

# **Harm Reduction Programming in Conflict Zones:**

**Exploring the Intersecting Barriers to Harm Reduction Services for LGBTQ+ People Who Inject Drugs and Internally Displaced Persons in Eastern DRC.**

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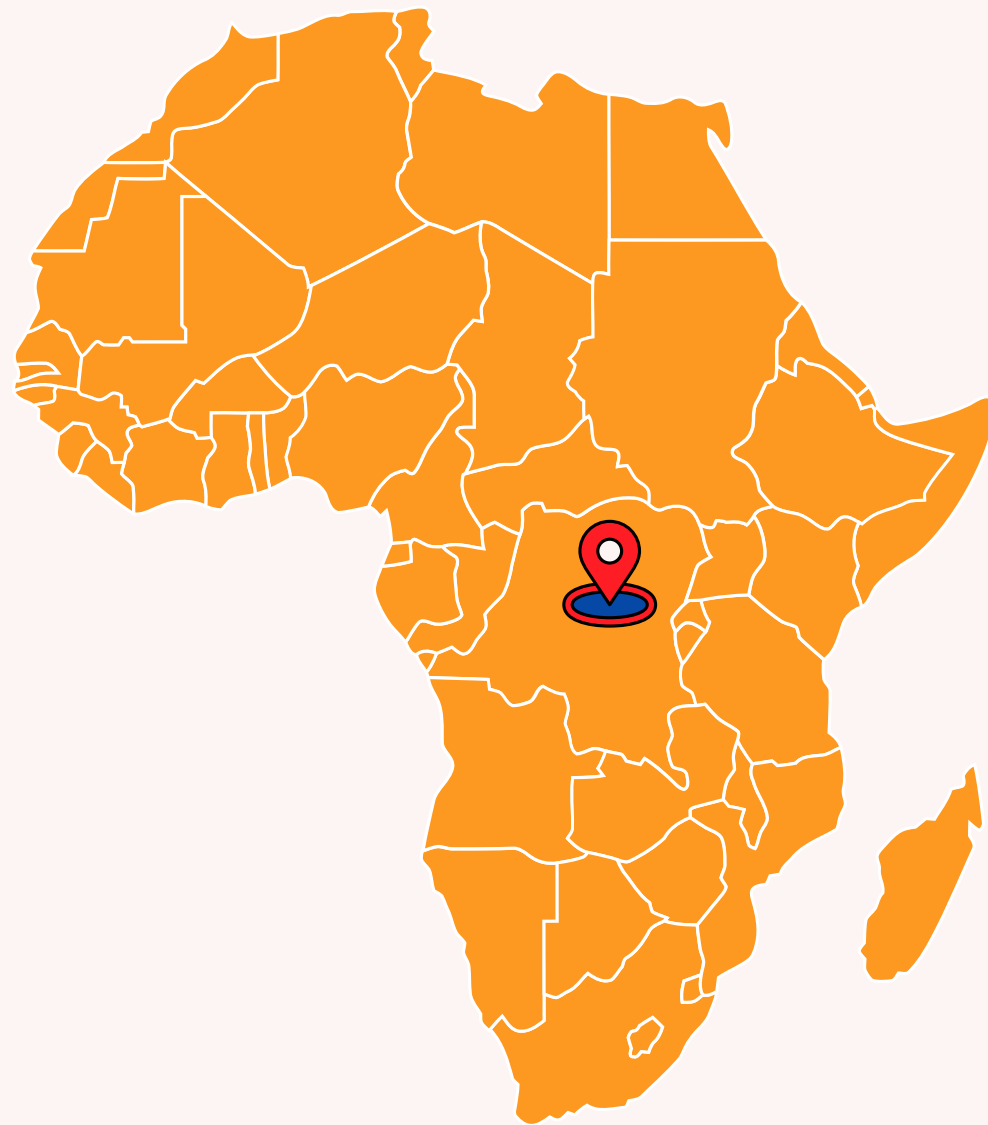


# About Repro Justice Congo

- Repro Justice Congo is a feminist, inclusive and human rights organization that promotes gender justice, and access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for all in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- Mission: Eliminate all forms of gender-based violence, protect the environment and improve universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services.



