

## **ENOUGH MANNA FOR ALL**

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By  
Professor Eyamba G. Bokamba  
Department of Linguistics  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; USA

### **1. GENERAL REMARKS**

It is truly a great honor for me to participate in this panel which is called to reflect on the General Assembly's theme from the perspectives of the "Global partners" in our united church: the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. I would like to express my gratitude to the Rev. Sandra Gourdet, the Executive Director of the Africa Department, for arranging my invitation on this panel. I am delighted to be and share this important moment with you, and I hope that I will be able to do justice to the task that I have been assigned.

I have been asked to speak in reference to the topic of "Enough Manna for All," that, as you all know, refers to a critical period in the 40-year exodus of the Israelis from Egypt through the wilderness under the leadership of Moses and Aaron (May and Metzger 1962). We are told in Chapter 16 of Exodus that when they reached "the wilderness of Sin" after six weeks of trekking from Egypt, they complained of hunger and accused Moses of taking them into the wilderness to starve them to death. And since they were God's people, He heard their complains and rained food on them, including manna (Exodus, 16: 15-16), with specific instructions for them to take only what they needed for their family each day, except on Sabbath. According to the story, there was enough manna not only to feed all the people, but also to last through their trip to the land of Canaan. In short, God provided for His chosen people in time of hunger to ensure their survival in the wilderness and their eventual arrival at their final destination: Israel or should I say Palestine.

There are potentially several interpretations of this story from the prisms of 21<sup>st</sup> century life. In my mind, however different these interpretations may be, the common and most evident theme is

that of God providing sustenance again for His children at critical junctures in their journeys, as He has done on so numerous occasions throughout the Bible. The 40-year trek, which is a very long time, in the wilderness may have been a trial period, just like Jesus' 40 days in the desert under Satan, or Job's trial. But in the end, God's will triumphs because of His immense love for His people.

I wonder if you know of any of God's people who have been suffering from hunger, diseases, economic and social injustices, including planned pauperization in a land of scandalous abundance for over 40 years after their liberation from their Egypt: colonial masters, and have yet to emerge from this wilderness of suffering. I know such a land, one that has more Disciples of Christ's members than its counterparts in the United States and Canada, thanks to the strong foundations that the pre-liberation missionaries built and to the unrelenting efforts of the Congolese church leaders whom they trained or whose training they facilitated in one fashion or another. That land from where Rev. Eliki, Rev Ilumbe, my wife Molingó, and I hail and of whose Disciples of Christ Church we are bi-products is called the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC in short). Many, if not most, of you in this audience have certainly heard of the vibrancy of the Disciples of Christ's Church in DRC that has expanded not only within its Mecca region, the Equateur Province in the northwest, but also to the 9 million inhabitants in the capital city of DRC (viz., Kinshasa) and across to the neighboring Congo-Brazzaville. You may also have heard from the Africa Department and from your own congregation's delegations to DRC that while we in the U.S. and Canada are experiencing loss in membership, the Disciples of Christ's church in DRC is bursting at the seams with members; and this is in spite and perhaps because of the great suffering the people are enduring.

I am certain that you have read or heard about the so-called civil wars that have caused the death of an estimated 5.6 millions of people since 1996, and the violent rape to which women, youths and children have been subjected daily in the hands of so-called Congolese rebels and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) in Eastern DRC since 1996. I wonder, however, if **YOU KNOW** the underlying causes of this suffering, and how critical the role of the church has become

under these difficult times. Allow me to share a few facts and research findings with you, and invite you to reflect on them under the prisms of a global church in which there is enough manna for all.

## **2. THE TRUE STORY BEHIND THE STORIES: SEPARATING THE FACTS FROM FICTION**

**2.1 Overview.** On June 30, 2010, DRC will mark, but not celebrate, its 50<sup>th</sup> political independence from Belgium, its former colonial master who inherited it from their former King: Leopold II, in 1908 after he ruled it brutally from essentially 1878 (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). While the country became officially an independent state on June 30, 1960, most of its political and economic levers continue to be pulled by external powers just as they well during the Leopoldian and Belgian eras. This externally exercised power and the predatory economic practices carried out by these powers and their internal collaborators have been aptly characterized as “Same Old Story” (S.O.S.) by a 2004 extensive report by Global Witness (GW). GW is a British based NGO that investigates and “exposes the corrupt exploitation of natural resources and international trade systems, to drive campaigns that end impunity, resource-linked conflict, and human rights and environmental abuses”. What the Global Witness’ report of 2004 states in a nutshell is that while the actors on the plundering of the natural resources of DRC and perpetrators of crimes against humanity on the Congolese people have changed, the methods and motivations remain the same as during King Leopold II’s era when an holocaust that caused an estimated 10 million deaths occurred (cf. Adam Hochschild 1998, Edgerton 2002). The goal of the power brokers on DRC was and continues to be unfettered access to Congolese resources, and the effect, intended or not, is to subject the Congolese people to abject poverty and dependence on these financial powers and the nouveaux riches who facilitate their access to the resources (Hochschild 1998, 2003, Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, Braeckman 2003, Kankwenda 2003). GW does not simply make assertions, it also identifies the looters and their collaborators, and documents the elite networks inside and outside of DRC. I have provided you in the *Appendix, Attachment C*, Global Witness’ (2004) chart of the former 1996 to 2003 war factions for the DRC resources. While the generalized or country-wide war has ceased, these factions, as reported in several U.N.’s reports (U.N. 2001 – 2003 ff) and one of Human Rights Watch’s recent

reports (2005) on the looting of these resources, these former war groups and their creators have formed elite networks to continue the plunder.

Specifically, since 1996 the Democratic Republic of the Congo or DRC, formerly Zaire under the late President Mobutu's 32-year dictatorship, has appeared quite periodically in the news as one of the hottest spots in Africa and the world in general. In fact, some journalists have characterized the country since then as one of the "killing fields" of Africa where hundreds of innocent people, including infants, children, youths, women of all ages, men, and the elderly die as a direct result of armed conflicts and/or as a consequence of such conflicts. At no time in the history of this giant nation, which is the size of the U.S. east of the Mississippi River, has there been such carnage caused by invading proxy states or civil war.

While DRC has been a country of an "unending crisis", as described by the eminent African political scientist M. Crawford Young in his numerous studies on the country since late 1960s, the conflict that occurred on October 6, 1996 and whose effects are still felt today is unique in the country's history. There have been seven times more deaths in the country since 1996 than there were under the Rwandan genocide (Gourevich 1997, Mamdani 2001), yet the revenge genocide against Hutu and the loss of Congolese lives in the hands of such invaders and their Congolese collaborators has never been acknowledged as a genocide. Why is this the case?

