

President Paul Kagame has firmly rejected claims that Rwanda is responsible for the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) persistent conflict. The President firmly stated during a lengthy news conference on January 9, 2025 that, While Rwanda is blamed for other people's problems, we can be blamed for protecting ourselves.

Addressing the local and international journalists, Kagame defended the country's stance on the ongoing crisis in the DRC, calling on the Congolese government to take responsibility for resolving the conflict.

Responding to allegations of Rwanda's involvement with the M23 rebel group in eastern DRC, Kagame questioned the reasons behind the conflict. "Why do we have 100,000 refugees from DRC in Rwanda? Why would M23 be fighting in Eastern Congo, and how does it arise?" he asked, clarifying that these fighters had actually fled to Uganda and later back to DRC.

Kagame highlighted Rwanda's 2018 offer to address regional security threats along their shared borders, which was rejected by the Congolese government. "We asked them, 'Let us support you to solve this problem. Why can't we work together to eliminate threats and ensure security along the borders?' They didn't allow us," he said, contrasting this with Uganda and Burundi's interventions in similar situations.

President Kagame pointed out sticking factors that led to the current crisis, including the FDLR, which harbors a long-term sinister plan to destabilize Rwanda, comprising remnants of the perpetrators of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. After the Genocide, they moved into the eastern part of DR Congo after killing more than one million lives.

"Does FDLR exist in that situation or not? Do people understand the history of FDLR or not? Why should FDLR even be an issue for discussion or why should it be a problem that can't be resolved," Kagame challenged, revealing that the Rwandan government has on numerous fronts engaged the DR Congo government on finding a long-lasting solution.

Emphasizing the need for a more effective regional approach, Kagame expressed dissatisfaction with the Angola peace process, stating, "There has to be an effort to continue altogether and find a solution, but it can't continue the way it is being done now. We need results." He suggested that the previous meetings in Luanda had failed to yield meaningful solutions, and that genuine progress would require more than just talks—it requires action.

Kagame asserted that the solutions to the DRC's instability are already known, and it is now up to the Congolese government to take responsibility. "The answers are known," he declared. "We've done our part. Now it's time for the DRC to take ownership of its challenges."

Reflecting on the historical and geopolitical factors contributing to the conflict, Kagame emphasized that external experts alone cannot resolve the deep-rooted issues. He pointed to the lasting impact of colonialism, which he argued continues to shape the current instability in the region.