

*By Jeje Muhinde*

The Rwandan government has announced that the Gatuna border with Uganda will be opened from January 31, after the country expressed its willingness to resolve the issues raised by Rwanda, which was the reason for the closure of the border.

A statement from Rwanda's Foreign Affairs Ministry said that after the visit of Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, Senior Presidential advisor on Special Operations and Commander of Land Forces of the Uganda People's Defence Forces, who recently visited Rwanda on January 22.



“The Government of Rwanda has taken note that there is a process to solve issues raised by Rwanda, as well as commitments made by the Government of Uganda to address remaining obstacles. ” the statement reads in part.

It further stated that the decision to open the Gatuna Border will take effect on 31 January 2022. “the Government of Rwanda wishes to inform the public that the Gatuna border between Rwanda and Uganda will be re-opened from 31 January 2022.”

As it is the case for other land border posts in the country, measures to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic will be followed by Gatuna border, this will be supervised by health officials of both countries.

The Rwandan government said its committed to resolving the issues between the two sides, with the aim of accelerating the resolution of disputes between the two countries.

The Gatuna border was closed in 2019 after Rwanda announced that Uganda supports activities aimed at undermining its security, as well as detaining Rwandans illegally without proper legal procedures.

At the time, Rwanda advised its people to refrain from going to Uganda because they do not have the capacity to ensure their security.

This decision has had a profound effect on Rwanda and Uganda, which have been friendly neighbors for a long time, so it is not surprising that there are families with siblings on both sides of the border.

In addition to the relationship, the dispute between the two countries has had a major impact on trade.

On January 22, Gen Muhoozi paid a special visit to Rwanda where he held talks with President Kagame, with reports that both sides were pleased with the outcome of the talks and that it had taken “further steps in resolving the existing issues”.

Prior to Gen Muhoozi’s visit, both sides had tried to reach an agreement through mediation by Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo but to no avail.

However, despite the two countries having serious problems, neither side has ever said that it will never agree to the other, nor have the two countries ever severed diplomatic ties at the embassy level, suggesting that each side was ready for a reversal.