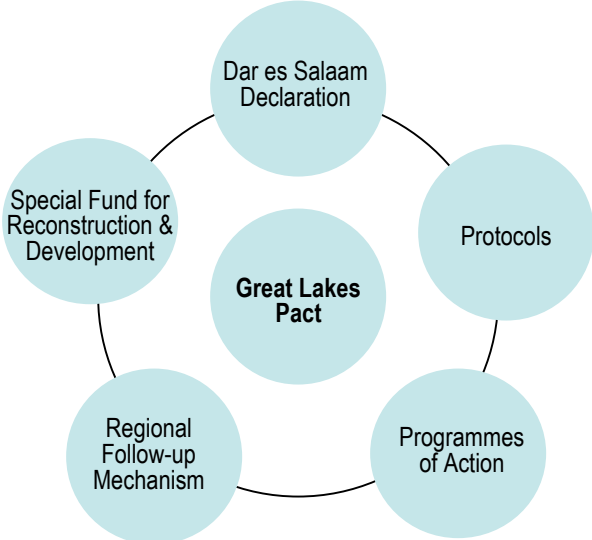


# What is the Great Lakes Pact?

The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region (Great Lakes Pact) is a comprehensive package of new laws, programmes of action and mechanisms that represent a commitment by the 11 member states of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to work to end the conflicts which have plagued their region. It entered into force in June 2008.

## Five elements of the Pact



# What does the Guide for Civil Society aim to do?

*The Great Lakes Pact and the Rights of Displaced People, A Guide for Civil Society* aims to translate the potential of the Great Lakes Pact into real improvements in the lives of the more than ten million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Great Lakes region by aiding advocates and decision-makers to design programmes and shape policies which help the displaced.

# The Pact has five core elements:

## 1. The Dar es Salaam Declaration

The Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development (Dar es Salaam Declaration), signed in 2004, is the legal and political framework for the Pact, describing general commitments of states which are developed further in the protocols and programmes of the Pact.

## 2. Protocols

The Pact contains ten new protocols addressing four thematic pillars:

- Humanitarian & Social Pillar**
  - Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons
  - Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons
  - Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children
- Democracy & Good Governance Pillar**
  - Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity
  - Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance
  - Protocol on Judicial Cooperation
- Peace & Security Pillar**
  - Protocol on Non-Aggression and Mutual Defence in the Great Lakes Region
- Economic Development & Regional Integration Pillar**
  - Protocol on Management of Information & Communication
  - Protocol Against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources
  - Protocol on the Specific Reconstruction and Development Zone

The protocols under the Humanitarian & Social Pillar are most directly relevant to the rights of the displaced and are the focus of the *Guide for Civil Society*.

# IDP Protocol

The Protocol on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons is the first binding multilateral instrument the world dedicated to the implementation of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. The IDP Protocol requires states to adopt national legislation for addressing IDP issues

# Property Protocol

The Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons addresses rights to property left behind in order to ensure successful return and reintegration of forcibly displaced people. The Protocol lays out general principles which recognise the need for creation of simplified mechanisms to resolve disputes which are accessible to rural populations and take into account customary law, the system which governs land issues in much of the region.

# Sexual Violence Protocol

The Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children aims to provide a comprehensive set of measures to address the problem of sexual violence in the region. The Protocol significantly expands the range of acts of sexual violence which member states must criminalise. In addition, measures are aimed at addressing impunity for these crimes, including abolishing statutes of limitation and providing for regional cooperation in arrests.

# 3. Programmes of Action

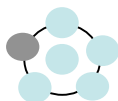
The 33 priority projects of the Programmes of Action ensure that the new legal standards and undertakings in the Pact are put into practice. They include the establishment of a regional fund for compensating loss of refugee property and the harmonisation of standards around the issue of identity documents for the displaced.

## 4. Regional Follow-up Mechanism



The Pact provides for a new institutional structure to ensure and monitor implementation of the Pact. This includes mechanisms at heads of state, ministerial and civil society levels; a Secretariat based in Bujumbura; and a proposed Centre for Democracy and Good Governance.

## 5. Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development



The Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development is a fund that is intended to support the implementation of the Pact. It embodies the Pact's political aim of harnessing resources for collective development. It is designed to be accessed by all the Pact's partners, including civil society.

## Ideas for NGO Action

The Great Lakes Pact is an important tool for the protection of the rights of refugees and IDPs. In particular, civil society may engage in monitoring commitments made by the Pact's member states and advocate to ensure that these obligations are translated into national law and policy. Ideas for actions by civil society include the following:

- Public awareness raising
- Legislative advocacy around ratification of the Pact and adoption of implementing legislation
- Implementing and monitoring projects within the Programmes of Action
- Using the political mechanisms of the Pact in ongoing efforts to resolve refugee and IDP crises.

Download the full *Guide for Civil Society* at:  
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/greatlakes>

Enhancing the architecture of refugee protection in Africa is a core objective of the **International Refugee Right Initiative's** work, including exploring how the norms and mechanisms of the sub-regional organisations can be leveraged on behalf of the forcibly displaced. The *Guide for Civil Society* is a joint project of the International Refugee Rights Initiative and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

All documents adopted by International Conference on the Great Lakes Region available at:  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/law/projects/greatlakes/ihl-greatlakes.htm>, or at:  
[http://www.icglr.org/F\\_END/doclib.asp](http://www.icglr.org/F_END/doclib.asp)

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