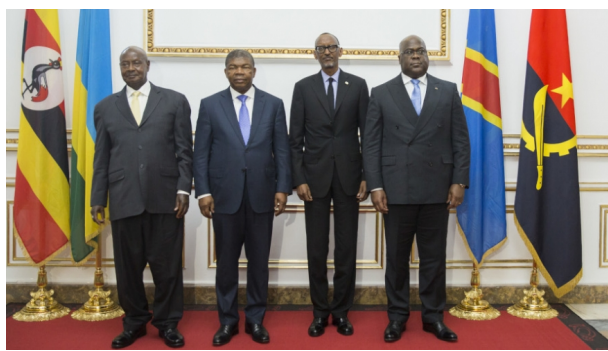


Regional summit commits to open dialogue on peace, security and integration

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(L-R) Presidents Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, João Lourenço of Angola, Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Félix Tshisekedi of DR Congo in a group photo after meeting in the Angolan capital Luanda for what has been dubbed as the Quadripartite Summit. / Village Urugwiro

Presidents Paul Kagame of Rwanda, João Lourenço of Angola, Félix Tshisekedi of DR Congo, and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda yesterday met in the Angolan capital Luanda for a regional meeting, dubbed, Quadripartite Summit.

The Luanda talks came at a time when Rwanda and Uganda are witnessing a fallout in their relations after proof emerged of Kampala backing armed groups hostile to Rwanda, including RNC and FDLR.

A report published in December 2018 by a UN Group of Experts corroborated earlier reports that Uganda was a major source of new recruits for 'P5', a coalition of anti-Kigali groups, including RNC and FDLR.

The RNC rebel outfit has lost hundreds of fighters

in operations by Congolese forces, with several others, including its top commander arrested, it has emerged.

The New Times has established that the rebel group lost two of its most senior commanders, both of them having previously served in the Rwandan military.

Uganda's support for anti-Kigali armed groups was also revealed by former FDLR senior officials, who were arrested by Congolese authorities at the Bunagana border with Uganda on their way back from Kampala for a meeting attended by RNC agents and a Ugandan cabinet minister.

At yesterday's meeting in Luanda, according to the statement, the leaders stressed the importance of a permanent, frank and open dialogue that should be strengthened "both bilaterally between regional states and multilaterally, for the consolidation of peace and security, and as a fundamental premise for economic integration."

The meeting decided to continue to pay particular attention to the "creation of a climate conducive to fostering cooperation between their respective countries in areas of common interest, including in political and economic spheres."

The four leaders also decided to prioritise the resolution of any dispute between their respective countries by peaceful means through conventional channels and in the spirit of African brotherhood and solidarity, the statement added.

"As far as the bilateral relations between the Republic of Rwanda and the republic of Uganda are concerned, the Summit welcomed the willingness of the two parties to continue the dialogue with a view to finding a solution to the existing problem," the

communiqué reads in part.

“In this regard the Summit also welcomed the readiness of the Republic of Angola with the support of the Democratic Republic of Congo to facilitate this process.”

Some of the issues that will need to be addressed include the arbitrary arrests of Rwandans in Uganda.

Most of them have never been produced before court and Kigali says they have been denied consular services and family access.

Many were deported after spending months in Ugandan torture chambers, mostly run by military intelligence services.

The four regional leaders also expressed support for the efforts by the DR Congo to address the insecurity caused by armed groups in the east of the country.

“The Heads of State welcomed the efforts of the DRC authorities to pacify the entire national territory,” a joint communiqué issued at the end of the one-day summit reads in part.

The meeting “condemned the persistence of armed groups in the east of the country that are in breach of the ongoing peace process and destabilizing neighbouring countries.”

The armed groups include FDLR, the offshoot of the forces largely blamed for the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda which claimed the lives of more than a million people, as well as RNC, of wanted Rwandan fugitive Kayumba Nyamwasa, who is linked fatal grenade attacks in Rwanda between 2010 and 2014.