

## “Political and Conflict Dynamics in the Great Lakes Region in Africa: Where are we now?”

### Open Dialogue

The Great Lakes region (GLR) of Africa, encompassing the countries Rwanda, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Burundi, is characterized by ethnic tensions, resource competition, and historical grievances. For decades the region has been facing security challenges, including armed conflicts and wars, political instability, and massive humanitarian crises. The presence of various rebel groups, local militias (e.g. “Wazalendo”) as well as foreign armed forces exacerbates insecurity, leading to violence and displacement.

The recent fall of Goma and Bukavu, respectively capital of the provinces North-Kivu and South Kivu, to M23 militias marks a dangerous escalation in the conflict in eastern DRC, highlighting the fragility of the region and the Congolese state's inability to provide security and to assert control. The takeover of key mining areas underscores, among identity, power struggle and land questions, the economic motivations behind the violence. Now, with M23 advancing further, currently towards Uvira, bordering the city of Bujumbura in Burundi, the fear of destabilization of this country is growing.

Reports of Rwandan military forces actively participating in fighting raise questions about Rwanda’s role in fueling the conflict and appropriate reactions from the International Community. Meanwhile, both the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) have deployed troops, but their effectiveness remains uncertain. The widespread dire human rights violations – including mass killings, torture, and sexual violence – along with the killing of MONUSCO personnel further deepens the humanitarian and social crisis. Meanwhile, also in other regions such as Ituri and Kwamouth, armed militias like CODECO and Mobondo continue to commit mass atrocities.

The recent disarmament and arrest of international mercenaries in the region add another layer of complexity. While negotiations in Dar es Salaam offer a diplomatic avenue, the prospects for a lasting ceasefire remain bleak as key actors continue to pursue military solutions. As the crisis worsens, the DRC risks further fragmentation, while regional and global powers struggle to respond effectively.

Date

**05:00pm, 16th April, 2025**

Venue

**K2, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,  
Hiroshimastraße 28, 10785 Berlin**

*The event will be translated from  
English to French.*

For registration, please send an  
e-mail to:

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In our open dialogue, we will focus on the recent political and conflict dynamics in the Great Lakes Region. The goal is to understand the current developments and identify concrete ideas for policies and strategies for peace and security for the region.

Key questions to be raised will be:

- What are the main factors behind the current conflict / war in the DRC?
- What are the factors that explain the failure of all the previous peace and political processes over the last 30 years?
- Which actors are involved in the conflict, what is their agenda?
- What does this very critical situation in the Eastern DRC mean for the entire region and the risk of a further regional escalation?
- Which political path could lead to peace and security in the region? What could realistic scenarios be and what can we expect from the Luanda and Nairobi processes which are going to merge?
- How would peace-supporting alliances look like and who are credible actors in the international arena to build such support-alliances for peace in the Great Lakes Region?

**Program:**

05:00pm	Registration
05:30pm	Welcome remarks by FES / Maria Klatte, Director Africa Department Misereor
05:45pm	Panel Discussion (inclusive 5 min. introductory statement by all) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Jair van der Lijn, Director, SIPRI Peace Operations and Conflict Management Programme</li><li>• Dr. Nene Morisho, Director, POLE Institute, Goma</li><li>• Dr. Paul Simon Handy, Regional Director East Africa and Representative to the AU, Institute for Security Studies</li><li>• Onesphore Sematumba, Senior Analyst, International Crisis Group</li><li>• N.N. (Voice from the region)</li></ul>
06:45pm	Discussion & Q&A
07:30 pm	Reception & Networking open end

**Moderation:** Dr. Carla Schraml, Berghof Foundation