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"Faced with a gun, what can you do?" – Mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo

By Global Witness

The militarisation of mining in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is prolonging the armed conflict that 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 have carried out the most horrific human rights abuses, including widespread killing 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.

Our new report "Faced with a gun, what can you do?" documents the militarization of mining in the conflict-affected areas of eastern DRC. Its findings and conclusions are based primarily on our field research in North and South Kivu in 2008, and in Rwanda and Burundi in 2009.

Our report shows that 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 we obtained 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.

Our 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 that may originate from eastern DRC and stronger corresponding action by their governments to hold accountable those who continue to trade in ways that fuel the conflict.

For the entire report "Faced with a gun, what can you do?", published by Global Witness in July 2009, please see

[http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/786/en/global_witness_report_faced_with_a_gun_what_can_you](http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/786/en/global_witness_report_faced_with_a_gun_what_can_you_do)

For more information on minerals and conflict please see http://www.ecc-platform.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=373&Itemid=130

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POLICY & RESEARCH

New Perspectives on Addressing Forest Conflicts

Addressing forest conflicts and promoting the conservation and sustainable use of forests requires rights-based approaches. This is the message of two recent studies that focus on forest conflicts from different perspectives.

Highlighting the perspective of forest companies the report "Company-Led Approaches to Conflict Resolution in the Forest Sector", published by The Forest Dialogue and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), offers a set of tools and approaches, which could be used by forest companies to reduce conflict around their operations. Although companies often recognize the negative impact of conflict on their long-term profitability, they lack the knowledge and skills to implement effective mechanisms. The report provides best-practice examples for company-led conflict management and discusses international norms and standards such as the principle of free prior and informed consent (FPIC), outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. FPIC is aimed at giving indigenous people a formal role in the consultations and decision making process about local development projects to ensure their rights to self-determination, their access to land as well as a share of the revenues generated through the utilization of the respective resources. While such international

norms provide guidance, they need to be accompanied by national legislation, meaningful multi-stakeholder dialogue, and integration of conflict management into the general business practice.

The report "Rights-based approaches: Exploring issues & opportunities for conservation", by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), discusses an increasingly prominent approach to climate change mitigation – Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). The goal of REDD is to provide positive incentives for forest conservation and carbon emissions reduction through compensation and payment structures. However, REDD mechanisms could also create new incentives for states to restrict access rights of forest-dependent communities, thereby exacerbating land use and property rights conflicts. Marginalized groups might not be able to participate in payment programs and carbon contracts, although they play an important role in forest conservation. The authors therefore argue for a rights-based approach to REDD, including revenue transparency and grievance mechanisms as well as the FPIC of affected communities. (*Christiane Roettger*)

The IIED report "Company-Led Approaches to Conflict Resolution in the Forest Sector" can be downloaded at <http://www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=G02510>

For the report "Rights-based approaches: Exploring issues & opportunities for conservation", published by IUCN and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) please see [here](#).

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Water Conflicts under Scrutiny

Will water scarcity trigger wars, or will nations choose to cooperate in using this resource? This question was one of the main points of discussions during the Stockholm World Water Week 2009. For a long time this question was examined primarily from the perspective of international relations and the balance of power between countries. The volume titled "International Water Security. Domestic Threats and Opportunities" on the other hand, looks closely at the role of domestic factors in determining whether the approach to transboundary water bodies is cooperative or conflictive. The volume, edited by Nevelina I. Pachova, Mikiyasu Nakayama, and Libor Jansky, was published in 2008 by the United Nations University Press. The authors cite various case studies to demonstrate the influence of domestic security concerns on the negotiation and implementation of international agreements (e.g. Indus, Lesotho, Danube, Mekong and Lake Chad).

Domestic developments, such as migration, poverty or the creation of new water infrastructure, can intensify competition for the resource, as exemplified in the case of Sudan and Egypt, Thailand and Burma, or the Aral Sea and Mekong basins. These regions have been identified as potential water hotspots. Transboundary water cooperation must therefore be strengthened to counteract such developments. The authors recommend that water issues be viewed in the broader context of regional cooperation, so as to increase the scope of compromise and potential benefits for all parties. The example of the Okavango Delta illustrates the approach of a systematic assessment of security policies in river basins, which can identify the negative impact of national security considerations on sustainable water management. In upstream Angola, for example, the strategic relevance of water resources is steadily rising after the

reconstruction phase that followed the end of the civil war in 2002. Economic development, ensuring food security and the resettlement of displaced population groups have been identified as priorities, whose implementation could have an impact on downstream Namibia or Botswana. Such developments need not, however, result in conflicts. Non-state actors, academicians, the Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) and others have an important role to play in making the sustainable use of the shared water resource a political priority.

