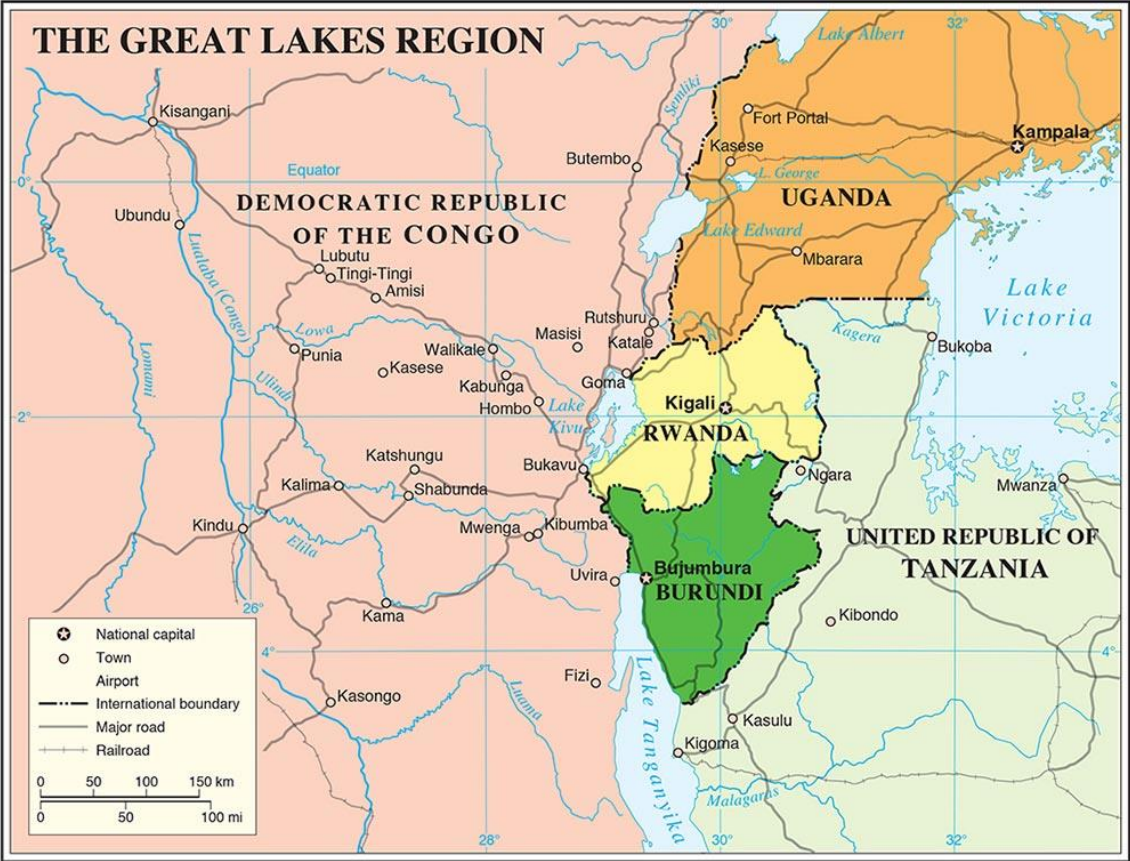


Insecurity in Africa in the Great Lakes countries

1. continuing insecurity in the Great Lakes region of Africa

Rwanda and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are located in the region known as the "African Great Lakes Region". In addition to these two countries, this region includes two other countries, Burundi and Uganda. Africa of the Great Lakes is a region that has been marked by insecurity and continues to suffer from many conflicts. These are mainly ethnic conflicts, rebel movements against the ruling powers or even zivile conflicts involving the cultivation of arable or pasture land. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, armed groups often fight for control over mining areas, which are often exploited uncontrollably. After independence in 1962, Burundi was often marked by civil wars between ethnic groups for control of political and economic power. The situation was similar in Rwanda, where the numerous conflicts finally led to the genocide of the Tutsis in 1994. This led to the death of over one million people.



Map of the Great Lakes Countries /<https://www.google.com/search>

2. the consequences of uncertainty

The consequences of these conflicts are manifold: loss of life, disruption of infrastructure, flight and displacement of populations, bankruptcy of economic enterprises, trauma of all kinds and other misfortunes. Border-crossing tender trade is often disrupted by the temporary closure of borders and the political interests of countries. However, the people in these Great Lakes countries have populations that are related to each other, share the same culture and language, and trade a lot among themselves. All these assets do not yet contribute to the pacification of the region. They unfortunately cause mistrust and prejudice, which are the source of cross-border conflicts. The Great Lakes countries accuse each other of supporting rebel movements that destabilise their neighbours.



Thousands of Congolese fleeing to Uganda on 4 November 2013 /Photo by Ignatius Bahizi/BBC

3. the contribution of Protestant school coordinations to the search for peace

The Protestant Council of Rwanda (CPR), the Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique (CBCA) for North Kivu and the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC) for South Kivu have initiated a joint peace education project. Since 2019, the project "Developing the culture of peace in Protestant schools in Rwanda and Eastern DRC" has been organising meetings of the students to exchange their experiences in the search for peace. Each school benefiting from the project has a peace club composed of students and supervised by teachers. This tripartite project has already developed the training module that it uses at the student meetings and the various peace club meetings.



Meeting in Bukavu (DRC) from 7 to 8 March 2022/Photo by Jean Baptiste Ndamukunda

The training module for students who are members of peace clubs consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 1. Principles and Values of Protestantism.

Chapter 2 Biblical Approach to Human Rights

Chapter 3. Peaceful resolution of conflicts

Chapter 4: Education for Peace

Chapter 5 Education for Living Together

Chapter 6: Education for the management and protection of biodiversity.

For the coordinations of the Protestant schools in Rwanda, South Kivu and North Kivu, the Bible remains the standard for ethical faith. The various lessons given to the young people are based on biblical texts. The Bible itself contains examples of conflicts in society. After Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree forbidden by the Lord, they went directly into conflict (Genesis: Chapter 3). There is no lack of conflicts of all kinds in the school environment, but the students trained in the peace clubs know how to deal with and prevent them.

The various meetings organised between the representatives of the members of the peace clubs of the schools in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo are moments of exchange of experiences. Some tell those at what they are doing to develop the culture of peace. The students work together in groups to reflect on peace education issues. In these encounters, they also perform cultural works and dances that help them to get a little closer to each other and gradually dissolve the false prejudices that some have towards others. The short stay in another country is enough to show the pupils that strangers are not enemies, but brothers and sisters with whom one should build friendly relations.



Students, teachers and parents at a workshop on peace education in Muhanga (Rwanda) on 30 March 2022/ Photos by Jean Baptiste Ndamukunda

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