

# The Continuous Unstoppable Challenges of Western War Economy Ambitions (CUCWWEA) in the Hot Spot of African Radical Conflict Zone (HSARCZ) Over the M23 and FDLR Weaponry Contest of Slaughtering Unarmed Citizens (WCSUC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo: The United States and Angola Peace Deals Shaping New Insights of Promoting, Protection and Prioritizing American Multinational Corporation Interests(PPPAMCI) for Massive Exploitation ahead of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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Article History	Abstract
<b>Original Research Article</b>	<p><i>The present paper deals with the radical unstoppable continuous conflicts of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century occurring in the hot spot of Africa specially in the Great Lakes Region including the DRC and Rwanda as factional groups keeps using their locally fabricated and imported arms of different categories to slaughter the unarmed civilians to the benefits of the Western hyper neo-colonial actors. The latter are the promoter of skirmishes to open conflict situations which could facilitate their massive exploitation of natural resources in the context of CUCWWEA. Over thousands of their countrymen have lost their lives, internal and external displacements and frustration round the clock which means nothing to the war treasurers and promoters in the game of war economy interests. For long will the Africans of that specific region know the realities and values of human being is still a question that worries and leaders of the said countries have to sit-up in the truthful negotiation table to find an everlasting solution knowing that the West remains what they are in their manipulation agenda the African Continent cutting across slavery and slave trade, indelible crimes committed during the era of colonization in different African colonial territories conferred to them out of the November 1884 and February 1885 Berlin Colonial Conference and thereafter, the aftermaths of the first and second world wars with the Mandated and Trusteeship Systems of the League of nations and United Nations in 1919 and 1945 respectively. In fact, the cheating or unequal globalization slogans between the Industrialized Developed World (IDW) and Remote Industrialized Less Developed World (RILDW) who are in high needs of African natural resources at all course is a clear indication that any approaches brought in for conflict management, negotiation, arbitration and pacific settlement in any act of aggression and breach of peace may however ends up in pieces of much troubles so far as their interests is tempered with. Therefore, Africans should understand themselves in the ancient palaver settle approaches vis-à-vis the contemporary mechanisms to prevent themselves from being wanted all the times as criminals when power elapses with the conspiracy of any Western initiatives. Using the historical perspectives in the analyses, with modest experiences in the lecturing of Africa in International Relations in the post-graduate levels, the used of</i></p>
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*specialized sources, documentaries and valuable website sources provided us with enormous authentic evidence concerning the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century still unresolvable in the Hot Spot of African Conflict of the Economic Community of Central African States(ECCAS).*

**Keywords:** War Economy, Africa, Conflict, Goma, USA, Angola, Prioritizing, Multinational Corporation, M23, DRC. Rwanda.

## Introduction

Several international parties have become involved in efforts to broker a ceasefire in the long-running war centred around Goma. Each of these actors is pushing for diplomatic moves that are in line with their own strategic goals. The United States took a different diplomatic approach than the other actors, in line with its overall global security stance. It also recognised the geopolitical and economic importance of the mineral resources in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo that are essential to global supply chains and industrial production. In this situation, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed a peace agreement in Washington to put an end to decades of instability and military conflict between the two countries. The pact could also make it easier for the United States to work together on mineral issues in the future. The accord lays out promises to pull armed groups out of eastern Congo, disarm them, and let them back in under certain conditions. Even if there aren't many detailed plans for how to carry out the agreement and previous peace deals in the area have had trouble keeping the peace, political leaders called it a major diplomatic milestone. U.S. President Donald Trump called the pact a big step toward stopping violence and starting a new age of collaboration and opportunity in the area during the signing ceremony in Washington. The foreign ministers of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed the agreement at the United States Department of State. This was in keeping with earlier promises made in a declaration of principles that was agreed upon in April. The ceremony, which was attended by high-ranking U.S. officials like Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, showed that Washington is involved in the peace process. Even while the agreement has a lot of meaning, there are still a lot of problems in putting it into action. The office of Felix Tshisekedi called the development one of the most important diplomatic successes for the country in more than 30 years. Qatar has also worked to mediate in the region by bringing together the leaders of the Congo and Rwanda in Doha and helping to set up a joint monitoring group with support from the United States. Still, the underlying causes of the conflict, such as claims that outside entities are helping rebel groups and the strategic value of rare minerals used in contemporary electronics, continue to affect the complicated geopolitical situation in eastern Congo.

[\(Rwanda and DR Congo sign US-brokered peace ...France 24, <https://www.france24.com> › 2025...\)](https://www.france24.com/2025...)

The long-running war in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo got worse earlier this year when the March 23 Movement took over a lot of land in the area, including the important cities of Goma and Bukavu and two major airports. The rebel attack had a big effect on people's lives, with reports of thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of residents being forced to leave their homes. After losing these territories, the Kinshasa administration asked the United States for help with diplomacy and security. They allegedly offered the US more access to strategically significant mineral resources in exchange for security guarantees. The eastern part of Congo has a lot of coltan and other minerals that are very important to the electronics and technology industries around the world. This makes the area important from a political point of view. Rwanda, on the other hand, continues to deny claims that it supports the M23 insurgency, even though international observers have provided a lot of evidence to the contrary. The country says that its military presence near the border is mainly defensive and aimed at threats posed by armed groups like the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, which is made up mostly of Hutu fighters who are linked to the people who carried out the Rwandan Genocide. Rwanda has accused the Congolese government of helping the FDLR in response, but the Democratic Republic of the Congo firmly denies this.

Early reports about the peace framework brokered by Washington said that it included provisions that stressed respect for territorial sovereignty and an end to hostilities, as well as commitments to help refugees and internally displaced people who had been affected by the conflict return home. The agreement, on the other hand, didn't say much about how it would be enforced or when it would be put into action. Reuters reports that Congolese negotiators wanted Rwandan troops to leave Congolese territory right away. There are thought to be about 7,000 Rwandan troops there. However, Rwandan authorities reportedly opposed these terms. When Olivier Nduhungerehe publicly criticised the unauthorised release of a draft peace accord, tensions around the negotiations grew. He accused the negotiating parties of breaking confidentially. He went on to say that the final version of the agreement did not mention the Rwanda Defence Force, Rwandan troops, or any formal

requirement for withdrawal. This showed that the two sides still disagree on one of the most contentious parts of the peace process. [Rwanda and Congo Sign U.S.-Brokered Peace Treaty, The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/politics](https://www.nytimes.com/politics).

The office of Felix Tshisekedi said just before the signing of the Washington peace agreement that the agreement effectively calls for the removal of Rwanda's military forces from eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the wording reportedly uses the term "disengagement" instead of "withdrawal," which officials said allows for a wider interpretation of the intended process (Natasha Booty et al., 19 June 2025). However, there are still some important questions about how the deal will be carried out because not all of its terms have been made public. There are still questions about whether the March 23 Movement will give up the land it currently controls, whether the phrase "respect for territorial integrity" means that the Rwandan military will be present and then leave, and whether promises to bring back refugees will allow Congolese people who have been displaced in Rwanda to safely return home. There are also questions about whether the disarmament rules will force the M23 to give up its weapons and who will be accountable for stopping the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda after multiple failed attempts in the past. There is also uncertainty about humanitarian issues, such as whether access requirements will allow airports controlled by rebel troops to reopen for relief delivery. Before the agreement was signed, Yolande Makolo, a spokesperson for the Rwandan government, told Reuters that Rwanda would only ease its defensive stance along the border if the FDLR was effectively neutralised. The M23 movement's history makes the situation much more complicated. It came from an earlier peace accord that didn't fully demobilise armed organisations. Previous diplomatic efforts have also failed. For example, experts from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo made some preliminary plans with Angola's help for troop withdrawal and joint operations against the FDLR. However, these plans were never officially approved by ministers from either country, which led Angola to stop being a mediator in March (Natasha Booty et al., June 2025).