# Geopolitical Context



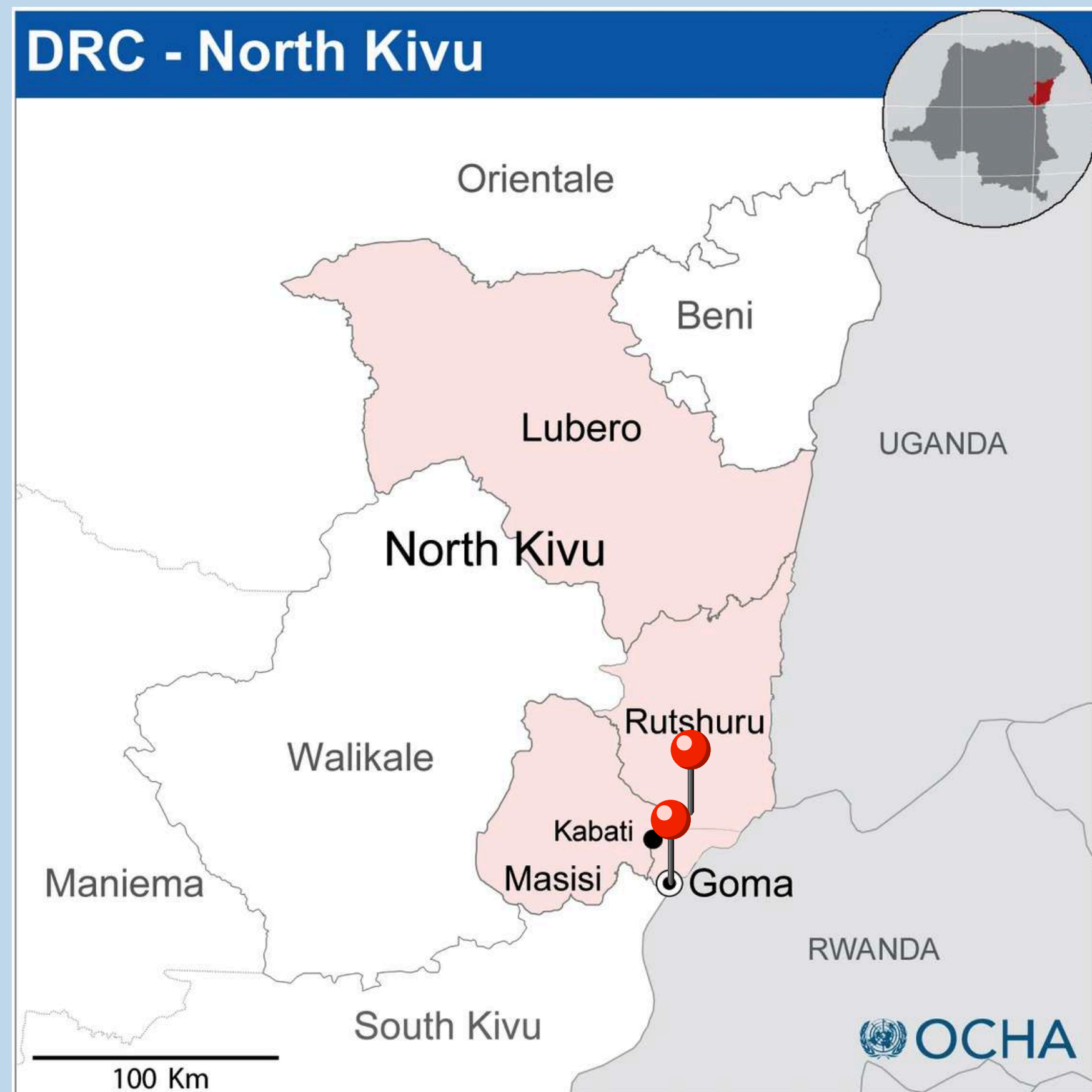
- DRC is located in Central Africa and is the second-largest country on the continent.
- Eastern DRC has been affected by persistent armed conflict for over three decades, fueled by internal and external influences as well as competition over natural resources, and governance challenges.
- More than 120 armed groups operate in eastern DRC. These include local militias, foreign rebel groups, and criminal networks, creating chronic insecurity, human rights abuses, and a breakdown of basic health services.
- Since January 2025, the rebel group M23 has taken control of Goma and Bukavu, two strategic cities in North and South Kivu.
- This has negatively impacted existing harm reduction services, worsening an already challenging humanitarian context.

