

76

SHARES

ShareTweetEmail

Senegal President Macky Sall, who chairs the Africa Union, on Sunday called for dialogue between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda as tensions escalate between the two countries over a resurgence of the M23 rebel group.

He also urged Angolan President João Lourenço, the chairperson of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), to head peace talks between DRC and Rwanda.

DR Congo on Saturday summoned Rwanda's ambassador and suspended RwandAir flights to Congo in response to what it says is Kigali's support for M23 rebels carrying out a military offensive in its eastern borderlands.

Kinshasa has accused Rwanda of the latest offensive by the rebels, citing the rebels' heavy firepower as evidence of outside support. Rwanda has denied this, calling the fighting an intra-Congolese conflict.

"I am seriously concerned by the rising tension between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo," Sall said on Twitter.

"I call for calm and dialogue between the two countries, and for the peaceful resolution of the crisis with the support of regional mechanisms and the African Union," said Sall, who holds the rotating chairmanship of the African Union.

## Soldiers detained

Rwanda's army also requested the release of two Rwandan soldiers it said were "kidnapped" along its border with Congo.

General Sylvain Ekenge, spokesman for the military governor of North Kivu province, said the two Rwandan soldiers were "arrested in North Kivu by civilians, more than 20 kilometres from the Rwandan border."

However, the Rwandan army denied this and insisted that the soldiers were kidnapped.

“FARDC with FDLR attacked RDF along our border, and two Rwanda Defense Force soldiers were kidnapped while on patrol,” said a Rwandan army statement released on Saturday.

## Peace talks

During a briefing on the North Kivu situation on Monday, DR Congo government spokesman Patrick Muyaya said, “We will make peace with those who want peace.”

“Whatever the nature of the crisis today, we cannot close the doors to the possibility of talks. Even if there is war today, we will end up in dialogue.”

The Democratic Republic of Congo said it now considers the M23 as terrorists and excluded the rebel group from the Nairobi talks.

Even as Rwanda denied Kinshasa’s accusation of backing the M23 rebels, it has also accused the DRC of being an “ally” of the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda), an armed group hostile to Kigali and which fled Rwanda after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

In a statement issued on May 28, the Rwanda Defense Forces said that the “authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo work closely with these [FDLR] genocidal armed groups.”

Vincent Biruta, Rwandan Minister of Foreign Affairs, said “the Congolese army has been collaborating with the FDLR for almost 30 years.” However, DRC government spokesman Muyaya rejected this claim.

As of Monday, fighting in North Kivu province between government forces and the M23 had stalled, but tension was still high in the area.

Kinshasa has, however, reinforced the military in anticipation of renewed fighting.

## Share this:

Click to share on Facebook (Opens in new window)

Click to share on X (Opens in new window)

Click to email a link to a friend (Opens in new window)

Click to share on LinkedIn (Opens in new window)

Click to share on Telegram (Opens in new window)

Click to share on WhatsApp (Opens in new window)

Click to share on Twitter (Opens in new window)

76

SHARES

ShareTweetEmail