### **1. The Danger of Continuous War Economy in the era of Hyper Global Manipulating Mechanisms through Multinational Corporations (MNCs)**

Since 1998, the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have been in a violent fight over who controls and uses the country's huge natural resources. At least six surrounding countries have been involved in this battle, as well as a number of rebel groups fighting for strategic and economic gain. The long war has killed

millions of Congolese people and caused a lot of instability that goes beyond the country's boundaries and affects the whole African continent. After the start of the Second Congo War, the United Nations Panel of Experts looked into the unlawful use of minerals and other natural resources in the DRC. They found a troubling pattern. The Panel found that the main reason why governments, military forces, and armed groups were fighting was to get as much money and goods as possible from resource extraction. The Panel's finding that private sector actors played a big part in keeping both the exploitation of natural resources and the fighting going was very concerning. Recent reports about the growing war and the African Union's Peace and Security Council's diplomatic responses (28 January 2025, Al Jazeera) have made it clear that the violence is still intimately linked to competition for mineral resources.

In light of this, the current paper conducts a thorough analysis of several companies and commercial enterprises identified by United Nations specialists for their participation in the coltan trade. These are Cogecom, Cogear, Sogem, Masingiro, Finmining, Finconcord, Raremet, and Eagle Wings Resources. Each of these organisations is partially incorporated in European countries and/or is run by people from Europe. The coltan trade is getting a lot of attention since it is directly linked to a product that has grown essential in ordinary European life: the cell phone. Coltan is a mineral that contains tantalum, a rare metal that is used in the making of mobile phones and computers. Under the motto "No blood on my mobile!" a group of eighteen Belgian non-governmental organisations started a public campaign in June 2001. "Stop the stealing of Congo!" The campaign advocated for real steps to make sure that the exploitation and trade of Congolese minerals would help the people of Congo instead of making the violent conflict that destroys local livelihoods worse. This research aims to contribute to that goal by evaluating the level of accountability of the firms under examination for their role in the extraction and commercialisation of Congolese mineral resources during the conflict.

Since the Second Congo War started in August 1998, the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo have been fighting over who controls the country's huge natural resources (Jeroen Cuvelier et al., January 2002). Six surrounding nations and many rebel groups have fought to get the most money out of these resources, which has frequently come at a huge cost to the lives of millions of Congolese citizens. In this situation, private sector players have been very important since they have made it possible to harvest, move, and sell mineral resources from Congolese land. The current study delineates the results of

an inquiry conducted by the International Peace Information Service (IPIS) regarding the activities of various European corporations involved in the coltan trade, specifically identified in the report by the United Nations Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the DRC. Coltan was chosen for examination because it is strategically important as a raw material for making mobile phones and computers, which are products that represent modern European consumer lives.

The first three case studies in this paper look at how European trading companies in the South Kivu region work with the RCD-Goma, a rebel group sponsored by Rwanda. The RCD set up a tax system on resource exports to pay for its military activities, using administrative and economic systems that came from the Mobutu era. In reaction to the sharp rise in worldwide coltan prices at the end of 2000, the rebel authorities took another step by giving a newly formed corporation called SOMIGL a temporary monopoly on all coltan exports from areas they controlled. This exclusivity lasted until March 2001 (Jeroen Cuvelier et al., January 2002). IPIS has found evidence that the Belgian corporation Cogecom Sprl was the main business partner of this rebel-controlled monopoly. The RCD is thought to have made about 600,000 USD in December 2000 from deals made between SOMIGL and Cogecom. Similar agreements were apparently made between SOMIGL and Cogear, another company that is said to be doing business in Belgium under a fake address.

Sogem, which is a part of the Belgian multinational company Umicore (previously Union Minière), did not do business directly with middlemen who worked for the rebel government. However, with the help of its local partner in South Kivu, the MDM trade post, Sogem was effectively squeezed out of the market after the SOMIGL monopoly was set up. Sogem, like other European corporations who traded coltan in the Kivu region, indirectly helped pay for the conflict, even though they didn't have direct contracts with the rebel leadership. This happened because the local trading partners paid taxes to the rebel administration that was in charge of the area. More study into the business dealings of the German company Masingiro GmbH shows that there were three different transactions between June and September 2001 in which over seventy-five tonnes of coltan were exported. The large number of these shipments shows that the material probably came from stocks that had already been built up because of the RCD's SOMIGL monopoly.

Masingiro sent coltan to Germany through logistical lines that included the airport of Ostend and the seaport of Antwerp. Expedition businesses like TMK in the Democratic Republic of Congo and A.B.A.C along with NV Steinweg in Belgium helped with this. Once it got to

Germany, the mineral was probably going to be processed at the tantalum refining facility run by H.C. Starck, a Bayer company that is known around the world for being a leader in the manufacture and processing of tantalum materials. The participation of these interconnected business people shows how European corporations and the coltan trade that starts in the Democratic Republic of Congo are connected on a larger scale. The investigation by IPIS and the findings of the United Nations Panel of Experts show that international corporate networks have played a big part in keeping the DRC's economy going, which has become a war economy (Jeroen Cuvelier et al., January 2002).

The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) has been recognised as a well-organised and strategically effective player in the war-driven economy of the Great Lakes area. The United Nations Panel of Experts found that the RPA set up a special operational structure to oversee the extraction of mineral resources from Congolese territory and make it easier for international, especially Western, buyers to do business with them. The second portion of the research looks at many economic ties that were made between European coltan traders and people who are close to the RPA and members of President Paul Kagame's political circle. These partnerships are called "military commercialism." One of the people that stands out in this context is Swiss businessman Chris Huber, who seems to have played a big role in helping Rwanda's economy during the conflict. Investigations show that Huber's offshore firms, Finmining and Raremet, bought coltan from Rwanda Metals, a company that many people think is a front for the RPA, and then sent the material to the Ulba metallurgical processing facility in Kazakhstan. Huber may also be connected to Viktor Bout, a well-known international arms trafficker who has supplied weapons to many armed groups and military forces in Africa. This is because he worked with the Kazakh cargo aviation company Ulba Aviakompania, also known as Irtys Avia, to manage Finmining's shipments from Kigali to Kazakhstan. Eagle Wings Resources (EWR) is another business that the report talks about. It is a joint venture between the American corporation Trinitech and the Dutch company Chemie Pharmacie Holland. Alfred Rwigema is the company's agent in Kigali. He is married to President Kagame's sister and is his brother-in-law. The United Nations Panel of Experts has said before that President Kagame was a key player in the systematic exploitation of the Democratic Republic of Congo's natural resources. Eagle Wings Resources' management has said that they turned down some business offers from another RPA-controlled coltan trading company called Grands Lacs Metals. However, the company was unable to say exactly which trading posts its representative in Kigali got the coltan that EWR sent out. The paper ends with a list of suggestions for the European

Union's Council of Ministers, the United Nations Security Council, European governments, the authorities of Kazakhstan, people in the business sector, and consumer groups. A wide range of non-governmental organisations from different European nations have backed these suggestions (Jeroen Cuvelier et al., January 2002).

