

# Imperiled World Heritage in Kahuzi Biega Park, DRC

Landsat TM acquired on **26 May 1984** from 07:41:46 to 07:42:10 UTC

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Sentinel-2 MSI acquired on **05 April 2022** at 08:16:01 UTC

Sentinel-1 CSAR IW acquired on **21 April 2022** at 03:53:38 UTC

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[2D Layerstack](#)

Fig. 1 - S1 (2022.03.23->2022.04.21) - Kahuzi Biega National Park is located in eastern DRC, south-west of Lake Kivu.

[2D view](#)

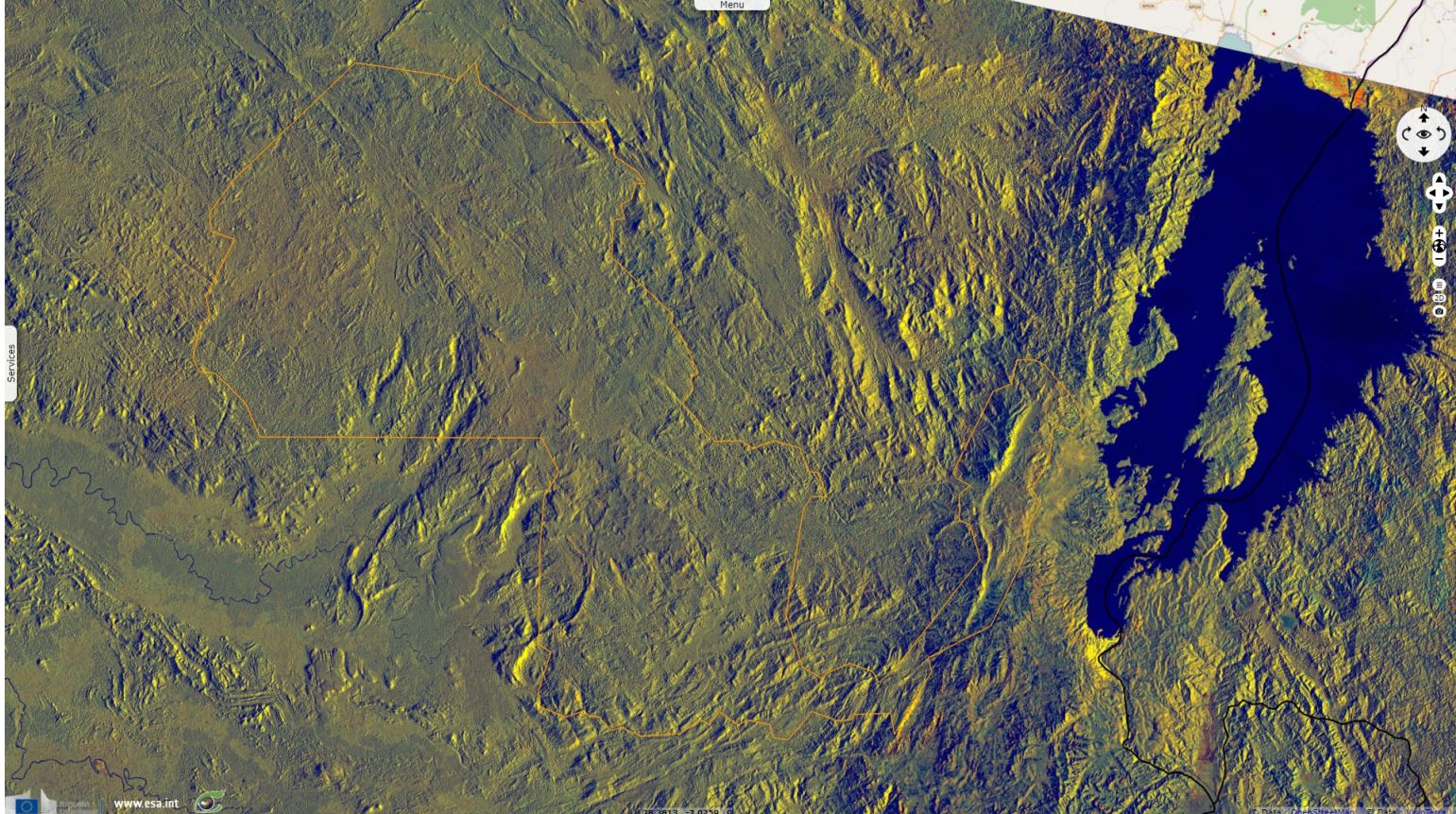
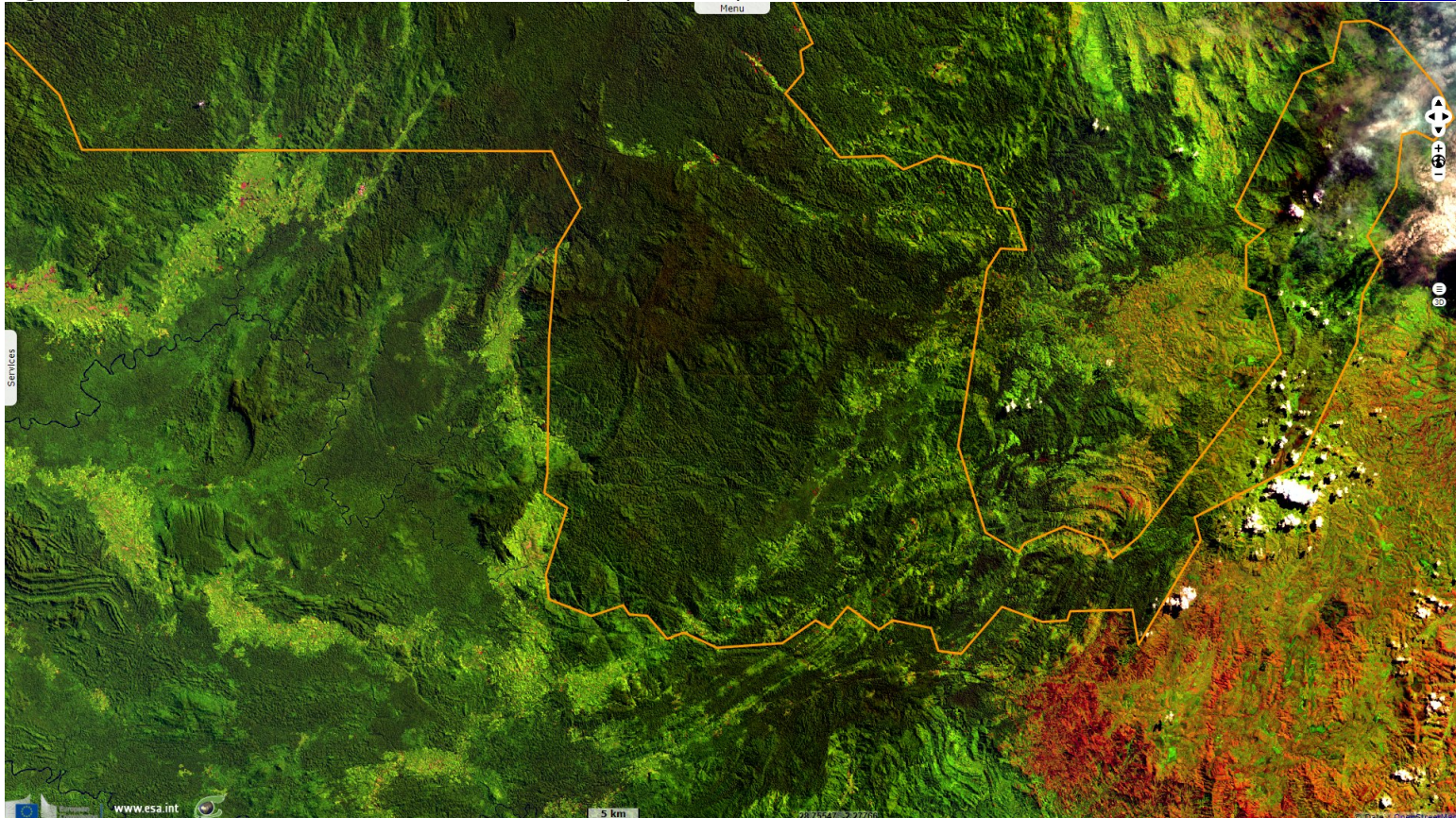


Fig. 2 - L5 (26.05.1984 & 02.06.1984) - View of the south-east part of the park in 1984.