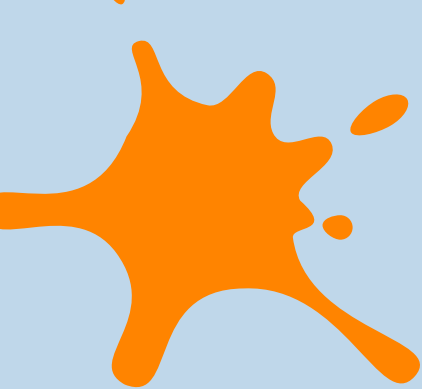




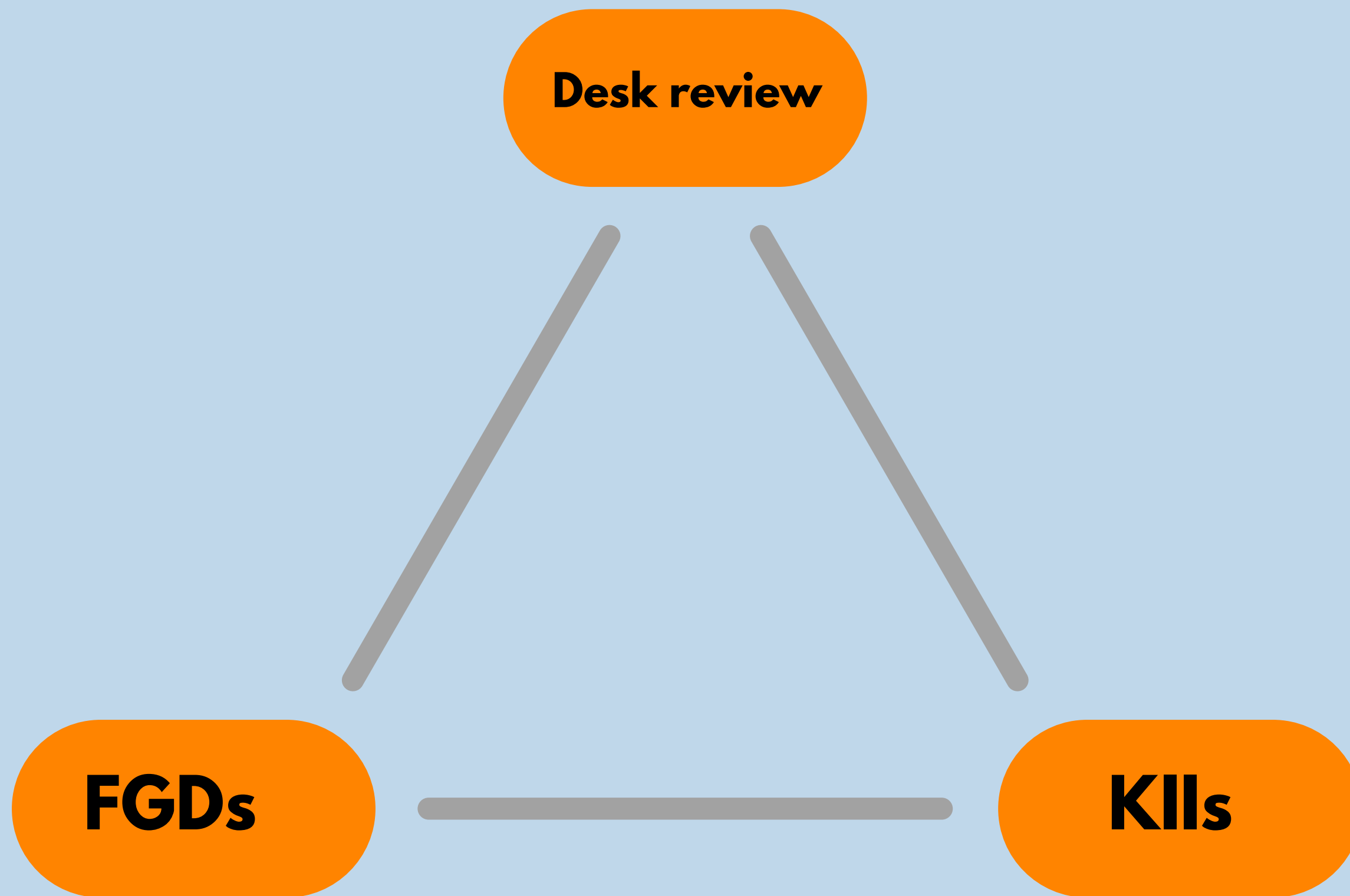
# Background

- In May 2024, Repro Justice Congo conducted an assessment to explore the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people who inject drugs (PWIDs) and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the conflict-affected regions of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- The study was carried out in two districts of Goma and three IDP camps housing individuals fleeing violence from Rutshuru Territory.
- It aimed to identify barriers to HIV service access and harm reduction programming for these highly marginalized populations.

