

The Eastern DR Congo Insight on Mineral Business and Human Right during the M23/Rwanda war

Resumé: *The RDC is subjected to decades of political upheaval with recurrent fighting against RCD, CNDP & M23 all Rwanda supported conflicts whose root cause had been revealed to be the need of transient mineral resources market control. The below report shed light on supportive factors and call for internationally imposed peace and good governance for the benefit of Congolese inhabitants and peace in the region.*

The DR Congo had been subjected to recurrent political upheaval, with different armed groups acting for various reasons. However, in this last period, light has been shed on the effective root cause of the DR Congo war: the overwhelmed country of natural resources necessary for energy and electronic transit is coveted from abroad hence neighbors (Rwanda & Uganda) are being used to control mining sites, smuggling the DR Congo production and control the business market. The ICPRD is a local NGO led by Rafto Laureate 2008, Bishop BULAMBO Lembelembe Josué. It took time to assess the trend of different fighting groups move as the war broke through from Bunagana, to Goma and Bukavu. We tried to associate rebellion advances to outcome on mineral business in the region. This short report originates from data collected through the network of Human Right Defender (HRD) scattered in the Kivu region acting for fair commodity trade. Rafto foundation had supported their capacity building hence their findings are mostly addressed to the foundation and open for use to anyone able to support their lobbying effort to reach the practice of due diligence directives in the DR Congo mineral business.

What are the root causes of current DRC:

- 1. Poor migratory policy during the colonial period;** under Leopold labor power were recruited from various African side including Rwandese and Burundian; this bring a discriminatory talk among current DRC resident but the case was solved by the last constitution shifting the citizenship from 1885(the beginning of colony) to 1960(The end of Belgium colony). This is the root cause of the false Rwandese argument of protecting Tutsi while in Congo, we have so many foreigners who completely integrated the community, we even have others natives phenotypically Tutsi (as Hema who does not speak Kinyarwanda) while we also have Kinyarwanda speaking resident who were not brought as labor (Ndeze Chieftaincy).
- 2. Poor management of power shifting process** in the African great lakes' regions (Burundi, Rwanda & RD Congo). We mostly observed mostly corrupted power

accessing style (Coup d'Etat, dictatorship leading style, inheritance power accessing style, none fair election...) led to community hatred and high risk of civilian war as every leader secure support from his close relatives. This increased population movement from Rwanda and Burundi to RDC as well as the opposite occasionally. In consequence there is also easier mutual infiltration of security services and loss of trust between countries hence the DRC had had a Rwandan Army General as DRC general army commandant (10 April 2010 until 18 October 2018). Un-fortunately most of these false powershifting arrangement were done under UN observation and most leaders were congratulated.

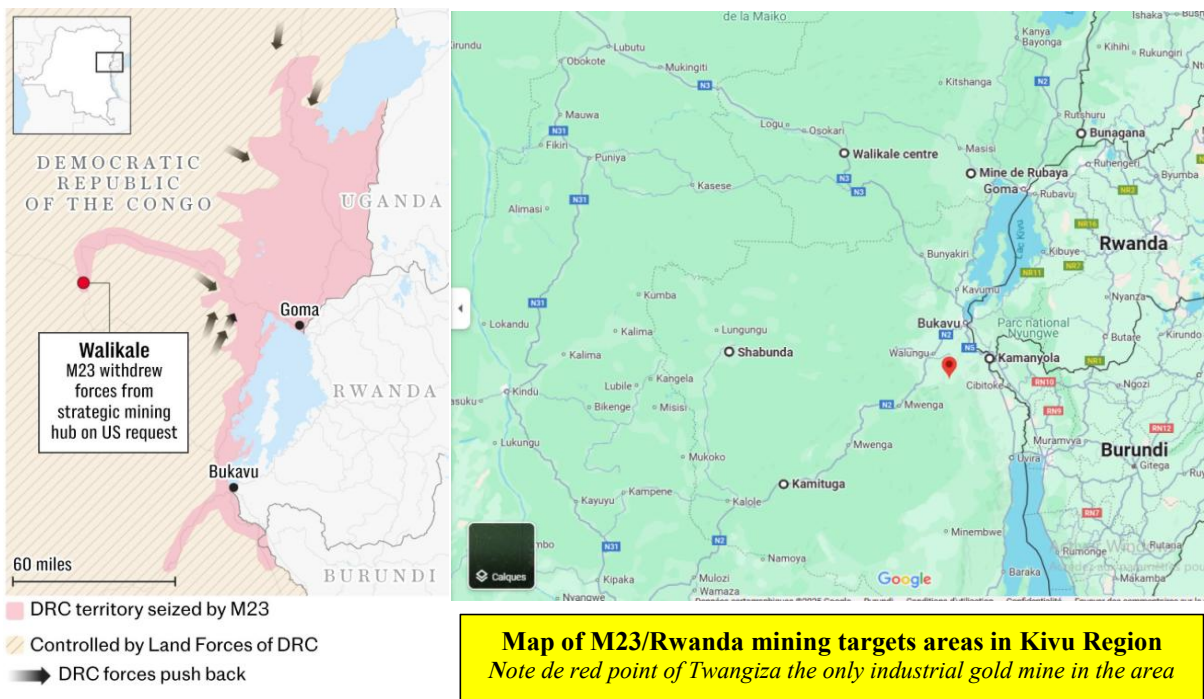
3. **The resource curse** mostly due on newly discovered DRC mineral content (24 trillion USD); the current DRC conflict appears to be a local rebellion beneath the surface an economic crime saga, and a battle for control over some of the most valuable natural resources on the planet 3TG (tantalum, tin, tungsten & gold). DRC resources still include copper, diamonds, cobalt, petroleum, silver, zinc, lithium... This mostly involve outside stakeholders fueling conflict. Evidence bases Reports documented spiked Rwandese gold exportation by 43% (closely equivalent to 11000'000'000 USD) in 2023 and 3,4 billion dollars exported from Uganda. Even the United States imported only 7% of its tantalum supply from the DRC in 2023, but a staggering 36% were from Rwanda. Given that Rwanda's own tantalum reserves are minimal and no gold mine is in there the likely explanation is still smuggling. This obviously demonstrate why Rwanda need control over this region. Note that it even has a still running contract with EU on mineral exportation.

