



# General Assembly

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## Security Council

This is a special part of the United Nations. The UN created this group to try to protect peace. They decide what is a danger to peace. There are 15 members of the Security Council: 5 are permanent and 10 change every two years. The permanent members are China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the US. The other members are Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland and Sweden.

This group helps peace in several ways. They ask states to solve problems peacefully. They also advise states to do something different or offer ways to resolve the situation. If a problem becomes bad the Security Council recommends sanctions. This means other states will punish the country in a non-violent way. An example might be not buying the country's products or not allowing a country's sports teams to compete internationally. If things get really bad the Security Council recommends the use of force to bring back international peace and security. All the states of the UN must follow what the Security Council decides.

All the permanent members of the Security Council get a veto. This means no resolutions can pass unless all the permanent members agree. All the other members get one vote. They have passed resolutions on peacebuilding, the situation in Western Sahara, and starting peacekeeping operations.

## The situation in the Great Lakes region (Africa)

### Guiding Questions

The Great Lakes region in Africa suffers from violence whose root cause is poverty and unsuccessful governments. With your fellow delegates you need to find a way to work towards making the following goals a reality.

- How can world governments help stop armed groups and reduce violence in the Great Lakes region?
- How can states support other countries in developing democratic, peaceful and successful governments?
- How can world governments help improve the economic situation in the Great Lakes region?

### Background

This is an area of the world that has seen a lot of conflict over the last couple hundred years. It is called the Great Lakes region because in the East African Rift Valley there are a series of lakes. Around this area there is a lot of conflict and violence often spreads. The countries inside this zone are Tanzania, Zambia, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Kenya, Sudan, Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Rwanda. The borders between these countries are not closed. In fact, in many places people can cross the border illegally.

## Background

When Europeans colonized Africa, they did not pay much attention to the systems of government, relationships, or traditional boundaries of the area. When they created borders, they did not think about the ethnicity of people living there. Therefore, the borders of countries cut through whole groups of people. This means that an ethnic group can be spread throughout 2 or more countries. Therefore, if an ethnic fight happens between two groups in one country it can spread to a neighbouring country quickly.

In 1994, there was a genocide in Rwanda. This means one group of people tried to kill all the members of another group. More than 1 million people died. The Hutu people tried to kill all Tutsi people over 100 days. Many people tried to escape the country. A Tutsi rebel group stopped the killing by taking over the government. This caused more people to become refugees. They thought the new government might take revenge.

Due to violence there are five active UN Peacekeeping Missions in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

## Recent Developments

A country that has many cultures is not more violent than a country that only has one culture. The citizens just need to respect their differences. In the Great Lakes region there are many different ethnic groups. Sometimes, leaders use ethnicity to divide people and create violence. They do this because it can possibly benefit them. For example, a civil war can allow criminal gangs to profit from taking resources illegally. Or, one group might want to use violence to take over the government.

Resources, much like groups of people, are not easily divided along borders. Exploitation of natural resources is a problem in many areas near the borders. Two or more countries will engage in a war to control those resources. A second problem is illegal gathering of natural resources. This happens when an armed group takes over an area with resources and exploits them. Often, the money raised is used to continue conflicts. Many of the resources stolen are non-renewable. Mostly, it is the sale of minerals such as tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold. These are rare metals that are needed for a lot of modern technology.

The World Bank says the DRC can become one of the richest states in Africa. However, 63% of the people live in poverty and it is one of the poorest states in the world. Most of DRC's riches are in its resources. 50% of the world's cobalt comes from the DRC. The DRC also has the 10th highest gold reserves. Unfortunately, one of the reasons there are many armed groups in the DRC is because they can sell resources on the black market. They can earn a lot of money by stealing resources.

Due to the violence in the DRC the UN sent a Peacekeeping Mission to the area. It is called MONUSCO. This Mission began in July 2010 and it took over from a Mission that started in the year 2000. The DRC has been suffering from instability for a long time. However, over the last 10 years things have been improving a lot. There have been elections and less violence. The DRC still has a problem with armed groups, poverty and ethnic violence. In 2013 a special "intervention brigade" was created to help the Mission meet its goals. This brigade can use force to engage with armed groups.

