



# Rift Valley Institute

## Great Lakes Field Course 2017

The 2017 RVI Great Lakes Field Course will focus on transitions in the region. It will examine the extent to which the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi have transitioned into democratizing, post-conflict polities, and the prospects for consolidation or backsliding in the months and years ahead. Years after the official end of large-scale wars, the Great Lakes Region continues to struggle with the peaceful transfer of political power. Burundi has been suffering from simmering conflict since 2015, when President Pierre Nkurunziza seized a third term despite arguments by the opposition that his bid was in violation of both the constitution and the Arusha Peace Agreement. In the DRC, President Joseph Kabila remains in power despite the fact that his constitutional mandate expired in December of 2016 while in Rwanda, President Paul Kagame is almost certain to win elections this year to extend his mandate for another 7 years after having organized a referendum to change the term limits.

### FEES, LOCATION AND HOW TO APPLY

- ♦ The course will be held in Entebbe, on the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda from **11-16 June**.
- ♦ The cost of each course is US 4,250. This covers tuition fees, six nights' full board and accommodation, special excursions, local transport and advance course literature. Flights and visas are not included.
- ♦ Please apply online at [www.riftvalley.net/key-projects/courses](http://www.riftvalley.net/key-projects/courses). For more information contact [courses@riftvalley.net](mailto:courses@riftvalley.net).

### SYLLABUS

#### Day 1 History, power and politics in the Great Lakes

- ♦ A history of the state in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC
- ♦ Mobutu and the decline of the state (1965-1996)
- ♦ A prelude to violence in the Kivus

#### Day 2 Crisis in the Congo

- ♦ The Congo Wars: 1996 to present
- ♦ Mining, corruption and political survival in the Congo
- ♦ Kabila's succession crisis

#### Day 3 Rwanda: Development and democracy

- ♦ The Rwandan genocide, then and today
- ♦ Reconciliation in Rwanda
- ♦ 23 years on: Evaluating the RPF's record and electoral landscape

#### Day 4 Burundi: Turmoil and stability

- ♦ The transformation of the CNDD-FDD
- ♦ Land and refugee politics in Burundi and Rwanda

#### Day 5 International interventions in the Great Lakes

- ♦ Peacekeeping interventions in the Kivus
- ♦ The rising region: Regional politics and crisis management



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### **What have been the region's most significant developments this year?**

In the **DRC** President Kabila's mandate ended with no new elections prompting protests and repression. At least 100 people died before leaders of the Catholic Church brokered an agreement for transitional arrangement leading to elections by the end of 2017. However, disagreements followed over the appointment of a Prime Minister, prompting further delays. Violent conflict and civilian killings have grown in Kasai-Central Province as well as in Beni and South Kivu. In March, two UN Group of Experts researchers, along with their translator and drivers, went missing in Kasai-Central, their bodies found weeks later. In **Burundi**, simmering conflict moved into its third year, while little progress has been achieved with the EAC-mediated talks. More than 400,000 refugees have now fled to neighbouring countries, fueling tensions in the region. The Burundian government has accused Rwanda of arming and training refugees while an overflowing Lusenda camp in the eastern DRC could provide fertile ground for rebel recruitment. The approach of **Rwanda's** presidential elections in August has brought a crackdown against dissidents and the likely return of President Kagame for another seven year term.

### **What are the main policy challenges?**

A solution for the conflict in Burundi remains elusive. The Arusha Agreement, which ended Burundi's decade-long civil war, is threatened, following discussions of a potential constitutional change, which would allow Nkurunziza to stay in power beyond 2020. There is also a risk of another upsurge in political and communal violence following an escalation of violent hate speech. Donors will be asked for huge financial and logistical support to ensure the DRC elections take place by the end of 2017, while over 70 armed groups continue to operate across the country and the UN peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO, has reduced troop numbers.

### **What are the potential implications of these events beyond the region?**

Great Lakes events are almost never contained, with spill over across borders and repercussions for neighbouring states, often inviting unilateral interventions. The latest Burundi and DRC crises are no different. Rebel groups will likely establish rear bases in neighbouring states, which, may use this as a justification for security crackdowns internally. DRC and Burundi will continue to demand the attention of the African Union, United Nations, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and the Southern Africa Development Community.

### **What will be the highlights of the course?**

The course takes deep dives into the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi, and their interconnected histories, politics, peoples and economies. A diverse team of leading international and regional experts will lead an intensive but fulfilling week of lectures, panel discussions and situation analyses, with ample time for networking and informal discussions with teachers and participants. There will also be films and football.



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### CORE TEACHING STAFF

**Jason Stearns PhD**, Director, Congo Research Group, New York University

**Yolande Bouka PhD**, Independent Researcher

**Willy Nindorera**, Political Analyst

**Aymar Bisoka PhD**, Post-doctoral fellow

**Assumpta Mugiraneza**, Director, Centre IRIBA, Kigali

**Jean Omasombo Tshonda PhD**, Researcher, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren

**Aidan Russel PhD**, Assistant Professor, Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Michael Kavanagh**, Journalist

**Stephanie Wolters**, Head of Peace and Security Research Programme, ISS



Co-Director of Studies, Jason Stearns

### WHAT ALUMNI SAY

- *'An excellent course, in particular I appreciated the historical context and perspectives from political economy and land rights issues. Teachers were excellent: clear, good powerpoints and good presentations.'* **Maaïke van Vliet**, Embassy of the Netherlands, Bujumbura, Great Lakes Field Course 2016.
- *'Very informative and enlightening: both the lectures and offline conversations with the lecturers and fellow participants. I go away with a better understanding and picture of the issues and a larger network on which to draw to work on the issues.'* **John Kelley**, US Embassy Kinshasa, Great Lakes Course, 2013.