**2.2 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS.** Young and many of his former students (e.g. Turner, Nzongola, Schatzberg,) described DRC, then Zaire, as a state with an unending crisis, because it experienced externally driven secessions of two of its provinces (Katanga and South Kasai) less than two months after decolonization from Belgium on June 30, 1960. The Katanga secession (declared on July 11 by its Governor, Moise Tshombe) brought in the first U.N. mission to supposedly help maintain the country's territorial integrity (O'Bryan 1963, Ndaywel è Nziem 1998, Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). The secession also facilitated the assassination, execution style, on January 17, 1961 of the country's most eloquent and the only democratically elected leader: Patrice Emery Lumumba, along with two of his cabinet members (viz., Joseph Okito then Vice President of Congolese Parliament's

Senate, and Maurice Mpolo, Youth and Sports minister) (Ndaywel è Nziem 1998, de Witte 2001, Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). As many of you may be aware, Lumumba's assassination was ordered by President Dwight D. Eisenhower's on August 18, 1960, in conspiracy with Belgian and U.N. officials, on the one hand, and with Lumumba's political enemies in the Congo who included Mobutu, President Kasa-Vubu, and Tshombe, on the other hand (Ndaywel è Nziem 1998, De witte 2001, Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). (A succinct accounts of these developments in English are found in De Witte (2001) and Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002, especially chapter 3, pp. 106-112). The pretext for his overthrow and eventual assassination was that he was a communist allied to Moscow. This fallacy of this accusation is clearly demonstrated not only by Lumumba's speeches and letters (cf. Van Lierde 1963), but also in the extensive research published by independent scholars, including those cited in this paper. The motivation for assassination was that he dared speak the truth about the political, social, and especially economic aspirations of his people on the inauguration of the Congolese independence: June 30, 1960 (Ndaywel è Nziem 1998, De Witte 2001, Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, French 2004)

In January 1964, a year after the U.N. ended the Katanga secession, Pierre Mulele, Lumumba's former minister of education, along with two colleagues (viz. Gaston Soumialot and Laurent Kabila) launched a guerrilla warfare that was intended to reclaim what was perceived as a lost political independence after the assassination of Lumumba and the Belgian-driven secession of Katanga, then characterized as the country's mineral-rich province (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002). The Mulele's rebellion, which had gained significant ground and led to the establishment of a People's Republic of the Congo with a headquarter in the city of Kisangani, was ended on November 24, 1964, when "Operation Red Dragon" was launched by Belgian paratroopers, mercenaries and elite units of the Congolese Army with logistical support from the U.S. More specifically and according to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002: 273), the operation was launched

with US planes dropping Belgian paratroopers at Kisangani and providing air cover for a column of mercenaries and élite units of the Congolese army led by Belgian colonel Frédéric Vandewalle. (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002: 273)

Free and fair elections were held in May, with M. Tshombe, the former secessionist governor of the Katanga province elected as Prime Minister and Mr. Kasa-Vubu re-elected as President. A few months later that year (viz., November 24, 1965) and after the freely elected government had been in operation, General Joseph Desiré Mobutu (subsequently called Mobutu Sese Seko wa Zabanga) staged his second coup d'état with the support of the CIA on the pretext of fear for the potential return to insecurity caused by a friction between President Kasa-Vubu and Prime Minister Tshombe (Ndaywel è Nziem 1998, Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). It should be noted here that Chief of Staff Mobutu had staged his first coup d'état on September 14, 1960, with the support of the same agency, and replaced the elected government with a college of appointed commissioners. In the 1965 coup d'états, however, he declared himself president even though he was ineligible by virtue of his age (35 years) according the 1962 constitution that required senatorial and presidential candidates to be at least 40 years old. Note further that in carrying out the November 1965 coup d'état, Mobutu overthrew a democratically elected government under an election that was free and fair, and in which results in only 5 out a total of 135 parliamentary districts were contested (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002: 145). Historically, therefore, it is absolutely false to accept the often-quoted claim in the much of the Western press that the 2006 general elections that legitimized Joseph Kabila's presidency are the first democratic elections in DRC since independence.

From November 1965 to 1997 Mobutu ruled the Congo under administrative regimes that began as nationalistic with participatory democracy of some sort, to become increasing authoritarian after the first five years, and to end up with an oppressive dictatorship in his last ten years or so. He succeeded in doing this for this long with the knowledge and enthusiastic support of the West (viz., Washington, and its partners: especially, Belgium, Britain, France, and Germany) who lavished him with loans from the World Bank, allowing him to reschedule them at will because the country had immense natural resources and constituted the best ally against the spread of communism in Africa (Young 1986, Nzongola 1986, 2002, Braeckman 2003). This perception of the economic importance

of DRC as a source of cheap natural resources, its geopolitical significance during the Cold War, the role that Mobutu played as a conduit for intelligence agencies' money laundering to armed conflicts in Angola and other countries, made him both the darling of the West and an immutable leader. Numerous efforts to remove him from power failed, because every time he became vulnerable, the West, directly and through selected allied countries (e.g., Morocco and Israel) came to his assistance.

Mobutu's 32-year autocratic and dictatorial rule achieved four major positive results: (1) he united the country that had become so fractious, with multiplicity of provinces (up to 21 in 1966 from 6 in 1960); (2) he established a sense of nationalism through his policy of appointing governors to serve in any province outside of their native region; (3) he re-enforced Congolese pride and self-esteem on a national scale through his doctrine of authenticity—the precursor to Mbeki's African Renaissance; and (4) he facilitated the expansion of education, especially at the pre-university level.

In contrast to these achievements, however, Mobutu mismanaged the country's natural resources at a grand scale; he allowed corruption by high officials, including himself, to the level of kleptocracy; he ran the country's economy down through misdirected policies such as Zairianization; he allowed his ministers to destroy the incipient political infrastructure that emerged during the first five years of decolonization; and he systematically destroyed the armed services, especially the elite officer corps that had been trained in some of the best military schools in Western Europe and North America. In fact, Mr. Mobutu thwarted the Congolese people's quest for freedom and participatory democracy. Mobutu's Zaire/Congo was not an ailing, but A FAILED state. As a result, it was primed for adventurers of all sorts, including rapacious multi-national companies that offered bribes to anyone who would take them; self-claimed Congolese Tutsi in the Kivu provinces, some of whom he gave prominent positions in his political party, the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR), and to whom he also granted a general, rather than individual, citizenship.

### **3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

**3.1 First regime change.** This is the Congo that Laurent Kabila, Joseph Kabila's father, took over on May 17, 1997, under the sponsorship of client states Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi on

behalf of a superpower, according to Wayne Madsen's *Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa, 1993-1999* (1999, and testimony on DRC in Congress, 2001) and Collette Braeckman (*Les Nouveaux Prédateurs: Politique des puissances en Afrique centrale* (Fayard 2003). Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi were subsequently joined by others (Angola, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) for one reason or another (e.g., payback Mobutu for his destabilizing role on behalf of the U.S.).

