The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) has declared that ten Ugandan alcohol brands restricted by Rwanda are safe, certified under East African Community (EAC) standards and have no scientific basis for being kept out of the Rwandan market.

In a statement released on August 14, 2026, UNBS challenged Rwanda’s decision, saying the affected alcoholic products meet the required EAC safety standards, have valid certification under harmonised regional standards and should be permitted to circulate within the EAC market.

UNBS said the issue was discussed at an EAC meeting involving Uganda and Rwanda, as well as representatives from Kenya and Tanzania, and that the discussions did not produce any technical or scientific grounds for continuing the restrictions.

The dispute follows Rwanda’s decision to restrict a number of alcoholic beverages manufactured in Uganda from entering or being sold in the country. The action comes as Rwanda intensifies its crackdown on alcoholic drinks considered harmful or non-compliant, with the Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (Rwanda FDA) director general and other officials also arrested as part of investigations into the matter.

According to UNBS, Rwanda did not formally alert the Ugandan standards authority before imposing the restrictions.

“The FDA filed no official notice as UNBS learnt of the matter through social media reports,” the agency said.

UNBS maintains that Rwanda’s decision is inconsistent with the EAC’s Mutual Recognition of Quality Marks arrangements, which are intended to facilitate the acceptance of certified products across member states.

Under the East African Community Standards, Quality Assurance, Metrology and Testing Act, a member state that identifies concerns about a product certified by another member state is required to notify the relevant national standards body in the country of origin.

Officials from Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda met under the EAC Secretariat on August 10, 2026, to address the dispute.

UNBS said the meeting did not establish any technical or scientific justification for keeping the restrictions in place.

The ten affected products are Blended Whisky Bond7, Gilbey’s Flavored Gin, Cambridge Gin, X5 Gin, X5 Whisky, X5 Liqueur, Jonney’s Pineapple Flavored Gin, Pan Master Blended Mature Whisky, Club 5 Gin and Tembo Liqueur.

They are manufactured by Uganda Breweries Limited, John Distillers (U) Ltd and Glorrie Industries Limited.

UNBS said the products have valid permits and meet the applicable EAC harmonised standards.

The agency said Ugandan products carrying the distinctive Q-Mark should therefore be able to move freely throughout EAC member states in line with existing regional trade arrangements.

UNBS also reassured consumers and distributors that the affected brands meet the applicable regional requirements and said it would continue supporting the movement of goods and deeper integration within the EAC.

The latest dispute has renewed questions about non-tariff barriers within the EAC, where member states have committed themselves to removing obstacles to the movement of goods across their borders.

Rwanda FDA had not responded to requests for comment at the time of publication. The regulator has not publicly challenged UNBS’s assertion that the affected products have valid EAC certification, nor has it released the laboratory findings, inspection reports or other technical evidence used to support the restrictions.