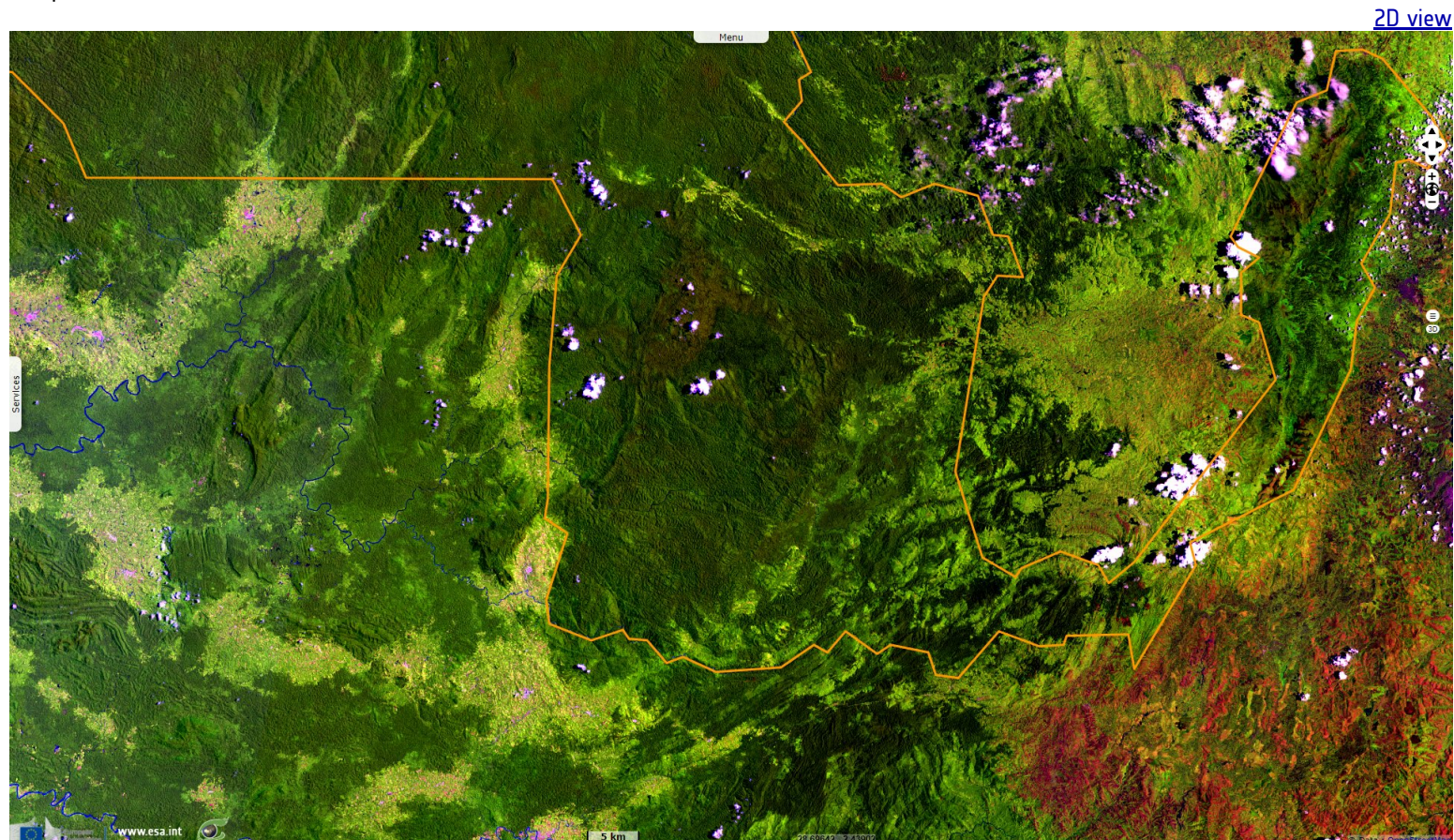
[2D view](#)