The book "International Water Security" broadens the debate on water and security by adding case studies and a new perspective. It demonstrates that even in very diverse regions it is possible to take action at the domestic level to minimize water-related tensions between countries. Although the contributions have a practical focus, the book is more suitable for enhancing one's understanding of the basic framework of water cooperation rather than offering any concrete proposals for action. (*Annabelle Houdret and Dennis Taenzler*)

For more information on the volume "International Water Security. Domestic threats and opportunities" edited by Nevelina I. Pachova; Mikiyasu Nakayama; Libor Jansky, please see <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/2008/internationalWaterSecurity.html>

For more information on the Stockholm Water Week 2009, please see <http://www.siwi.org/>

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Learning by doing: Training in Environmental Conflict Resolution

A report and a new database on trainings for environmental conflict resolution reveal that while natural resource management is largely covered, the crucial link between the environment and civil conflict is missing. While many capacity building measures exist for natural resource governance, their scope is mostly restricted to the local level and they do not consider the broader socio-political context. However, even though environmentally induced conflicts are increasingly frequent, their root causes are often not the environmental problems themselves, but are linked to broader structural problems of governance, marginalization and existing civil conflict. The report and the database show that these root causes are rarely addressed in trainings. Furthermore, those trainings that focus on (post)conflict settings and peacebuilding only insufficiently include the potential contributions of environmental cooperation.

Adelphi Research compiled this overview as part of their activities in the "Initiative for Peacebuilding" project. Please feel free to contact us by Email (<mailto:Houdret@adelphi-research.de>) if you would like to add any trainings on conflict over natural resources and their socio-political context. A revised version of the database will be available on ecc-platform.org in November.

A report summarizing the key findings on the availability and characteristics of the trainings are available [here](#). The entire database of all trainings can be viewed [here](#).

Further information on the project "Initiative for Peacebuilding" is available at <http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/>

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The US and Climate Security: The Need for Renewable Foreign Policies

The European Union is not the alone in exploring the means to address potential security implications of climate change. EU and Member States representatives met recently in Berlin, at a briefing session regarding this topic. Decision makers in the United States however, are also discussing this issue more intensively, as part of the dynamic national debate on the challenges of climate change and energy security. Led by the Senators John Kerry and Richard Lugar, a Senate Hearing was held on "Climate Change and Global Security: Challenges, Threats and Diplomatic Opportunities" in July. The hearing was based on assessments provided most recently by the Department of Defense and last year by the National Intelligence Council. According to Senator Kerry the nexus between today's threats and climate change are most acute in South Asia, referring to potential terrorist threat emanating from this region. He further outlined that most instruments of US foreign policy will be affected by climate change, for example the readiness of US military operations due to rising sea levels throughout the world.

Senator Lugar linked the question of climate change and conflict to the overall oil dependency of the United States. "As we approach the point when the world's oil-hungry economies are competing for insufficient supplies of energy, oil will become an even stronger magnet for conflict." Lugar outlined that some answers, such as developing renewables, can be useful in addressing a cluster of threats confronting US national security. According to the Senator, the same holds true for the development of clean coal technologies as one the main energy sources, not only in the US but also in China and India. The Hearing in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations increased momentum for a new US climate and energy policy approach, as envisaged in the House bill introduced by Congress members Edward J. Markey and Henry A. Waxman. It remains to be seen however, if that momentum for a more proactive climate policy approach will last until year's end to positively influence the national and international climate decision making processes. (*Dennis Taenzler*)

For more information on the US Senate Hearing, please see <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/2009/hrq090721p.html>

For the meeting report of the Berlin Briefing on "Climate Change and International Security" facilitated by Adelphi Research, please see http://ecc-platform.org/images/stories/stories/newsletter/ccis_berlin_2009_briefing_report.pdf

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Water for All: Not Just a Legal Issue

Violent conflict over scarce water resources is already a reality at the local level. Thus, according to former UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, measures to prevent long term water scarcity and ensure equitable distribution of this resource serve as disarmament instruments against future water wars. At the 34th Science Forum, organized by the weekly newspaper "DIE ZEIT" in Berlin on July 1, Töpfer participated in discussions with representatives from industry, and the international law, science, and civil society communities, about the key challenges of the global water problem.