The so-called Laurent Kabila's and Banyamulenge's rebellion of 1996 was not a genuine rebellion: it was a constructed rebellion to which Kabila and the Banyamulenge interests were grafted after Rwanda and Uganda had been directed and supported by the Clinton's administration to remove Mr. Mobutu who had become a useless ally of Washington, and a putative devotee of France in the covert war on the unfettered access to Congolese scandalous mineral resources that include not only the previously known diamonds, gold, copper, cobalt, uranium, beauxite, zinc, iron ore, silver, tin, and europium, but also new and more critical minerals: niobium or columbite tantalum (i.e., coltan), that is used in the manufacturing of electronic goods such cell phones, computers, VCRs, playstations, and other key 21<sup>st</sup> century equipment/tools; tungsten that is utilized in light bulbs, and cassiterite that is used in cans and (Madsen 1999, Nzongola 2002, Braeckman 2003, Global Witness 2009).

After Mobutu was removed on May 17, 1997 by Laurent Kabila, under a negotiation carried out by the venerable President Nelson Mandela on a boat anchored off the shore of the mighty Congo River near the Atlantic Ocean and under the nearby watchful eye of the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. (Mr. Bill Richardson), Kabila proclaimed himself President of Zaire that he renamed DRC. The so-called spokesperson for the rebel movement created on October 18, 1996, viz. Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo (AFDL) in Lema (South Kivu), proclaimed himself president without a voice from the Congolese electorate; he was viewed and welcomed as a liberator after the numerous failed attempts to remove Mobutu from power. Unfortunately, however, Laurent Kabila's Rwandan and Ugandan sponsors made him a virtual hostage by controlling not only the country's military security responsibilities with General Kabarehebe of the Rwandan army as the

Chief of staff, but they also ensured Kabila's personal security details. These Rwandan and Ugandan military officers were the new rulers of DRC under the directions of General Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Mr. Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. Laurent Kabila was isolated from the Congolese political élite that he found in DRC, especially Kinshasa, and who had been responsible for weakening Mobutu's regime as exemplified in the National Sovereign Conference that began on August 7, 1991.

**3.2 Second and third regime changes.** By October 1997 the residents of Kinshasa, the DRC capital, began to criticize Lurent Kabila as a leader of an occupying force commandeered by Rwanda and Uganda. Initially he denied that his so-called army, consisting largely of child soldiers commanded by Rwandan and Ugandan officers, to be an occupation army. The criticisms continued and intensified by December 1997. It was not too long thereafter that Kabila acknowledged the obvious, especially when his sponsoring officers along with some strategically placed Rwandan young politicians masquerading as Banyamulenge, Congolese Tutsi, reportedly attempted a palace coup that would have ended Kabila's life. Thereafter Kabila began to sideline the Rwandan and Ugandan officers from his personal security services, replacing them with former Mobutu's army officers. But the sponsoring officers remained in charged of the armed forces. This marriage of convenience began to fall apart when Kabila removed Commander James Kabarehebe, the Rwandan military officer, from his post as chief of staff of the Congolese army on July 13, 1998 (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). The split took a dramatic turn on July 27 when Kabila arranged to send Commander Kabarehebe and his officers back home to Rwanda. On August 2, 1998, they staged the second invasion of DRC, with the assistance of their Ugandan and Congolese allies. Between August 6 and September 1, 1998, they seized the Kitona air force base in the Bakongo, Western DRC, and began to march to Kinshasa to overthrow Kabila and run the country. Kabila called upon the governments of Angola, Chad, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to assist him in driving the invaders out of much of Western Congo, and managed to do so after about two years while simultaneously accepting negotiations for a political solution that was launched by the Zambia government in 1999.

After two years of an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate a political settlement between the Laurent D. Kabila's government in Kinshasa, the Rwandan and Ugandan invaders and their Congolese proxies (RCD and MLC), L. Kabila was assassinated on January 16, 2001 by an assassin whose name and country of provenance remain undetermined to-date. L. Kabila was mysteriously replaced by his putatively adopted son, Joseph Kabila, who was just 29 then, immediately thereafter, ushering in the second regime change in the post-Mobutu's era. According to two sources (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, Braeckman 2003), Kabila was chosen by his father's entourage on the following day (January 17) presumably as the most appropriate person to maintain calm in the country in the wake of another historic political assassination that harkens back to that of Lumumba. Joseph Kabila was eventually persuaded to accept the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity (GNU) at the Inter Congolese Dialogue held in Sun City, South Africa. The comprehensive accord for the formation of the TGNU stipulated the inclusion of the Congolese warring factions with each appointing a Vice-President, the non-violent opposition group in Kinshasa was also entitled to one vice-presidency as was Joseph Kabila's government.

Characteristic of their power and financial greed, the legitimized warlords demanded that the ministries be divided equally among them. In all, TGNU had five vice presidents, with Joseph Kabila retaining the presidency; and the transition was to last for three years (2003-2005) during which they were to prepare for general elections for the two chambers of National Parliament in Kinshasa, and for the presidency that were to be held by 2005. But the TGNU failed to meet the deadline, and the elections were held a year later, in December 2006. Reportedly and with the support of the Western countries that engineered and executed the regime change against Mobutu, the UN Mission in the CONGO (known under its French acronym, as MONUC) and a European Union expeditionary force (known as Euro-Force) that directed the maintenance of security during the elections ensured Kabila's win on a re-run voting against Jean-Pierre Bemba, one of the vice presidents in the TGNU and a former warlord. Joseph Kabila's win was as good as Ahmadinejad's in Iran and was followed by the

same massive demonstrations, including open battles in Kinshasa between Kabila's and Bemba's security forces a few months later, leaving dozens of deaths and burned property.

Joseph Kabila also attempted openly to assassinate Jean Pierre Bemba in March 2007 while he was meeting Western diplomats, including the Head of MONUC (William Lacey Swing) in his residence. Western governments remained mum over what the Congolese, especially in Kinshasa and the rest of western DRC, as a stolen election. Mr. Swing's response given in response to questions concerning election irregularities, as indicated in the citation below, is characteristic of the MONUC's behaviors:

UNITED NATIONS, August 2 -- As in the Congo both vote-counting and vote-spinning continue, UN envoy William Lacy Swing on Wednesday told reporters in New York all irregularities with the election "have been dealt with by the electoral commission."

...This Mr. Swing later modified, saying the irregularities "are being" dealt with. These were not the only word games deployed by Mr. Swing over the video connection. Inner City Press asked Swing to explain why he had applauded the offer of a position in the Congolese army to Mathieu Ngudjolo, a warlord with the Mouvement Revolutionnaire Congolais (MRC) who has previously been quoted justifying the use of child soldiers.

