

# **The United Kingdom remains concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region: UK statement at the UN Security Council**

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## **Statement by Jennifer MacNaughtan, UK Minister Counsellor, at the Security Council meeting on the Great Lakes. Region.**

President, before I begin my statement on the Great Lakes region, I want to recognise that this month marks the 32nd anniversary of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

As we remember the horrific crimes that were committed, my thoughts are with the families and victims at this sombre time.

I will now make three points.

First, the United Kingdom remains concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the region, particularly driven by regional conflicts.

We note that millions of civilians have been internally displaced in eastern DRC, and hundreds of thousands have sought refuge in neighbouring states.

We have also seen the Sudan conflict driving displacement into South Sudan and Uganda.

We call on all parties to facilitate full, safe, and rapid humanitarian access to those in need.

We also urge support for regional humanitarian appeals.

The United Kingdom provided over \$130m of humanitarian and peacebuilding funding to eastern DRC and the region last year.

We also urge an intensification of efforts to bring an end to conflicts in the region.

We commend the diplomatic progress in negotiations to end the conflict in eastern DRC and commend the leadership of the United States, Qatar, and the African Union in driving peace.

But diplomatic progress must also translate into progress on the ground.

Second, it is critical that the protection of civilians is prioritised.

We note that over 2,900 human rights violations have been documented by the UN in eastern DRC in the last six months.

Women and girls continue to be disproportionately impacted by conflict, including widespread reports of conflict-related sexual violence.

We call on all actors to protect civilians in line with their obligations under international law.

Third, the United Kingdom is concerned at growing restrictions on civic and political space in certain parts of the region, including arbitrary arrests and, in some states, the detention of opposition members.

Inclusive governance, accountability, and the safeguarding of rights are essential for long-term stability in the region, helping to address grievances and undercut cycles of instability.

We ask all countries to uphold civic space and protect freedom of expression.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-united-kingdom-remains-concerned-by-the-deteriorating-humanitarian-situation-in-the-great-lakes-region-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>