

Congo: Rwandan Army Withdrawal A Farce

By [Stop NATO](#)

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He said the AU [African Union] and SADC [Southern African Development Community] should call President Paul Kagame "to order", adding that Rwanda's Defence Minister, General James Kabaerebe, has ratcheted "war talk" against Kinshasa.

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Rwanda army withdrawal a farce

by Felix Njini

The DRC government says Kigali is still actively assisting rebel groups in Congolese territory and that the "purported" withdrawal of Rwandan Special Forces from the eastern regions of the country this past week was a "charade" designed to mislead the international community.

Kinshasa also said Western countries, in particular the United Kingdom, were benefiting from the instability through "laundered minerals".

DRC Information Minister Lambert Omalanga Mende told The Southern Times that Rwanda had shown no intentions of heeding calls by the international community to stop assisting a rebel movement in North and South Kivu calling itself the M23.

Mende dismissed a televised withdrawal of Rwandan Special Forces from eastern DRC earlier this past week as a "farce" and a "propaganda trick".

He added that if Rwanda indeed was pulling out, it would not have blocked the DRC army and UN forces (MONUSCO) from observing the withdrawal.

The Information Minister also slammed the UK for lifting an aid freeze on Rwanda, hinting that the international forces, which have previously benefitted from the internal strife in the

DRC through laundered minerals, “are back at it again”.

He said the AU [African Union] and SADC [Southern African Development Community] should call President Paul Kagame “to order”, adding that Rwanda’s Defence Minister, General James Kabaerebe, has ratcheted “war talk” against Kinshasa.

While President Kagame recently accepted plans for a neutral force to monitor the border region and help bring down the rebels, Gen Kabaerebe openly said Rwanda was opposed to any such deployment, Mende said.

“The situation is worsening while our own Rwandese neighbour shows no will to stop assisting those rebels who are made up of Rwandan army officials and remnants from the genocidal war.

“We have heard a recent speech made by General Kabaerebe, which is in total contradiction to what Kagame and his Foreign Minister said recently with regards to the rebels.

“Kabaerebe is trying to justify whatever they are doing. We know that he is the mastermind of all rebel activities. He is their pilot,” Mende said.

Rwanda’s Special Forces deployed in Rusthuru two years ago on the pretext of pursuing a rebel group, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda.

A UN investigation has found that Rwanda gave military hardware, training and recruits to M23, which is led by renegade DRC General, Bosco Ntaganda.

Ntaganda led the mutiny of 600 former rebels who had been integrated into the DRC army. Their ranks have swelled to around 4,000, with Ntaganda orchestrating things from Rwanda, allegedly with Kigali’s tacit backing.

The DRC government says it has arrested 50 officers and men from Rwanda’s military as evidence of Kigali’s involvement.

“We have 50 Rwandese soldiers. Our own forces captured them on the frontline; there are officers and ordinary soldiers. We have their identities, they are Rwandese.

“When the rebellion started, it was small and we crushed it and confiscated all their arms.

“But when they went to the Rwandese border, a small group of 600 was suddenly transformed into an army of 4,000 well equipped with combat vehicles and heavy ammunition. That was because Rwanda assisted them to re-organise themselves,” Minister Mende said.

“The so-called M23 was created by Kabaerebe to cover Rwanda’s aggression on our country, to cover their operation on our soil.

“As far as we are concerned, the M23 are puppets of Kabaerebe,” Mende added.

...

Minister Mende said Rwanda’s arrogant posturing would continue, “especially with the British doing what they have done to remove pressure”.

“Britain has been quick to remove sanctions on Rwanda. We see that as a sign of non-interest in the people who are suffering because of rebel activities.

“It is something very bad and we told them yesterday (September 5),” Mende said. Mende said Rwanda was supporting rebels to create chaos that would allow illegal exploitation of oil deposits in DRC’s eastern districts.

“Kagame has an eye on this oil in this specific region. We believe he wants this oil, that is the main reason for Rwandese backing rebels to have a separate state in that part of the Congo,” Mende said.

The Director of the Kinshasa-based Centre pour la Gouvernance, Nickson Kasola, said an immediate end to Rwandan support of M23 would ease the crisis significantly.

“The illegal backing Rwanda has already given to the rebel group, including arms and ammunition, has bolstered the group immensely and turned it into a real threat to the DRC government’s control of a part of North Kivu province,” Kasola said.

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