

RwandAir Cargo is exploring expansion into new markets, including Istanbul, Turkey, and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, despite disruptions caused by instability in the Middle East, the company's chief executive said.

Jean Bosco Gakwaya, Director of Cargo Services at RwandAir told Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA) that recent security challenges in the Middle East have negatively affected the airline's cargo operations because the United Arab Emirates is one of its key markets.

"The problems in the Middle East had a significant impact on RwandAir Cargo because the United Arab Emirates is a major market for our business," Gakwaya said. "While passenger airlines experienced the most visible effects, cargo operations were also disrupted."

He said the company was able to continue some operations through special flights to the UAE, but the disruptions affected both revenue and overall market performance.

"In general, these challenges affected revenues and the functioning of the market, creating significant disruptions to RwandAir Cargo's business," he said.

Despite the setbacks, Gakwaya said the airline is pursuing several initiatives to expand its cargo network and enter new markets. Feasibility studies are underway, with further details expected to be announced soon.

The planned expansion includes destinations in Africa as well as longer-haul routes to Istanbul, Jeddah and Oman, he said.

RwandAir Cargo also plans to increase freight capacity on passenger aircraft and expand its overall cargo-handling operations.

The United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom currently account for the largest share of the airline's cargo traffic.

RwandAir Cargo transported 6,257 metric tons of freight in 2025, up 2.4% from 6,113 metric tons in 2024, according to figures provided by the company.