Women and girls are especially at risk in areas with violence. This is because many people will target them. Their voices need to be heard in order to build a lasting peace. Women also need to be included in the peace process. In addition, many women are involved in the economy of their countries. For example, many women are involved in small-scale trading. These women need to be protected so they can continue their work.

**DRC Military Groups**

Most of the armed groups are in the African Great Lakes Region in Eastern DRC. This is an area that is shared with Uganda and Rwanda who have armed groups of their own. The armed groups cross the borders to escape government soldiers knowing they will not follow them into another country.

**Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons**

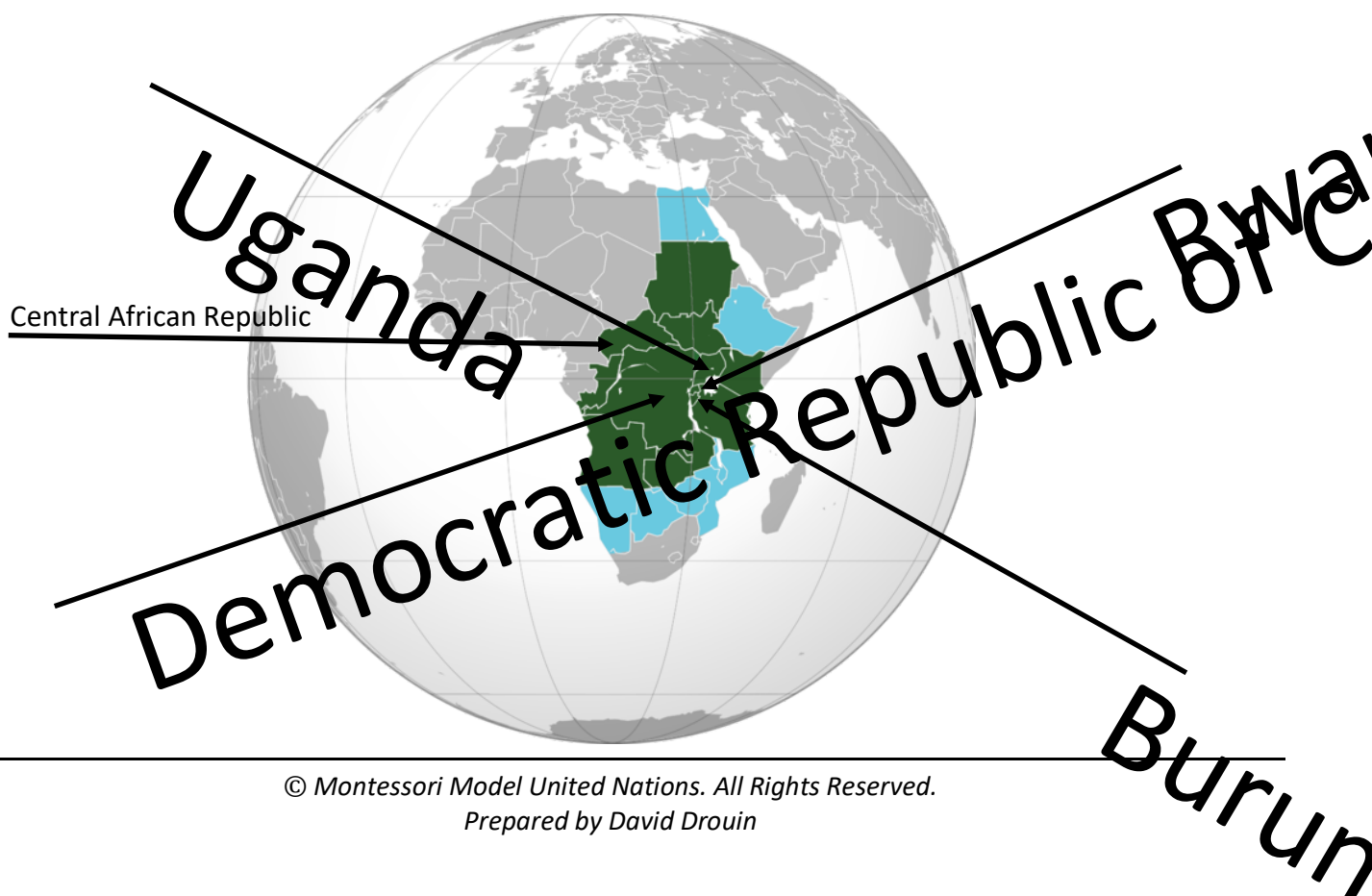
There are over 7.5 million internally displaced persons and 3.5 million refugees. Most of this is because of violence. It is called forced displacement. Interestingly, refugees flow from one country to the other. There are Rwandan refugees in the DRC and Burundi and vice versa. This just creates a cycle of displacement that does not end.