..."I don't think you're quoting me on that," said Mr. Swing. "It's not my business to applaud." (cf. *Inner City Press*, 2005?)

In fairness, a UN Commission did investigate the March 2007 open battle in Kinshasa, but not the election results. While the team found that both parties acted recklessly in causing unwarranted civilian deaths and damage to property, the main blame was laid against Kabila for provoking the battle. The threat against Bemba's life caused him to go into exile in Portugal where he had initially traveled for medical treatment, and essentially forced him to vacate his senate seat in the National Parliament. While he was in Portugal planning a return to Kinshasa, Kabila out-smarted him by reportedly colluding with General François Bozize, the current President of the Central African Republic, to bring charges against him at the International Criminal Court, The Hague, for war crime committed by Bemba's troops whose assistance was requested back in 2003 by the legitimately elected president of that country (Ange-Félix Patassé) whom General François Bozize overthrew. Bemba was arrested in Belgium over a year ago, and is awaiting trial at the ICC, with the pre-trials having failed thus far to substantiate the accusations. In his absence as the most powerful leader of the

only viable opposition party, Kabila has built a veto proof coalition of parties in the National Parliament, and has succeeded in practically silencing the opposition through dictatorial and oppressive means, as documented by a number of NGOs, including the most recent report by FIDH, a Belgium based NGO, summarized in *La Libre Belgique*)<sup>1</sup>:

On a déjà dénoncé à plusieurs reprises dans ces colonnes les manifestations de l'autoritarisme du pouvoir congolais. A l'égard des parlementaires, des magistrats, des défenseurs des droits de l'homme... Dans un rapport documenté, fruit d'une enquête menée en avril de cette année en collaboration avec ses trois associations locales partenaires, la Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme dresse un constat accablant sur l'évolution du pouvoir de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC). Et cela, à mi-mandat de la présidence, soit deux ans et demi après l'élection de Joseph Kabila à la tête de l'Etat. Au-delà du réquisitoire, l'organisation veut alerter les acteurs de la communauté internationale sur les dangers qu'une inaction de leur part impliquerait sur la stabilité du pays.

Le constat. Le président de la Ligue belge francophone des droits de l'homme, Benoît Van Der Meerschen, résume l'enquête, intitulée "RDC, la dérive autoritaire du régime" en ces termes : "Tous ceux qui s'élèvent pour contester les orientations politiques du régime sont systématiquement visés par le pouvoir". La répression n'est donc pas la conséquence des séquelles de la guerre et d'un certain chaos qui persisterait, selon M. Van Der Meerschen. Certes, reconnaît-il, le Congo est handicapé par un lourd passé. Mais des élections ont porté au pouvoir Joseph Kabila; la RDC a ratifié les principales conventions de défense des droits de l'homme; le citoyen congolais est donc en droit de réclamer des comptes à ses dirigeants. Or, personne n'est épargné par la vague de répression. L'opposition politique est muselée; la société civile est assimilée à cette dernière et subit le même sort; les activités des défenseurs des droits de l'homme sont entravées; la presse est contrôlée...(La Libre Belgique, 07, 25,2009)

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<sup>1</sup> We have previously denounced on several occasions on these pages the appearances of authoritarianism of the [current] Congolese government [,] vis-à-vis parliamentarians, judges, [and] advocates of human rights... In a well documented/substantiated report, the results of an investigation conducted in April this year in collaborations with its three local partner associations, the International Federation of the Leagues of Human Rights [FIDH] presents a damning assessment of the evolution of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). And this [is occurring] at the mid-term of the presidential term, that is two and a half years after the election of Joseph Kabila as head of state. Beyond these results, the organization [i.e., FIDH] wishes to alert the decision-makers in the international community that inaction on their part [regarding this situation] will have serious implications on the stability of the country.

The assessment. The president of the French [-speaking] Belgian League for human rights, Benoît Van Der Meerschen, sums up the inquiry [that is] entitled "DRC, the regime's drift towards authoritarian" in these terms: "All those who rise up to question the regime's political leanings are systematically targeted by the government." Repression is not at all the consequences of the aftermath of the war [in eastern DRC?] and of some chaos that might have continued, according to Mr. Van Der Meerschen. Indeed, he acknowledges, the Congo is handicapped by a difficult past. But the [presidential elections of 2006] carried Joseph Kabila to power; DRC ratified all the major treaties/conventions for the protection of human rights; the Congolese citizen has therefore the right to demand accountability from its leaders. Instead, no one is spared by the wind of repression. The political opposition is muffled/silenced; the civil society is viewed similarly and suffers the same treatment; the activities of human rights advocates/defenders are hindered; [and] the press is controlled. [My translation, EGB].

As a result, Joseph Kabila and his cronies continue business as usual with very little to show for his administration, except for the continuation of predatory economic practices of all sorts and bogus agreements with the Museveni and Kagame's regimes for the resolution of the on-going wars in the two Kivu provinces and the Ituri sub-region in the Oriental Province.

The accords are bogus in that the militarization of mines that are the true causes for the continuing wars in these regions serves Kabila, Museveni, and especially Kagame's economic interests. As such, they will not be seriously implemented, but represent façades to the outside world. You do not have to accept my statement as Gospel truth; here is what Global Witness states, among other aspects, in its July 2009 report:

In many parts of the provinces of North and South Kivu, armed groups and the Congolese national army control the trade in cassiterite (tin ore), gold, columbite-tantalite (coltan), wolframite (a source of tungsten) and other minerals. The unregulated nature of the mining sector in eastern DRC, combined with the breakdown of law and order and the devastation caused by the war, has meant that these groups have had unrestricted access to these minerals and have been able to establish lucrative trading networks. The profits they make through this plunder enable some of the most violent armed groups to survive.

In their broader struggle to seize economic, political and military power, all the main warring parties have carried out the most horrific human rights abuses, including widespread killings of unarmed civilians, rape, torture and looting, recruitment of child soldiers to fight in their ranks, and forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. The lure of eastern Congo's mineral riches is one of the factors spurring them on.

By the time these minerals reach their ultimate destinations – the international markets in Europe, Asia, North America and elsewhere – their origin, and the suffering caused by this trade, has long been forgotten.

The illicit exploitation of natural resources is not a new phenomenon in eastern DRC. It has characterised the conflict since it first erupted in 1996 and has been well documented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the United Nations Panel of Experts and Group of Experts, journalists and others. Twelve years on, the patterns remain the same, and despite abundant evidence of these activities, no effective action has been taken to stop this murderous trade. On the contrary, the warring parties have consolidated their economic bases and have become ever more entrenched. (Extracted from Global Witness' Summary of the report, "We are their meat, their animals. We have nothing to say"; p. 1).

Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group<sup>2</sup> (see, e.g., its 2004 report on the extremely high mortality rate in DRC), other NGOs, and the U.N. have made similar reports that have not received the attention they deserve urgently in part because of the vested interests of many of U.N.'s

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, its 2004 report on the extremely high mortality rate in the country.

members, and also, because the people dying and the women being raped are black, and there is currently yet no geo-political struggle between the West and the East (i.e., China). While on the one hand the so-called international community remains passive to the heinous crimes committed daily against innocent Congolese citizens and hundreds of others are being subjected to slave labor, the same international community, at least many of its members, are ACTIVELY buying the blood minerals produced under these conditions (Human Rights Watch 2005). I can hear God searching for new Moses and Aarons and crying out, “Who shall rescue my people in the Congo from the spiral of predatory economics under which they have been suffering cyclically since the forceful occupation of their land by King Leopold II?” “Who can free them from the oppression that they have been experiencing under externally selected presidents and internally corrupted politicians”? If you hear God’s voice, will you reply, as Moses initially did: Who am I that I should be their spokesperson? Or will you answer in the affirmative, here I am Lord, send me?

#### **4. CONCLUSION: THE WEST AND DRC**

**4.1 The precious manna: Is there enough for everyone?** I am certain that the story recounted in the Global Witness’ 2009 report is news to many of you who may have internalized the stories in the press that characterize the 1996 invasion of DRC by Rwanda in collaboration with Uganda as an attempt by Rwanda to destroy the remaining Hutu genocidaires who escaped into Eastern DRC and who continued to wage guerilla warfare from there into Rwanda; that the war that erupted in 1998 was a civil war that resulted from grievances by so-called “banyamulenge” or ethnic Tutsi in the Congo who felt discriminated against and disenfranchised from their citizenship rights; or that subsequent wars in Eastern Congo, especially under the so-called renegade General Nkunda Batware, was motivated by what he felt was a need to protect ethnic Congolese Tutsi against Hutu Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) who were marauding against them in complicity with the Congolese army (FARDC). As Johann Hari (2008) has accurately pointed out in his article that appeared in the *Independent*, a U.K. publication,

There are two stories about how this war began – the official story, and the true story. The official story is that after the Rwandan genocide, the Hutu mass murderers fled across the border into Congo. The Rwandan government chased after them. *But it's a lie. How do we know? The Rwandan government didn't go to where the Hutu genocidaires were, at least not at first.* They went to where Congo's natural resources were – and began to pillage them. They even told their troops to work with any Hutus they came across. Congo is the richest country in the world for gold, diamonds, coltan, cassiterite, and more. Everybody wanted a slice – so six other countries invaded. [My emphasis, EGB]

Hari goes on to point out that even General Nkundabatware's stories is a lie:

There were times when the fighting flagged. In 2003, a peace deal was finally brokered by the UN and the international armies withdrew. Many continued to work via proxy militias – but the carnage waned somewhat. *Until now. As with the first war, there is a cover-story, and the truth. A Congolese militia leader called Laurent Nkunda – backed by Rwanda – claims he needs to protect the local Tutsi population from the same Hutu genocidaires who have been hiding out in the jungles of eastern Congo since 1994. That's why he is seizing Congolese military bases and is poised to march on Goma.*

*It is a lie. François Grignon, Africa Director of the International Crisis Group, tells me the truth: 'Nkunda is being funded by Rwandan businessmen so they can retain control of the mines in North Kivu. This is the absolute core of the conflict. What we are seeing now is beneficiaries of the illegal war economy fighting to maintain their right to exploit.'* [My emphasis, EGB]

Hari goes further to identify the primary conduit and beneficiary, in Africa, of the precious looted minerals: Little Rwanda next door that has no single mine of either of these resources, and yet whose economy has grown by 12% annually at least in the past three years, while that of DRC continues to decline:

At the moment, Rwandan business interests make a fortune from the mines they illegally seized during the war. The global coltan price has collapsed, so now they focus hungrily on cassiterite, which is used to make tin cans and other consumer disposables. As the war began to wane, they faced losing their control to the elected Congolese government – so they have given it another bloody kick-start.

As stated previously, however, the looters of Congolese resources, including earnings from the sale of goods and services, are not all foreigners: They include elite networks, as Global Witness and U.N. reports have discovered, of Congolese politicians, business persons, and soldiers who moonlight into mining and/or forestry to compensate for their low or lack of salary from the national government. These individuals, who are complicit in the suffering of their compatriots by design or through bribery by foreign economic predators, are equally co-responsible for the failure of the national democracy project that the late Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba championed through the political party he founded: The National Congolese Movement (MNC) during his short-lived political

career. They deserve their day in ICC at The Hague. But, to return to the question raised earlier, why should you care and become involved in the plight of the Congolese people? And, specifically, what can you do?

**4.2 Your role in the web of predatory economics.** To answer the first two inter-related questions, you should care and become involved for two primary reasons: First, you should care about the Congolese people and be involved in their struggle for socio-economic justice, democratization, and human dignity because you are a Christian. As such, you and I are bound by our faith to be our brother and sister's keepers. This is what Edmond D. Morel did when he denounced King Leopold II's terrorism against the Congolese people that caused the first holocaust in modern history, and how he proceeded to build the very first international human rights movement, called the Congo Reform Association (CRA), in 1890 to combat the king's cruelty in the Congo Free State. Morel, a British citizen and shipyard clerk, was joined by, among other advocates of the Congolese cause, two African Americans: the historian and journalist George Washington Williams who journey in the Congo and witnessed aspects of the King's men cruelty, and the Reverend William Henry Sheppard, a Presbyterian missionary and co-founder (with Rev. Samuel Lapsley) of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission in 1891 (Marchal 1996, Hochschild 1998, Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). The unrelenting efforts of these early human rights advocates and their network across the ocean not only exposed King's Leopold II's brutality in the Congo, but also forced him to abdicate eventually his Congo fiefdom to the kingdom of Belgium in 1908. According to Hochschild (1998), by that time the King's brutal rule had decimated over 10 million Congolese, or half of the country's population. Probably without the Congo Reform Association's efforts, the King would have maintained his personal colony and would have depopulated it further in his drive to exploit other natural resources beside rubber for automobile tires.

Second, you have to become involved in the current DRC crisis, that I term "A Man Made Daily Tsunami," because you are wily nilly a consumer of many of the modern electronic gadgets and other contemporary life tools that are made with the blood minerals from DRC's war-ravage zones.