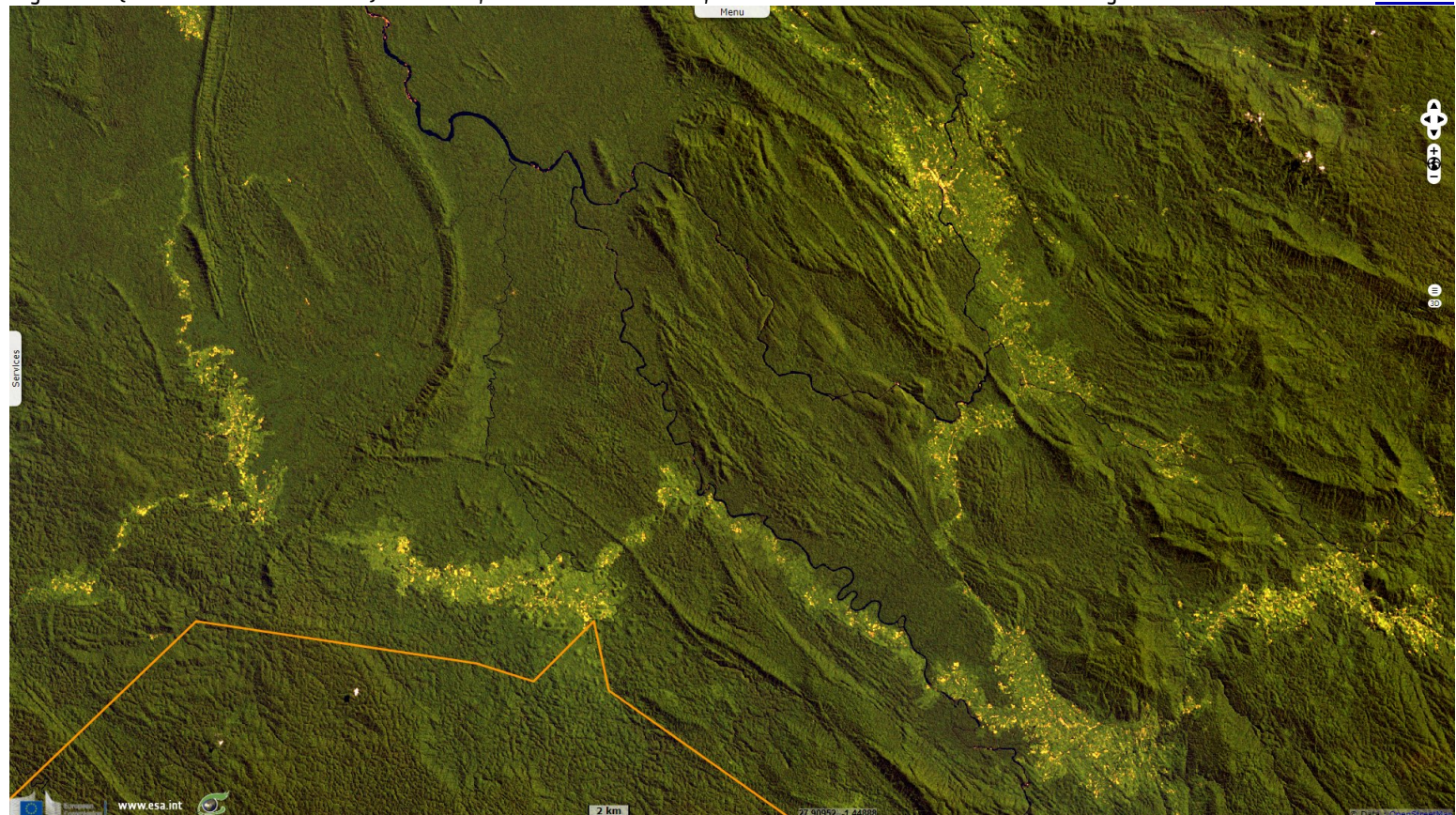
In eastern DRC near Lake Kivu, the Kahuzi Biega Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980. In 1997, it was placed on the list of World Heritage in Danger. In 2005, the mountain gorilla population was estimated to be down to about 100 individuals, a sharp reduction from 600 gorillas in the pre-1990 conflict period.

Fig. 3 - S2 (03.03.2022 & 05.04.2022) - 38 years later, the forest cover has decreased while cities and farmland have grown around but also within the park.



6000 km<sup>2</sup> in size, the park is the object of much greed. Its biodiversity is subject to traditional hunting but also poachers. Its mining resources (such as gold or coltan) and valuable wood also cause illegal exploitation. The observed urban growth causes anthropic pressure on natural resources while the deforestation at the margin of the park is likely caused by farmers extending their land on the forest.