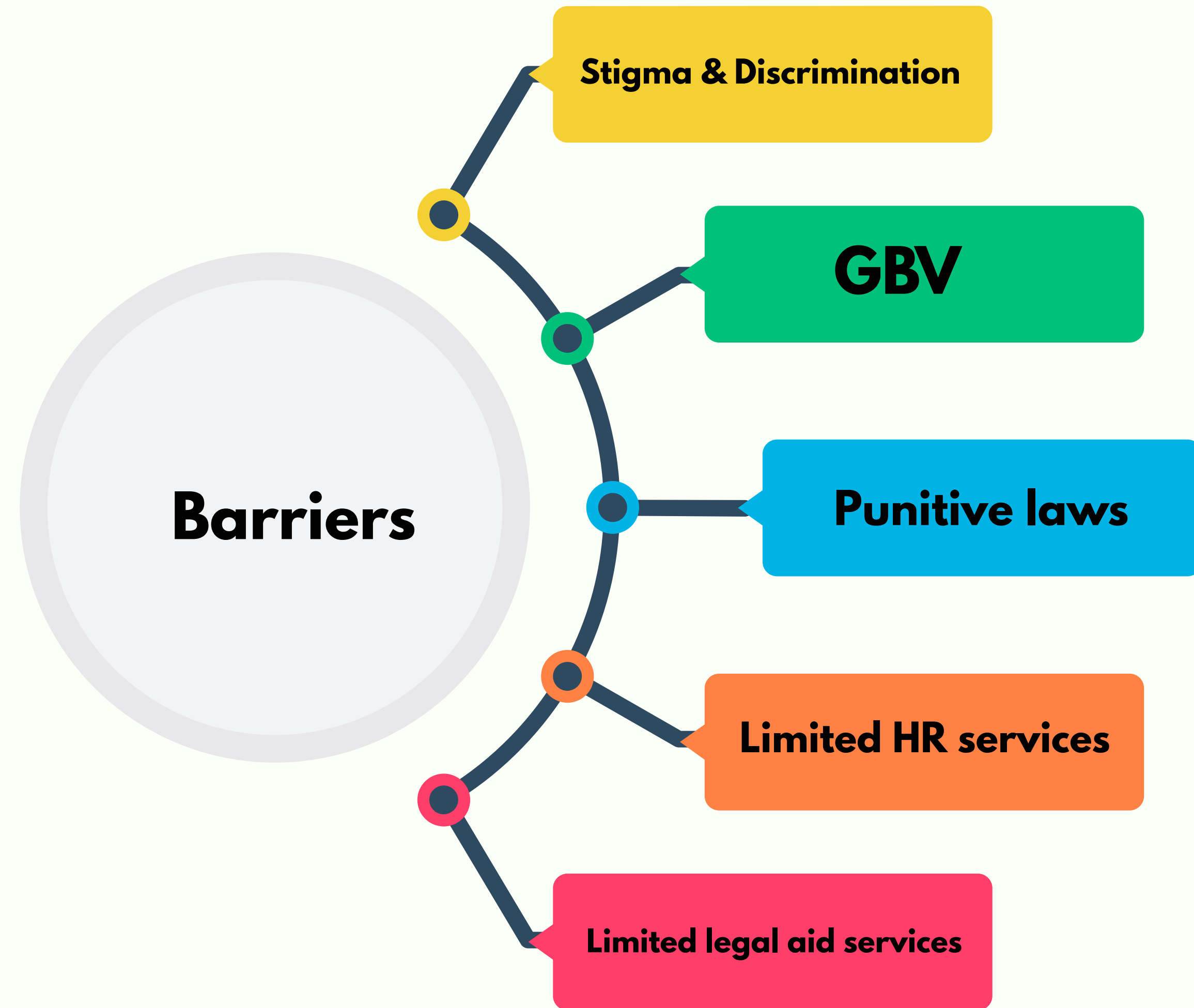




# Methodology









# Progress

- Despite these challenges, progress has been made. The DRC government's recognition of MSM, TG persons, and PWIDs as key populations in the National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2023-2027 and;
- The development of a size estimation report detailing HIV prevalence among these groups mark significant advancements.







## Conclusions

- Integrating HIV services into humanitarian responses, with a focus on key populations, is crucial for improving health outcomes in conflict zones.
- Addressing the intersectionality of LGBTQ+ identities and displacement, coupled with implementing rights-based harm reduction programs, is essential to overcoming barriers and ensuring equitable access to healthcare in these vulnerable communities.





Thank you!

