

FACTSHEET

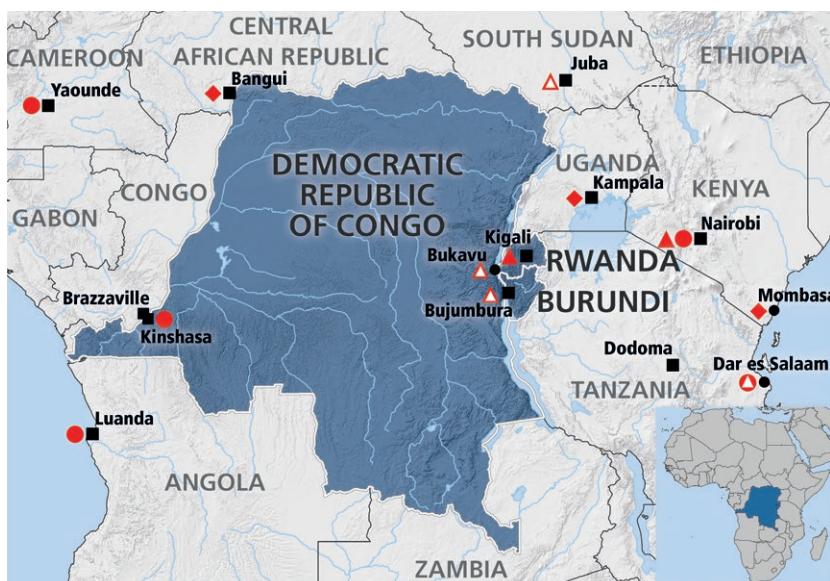
DEMOCRACY WITHOUT BORDERS



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Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs FDFA

PSYCHOSOCIAL PROGRAMME IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION



Swiss Representations

- Embassy
- Embassy (International cooperation division)
- ▲ Cooperation office
- △ Programme office
- ◆ Honorary representation

A series of conflicts that affected the Great Lakes region (Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo - DRC) in the 1990s have left the populations traumatised. Women and girls in particular were, and still are, the prime victims of gender-based sexual violence. The SDC finances a programme caring for these victims in South Kivu as well as in neighbouring Burundi and Rwanda. Some 20,000 persons have benefited since 2011.

CONTEXT

The conflicts that erupted in the Great Lakes region (Burundi, Rwanda, the DRC) in the 1990s caused great suffering to the population and increased the fragility of the states concerned. Rape was used as a weapon of war for an entire decade, becoming commonplace. Despite the official end to the war, the extent of gender-based violence is still a matter of great concern. Switzerland estimates the number of sexual violence victims in the two eastern provinces of the DRC to be about 5000 every year. The SDC finances a comprehensive medical, legal and reintegration programme to care for these victims. Its implementation is ensured by local structures covering around 100 communities. The programme also involves a psychosocial approach focusing on the community and integrating the families and neighbours of the victims in a process of trauma management and healing, designed to address and treat the violence at its root. It also helps to initiate social processes that make it possible to react to the destruction of the social fabric and support community self-help.



Beneficiary of the psychosocial programme in the Great Lakes region

PURPOSE AND USEFULNESS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Since 2011, some 20,000 persons including about 13,000 victims of sexual violence have benefited from this care and this approach. The reintegration of victims who have been rejected is a delicate matter and can take several months. To date, some 30% of the victims have been successfully reintegrated in their communities, while the remainder continue to benefit from mediation services. The SDC is also helping to make the political commitment to combat gender-based violence made by the leaders of the member states of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) a reality.

The SDC addresses the medical, psychosocial and integration aspects of victims' problems. An enduring response to sexual and gender-based violence in the Great Lakes region requires not only efforts at the community level (including with the men) and strengthening of the healthcare system, but also and especially a firm political commitment by the states concerned to combat impunity and systematically prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes.



Women learn to read and write and are informed about their rights.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

Topic: Support for the victims of sexual violence

Country/region: Great Lakes region (Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC)

Partners: Civil society organisations, health institutions, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)

Project objectives: A reduction of the violence against women, girls and boys, and improvement in the status of victims

Target groups: Victims of sexual and gender-based violence

Cost: About CHF 3 million p.a.

Duration: 2011–2017

Contact: dsf@eda.admin.ch



The status of women is one of the topics of the sensitization workshops

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