These suggestions are meant to make it more appealing for the people involved in the conflict to work toward a peaceful and lasting peace agreement. At the same time, they should create conditions in which the trade in coltan helps the Congolese people instead of keeping a violent conflict going that hurts their livelihoods. The report's main idea is to put a temporary ban on coltan and other natural resources coming from areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo that are still occupied, as well as from countries that are directly involved in the conflict in Congo. The purpose of this provisional measure is to provide sufficient time and institutional space for the United Nations, the European Union, and relevant national authorities to conduct thorough investigations into the activities of companies and individuals involved in the coltan trade. Such investigations could lead to the implementation of suitable regulatory and

legislative measures to guarantee that the extraction, transportation, and commercialisation of these resources do not directly or indirectly facilitate the financing and perpetuation of armed conflict in the DRC. The study's results lead to specific policy suggestions for the governments of Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. These suggestions stress that these governments need to improve the oversight and regulatory systems they have in place for businesses that operate in their countries. Also, big multinational companies that use tantalum capacitors to make electronics, like Alcatel, Compaq, Dell, IBM, Ericsson, Nokia, and Siemens, are being asked to stop buying parts that contain tantalum from mineral sources in the Congo and nearby areas that are involved in the conflict. These companies should also be urged to let independent monitoring and verification systems check that their supply chains don't include products from war zones. The report aims to enhance corporate accountability and responsible sourcing practices in the global electronics industry, while deterring commercial activities that perpetuate the war economy associated with the coltan trade in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Jeroen Cuvelier et al., January 2002).

**Table No. 1: Multinational involved in the exportation of Goma Export as of 2000**

	<b>Names of MNCs</b>	<b>Estimated quantities</b>	<b>Estimated value in U.S dollars</b>
1	Ntale	26.100	391.500
2	Mbanzabugabo	14.000	210.000
3	Socomi	165.000	2.475.000
4	Singoma-Mwanza-Shenimed	49.000	735.000
5	MDM	41.147	617.205
6	Muyeye	120.176	1.802.640
7	Sogermi-Congo	12.968	194.520
8	Vanga-Entreprise	1.000	15.000
9	Hitimana	5.364	80.460
10	EFP/ Business	1.500	22.500
11	Kaferege (Rwanda Metals)	9.000	135.000
	<b>Total</b>		445.255 6.660.825

Source: Compiled by us with information from; RDC, Official Statistics RCD Ministry of Mines and Energy, October 2001.

When worldwide coltan prices fell sharply at the end of March 2001, official shipments fell sharply as well, going down to just 19 tonnes. The RCD leadership eventually decided to end SOMIGL's monopoly in this situation. This opened up and liberalised the coltan market. During this short transition period, the RCD leadership was able to make important economic deals with a number of international partners, including two enterprises in particular: Cogecom and Cogear. At the same time, the Belgian company Sogem had to stop working in the Kivu region since its local business partner was momentarily

unable to do business because of the monopolistic system. After the SOMIGL monopoly was broken up, though, European businesses looking to get back into the regional coltan trade had fresh business options. The German company Masingiro is one such example. The third part of this chapter looks at its work in depth. It is also important to mention the long-lasting power of the Indian Kotecha family. They run a network of trading enterprises in eastern DRC and have been a big part of the coltan trade in the Kivu region for many years. Mr. Ramnik O. Kotecha, a member of this family, has said that he is the honorary consul of the

United States in Bukavu (Report of the UN Panel of Experts, 12 April 2001; de Faily, Coltan, November 2001; Le Potentiel, 14 April 2001).

Many people thought that Cogecom and Cogear were two of the most important business partners of the rebel government in Belgium. Cogecom SPRL was founded on November 9, 1992, as an import-export business that traded goods to and from Zaire. At first, the corporation was mostly a central firm that oversaw a network of buying stations across Burundi, Rwanda, and Zaire. But as time went on, its main concentration became importing goods from the Democratic Republic of Congo, such as coffee, papaya, quinine, tin, and especially coltan. Jacques Van den Abeele, the company's manager, said that the company got their coltan from a trade post (comptoir) in Bukavu, South Kivu, called Shenimed. Mrs. Shenila Mwanza and her brother Mohammed ran this business. They are both children of Aziza Kulsum, a well-known businessperson in the area who was in charge of the RCD's coltan monopoly from November 2000 to March 2001 (Panel of Experts, 12 April 2001). The United Nations Panel of Experts named Cogecom as one of the firms that exported coltan from the DRC through Kigali. They also said that Ms. Gulamali had Cogecom as a business client. Even though there were these claims, Mr. Van den Abeele frequently told the press in public declarations that there was no business tie between Cogecom and either Ms. Gulamali or the SOMIGL monopoly. But documented evidence gathered by the International Peace Information Service (IPIS) points to a different conclusion. IPIS researchers found two documents that show that SOMIGL sold a lot of coltan to Cogecom in December 2000. On December 1, 2000, these papers let 30 tonnes of artisanal coltan worth \$1,568,575 to be shipped out. On December 16, 2000, another 30 tonnes worth \$1,545,593 were shipped out. Kayonga Abbas, the provincial head of the RCD Ministry of Mines in South Kivu, signed both export authorisations. Jacques Van den Abeele corroborated this on

August 22, 2001 (UN Panel of Experts, 12 April 2001, Annex I).

Another pertinent example was Sogem, a subsidiary of the Belgian multinational business Umicore, which endeavoured to retain a degree of separation from the RCD-Goma administration during the conflict. The Belgian Union Minière company, today known as Umicore, owns about 99.68 percent of Sogem. Umicore is one of the oldest and most important Belgian international organisations. It was founded in Brussels in 1900. The company has a large international network, with branches in about twenty-seven countries that buy, sell, and market non-ferrous and precious metals. The United Nations Panel of Experts said in its first report that Sogem had worked with the RCD authorities through its coltan export monopoly run by SOMIGL and linked to Ms. Gulamali. Sogem openly denied these claims, saying that it had never done business with SOMIGL and that its business dealings in the Kivu region were only with long-term partnerships with independent local traders. The company's management says that the SOMIGL monopoly made Sogem far less involved in the regional coltan market and hurt its business in South Kivu. The International Peace Information Service (IPIS) also did research that found two main commercial partners linked to Sogem's work in the Kivu area. One of these partners worked in the Beni and Butembo area of North Kivu, and the other partner was a trade center in Bukavu, South Kivu, called MDM. Mudekereza, the proprietor of the business, is what MDM stands for. Mr. Mudekereza is also involved in the export of agricultural goods and has quinine plantations in the Kalehe, Walungu, and Kabare areas. Since the 1980s, these plantations have been used for business purposes, giving jobs to hundreds of people in the area (Namegabe Mudekereza, 5 September 2001).



Source: Photo: Ed Prior/NRC: A school site in Nyiragongo, north of the city of Goma, where 300 families are now sheltering in cramped conditions and without functioning latrines or fuel to cook. As fighting flared in January this year, hundreds of other families fled the site, often to areas which have been badly hit by years of conflict.

Since the beginning of 2025, the humanitarian situation in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu has gotten worse. During this time, roughly 1,157,090 people have had to leave their homes, but about 1,787,298 people have been able to go back to where they lived before. More than 660,000 people had to evacuate temporary collective relocation sites in Goma and nearby locations around Nyiragongo territory between January and February 2025. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there are around seven million internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). around 90% of these displacements are directly attributable to armed conflict. Many of the afflicted towns are still in very bad shape. More than 90% of the people living in villages around Shasha, west of Goma, don't have access to proper sanitary facilities like latrines and washing areas. Many drinking water systems have also been destroyed. A survey of 138 homes by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) from February 14 to 17, 2025, showed that this was a problem. The NRC puts out a study every year that lists the 10 most overlooked displacement situations in the world. The DRC has been on every one of these lists since the report started. The country has been named the second most ignored crisis four times and the most neglected crisis three times. Lack of money continues to be a major concern in dealing with the humanitarian crisis. The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the DRC always gets less than half of the money it needs to satisfy basic humanitarian requirements. The strategy only got 41% of the money it needed in 2023 and about 44% in 2024 (UNHCR 2023; UNHCR 2024). Humanitarian groups working in the country think that about \$2.54 billion will be needed in 2025 to help about 11 million people whose lives are in danger because of the crisis (HRP, 2025). According to UN OCHA, the US gave more than two-thirds of the money needed for the DRC humanitarian response plan in 2024. Access to clean water and sanitary infrastructure is becoming one of the most important issues. In places where the NRC is now working in Shasha, west of Goma, many communities that have returned have moved to areas that do not have working latrines, drinking water supplies, or basic washing facilities. In February 2025, Al Jazeera reported on the terrible conditions in Goma after heavy combat. Residents had a hard time dealing with wrecked structures and burial sites that were full to capacity. Many families have had to drink untreated water from Lake Kivu or adjacent rivers because there isn't enough safe water. This has led to more cholera illnesses. In response, the NRC has set up chlorination points to make the water safer and is trying to fix the clean-water infrastructure that was damaged. The prolonged war has also affected schools and colleges. 5,927 schools are still closed in North and South Kivu, which means that almost two million kids can't go to

