

Rwanda joins legendary Japan Karate Association

By: JAMES KARUHANGA



Sensei Mori Toshihiro (R) takes Rwandan Karatekas through basic Kata stances on Sunday. (Fernand Mugisha)

Rwanda became a member of the Japan Karate Association (JKA), one of the most influential and oldest karate organizations in the world, on Sunday.

The announcement was made after the three-day JKA technical seminar at Amahoro National Stadium in Remera, the first of its kind in Rwanda, conducted by three prominent Japanese instructors led by JKA Executive Director, Mori Toshihiro (eighth Dan).

“This is a very big achievement for Rwanda. The federation, and all Karatekas are delighted to have come this far,” said Theogene Uwayo, president of the Rwanda Karate Federation (FERWAKA) at the closing ceremony.

Toshihiro was assisted by Kamino Masaru (seventh Dan), from the JKA in Tokyo, and Kasijiima Keiichi (seventh Dan), the JKA representative in Luxembourg and Belgium. The JKA specializes in Shotokan Karate style.

In addition to seeing several Karatekas promoted, Toshihiro awarded John Sayinzoga his sixth Dan, Rwanda's highest so far. Sayinzoga's honorary award, Toshihiro said, was for his assistance and promotion of Karate in Rwanda.

Toshihiro is a Japanese master of the Shotokan style of karate, who has previously won the JKA's version of the world championships for kumite (fighting) as well as the JKA All-Japan championships for kumite on two occasions, among his other accomplishments.

While in Kigali, the JKA team also conducted a separate seminar for children. Like the adults, the children too were taken through basic Karate techniques including the Kata, a display of a set sequence of karate moves in a pre-arranged fight against imaginary opponents.

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