These include, to name but a few, cell phones, computers, play stations, light bulbs, cans, and airplane fuselages. In addition, if you own a diamond ring, copper-made cooking ware, gold or gold-plated jewelry, furniture made from precious tropical wood such Ebony, Afformosia, Wenge, chances are that some of them contain Congolese looted products. To denounce and expose the multinational companies that thrive in the purchase of these blood-stained products today is as much of a moral imperative as it was during King Leopold's Congo Free State. The International Rescue Group and several reports from other sources have estimated that over 1250 people die in Eastern Congo, and that hundreds of women and girls are raped violently daily in the same region by militia, foreign and domestic, who systematically loot Congolese minerals as proxies for international markets. Except during the Leopoldian era, DRC has never experienced such massive and on-going deaths. To remain silent under this situation not only constitutes an act of dereliction in our Christian commitment, but also an abandonment of our Christian brothers and sisters to a life of perpetual suffering against which they cannot stand alone, having already been brutalized for decades. From the Disciples of Christ in DRC's perspective, such abandonment will certainly lead to the demise of a vibrant and growing church, thus destroying the last products of your great parents' work. We must stand up and speak against those who trample over the human rights and principles that we hold so dear by virtue of our Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

**4.3 Recommendations for action:** Readings and actions. Having now demonstrated how you are implicated in the struggle for the liberation of DRC by faith and consumption of products made with plundered Congolese natural resources, the question that arises at this juncture are: (1) "What should I/we do"? And (2) "how should we proceed"? The first act you should undertake individually and in certain cases collectively, is to become better informed about the situation in DRC by reading international organizations' reports, including the UN's and NGOs', that you can access on the Internet. I have provided you a sample list of some of these. In addition, read books about DRC written by well-informed scholars and investigative journalists. Such knowledge will enable you to discern not only fiction from superficial news reports, but also equip you write

persuasively to your government representatives and make convincing presentations to company boards. You will also avoid the trap of misguided action that Hari (2008) describes in the first part of the following statement:

Yet the debate about Congo in the West – when it exists at all – focuses on our inability to provide a decent bandage, without mentioning that we are causing the wound. It's true the 17,000 UN forces in the country are abysmally failing to protect the civilian population, and urgently need to be super-charged. But it is even more important to stop fuelling the war in the first place by buying blood-soaked natural resources. Nkunda only has enough guns and grenades to take on the Congolese army and the UN because we buy his loot. We need to prosecute the corporations buying them for abetting crimes against humanity, and introduce a global coltan-tax to pay for a substantial peacekeeping force. To get there, we need to build an international system that values the lives of black people more than it values profit.

Your third action, individually or collectively, should be to write to your representative in Congress or the Senate, inform them of your concern about DRC, and demand that they act to preserve this emerging democracy whose quest has been thwarted by external forces for so long, and support the economic development of this enormously rich nation that can become the leading engine for the entire African continent. A related and fourth action would be for you and other like-minded brothers and sisters to organize a semester-long study on DRC, including the work of the Christian Church there, and to invite selected well-informed speakers of the situation to supplement your discussions. And finally, contribute to the international human rights NGO of your choice that addresses the situation in DRC.

**4.6 Importance of your participation.** I would like to conclude by pointing out that your advocacy of the social and economic justice in D.R. Congo, and particularly the restoration of democracy and rule of law, is absolutely critical for the future success, stability and holistic development not only of the country, but of the entire African continent, for three principal reasons. First, the West, under the leadership of our country, was responsible for the establishment and sustainability of the Mobutu's 32-year dictatorial regime that has facilitated the recent state collapse in every respect. Second, the regime change that was initiated by the Clinton's administration, according to Madsen (1999, 2001) and Braeckman (2003) and has cost the lives of over 5.6 million Congolese, demands that we, the citizens of these United States, speak out against those past and

misguided policies, and for their rectification under the Obama's administration that is poised to abandon them (see his Cairo's speech). Crimes committed and directed by the Kagame's regime, whose invading troops are accused of causing and sustaining the 1994 Rwanda genocide after they assassinated the former presidents of Rwanda and Burundi by shooting down the airplane that carried them from an inter-Rwandan reconciliation meeting in Tanzania (Madsen 1999, Ruzibiza 2004), should not be condoned under the pretext of guilt for the West's inaction against the Rwandan genocide in which Kagame was a key participant, according to the court testimony of one of his former elite officers: Abdul Ruzibiza (2004).

Third and finally, as American citizens, freedom of speech is a guaranteed and protected civil right; in D.R. Congo it is not respected by the Kabila's regime. Dissent to the regime's policies is often met with brutal force, including imprisonment and death (cf. citation from *La Libre Belgique's*, 07-25-09 and reports from HRW's reports). We represent, therefore, a potential force as that of CRA during the Leopoldian era to denounce crimes being committed against the Congolese populations by greedy multinational companies, their proxie and Congolese collaborators. We must also offer realistic proposals for and solutions to, in collaboration with democratically minded Congolese and other players, the on-going crisis that will plunge D. R. Congo deeper into abject poverty and lawlessness. This is a moral imperative that must be pursued without delay.

To return to our theme, let me state unambiguously that there is enough manna in DRC for everyone who wishes to harvest it according to God's principles of good conduct, and human-made principles of rule of law governing all economic operations in a sovereign state. The Congolese mineral, forest, agricultural, water and hydroelectric resources—the latter of which can provide electrical power to the entire continent and beyond (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007)—can be shared with other nations through responsible investments that can also benefit the Congolese nation and people. While it is true that those immense resources belong first and foremost to the Congolese people, it remains also true under God's eyes that they are to be shared; and that under the globalized economic structure into which DRC has been incorporated, they have to be shared as being done elsewhere