school (DRC Education Cluster). Food insecurity is still a big problem all around the country. The DRC is currently experiencing the world's worst hunger crisis, with about 27.7 million people suffering from severe food insecurity. This shows that a lot of families don't have enough food, are malnourished, and often have to sell their personal belongings or productive assets to stay alive (IPC). Violence has led people to leave their homes, which has left farmland in some sections of North and South Kivu uncultivated for years. This has had a big impact on farming. In other circumstances, people who go back to their land have trouble establishing that they possess it, which makes land conflicts more likely. The NRC helps those who have been affected get back their land and get to it, and it also pushes for bigger changes that will make land rights stronger across the country (NRC Information).

## **2. The Roots of the March (M23) Actors**

For more than 30 years, there has been ongoing violence in the eastern section of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which is recognised for having a lot of minerals. This has been especially true since the 1994 Rwandan genocide. During this lengthy time, many armed organisations have fought the central government for power, trying to gain control over both political power and the country's immense natural resources, which have a lot of economic potential. This ongoing instability has often pulled neighbouring countries into the fight, with terrible results. In the late 1990s, two huge wars that are commonly called "Africa's World Wars" affected many African countries and killed millions of people. A new wave of violence in eastern DRC since the beginning of this year has once again garnered worldwide attention to the area, especially after the M23 rebel group made substantial territorial gains. After taking over a number of important towns and cities, talks about the prospect of a peace deal have started up again. At the end of January, the organization had its first big military victory when it took over the city of Goma in North Kivu province. Goma is a significant metropolis with more than a million people living there. Goma is a key transportation and trade hub on the border with Rwanda and along the shores of Lake Kivu. It also gives people access to surrounding mining towns that offer metals and minerals that are in high demand on worldwide markets. The M23 rebels also took Bukavu, the provincial capital of South Kivu, in February. This city is likewise very important in eastern DRC. The M23, the Congolese national army, and allied militia groups have been fighting each other in the region as the rebels try to gain more land. At one point, the group even said they would go toward Kinshasa, the capital of the country, which is around 2,600 kilometres distant on the other side of the country. The M23 movement is mostly made up of Tutsi

fighters who say they need to fight to protect the rights and safety of the Tutsi minority in eastern DRC. The group says that a number of previous peace deals that were supposed to end decades of fighting in the area were never fully carried out. The name of the movement comes from the peace agreement that the Congolese government and a former Tutsi-led rebel group signed on March 23, 2009. The M23 quickly grabbed territory and briefly took over the city of Goma after it was formed in 2012. These activities drew intense international condemnation and charges of war crimes and major human rights violations. After that, the group had to leave the city and lost a lot of battles against the Congolese armed forces, which were backed by a United Nations peacekeeping mission. This eventually drove the rebels out of the nation. After these events, M23 fighters agreed to join the national army in exchange for promises that the Tutsi people would be safe. But in 2021, the gang started its violent insurrection again, saying that these promises had not been kept (Damian Zane, 2 May 2025, AFP). Sultani Makenga, the head of the M23, is a Congolese Tutsi who used to be in the Rwandan army. Rwanda has denied many times that it helps the M23, but since 2012, UN experts have said that the country has given the rebels weaponry, help with logistics, and even advice on how to fight. The DRC government, along with the US and France, has also said that Rwanda is supporting the movement. Last year, UN experts said in a report that as many as 4,000 Rwandan soldiers were working with M23 insurgents. The UK temporarily stopped several types of aid to Rwanda because it was worried that the country's military was helping the rebels. Yolande Makolo, a spokesperson for the Rwandan government, told the BBC in February that Rwandan forces had been sent to the border just to keep the war from extending into Rwandan territory. Rwanda has also said that it has been unfairly blamed for the fresh conflict and has accused the Congolese government of not talking to the M23. The current war has its roots in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, when radical Hutu organisations massacred almost 800,000 people, most of whom were Tutsis. The genocide came to an end when Paul Kagame, who is currently the President of Rwanda, led Tutsi-led rebel forces to take over the country. After these events, almost a million Hutu refugees crossed the border into what is now the DRC, which made things much more tense in the area. The Banyamulenge, a group of ethnic Tutsis in eastern Congo, felt more and more threatened and left out. Rwanda then sent troops into the DRC twice, saying it was looking for people responsible for the genocide and working with Banyamulenge rebels and other armed organisations. The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a Hutu rebel group with ties to the genocide, is still active in eastern DRC after more than 30 years of fighting. Rwanda calls the FDLR a

"genocidal militia" and says that having them in the area is a direct threat to security. Rwandan officials say that the group plans to go back to Rwanda to "finish the job." Rwanda also says that the Congolese government is working with the FDLR, something the DRC fiercely denies. Rwanda has said that it will stay active in the crisis until it is sure that the FDLR is no longer a threat to its own land or to Tutsi populations in eastern Congo (Damian Zane, 2 May 2025, AFP).

After months of frustration in which mediation attempts—especially those sponsored by Angola—failed to bring about a sustainable ceasefire, there have been important diplomatic developments in the last few weeks that could help end the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. On March 18, the presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, Félix Tshisekedi and Paul Kagame, met in Qatar and advocated for a "immediate ceasefire." On April 23, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the M23 rebel organization agreed to stop fighting in the eastern region until the peace talks that Qatar was mediating were over. A few days later, on April 25, the governments of DR Congo and Rwanda signed an agreement in Washington promising to preserve each other's sovereignty and work toward writing a formal peace pact. Reports said that fighting was still going on in some parts of eastern Congo, even while these diplomatic efforts were going on. M23 forces were said to have taken more villages in South Kivu province. The US has also been pushing DR Congo and Rwanda to reach a peace deal by July. This is partially because the US wants to form mining agreements with both nations. The Congolese government, with the help of several United Nations reports, has accused Rwanda of using the ongoing conflict to take advantage of Congolese mineral resources like gold and coltan, which are used to make mobile phones and other electronics like cameras and car parts. The M23 has taken over various mining areas that are important to the economy in the previous few years. A report from UN specialists last December said that the organization was sending about 120 tonnes of coltan to Rwanda every four weeks. Rwanda has always denied claims that it is taking minerals from the DRC for its own use. The Congolese government has also been talking to the United States about a possible minerals deal. They hope that working together on the economy will help calm things down and lower the bloodshed. Massad Boulos, President Donald Trump's top advisor for Africa, told the Reuters news agency that the United States is also looking into the potential of a similar deal with Rwanda. International peacekeeping forces are still working in the area, along with these diplomatic and economic efforts. Since 1999, the United Nations has sent a mission to the DRC. The present operation, called MONUSCO, includes more than 10,000 peacekeeping personnel. The army

Intervention Brigade is the only part of this army that is allowed to attack armed groups. During the 2013 war, this brigade was very important in defeating the M23. Still, some people in the Congo have often criticised MONUSCO because they think the mission hasn't done enough to keep people safe. President Tshisekedi had asked for the mission to leave the country by the end of last year because he thought the operation was not working. The withdrawal procedure, on the other hand, was put off, and the mission's mandate was extended for another year in December. At the same time, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which has sixteen member states, had sent troops to the area since late 2023. At the end of April, this force started to leave because it couldn't stop the M23 from taking further land. The mission officially ended in March after fourteen South African soldiers died in January, along with other soldiers from Malawi and Tanzania (Damian Zane, 2 May 2025, AFP).