Töpfer emphasized the need for developing early warning systems for identifying important watersheds and regional water scarcity that may point to and prevent conflicts at an early stage. Unlike fossil fuels, water cannot be replaced with other alternatives. Access to water must be recognized internationally as a human right. However, negotiations to achieve this goal have been very protracted. Töpfer therefore called for the implementation of concrete and practical measures at a regional level because any "human right to water will be meaningless if there is no water." International law regarding water has remained static since 1966, explained international law expert, Klatt. At that time, the right to water was included in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as part of the right to health and an adequate standard of living. Its actual implementation, however, has been weak. Even the more detailed interpretation adopted with the General Comment No. 15 in 2002, is not a legally binding document in international law.

Beyond the legal issue, discussions at the Science Forum also showed that often there are successful projects and efficient water systems at the local and regional levels. Water engineer Professor Otterpohl however, pointed out that such projects are rarely scaled up once the pilot phase is over, often due to a lack of public awareness and political will. This is despite the fact that there is a tremendous potential for saving water: The methods are technically simple with a negligible price impact on consumers. What is required is a serious and widespread implementation of decentralized, closed loop water systems and successful pilot projects – especially in the industrialized countries. These could set new benchmarks for a responsible approach to water so as to significantly lower individual and national "water footprints". (*Christiane Roettger*)

Detailed documentation of the Forum is available (in German) at <http://www.zeit.de/2009/29/Wissenschaft-ZEIT-Forum>

Further information on the human right to water is available at <http://www.righttowater.info/code/homepage.asp>

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Security for Development: Environment and Resources as Key Elements

Crises and conflicts can only be prevented if their structural causes are addressed. As the Eschborn Dialogue 2009 of the German Technical Cooperation (gtz) revealed, resource management and tackling climate change need to be considered as important instruments to address crucial structural causes of violent conflict. During this yearly key event of the gtz, two of the eight thematic panels dealt explicitly with the relevance of the environment for peace and security.

Climate change, the topic of one panel, has increasingly gained prominence on the foreign and security agendas of various governments during recent years. The discussion between representatives from the development and security communities, however, illustrated once more the complex relationship between different structural causes of violent conflict. Trying to isolate environment or resources as the reason for violent conflict is neither helpful nor appropriate. However, the urgency for early action is tremendous. As outlined by Adil Najam, Professor of Global Public Policy at Boston University, the current state of the world can already be compared to that of a failing

state: It is highly divided, degraded, and insecure, poorly governed and unsafe. To strengthen conflict prevention under such conditions, Victor Elbling, Commissioner for International Energy Policy, Globalisation and Sustainable Development at the Federal Foreign Office stressed the need to promote a coherent foreign policy – also in tackling climate change. He suggested using and adjusting instruments already at the disposal of decision makers, such as strengthening regional cooperation on shared water resources in regions most heavily affected. “Water Unites”, an initiative focusing on Central Asia, was cited as an example that combines regional capacity building with the strengthening of early warning systems.

The natural resources and conflict panel identified further key elements of a framework for early action. Jon Martin Trondalen, a geography professor actively involved in mediation of transboundary water conflicts in the Middle East, argued for close cooperation with small organizations in conflict-prone settings. By building on established activities and partners, development agencies can identify points of entry for conflict resolution without exceeding their own capacity for action in these settings. The Eschborn Dialogue was successful in bringing together such different perspectives on the role of the environment and resource use for security and development. However, it also showed that donor activities are only just beginning to systematically address the conflict-related challenges posed by environmental degradation and climate change. *(Dennis Taenzler and Annabelle Houdret)*

For further information on the Eschborn Dialogue 2009, please see <http://www.gtz.de/en/25641.htm>

For the report "Climate Change and Security" commissioned by the German Technical Cooperation (gtz), please see www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/en-climate-security.pdf

For more information on the initiative “Water Unites”, please see [here](#).

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How States React to Water Stress

On July 23 the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) hosted a roundtable on "How states react to water stress: Recommendations for Long-Term Strategic Planning in a Warming Climate". The event, which took place in London, saw the participation of over 20 international representatives from government agencies, research and academic institutions, and NGOs. The event successfully convened experts from different sectors such as science, policy, political science and the military, who all shared the goal of gaining a better understanding of water security.