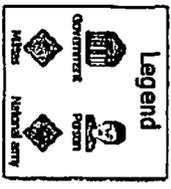
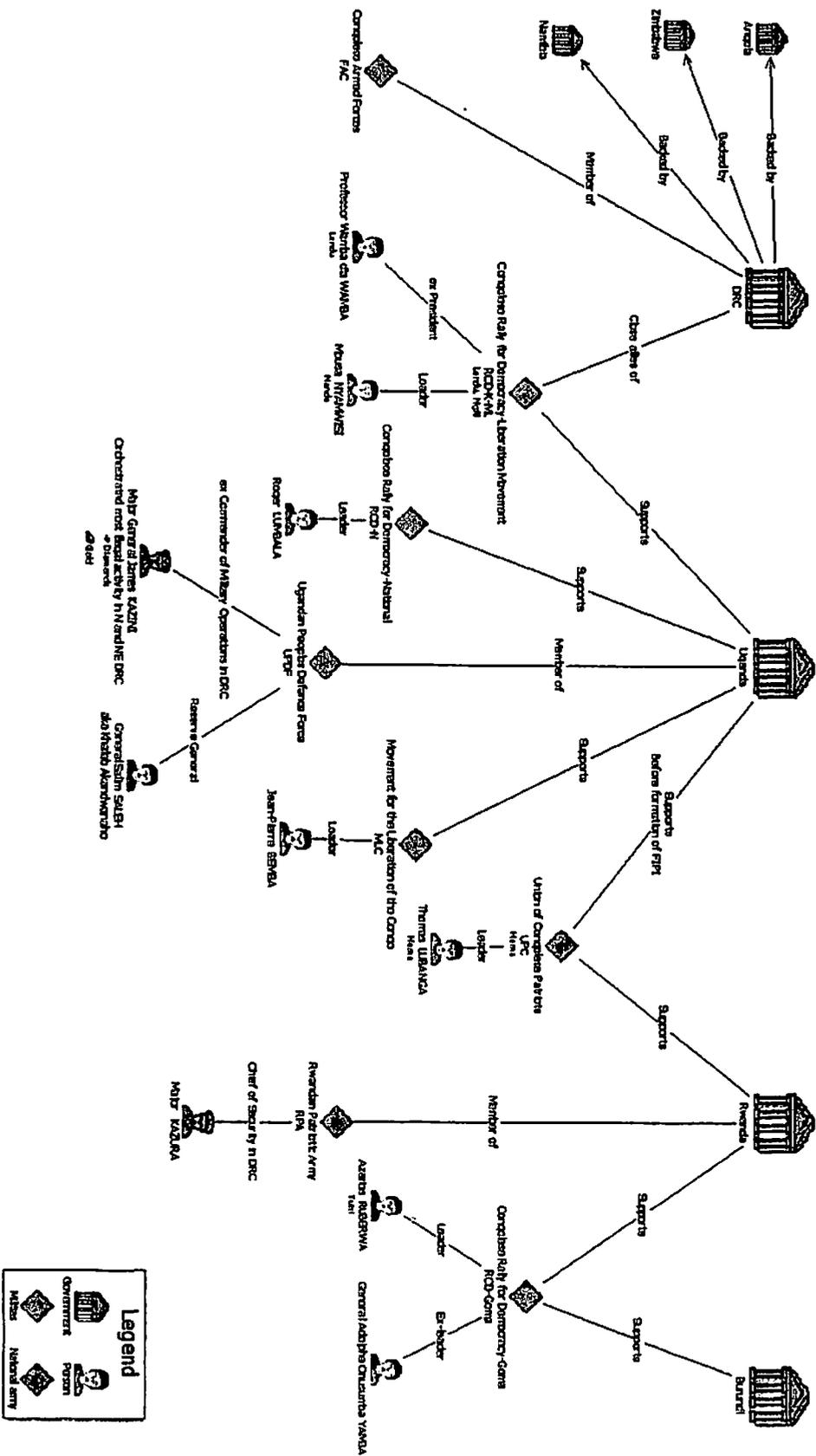
through legal investments. It follows, therefore, that the criminal plundering of these resources through regime changes, proxy or client states, and collaborative internal elite predators that continue to cause thousands of Congolese lives directly or indirectly is unwarranted and must be stopped once for all. You are all called and challenged to join this liberation effort.

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# A chart showing the major countries and armed groups involved in the conflict in DRC



# 1 Summary

“We are their meat, their animals. We have nothing to say.”

MINER FROM SHABUNDA (SOUTH KIVU), 28 JULY 2008

The militarisation of mining in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is prolonging the armed conflict which has been tearing the country apart for more than 12 years.

In many parts of the provinces of North and South Kivu, armed groups and the Congolese national army control the trade in cassiterite (tin ore), gold, columbite-tantalite (coltan), wolframite (a source of tungsten) and other minerals. The unregulated nature of the mining sector in

eastern DRC, combined with the breakdown of law and order and the devastation caused by the war, has meant that these groups have had unrestricted access to these minerals and have been able to establish lucrative trading networks. The profits they make through this plunder enable some of the most violent armed groups to survive.

In their broader struggle to seize economic, political and military power, all the main warring parties<sup>1</sup> have carried out the most horrific human rights abuses, including widespread killings of unarmed civilians, rape, torture and looting, recruitment of child soldiers to fight in their ranks, and forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. The lure of eastern Congo’s mineral riches is one of the factors spurring them on.

By the time these minerals reach their ultimate destinations – the international markets in Europe, Asia, North America and elsewhere – their origin, and the suffering caused by this trade, has long been forgotten.

The illicit exploitation of natural resources is not a new phenomenon in eastern DRC. It has characterised the conflict since it first erupted in 1996 and has been well documented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the United Nations Panel of Experts and Group of Experts, journalists and others. Twelve years on, the patterns remain the same, and despite abundant evidence of these activities, no effective action has been taken to stop this murderous trade. On the contrary, the warring parties have consolidated their economic bases and have become ever more entrenched.



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Miners scour for cassiterite with their bare hands, Bisie mine, North Kivu, April 2008.

<sup>1</sup>The term “warring parties” is used throughout this report to denote the range of armed groups operating in eastern DRC, as well as the Congolese army.

## Overview of findings

This report documents the militarisation of mining in the conflict-affected areas of eastern DRC. Its findings and conclusions, summarised below, are based primarily on Global Witness field research in North and South Kivu in 2008, and in Rwanda and Burundi in 2009.

- All the main warring parties are heavily involved in the mineral trade in North and South Kivu. This practice is not limited to rebel groups. Soldiers from the Congolese national army, and their commanders, are also deeply involved in mining in both provinces.
- In the course of plundering these minerals, rebel groups and the Congolese army have used forced labour (often in extremely harsh and dangerous conditions), carried out systematic extortion and imposed illegal “taxes” on the civilian population. They have also used violence and intimidation against civilians who attempt to resist working for them or handing over the minerals they produce.
- The most detailed information obtained by Global Witness relates to the *Forces démocratiques pour la libération*

*du Rwanda* (FDLR), the predominantly Rwandan Hutu armed group, some of whose leaders are alleged to have participated in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo* (FARDC), the Congolese national army. The involvement of these two groups in the mineral trade is extensive and well-organised.

### FDLR

- The FDLR has a stranglehold on the mineral trade in large parts of South Kivu. In some areas, their economic activities have become so successful that they appear to have become an end in themselves. Local residents describe them as the “big businessmen”.
- The FDLR sometimes trade openly, selling minerals in markets and towns; on other occasions, they use Congolese civilians as intermediaries.
- The FDLR systematically extort minerals and money from miners, charging a flat fee of 30% on mining proceeds in some areas and “taxing” minerals at roadblocks.



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Cassiterite miner, Bisie, North Kivu, April 2008. Working conditions are dangerous and there are frequent accidents when mineshafts collapse.

