in tourism, education, medical care and trade to enhance the well-being and mutual learning of the two peoples.

“The exceptional stability and clear investment policies [in Rwanda] are among key factors driving Sudanese investments in the country,” he said.

Rwanda and Sudan are proving that history can be a foundation, not a barrier. With trade, investment, and people-to-people ties flourishing, the partnership between the two offers a bold vision of African-led progress. Together, they are not just shaping bilateral relations — they are shaping the future of the continent.