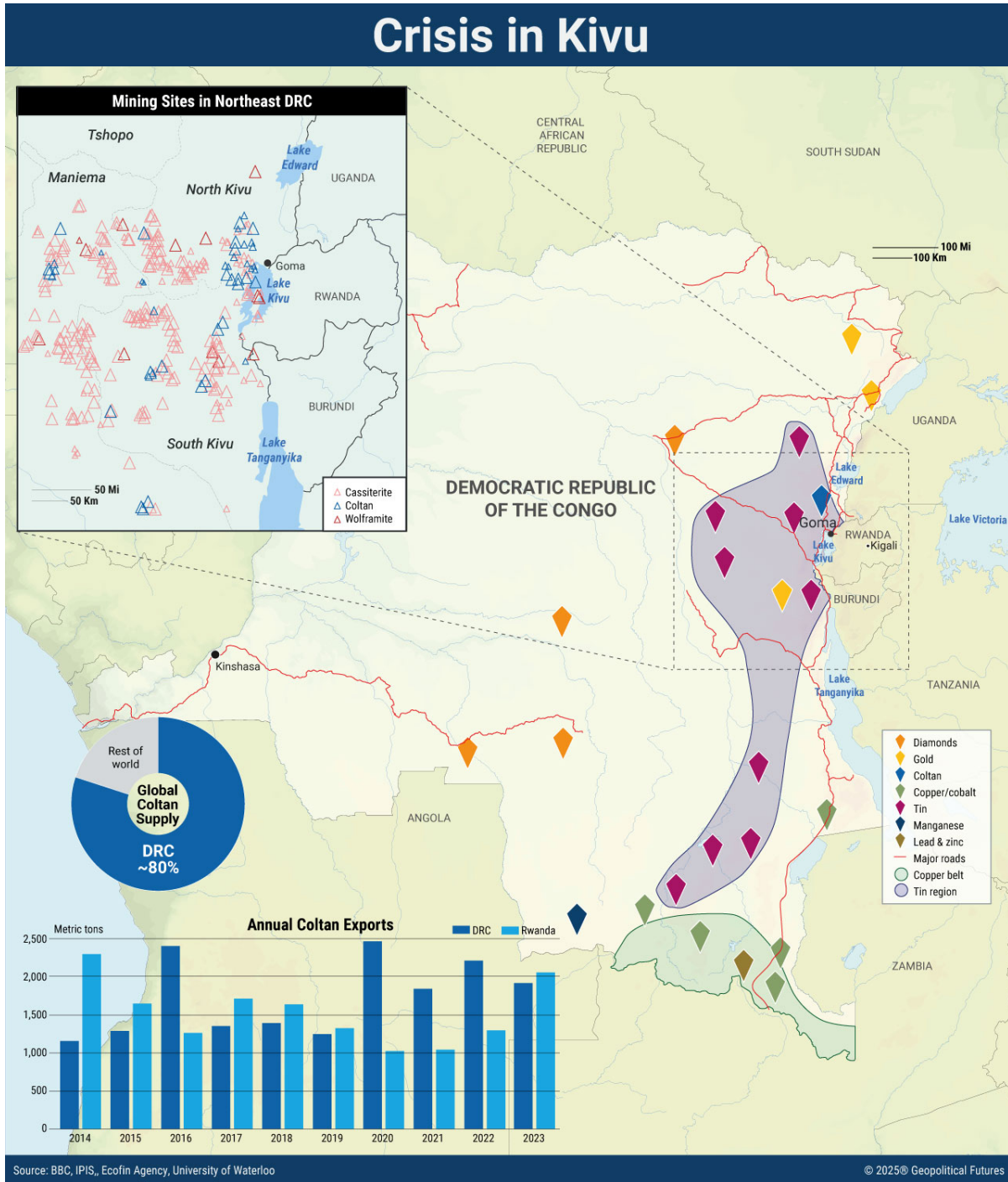


# Rwanda's Role in DRC Conflict

by Geopolitical Futures - January 31, 2025



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The conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo escalated last weekend when the M23 rebel group advanced into North Kivu, seizing the regional capital, Goma. Rwanda, long accused of

covertly backing M23 with arms, training and logistics, has now openly deployed 3,000-4,000 troops to support the group's offensive.

Rwanda's involvement stems from two key motivations: economic gain and border security. Eastern DRC is rich in minerals, much of it extracted by artisanal miners. M23 controls key mining areas, smuggling minerals into Rwanda to fund its operations. For example, Rwanda has become a major exporter of coltan, which is essential for electronics production, despite having few reserves of its own. Regional blocs, including the Southern African Development Community and the African Union, have condemned Kigali's actions but offered little support to Kinshasa. Peacekeeping forces in Goma clashed with M23, resulting in Malawian and South African casualties. South Africa's president has threatened retaliation, but without strong economic incentives, escalation remains unlikely.

Emboldened by its success, M23 continues its territorial expansion. Kinshasa is struggling to respond, unable to deploy reinforcements over 1,500 km (930 miles) while M23 holds Goma's airport. M23 now seeks to push westward, even toward Kinshasa, while entrenching its rule in Goma. Control over the region's resources ensures ongoing financial and strategic benefits for both the rebels and Kigali.

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