What is the trend observed during this active fighting period:

The overview of the rebellion controlled areas from the Bunagana to Kamanyola have 328km long to its eastern side bordering Rwanda and Walikale(300 km inside the country) . The areas has 2 Principal towns of Goma (900'000 inhabitants), Bukavu (1'400'000 inhabitants) and several inland business centers. Most of those inland centers are 3TG trade centers; surprisingly those bear the current fighting momentum while the main towns as Goma and Bukavu are left without sufficient security (military) hence regular killing , robbery (average 5 dead bodies per night) with day activities controlled by M23 while night activities appear to be under gangs control. Hope we are not heading to the Haiti like uncontrolled land.

The M23/Rwanda has sufficient soldiers as presented to local community during a military parade but they are mostly sent to compete with local militias (Wazalendo/FARDC partners) for mining sites control toward **Walikale** (North Kivu), toward **Twangiza** (South Kivu) and around Kavumu (**Luhihi, Kadasomwa** Mining sites in Kabare). It is obvious that the Rubaya Mining (50% of coltan store worthy) is totally under the rebellion control.

Other interesting mining centers on their target are **Kamituga** (185 km from Bukavu) and **Shabunda** (248km from Bukavu) but these are far located to Rwandan border and there is no open driving possibility and these areas are well loaded with local militias. The forest of Urega between Lwindi and Elila rivers with their inland towns of Shabunda (200'000 inhabitants) and Kamituga (400'000 inhabitants) are possible second goldenest area in DR Congo after Kibali-kilomoto belt. On the other-side note that all mineral from the Urega area streamline into Bukavu town then cross to Rwanda hence no need to compete for conquering a spontaneously flowing production.



(1)M23/Rw controlled town centers are Bunagana/ (Rutshuru Territory), Rubaya mine (Masisi Territory), Goma, Bukavu, Kamanyola... (2)Fighting battleground are Luhihi, Katasomwa around Kavumu (in Kabare Territory as well as the Twangiza, Butongo-Tubimbi (along the Kadubo gold minig river bordering Mwenga & Walungu) and Nzibira in Walungu Territory. (3)Coveited mining trade centers are Walikale, Shabunda and Kamituga these are enclaved towns hardly accessible by road but have airdromes for small aircraft.

What are the way out?

The ICPRD as active civilian society member from eastern Congo will not invent a new road except shedding light on pathway ready attempted. As documented above, despite the above trajectory of the war a better end to this conflict remains possible. Building on the recent international sanctions (the United States, the U.K., German, Belgium.. and the EU). These should set “escalating targeted network sanctions against senior Rwandan and DRC officials and their affiliated companies and enablers until the Rwandan government withdraws its troops from foreign soil and ends all support for — and pulls back — the M23, as the DRC government halts its aid to the FDLR”.

Having in mind the possibility of imposing the UN Council resolution 2773 as last way out; we are first looking forward to the so advertised USA-DRC mineral deal for security. Nevertheless there is need for this agreement to follow strict contract and revenue transparency requirements from the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#) (EITI) standards to prevent corruption as well as to have included clear mechanisms to ensure that Congolese people (especially those from remote village where mining is operated) benefit from their own natural resources, and increased democratic provisions to allow the Congolese people a strong say in their future. Brief on behalf of Congolese inhabitants we seek the world to impose peace and good governance in the country.

References

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