

Trade authorities across the region are calling for calm to prevent a diplomatic and commercial fallout following Rwanda's decision to temporarily halt the importation and sale of more than 52 foreign alcoholic beverage brands.

The measure, announced on 5 August 2026 by the Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (Rwanda FDA), pulled dozens of popular regional spirits, wines, and beers off local store shelves in the interest of public health and safety.

Among the affected products are major household names imported from neighboring countries. From Tanzania, popular spirits like Konyagi (Tanzania Distilleries Limited), K-Vant, Strong Dry Gin, Diamond Rock Gin, Kiwingu Spirit, Blackhat, Campfire Gin, Cuca Vodka, Hanson's Vodka, Relax Vodka, Tzee Lemon and Ginger, and X5 Gin have seen their sales suspended.

From Kenya, the ban touches prominent labels including Gilbeys Gin (Kenya Breweries Limited), Kenya King and Safari Gin (London Distillers Kenya Ltd), alongside Avalon Premium Vodka and Sweet Berry Vodka (Zheng Hong Ltd). The directive also extends to selected alcoholic products originating from Burundi, India, and Poland.

In response, the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) issued a public notice reassuring local traders and exporters that efforts are underway to address the impasse through official channels.

Gladness H. Kaseke, Manager of Consumer and Market Services at TBS, confirmed in an official statement that Tanzania is actively engaging regional partners to resolve the situation.

"The Bureau, through the Ministry of Industry and Trade, will continue to follow up on the matter through diplomatic channels, including the East African Community Secretariat and the countries concerned, in order to find a solution to the matter as soon as possible," said Gladness H. Kaseke in the statement

TBS also assured the trading community that all alcoholic products entering Tanzania from the listed countries will undergo thorough quality inspections under the East African Community Standards, Quality Assurance, Metrology and Testing Act (EAC SQMT Act 2006) to ensure strict compliance.

Traders and consumers on both sides of the border have been advised to remain

calm while high-level discussions between Kigali, Dodoma, and the East African Community Secretariat continue.