

GREAT LAKES (UGANDA, RWANDA, BURUNDI, DRC)



Africa's Great Lakes region faces diverse challenges that threaten long-term stability and prosperity in the region, including political instability, armed conflicts, and humanitarian crises. The region is also facing four simultaneous outbreaks of Ebola, measles, cholera, and malaria.

Country Context

Development progress in the Great Lakes region is threatened by interstate and intrastate conflict; ethnic and communal violence; political repression and governance issues; inequitable access to resources and land; and health epidemics. Porous borders and transnational ethnic identities often elevate any of these situations to large-scale humanitarian crises, as has been demonstrated by the Ebola, measles, cholera, and malaria cases that have recently spread throughout the region. Much of the displacement in the region is also driven by hunger, and there are nearly 18 million severely food insecure people across the region.

Key Figures



10.2 million

in the region are internally displaced people, refugees, or asylum seekers



13.1 million

lack food security in the DRC; 5 million children are acutely malnourished



4 million

in need of humanitarian assistance in Uganda



Over 66%

of Burundi's population was infected by malaria in 2019



Over 50 million

in the region live below their national poverty lines

How is the U.S. Involved?

The United States provides little to no military support in the region, but it administered \$1.4 billion in humanitarian and development aid in 2017. The State Department's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region also implements U.S. policy in the region.

On-the-Ground Perspective

- Health interventions are hindered by hostility and violence from local populations, who suspect health workers are profiting financially from the Ebola outbreak and even infecting patients with the disease.
- Political repression, especially in Burundi over the past year, has resulted in the closure and expulsion of several NGOs.

Responses and Actions

- In areas where Feed the Future is working in Uganda, there has been a reduction in stunting in children under five by 20%.
- In 2018, the World Food Program reported assisting 5.2 million food insecure individuals in the DRC and reached 400,000 affected by Ebola in 2018.
- To combat the malaria outbreak in Burundi, USAID, the World Health Organization, and the World Fund are working with the Burundian government to distribute insecticide-treated nets and conduct indoor residual spraying as well as establish nationwide communications campaigns to raise awareness and mobilize local communities to fight against malaria.

InterAction has a Great Lakes working group; to request a briefing, contact policy@interaction.org. References available at [interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport](https://www.interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport).