As clashes between armed groups and government forces grew more intense, attacks on civilians continued, leading to hundreds of deaths and many more wounded. Most of the civilian deaths were caused by armed battles between government troops and armed groups including M23, the Cooperative for Development of the Congo (CODECO), and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). At least 100 civilians died and many more were hurt in Nord-Kivu province because all sides used indiscriminate shelling in inhabited areas. While trying to attack or defend their positions, both government forces and M23 fighters used explosive weapons in places with a lot of people. On January 25, a rocket thought to have been shot by Congolese government forces hit a house in the town of Mweso in Nord-Kivu province, killing nineteen people and injuring at least twenty-five others. On March 4, another incident happened when a shell hit a group of people trying to escape active fighting in Nyanzale town in the same region. At least seventeen civilians were killed and twelve others were hurt. Witnesses said that M23 soldiers had fired the rocket from a hill that they controlled. The ADF was behind some of the worst attacks on civilians that year. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) says that at least twenty-eight civilians were killed by ADF attacks in April after news that two of its leaders had been killed. The group attacked the areas of Beni and Lubero twice in June, killing more than 200 civilians. This caused widespread outrage from national, regional, and international organisations, including the African Union Commission, which called for stronger measures to protect civilians. In August, M23 forces reportedly killed nine civilians in the Bwito chiefdom of Nord-Kivu while chasing members of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). Media reports based on information from civil society groups and local leaders say

that M23 soldiers killed fifteen civilians in Binza village in the Rutshuru area of Nord-Kivu between October and November of that year. In a different event that happened in August, government security forces killed at least nine peaceful protesters in the town of Kilwa in the Pweto area of Haut-Katanga province. Several media sources and civil society groups say that the victims were thought to have ties to the Bakata Katanga, a political-religious group that has fought against the government from time to time (Amnesty International, DRC, 2024).

There were other reports during the year about progress in getting justice and recompense for victims. The Katanga Reparation Program ended in April. It helped those who were hurt by an armed attack on Bogoro village in Ituri province on February 24, 2003. The program was run by the International Criminal Court's Trust Fund for Victims. The ICC Trial Chamber II first ordered reparations in 2017, and an appeal confirmed the ruling in 2018. The reparations were carried out between 2017 and October 2023. President Félix Tshisekedi named a new Director General for the National Reparation Fund for Victims of Sexual Violence (FONAREV) in September. But some detractors, like Nobel Peace Prize winner Denis Mukwege, were worried about how well the fund would work. The Office of the First Lady is in charge of FONAREV, which was set up in 2022. Earlier, in June, the organization said it would start a procedure to find victims of sexual violence related to war in Beni territory so that they might get money. The International Criminal Court's Office of the Prosecutor said on October 14 that it would start looking into crimes that happened in the DRC again. The ICC made this choice after the Congolese government sent a request to the ICC in May 2023. The Office of the Prosecutor said in its statement that the probe would focus on crimes that had happened in Nord-Kivu province since January 2022 and would look at violations by all parties participating in the war, not only certain armed groups. In November, the Ministry of Justice held a national conference to talk about changes that might affect how the court system works in the future. Government officials were also talking about new ways to deal with crimes related to conflict. These included ideas for setting up a special court that would be responsible for prosecuting offences under international law. In July, many members of the steering committee in charge of the Special Fund, which was set up to pay victims of Uganda's illegal actions in the DRC, were fired and replaced after being accused of mismanaging the fund's money. After that, the former members who were accused of stealing money were taken to court (Amnesty International Report, DRC, 2024/25).

Images of unbearable killings of civilians in the conflict zones of Goma calling for international concerns



Source: Sabrine Amboka, 23 February, 2025, Locals call for prayer as 70 bodies found in Democratic Republic of Congo church after attack; Clara Padovan, MONUSCO, ACI Africa, 25 May 2025, North and South Kivu have been embroiled in armed conflict for years.

After over 70 bodies were found inside a church building in the conflict-affected North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), people in a community there have asked for prayers. Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) International spoke with local informants who said that the deaths happened in the community of Maiba in eastern DRC between February 12 and 15. ACN issued a story on February 21 that said fighters from an Islamist terrorist group that started in Uganda came to the village on February 12 and kidnapped about 100 people. The sources further said that on February 15, roughly 70 remains were uncovered in a Protestant church. "Some had their heads cut off and others were chained up. The source, whose name ACN kept secret for safety reasons because there are several armed factions in the area, added that women, children, and old people were among the victims. The same source said that the victims probably couldn't handle the forced mobility that the insurgents made them do. When armed groups take citizens hostage, they often force them to go with them to either add to their numbers or do forced labour to help with their military activities. ACN's report says that kidnapped peasants are routinely made to carry stolen goods after raids on nearby settlements. "If you get tired along the way, you're done," the insider said, which might have happened to the people whose bodies were found in the cathedral. The same sources say that the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an armed Islamist group that has been terrorising people in Uganda and the eastern DRC for more than ten years, are to blame for the Maiba slaughter. The organization has stepped up its attacks on small, remote rural settlements, killing thousands of Congolese residents in raids (Sabrine Amboka, 23 February 2025). Local observers also said that ADF operations used to happen in other places, but lately they have been focusing more and more on the Lubero

region. People in the area are scared because they think that some people in the community may be working with the militants and helping them do their work. The slaughter in Maiba happened at a very bad time for eastern Congo, since the conflict is getting worse and the humanitarian situation in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces is getting worse. The March 23 Movement (M23) is another armed group that has been active in these areas and has carried out major military actions there (Sabrine Amboka, 23 February 2025). Reports say that Rwanda is helping the M23, which has taken over important cities and crucial locations in the area, such as Goma and Bukavu, after fierce battle with Congolese government forces. ACN has spoken to sources who are worried that the rebels could soon move toward Butembo, the second largest city in North Kivu province, in a way that is similar to how they took over Goma and Bukavu. "We are going through very hard times," the local source said. "People are afraid the rebels could come into the city at any moment, since they are only about 70 kilometres away right now." The insider says that the people of Butembo are going through a lot of mental pain because the violence is getting closer to their neighbourhood. The source said, "We have seen how violence has taken over other areas, and now it looks like it might be our turn." At the end of the testimony, the source asked the international community and Christians to pray for the people who were affected. They stressed that prayer is still one of the few things that gives hope to communities that are going through the ongoing crisis (ACI Africa, CNA News).