Participants all agreed that climate change was now part of the security agenda and that water security issues, in particular, had the potential for exacerbating disputes and triggering a domino effect in terms of food scarcity, migration flows and pandemics. The starting point of the discussion was to establish what areas of the world would be most vulnerable to water insecurity and which of these would face the greatest destabilization risks. Central and South Asia were identified as the most vulnerable regions.

The discussion was structured around four questions. In the first two sessions on "Cross border and water conflicts" and "Civil conflicts" experts were asked how to resolve and

avoid disputes – both between and within states – when water supplies are reduced by climate change. Could wars be fuelled by water shortages? Experts thought this unlikely, but agreed on the need to discuss the idea further. The afternoon session addressed the issue of adaptation, specifically the new technologies, management principles, or governance needed to alleviate the pressures of water shortages. Special focus was given to how governments could incentivize the development and deployment of such technologies. The day ended by looking at worst case scenarios and producing policy recommendations for the international community in the event that climate change caused long-term drought and state instability.

Throughout the day four main concepts emerged as predominant. First was the concept of basin hegemony such as China, India, Turkey and Egypt, and the related issue of an asymmetric balance of power among states sharing a river basin. Second was the debate over the need for a more efficient international architecture for dealing with water insecurity. Participants were divided over whether regional and local solutions should, at times, take priority over international arrangements. A third recurrent point related to the definition of water security itself. Indeed, some experts stressed that security goes beyond the issue of scarcity and it also concerns water's quality and its availability. Finally, vulnerability was a main point for discussion. Assessing the level of vulnerability of a given area or community was deemed essential in predicting the degree of damage potentially caused by water insecurity. (*Virginia Comolli, Research Analyst, The International Institute for Strategic Studies*)

The IISS will produce a brief working paper with the results of this workshop. The next programme of the Transatlantic Dialogue on Climate Change and Security will be a workshop focusing on maintaining food security in a world stressed by climate change.

More information on the IISS Workshop - Conflict and Competition over Changing Water Resources is available [here](#).

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events are also regularly published at <http://www.ecc-platform.org/>.

"Competing Claims on Energy: Access and Benefit Sharing" in Zurich (10-11 September)

The joint event of the Energy Science Center and the North-South Centre addresses the challenges for the global energy system from the perspective of developing countries. The conference will highlight and explore pathways to sustainable energy systems in developing countries, in particular harnessing renewable energy sources and improving energy efficiency. It will also address mechanisms of access and benefit sharing in the context of energy and climate change.

Further information on the event is available at <http://www.esc.ethz.ch/ESNS09/index>

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"Improving Civilian-Military Co-ordination in Response to Sudden Onset Disasters" in Wilton Park (28 - 30 September)

This conference aims to identify ways in which civil-military coordination can improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance at regional and sub-regional levels at times of disaster. The conference will address a range of questions including: What are the lessons of civil-military coordination from recent responses to natural disasters, for instance in China or Burma, or in sudden-onset disasters in South Asia, the Caribbean or Africa? How can military forces best be integrated into civilian responses?

Further information on the event is available at

<http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/themes/economic/conference.aspx?confref=WP994>

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"Insecurity and Durable Disorder - Challenges to the State in an Age of Anxiety" in Monterey, US (15 - 17 October)

This conference explores the future foreign and security policy issues of international relevance. It addresses the structural sources of global insecurity and asks how the state should respond to them. Different panels discuss weapons proliferation and technology, the security implications of population demographics, food and water shortages, the impact of climate change on regional stability, and energy security.

More information on the event is available at

http://cns.miis.edu/activities/pr090402_iss_isac.htm

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IN BRIEF

Vulnerable Energy Infrastructure, Corporate Responsibility and Crisis Impacts in Madagascar

Changes in the environment can cause serious disruptions to energy infrastructure, such as hydroelectric installations, offshore oil and gas production, pipelines, electrical transmission and nuclear power generation. A briefing paper published by Chatham House and Global EESE explores "[The Vulnerability of Energy Infrastructure to Environmental Change](#)".

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The report "[Sustaining Business and Peace: A Resource Pack on Corporate Responsibility for Small and Medium Enterprises](#)", published by International Alert, primarily addresses Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and is based on experience from Sri Lanka. Its purpose is to introduce Sri Lankan SMEs to the concepts and approaches of Corporate Responsibility (CR).

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Following the political crisis in Madagascar in February, which brought down the government of former President Marc Ravalomanana, illegal logging and exploitation of the protected areas has dramatically escalated. In a [joint statement](#), the international

community, including the embassies of Germany and France as well as the World Bank and the WWF call for determined action against illegal logging.

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