### FARDC

- The most blatant example of FARDC involvement in mining is Bisie, the largest cassiterite mine in the region, which accounts for around 80% of cassiterite exports from North Kivu. From 2006 to March 2009, Bisie mine was entirely under the control of an army brigade. In 2007 and the first part of 2008, the FARDC based at Bisie were collecting at least US \$120,000 a month by taking a commission of US \$0.15 on every kilogramme of cassiterite.
- In some mines, a system has been set up in which particular days of the week are allocated for civilian miners to work for individual soldiers or their commanders. Soldiers also demand 10% of minerals, as well as cash, at numerous military checkpoints along the roads.
- Senior officers in the provincial command of the 8th and 10th military regions of the FARDC have been profiting from this trade.
- Individual commanders or military units "own" particular mineshafts. In Mukungwe, in South Kivu, a mineshaft has been nicknamed "10th military region".

### FARDC/FDLR collaboration

- The FARDC and the FDLR – supposedly battlefield enemies – often act in collaboration, carving up

territory and mining areas through mutual agreement and sometimes sharing the spoils. The FDLR use roads controlled by the FARDC, and vice versa, without difficulty. Minerals produced by the FDLR are sent out through local airports controlled by the FARDC in South Kivu.

### Other armed groups

- The *Congrès national pour la défense du peuple* (CNDP), and various other armed groups such as the *mai-mai*, have also profited from the mineral trade, particularly through their own systems of "taxation".

### Smuggling

- Provincial government officials struggle to control mineral exports across the DRC's eastern borders. Official declarations and state revenues from exports of cassiterite and coltan have increased since 2007, but almost all the gold in North and South Kivu is still smuggled out. A Congolese government official told Global Witness that at least 90% of gold exports were undeclared.

### Rwanda and Burundi as transit countries

- The majority of the minerals produced in North and South Kivu leave the DRC through Rwanda or Burundi. The governments of these countries have effectively provided the warring parties in eastern



Metals extracted from coltan, cassiterite and wolframite are all used in the manufacture of electronic goods.



Tungsten derived from wolframite is used in the manufacture of light bulbs.



Tin extracted from cassiterite is used in the manufacture of cans.

DRC with access to export routes and international markets. They have failed to acknowledge the fact that these minerals are fuelling the conflict in eastern DRC and have not held to account companies in their country which engage in this trade.

### The *comptoirs*

- Several of the main *comptoirs* – trading houses based in Goma and Bukavu – buy, sell and export minerals produced by or benefiting the warring parties. They include Groupe Olive, Muyeye, MDM, Panju and others.
- The fact that these *comptoirs* are officially licensed and registered with the Congolese government acts as a cover for laundering minerals which are fuelling the conflict.

### Foreign companies

- These *comptoirs*' customers include European and Asian companies, such as the Thailand Smelting and Refining Corporation (THAISARCO), the world's fifth-largest tin-producing company, owned by British metals giant Amalgamated Metal Corporation (AMC); British company Afrimex; and several Belgian companies such as Trademet and Traxys. These companies sell the minerals on to a range of processing and manufacturing companies, including firms in the electronics industry.
- Economic actors are turning a blind eye to the impact of their trade. They continue to plead ignorance as to the origin of their supplies and hide behind a multitude of other excuses for failing to implement practices which would exclude from their supply chain minerals which are fuelling the armed conflict.
- Foreign companies use the “legal” status of their suppliers as justification for continuing to trade with



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AMC's offices in central London. AMC's subsidiary, THAISARCO, is among the companies importing minerals from *comptoirs* whose suppliers have links with armed groups.

them, without verifying the exact origin of the minerals or the identity of intermediaries. In reality, some of these “legal” suppliers are among the main facilitators of the illicit trade with armed groups and army units.

- Some companies have claimed that the well-being of the Congolese population in mining areas is dependent on these companies' continued involvement in the trade. Such arguments ignore the serious human rights abuses perpetrated against artisanal miners and other civilians by the warring parties who exploit these minerals and with whom these companies are prepared to continue trading.
- Correspondence between some of these companies and Global Witness has revealed that despite paying lip-service to “ethical” principles, trading companies have no effective monitoring system in place to check their supply chain or assess the human rights impact of their trade.
- Correspondence from some of the major electronics companies has shown a greater recognition of the need for due diligence but also a lack of a sense of urgency and limited commitment to applying checks throughout the entire supply chain.

### Foreign governments

- International dialogue and peace talks have not tackled the economic dimension of the conflict. Global Witness believes that political agreements which do not address the exploitation of natural resources as one of the main drivers of the conflict are unlikely to lead to lasting peace.
- Home governments have failed to show moral leadership in holding to account companies based in their countries that engage in trade which benefits the warring parties and leads to human rights abuses. They have fallen back on voluntary codes of conduct and other non-binding guidelines, resisting calls for stronger action to control the corporate sector.
- Most donor governments have chosen to concentrate on technical solutions instead of addressing the fundamental causes of the conflict. Not only has this allowed the warring parties, and the companies which do business with them, to continue benefiting from the mineral trade with impunity, but it has further delayed the implementation of measures which would deprive the warring parties of one of their principal sources of finance.
- The inadequacy of the international response to the economic dimension of the conflict is obstructing development efforts. The conflict in eastern DRC continues to cause deaths, displacement, trauma and destruction of livelihoods on a massive scale – all of which impede development. Donor governments continue to pour vast sums of money into the DRC, but this assistance is undermined by their failure to address one of the fundamental aspects of the conflict: the warring parties' access to natural resources.

The findings presented in this report are based on Global Witness interviews with a wide range of eye-witnesses and other sources in North and South Kivu<sup>ii</sup> in July and August 2008, including miners, individual traders and trading companies, mining companies, government and military officials, members of armed groups, journalists, members of Congolese NGOs, UN staff and foreign diplomats. Global Witness has protected the identity of many interviewees in this report for their own security. Global Witness carried out further research in Rwanda and Burundi in March 2009. Additional information was obtained through correspondence with companies and other sources in late 2008 and early 2009.

### Action to break the links between the mineral trade and armed conflict

This report sets out detailed recommendations for governments, individuals, organisations and companies inside and outside the DRC who have the power to break the links between the mineral trade and the conflict. Foremost among these recommendations are:

- measures to cut off warring parties' access to mining sites in the DRC, as well as international trade routes and external networks;
- ending the impunity protecting those engaged in illicit mineral exploitation and trade, through actions by the governments of DRC, neighbouring countries and countries where companies are registered;
- thorough due diligence by all companies trading in minerals which may originate from eastern DRC and stronger corresponding action by their governments to hold accountable those who continue to trade in ways which fuel the conflict.

<sup>ii</sup> Global Witness did not research the mineral trade in the area known as *le Grand Nord* (in the northern part of North Kivu) or in the neighbouring province of Maniema.