On February 12, 2025, leaders of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar called for action for victims of violence in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. They stressed the need for a truce, dialogue, and respect for human dignity. As war continues

in Eastern DR Congo, the Catholic charity increases its humanitarian response. On January 29, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development called on the world community to recognise the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A Catholic journalist who was killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo was remembered as a "man of peace" on October 4, 2024. Edmond Bahati Mbarushimana, who worked for Radio Maria Goma, was called "a faithful servant, committed and conscientious in everything he did." The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is in a serious crisis with rising violence, a lot of deaths, and a terrible humanitarian situation, especially in the east. Fighting has caused thousands of deaths and forced many people to leave their homes. Many dead are still unburied and unidentified (**OHCHR, 21 February, 2025**). **The humanitarian situation is dire, with overwhelmed hospitals, shortages of essential supplies, and reports of sexual violence and looting. High Casualties: Fighting in eastern DRC has resulted in the deaths of an estimated 7,000 people since January. More than 2,500 bodies, including a significant number of civilians, have been buried without identification. Hospitals and morgues are overwhelmed, struggling to cope with the influx of casualties and the need to bury the dead. The city of Goma, in particular, faces a crisis with a large number of bodies requiring burial. The conflict has led to a severe humanitarian crisis, with shortages of food, water, and other essential supplies. Displacement is widespread, and there are reports of sexual violence and looting. The sheer number of casualties and the urgency of burial have made it difficult to identify many of the deceased. This lack of identification raises concerns about potential human rights violations and the ability to track missing persons. The international community is responding with efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, but the scale of the crisis is immense, and more help is needed. The UN Security Council and the African Union's Peace and Security Council are holding meetings to address the situation. Concerning specifics of Goma, the city of has been particularly hard hit by the fighting, with reports of bombed-out buildings, overflowing morgues, and bodies in the streets, the M23 rebel group has been involved in intense fighting for control of Goma, the city has experienced power and water outages, further complicating the situation, while some markets have reopened, prices have skyrocketed, UN peacekeepers are operating in Goma, but their movements are limited. Then, for longer-term issues, the conflict in eastern DRC is part of a larger, decades-long cycle of violence and instability in the region, fueled by competition for resources and power, weak governance, lack of infrastructure, and a stunted economy have contributed to the ongoing crisis, the presence of numerous armed groups vying for control of the region**

further exacerbates the conflict. and parties to conflict must treat dead bodies with dignity (**OHCHR, 21 February, 2025**).

The extraction of coltan in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has had substantial effects on the ecology, the economy, and politics. For example, it has had a big effect on wildlife and has kept armed conflict going. The Born Free Foundation and the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund Europe did research that showed how coltan mining has harmed gorillas and other animals living in the woods of eastern DRC (Born Free Foundation & Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund Europe, May 2001). The UN Panel of Experts also looked into the private sector's role in exploiting natural resources and keeping the war economy going in the area. Coltan is a contraction of the mineral name columbite-tantalite. It is an ore that contains two rare metals with similar atomic structures: niobium (Nb), sometimes known as columbium, and tantalum (Ta). Coltan ore must be refined before these elements can be used in factories. The ore is chemically processed to remove tantalum and niobium from it and turn them into metallic powder. There are just a few companies in the world that have the technical know-how to process coltan. H.C. Starck in Germany, Cabot Inc. in the US, Ningxia in China, and Ulba in Kazakhstan are some of the most well-known processors. Many industries greatly appreciate the tantalum and niobium powders that come from this process. Tantalum powder is used to make electronic parts that can handle heat, which are needed for things like cell phones, laptops, and game consoles. It is also utilised in the nuclear energy and aviation industries. Niobium, on the other hand, is usually utilised to make glass and steel alloys that can withstand high temperatures. This is especially true in construction and heavy industry. A small number of mining operations, such as the CBMM mine in Araxá, Brazil, and the British-American mine in Goiás, Brazil, as well as the Niobec mine in Saint-Honoré, Canada, are responsible for most of the world's niobium supply. In the past, a lot of the world's tantalum came from the leftover slag that tin smelters threw away. This is because cassiterite, the mineral that makes up tin, is often found with coltan ore. But as the global tin industry slowly fades away, alternative sources of coltan are becoming more important. Australia is home to some of the biggest coltan mines, including Greenbushes, Wodgina, and the Sons of Gwalia mines. These mines produce about sixty percent of the world's coltan. Most people think that Africa has almost all of the world's coltan reserves. The Democratic Republic of Congo alone has around 80% of the continent's reserves. Within the DRC, coltan deposits are commonly found along riverbanks and riverbeds and are also located within the extensive natural reserves of eastern Congo, particularly in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Maniema.

At the end of 2000, people in the Kivu region took part in what was called a "coltan gold rush." The price of coltan on the world market went up a lot in just a few months, over 10 times. In January 2000, traders from other countries usually paid between \$30 and \$40 per pound for raw coltan ore. By December of that year, the price had risen to about 380 US dollars per pound. The main reason for this big jump was the fast growth of the global technology market. This was especially true for the launch of a new generation of mobile communication systems (UMTS) and the rise in demand for electronic gaming items like the Sony PlayStation II. These changes led to a sudden and big rise in the world's need for tantalum powder (Tantalum-Niobium International Study Center; Didier de Faily, Coltan, pour comprendre..., dans L'Annuaire des Grands Lacs, Antwerp, November 2001). But the boom didn't last long. By April 2001, the price of coltan had dropped to about 150 US dollars per pound. By July, it had dropped even more to about 100 dollars, and by October 2001, it had gone back up to about 30 dollars per pound, which was near to what it had been before the coltan rush. During this short time when prices were high, thousands of poor Congolese people started mining coltan to make money. At the same time, many international traders made a lot of money, and large amounts of money flowed to the people who were fighting (Tantalum-Niobium International Study Center; Didier de Faily, 2001).

Because it has so many minerals, the Democratic Republic of Congo is still quite interesting to the world mining sector. Over the past twenty years, ongoing exploration has led to a number of important discoveries. After the civil war ended in 2003, exploration picked up, and between 2005 and 2012, spending on exploration went up by almost 582.8%, from \$57 million to a high of \$389.2 million. Copper exploration has always gotten the most money, making somewhere between 35 and 67 percent of all exploratory spending from 2004 to 2024. These investments have led to large discoveries, such as the Kamao-Kakula Complex in the DRC, which includes the Kamao deposit found in 2008 and the Kakula deposit found in 2016. The copper ore grade in this complex is thought to be the highest in the world, at 2.52 percent. Since the DRC is still Africa's top place for mineral prospecting, it's conceivable that more high-grade deposits will be found. Recent exploratory activities have also shown promise in the lithium sector. Projections show that Africa's portion of global lithium output might grow from about 2% in 2022 to about 13% by 2027.

### **3. United States Peace Deal and its Hidden Agenda between DRC-M23- Rwandan Affairs**

During a ceremony in Washington that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio attended, the foreign ministers of the

Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda signed an agreement to help ease hostilities in eastern Congo. Reuters acquired a copy of the letter that says both countries have agreed to carry out a 2024 deal that was already worked out. This deal says that Rwandan forces will leave eastern Congo within 90 days. The deal also includes plans for Kinshasa and Kigali to set up a regional framework for economic integration during the same 90-day period as the proposed troop pullout. Before the signing ceremony, U.S. President Donald Trump talked about the long-running conflict and said that the violence between the two sides was one of the worst in recent history. He also said that diplomatic efforts had made it possible to work toward a settlement. Trump also said that the United States planned to get a lot of access to mineral rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo as part of the larger deal. Olivier Nduhugirehe, Rwanda's Foreign Minister, said that the deal was an important turning point in the two countries' relationship. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Congo's Foreign Minister, said that the promises made in the accord must be fulfilled by real efforts toward military disengagement and de-escalation. After the signing ceremony, President Trump visited with both ministers in the Oval Office. There, he gave letters to Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame urging them to come to Washington to sign a larger set of accords. Massad Boulos, President Trump's senior adviser for Africa, said that these proposed procedures were part of a larger diplomatic framework known as the "Washington Accord."

Nduhugirehe told Trump that past deals had not been implemented and urged Trump to stay engaged.

Trump said that there would be "very severe penalties, financial and otherwise" if the deal were broken. According to analysts and diplomats, Rwanda has moved at least 7,000 soldiers over the border to help the M23 rebels, who took control of eastern Congo's two biggest cities and rich mining areas in a lightning-fast offensive earlier this year.

The M23's victories in the latest round of a conflict that has been going on for decades and has its origins in the 1994 Rwandan genocide raised fears that a bigger battle could involve Congo's neighbours. (Daphne Psaedakis et al., June 27, 2025).

