Two people have died and six others have been injured in Gabiro after a vehicle in the opening stage of the 2026 Tour du Rwanda veered off the road and struck spectators.

The international cycling race began on Sunday in Gicumbi District, with Stage 1 heading towards Rwamagana District. Around 120 riders are taking part in this year's eight-stage race. Before the riders set off, lead vehicles promoting sponsors were already on the route. In Gabiro, Gatsibo District, one of these vehicles left the road and hit fans gathered along the roadside.

The Rwandan Cycling Federation (FERWACY) issued a statement expressing regret over the incident. "We deeply regret to inform the public about the accident that hit spectators," it said. The Rwanda National Police has launched an investigation into the cause.

The two victims were pronounced dead at the scene, while the six injured were taken to hospital for treatment.

In a separate statement, the Ministry of Sports extended condolences to the families of those affected and urged both road users and spectators to exercise caution.

Tour du Rwanda President Samson Ndayishimiye also encouraged residents in Rwamagana to take a moment to remember those who lost their lives.

Despite the tragedy, the race continued. Israeli rider Itamar Einhorn of UCI ProTeam NSN Cycling Team won Stage 1 and donned the yellow jersey. He was followed by Hodei Gabina Munoz of Soudal Quick-Step Devo Team and Mewael Girmay of Istanbul Team.

The 2026 edition of the Tour du Rwanda features eight stages, running from 22 February to 1 March, and traverses Rwanda's varied terrain, from the hills around Nyamata to the finish in Kigali on the final day.