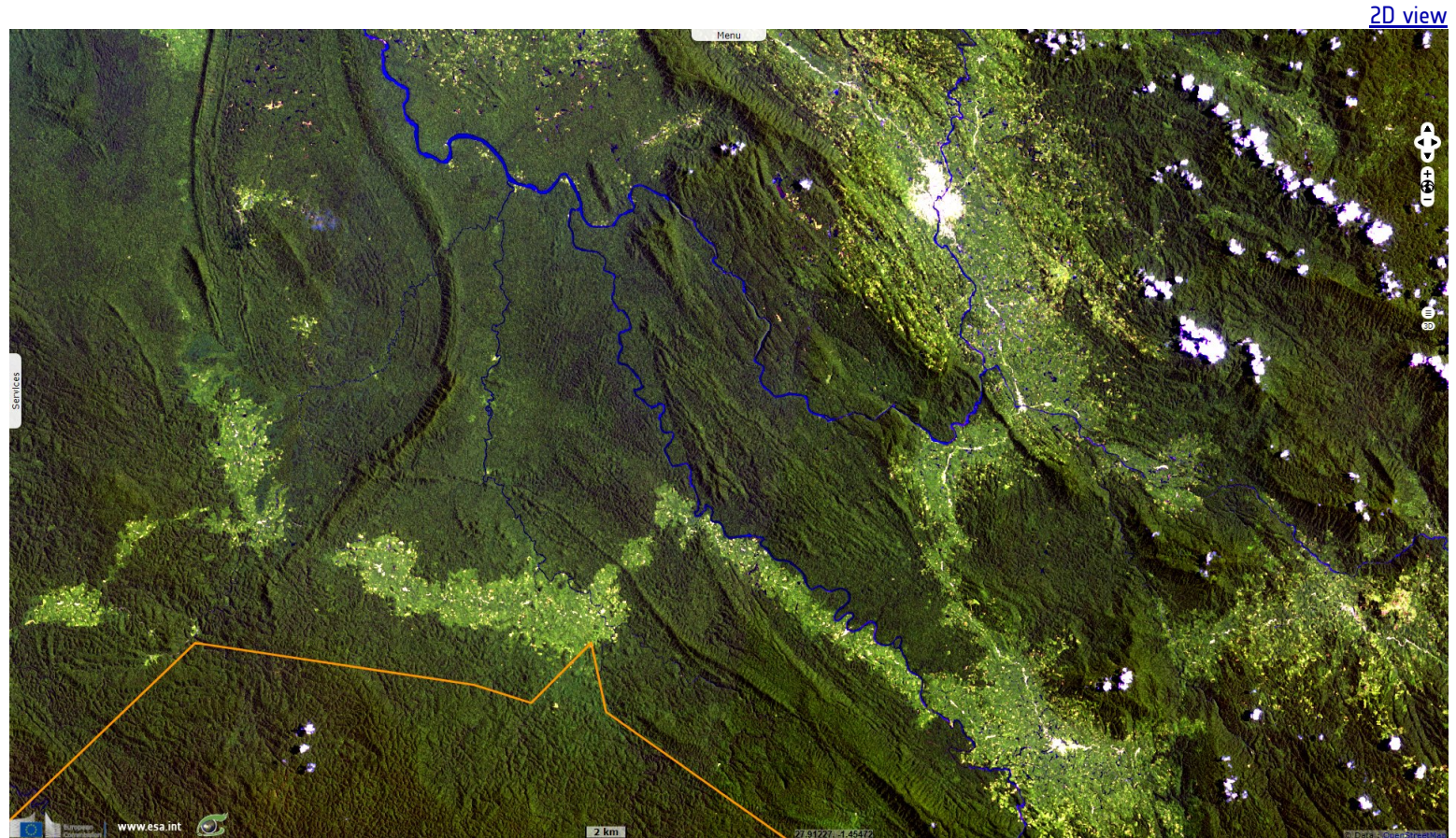
Fig. 4 - L5 (26.05.1984 & 02.06.1984) - At north, further from Lake Kivu, deforestation remained in a corridor along the roads.



But for its authorities, it also brings hope for more durable resources. It is generating durable production of non-timber forest products. It is also the source of water for the city of Bukavu, 500 000 inhabitants including its suburb. A water supply project is being financed by French Development Agency.















Fig. 5 - S2 (03.03.2022 & 05.04.2022) - In 2022, the corridors are broadened, in particular around Walikale & Itebero, sometimes dangerously close to the park.



The park's swamps, bogs, marshland and riparian forests on hydromorphic ground at all altitudes are rare worldwide. 136 species of mammals have been identified, over 1178 plant species have been observed in the highland regions of the park alone. This allows the ecotourism sector to be an important contributor to the local population.

*The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Space Agency or the European Union.  
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