A big part of the peace talks between the two countries was working together on economic issues. In May, Massad Boulos told Reuters that the US government wanted the full peace accord and the related procedures for mineral cooperation to be finished at the same time during the summer. A discussion in the Oval Office of the White House on June 27, 2025, showed that there was still diplomatic activity around the accord. Donald Trump, Marco Rubio, and J. D. Vance met with the foreign

ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, Therese Kayikwamba Wagner and Olivier Nduhungirehe, respectively.

Rubio later said that the leaders of both countries were anticipated to come to Washington in a few weeks to finish the whole procedure and make the comprehensive agreement official. Still, the document that was approved that Friday set up a transitional framework that gave the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda three months to start working on ways to increase international trade and investment linked to regional supply chains for important minerals (Cuvelier et al., 2002).

Sources close to the talks told Reuters that the two heads of state will sign a separate agreement outlining the economic framework at a later ceremony at the White House. The exact date had not yet been set, though. The economic framework could only be finalised if there was progress in the parallel mediation process in Doha, which includes delegates from the Congolese government and representatives of the March 23 Movement (M23). Because of this, the agreement clearly stated that it fully supported the negotiations that Qatar was helping with.

The agreement also says that Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo shall set up a combined security coordination system within thirty days. Both sides also agreed to put in place an earlier plan for verification and monitoring that was meant to keep an eye on the withdrawal of Rwandan troops within three months. In the same time frame, the Congolese military is expected to finish its operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda. This group is based in Congo and includes members of Rwanda's former military and militias that were involved in the Rwandan Genocide.

Reuters had previously reported that Congolese negotiators had dropped their demand for Rwandan troops to leave eastern Congo right once. This concession is said to have made it easier to clinch the accord. The Congolese government, along with the UN and a number of Western governments, has always said that Rwanda gives M23 military support by sending troops and weapons. Rwanda has denied these claims many times, saying that its military actions are done in self-defence against the Congolese armed forces and ethnic Hutu groups linked to the 1994 genocide, such as the FDLR.

Researchers looking at the situation have been careful in their evaluations of the agreement. Jason Stearns, an expert on the politics of Africa's Great Lakes region, said that the plan is the best chance we have right now to move the peace process forward, even though it has certain flaws and could face some problems. He did say, though, that similar diplomatic frameworks had been tried before and that the

United States, as the main sponsor of the endeavour, would have a lot of responsibility for making sure that the agreed-upon terms were followed.

The deal also stresses working together on natural resources for commercial reasons. It suggests ways to lower the risks that come with regional mineral supply chains while also building integrated value chains that link the two countries with the help of the United States and American investors. Tresor Kibangula of the Ebuteli Institute says that the deal has an implicit strategic message: protecting economic interests is directly tied to stabilising eastern Congo. Still, he said that it is still unclear if economic incentives alone will be enough to resolve the ongoing conflict (Psaledakis et al., June 27, 2025).

#### **4. The American Mineral Trapping Rwandan-Congolese Peace Deals**

The Oakland Institute put out a press release on October 21, 2025, to go along with the release of the report "Shafted: The Scramble for Critical Minerals in the DRC." This report looks critically at the peace deal between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo that the United States helped mediate. The article says that the pact is the most recent strategic move by the United States to strengthen its control over important natural resources in the Congo. The study contends that the enduring political and diplomatic support of the U.S. for Rwanda has facilitated the country's emergence as a pivotal conduit for the exportation of minerals illicitly sourced from Congolese territory, while concurrently allowing the March 23 Movement (M23) to solidify its dominance over mineral-rich regions. The report finds that the United States has been a major player in the laundering of Congolese minerals over the past few decades by looking at coltan trade data involving the United States, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo that had not been looked at closely before (Mittal, 21 October 2025). It further says that the peace agreement's provisions for regional economic integration essentially make these trading practices normal, and that deals with U.S. companies show that exploitative commercial interactions will continue even when armed combat is still going on. Donald Trump said in public that the peace agreement between Rwanda and the DRC marked the end of a violent conflict that lasted almost 30 years. However, Frederic Mousseau, one of the report's co-authors, says that the U.S. has historically been involved in Congolese affairs to gain access to strategic mineral resources. The report uses historical trade data to show that exports of Rwandan tantalum, an ore made from coltan, to the United States rose fifteenfold between 2013 and 2018. This was after the first M23 offensive in 2012 and during the time when some U.S. sanctions against Rwanda were lifted. At its peak, more than half of the tantalum that the

U.S. imported came from Rwanda, even though the country didn't have a lot of its own production capacity. The research contends that the regional economic integration framework incorporated in the peace deal serves as a vehicle designed to legitimise previously unlawful mineral supply chains (Mittal, 21 October 2025).

Also, even though the Democratic Republic of the Congo has some of the largest reserves of strategic and critical minerals in the world, the people there will continue to bear the heavy social and environmental costs of mining them. At the same time, Rwanda will continue to get more than its fair share of the economic benefits by processing and exporting resources from Congolese territory. Andy Currier from the Oakland Institute brought this up and stressed the structural mismatch in the present mineral trade agreements. The report goes on to say that there is a big contradiction in the diplomatic story. For example, James Kabarebe, a high-ranking Rwandan official, was punished by the US Department of the Treasury in early 2025 for allegedly coordinating Rwanda's support for the March 23 Movement (M23), helping to export minerals from Congolese territory, and overseeing the money made from these activities. The paper says that the United States' plan for regional economic integration is really trying to set up two parallel export routes for Congolese resources. The first route makes Rwanda a central processing and export hub for minerals mined in eastern Congo, where there has been a lot of fighting. The second is to make the Lobito Corridor bigger. This is a crucial transportation network that connects mineral-producing areas to the Atlantic Ocean so that copper and cobalt mined in southern Congo may be shipped abroad. The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation is giving Angola a loan of about \$553 million to help with this corridor development. The report also says that several U.S. companies are currently negotiating mining agreements that are connected to these transport routes. Some of these companies are said to be backed by powerful investors, including Bill Gates and people with ties to U.S. politics, the military, and intelligence. The report ultimately concludes that sustainable peace and equitable development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will hinge on the Congolese populace maintaining primary control over their nation's natural resources, rather than ongoing external interference (Oakland Institute Report, October 2025).

After the Washington-brokered deal was done, a number of US-based companies started to set themselves up to get strategic positions in the mineral sector of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. KoBold Metals signed an exploration agreement with the Congolese government not long after the deal was signed in Washington. Investors like Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates helped make this happen. The

deal lets the corporation apply for exploration permissions for more than 1,600 square kilometres and take part in building part of the lithium project in Manono. The project is still stuck in an international arbitration battle that started in 2023 with AVZ Minerals. They say that the Congolese government's deal with KoBold goes against an existing arbitration order. At the same time, another U.S.-linked group, made up of people with experience in the military and intelligence, is said to have made progress in buying Chemaf's mining holdings. Authorities in Kinshasa believe that working with the US will bring in both money and diplomatic support. The agreement's larger economic framework includes major infrastructure projects like the proposed Ruzizi Hydroelectric Dam, which would be built by both Rwanda and Burundi, and a planned investment of about 700 million U.S. dollars to build a methane-to-electricity power plant on Lake Kivu led by Symbion Power. However, the ongoing armed war in the area has put the latter project on hold, and development has not yet begun. According to authorities in Washington, D.C., the peace accord is a strategic chance to get at Congo's large mineral deposits that are important for the global energy transition and high-tech sectors. These minerals include coltan, cobalt, copper, and lithium. People also see the plan as part of a larger campaign to take away China's power in the Congolese mining industry (Titeca, 18 August 2025).