**Access to Land**

One of the biggest issues is access to land. In Rwanda, 80% of disputes are because of land. In Burundi, lack of access to land keeps people poor. Also, all displaced persons and refugees put strain on the areas they move to – creating more competition for land.

**Arms Embargo**

There is an arms embargo on the DRC. Nobody can sell weapons in the country unless it is to the government. However, weapons still get to the DRC because it is profitable for people to do so. The Security Council approved an “Intervention Brigade” to help deal with the armed groups. This is a group of armed peacekeepers. They can attack armed groups who threaten peace in the area.

**Map of the Great Lakes Region**

## Research Questions

1. How do the problems in this area affect your country? Why should your country be concerned?
2. How can governments work to help the refugees and displaced people in this area?
3. What is an effective way of stopping and preventing armed groups from causing conflict?
4. How can land be used more fairly in this region?
5. Why do women and girls need special protections in conflict zones? How can they be supported?
6. How can better natural resource management be used to improve the situation in this area?
7. Research colonialism. How do you think colonialism has played a role in causing violence in the present? What do you think is the responsibility of colonial powers?
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. Who is working on it? NGOs, not for profits, other groups or individuals?
10. Knowing about this problem, how does it impact your world view?
11. How could you make an impact on this issue through your life choices?

## Resources

Source / Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
<b>Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes</b>	<a href="https://ungreatlakes.unmissions.org/">https://ungreatlakes.unmissions.org/</a>	Gives lots of information about the area. It is an official UN site.
<b>MONUSCO</b>	<a href="https://monusco.unmissions.org/en">https://monusco.unmissions.org/en</a>	The official peacekeeping page of the peacekeeping mission in the DRC.
<b>Accord</b>	<a href="http://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/conflict-great-lakes-region/">http://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/conflict-great-lakes-region/</a>	A good overview of the problems in this region.
<b>The World Bank</b>	<a href="http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/09/25/great-lakes-project-to-help-african-traders-get-their-goods-and-services-to-market">http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/09/25/great-lakes-project-to-help-african-traders-get-their-goods-and-services-to-market</a>	An article about how improved trade can improve the lives of people in this region.
<b>Africa Up Close</b>	<a href="https://africaupclose.wilsoncenter.org/colonial-borders-in-africa-improper-design-and-its-impact-on-african-borderland-communities/">https://africaupclose.wilsoncenter.org/colonial-borders-in-africa-improper-design-and-its-impact-on-african-borderland-communities/</a>	A blog from the Wilson Center that has a lot of information on what is going on in the whole of Africa.
<b>Satellite Sentinel Project</b>	<a href="http://www.satsentinel.org/report/grand-theft-global-prosecuting-war-crime-natural-resource-pillage-democratic-republic-congo">http://www.satsentinel.org/report/grand-theft-global-prosecuting-war-crime-natural-resource-pillage-democratic-republic-congo</a>	This organization is using satellite imagery get information about what is happening in the region. They work to publicize what is happening and warn people about violence.
<b>Peacekeeping</b>	<a href="https://peacekeeping.un.org/en">https://peacekeeping.un.org/en</a>	The official peacekeeping site.
<b>Vox</b>	<a href="https://www.vox.com/2014/4/10/5590646/rwandan-genocide-anniversary">https://www.vox.com/2014/4/10/5590646/rwandan-genocide-anniversary</a>	A good overview of the genocide in Rwanda.
<b>The World Bank</b>	<a href="http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/forced-displacement-a-growing-global-crisis-faqs">http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/forced-displacement-a-growing-global-crisis-faqs</a>	An informative article on forced displacement around the world.