### 5. The Angolan Peace Proposal in the Making

On Friday 13 February 2026 other peace agreement effort was announced by DRC while the M23 declared not to have been informed of such initiatives from the Angolan Government( **Xinhua Editor, 13 February 2026**). In a statement, the Congolese Presidency said President Felix Tshiskedi agreed to the proposal “in a spirit of responsibility and de-escalation to pursue a peaceful resolution to the conflict, reaffirming Kinshasa’s commitment to regional stability and return to lasting peace. It should be noted that Angola has served as a key mediator in the DRC crisis since 2022, proposed late Wednesday 11 that a ceasefire between the Congolese Government and the M23 rebel group take effect on 18 February 2026. The proposed date remains contingent on a public declaration of acceptance by the parties according to Angolan authorities.(**Xinhua Editor, 13 February 2026**).While Kinshasa publicly endorsed the principle of the M23 offered a different account. A senior official of the rebellion, Benjamin Mbonimpa said on Friday that the group had not been informed of tge Angola-proposed ceasefire initiative and remained committed to the ceasefire monitoring framework agreed in Doha, another mediator guiding talks between the DRC Government and theM23 since March 2025. The rebel declared that “we have not been informed of what has been decided in Angola. We

have always respected what was agreed in Doha and vve assume full responsibility for the Doha process, he after Vivian Van de Perre, acting head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the DRC, known as MONUSCO, met with rebel officials in Goma, the capital of North Kivu of the proposal. Moreover, Mbonimpa added that the group had not been invited to the discussions held in Luanda and did not know the details of the proposal. The M23 long seized the Eastern city of Goma in January 2025 and Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu Province the following month as fighting continues in the town of Minembwe in South Kivu.(Xinhua Editor, 13 February 2026).

## **6. The United Nations Peace Approaches in collaboration with other Regional Security Mechanisms**

Apart from the America and Angolan peaceful approaches to the settlement of the Eastern DRC conflict in Goma which include Rwandan intervention, the U.N, Africa Union, the Southern Africa Development Community(SADC) regional forces (SAMIDRC), the East African Community(EAC) and MONUSCO are also playing important roles. Africa regional organisations and the UN have held a series of high level summits to address the escalating situation in Eastern DRC which threatens regional stability. Since 2021, the largely ungoverned area has experienced a resurgence of armed groups particularly the Rwandan- backed March 23 Movement (M23) which promoted Rwandan politico-economic and security interests rooted in historical context. In January 2025, they seized Goma, the capital of strategically mineral rich North Kivu Province which resulted to significant loss of life and the displacement, destruction of infrastructures with worsening critical humanitarian situation which calls for UN intervention. Since then, over 843 people have been killed with more than 500,000 displaced with at least 19 Peacekeepers from Southern Africa Development Community Regional Forces(SAMIDRC) and the UN stabilization mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) also killed.(UN, AU and RECs, UN OCHA, 28 February 2025).

The EAC also aimed to address insecurity in the Eastern DRC by deploying a Regional Force (EACRFs) with troops from Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda to Eastern Congo in November 2022 notwithstanding some EAC members competing vested interests. However, tensions regarding the EACFR's mandate torpedoed the force. The EAC sought to use the force for peacekeeping efforts to facilitate the withdrawal of armed groups like the M23, while engaging in dialogue through the intermittent Nairobi Process facilitated by former Kenya President Uhuru Kenyatta. In contrast, the Congolese Government did not extend the EACFR's mandate, frustrated by its inability to offensively support the FARDC against the M23 and

instead sought SADC's assistance. In response to the conflict to cease hostilities and hold peace talks instead urged the Congolese Government to engage in direct dialogue with the M23. In fact, Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi who had previously been averse to negotiating with the M23 did not participate in the EAC summit which was considered as an unreasonable stance towards peaceful settlement of the Goma conflict. On its part, SADC in December 2023 constituted troops of SAMIDRC comprising from Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania was deployed following President Tshisekedi invitation. Its offensive mandate focuses on neutralizing armed groups and the protection of civilians (POC) alongside the FARDC. In fact, SAMIDRC was meant to complement the Luanda Process facilitated by Angolan President Joao Lourenco since 2022 to promote political dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda.( UN, AU and its RECs, Democratic Republic of Congo ReliefWeb<https://share.google/hDoOGgliXBChgVw73>).

## **7. Circumstances of reaching an Everlasting Ceasefire among the Belligerents to resolving the Goma Conflicts due to Conflicting Interests of the Main Negotiating Actors**

Nevertheless, the ongoing peace processes initiated by different actors, including the U.S and Angola Presidents in addition to regional and sub-regional agencies have also been limited by their reluctance to challenge existing economic power dynamics or to account for the reality of the players on the ground because of specific hiding agenda on the exploitation of natural resources and war economy gains with their secret international business partners. This is particularly evident in the Doha and Washington frameworks where the actors involved failed to reach an everlasting compromise. Presented as attempts at high-level diplomatic re-engagement following the failure of Angolan mediation on behalf of the African Union, these processes illustrate the international community's stubbornly persistent blind spot towards the criminality sustaining ongoing conflicts. The Doha process was thus caught in a paradox: seeking to end a war, while refusing to address the illicit political economy that sustains it. Unsurprisingly, the end result, in November 2025, was a 'framework agreement for comprehensive peace' that the M23 leadership described as a 'mutual scam, a seller of fake diamonds paid with fake dollars'. The Washington process showed greater lucidity in recognizing the centrality of the war economy. The Washington Accords, signed in December 2025, are betting on contributing to peace by transforming economic potential into a lever for stabilization between the warring parties. (Zobel Behal, 26 January 2026). However, by failing to challenge the existing power relations and predatory economies upstream, this approach risks

promoting the economic normalization of illegal activity, benefiting actors capable of operating in unstable environments that have been politically ‘stabilized’ by diplomacy. In the absence of strict conditions, the Washington Accords could primarily benefit US interests and consolidate states and political-economic networks that already profit from the war economy in eastern DRC. The promise of new investment flows, security assistance and economic partnerships could strengthen these actors without requiring, in return, a clear break with cross-border predatory circuits. The desired stabilization would thus become a mechanism that enables accumulation, rather than a tool for transformation. Finally, the failure to call out regional responsibilities is another major deficiency in the recent diplomatic approaches to the situation in the DRC. Despite the reports and data establishing Uganda’s involvement in the political economy of the conflict, both the Doha and Washington processes were reluctant to name and involve the country in the discussions and the accords. The ongoing conflict in eastern DRC exposes a hard truth: peace efforts that ignore the transnational illicit economy that sustain war are bound to fail. As long as armed groups and regional actors profit from violence, diplomacy is doomed to remain detached from realities on the ground. Meanwhile, civilians continue to pay the price through insecurity, poverty and displacement, and future generations are put at risk according to Zobel Behalal, 26 February 2026.

## Conclusion

In fact Eastern Regional DRC with abundant rich natural resources with its series of conflicts spanning for some thirty years have suffered from obtaining an everlasting peace efforts for several years in spite of uncountable diplomatic approaches involving different actors attempting to resolved the conflict which is frequently plague by other conflicting interests from actors in the negotiating table especially the Washington Peace Brokered efforts. We are of the conclusion that those interventions are frequently characterized by several researchers as attempts to Promote, Protect and Proriotising American Multinational Corporation Interests( PPPAMCI) in the exploitation of the natural resources of DRC in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The effective usages of the mechanisms of Hyper-Power as the Policeman of the World of Globalisation with new modifications of the last prescriptions of the New World Order(NOW) of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century seems to be stemming more and continuous pressures among the belligerents of the conflicts due to the tactical potential initiation of hyper mechanisms of neo-colonialism in favour of War Economy Gains (WEG) as the conflict keeps prolonging. This paper open more research avenues to those specializing in African history bring in

appropriate importance and engagement of hyper-powers ambitions in the entire Central African Regions extended to the African Gulf of Guinea rich in natural resources which are keeping neo-colonial actors restlessly for more rapid exploitations.

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