



## **Act on Group of Experts' findings on mineral trade funding Congolese armed groups, Global Witness tells governments**

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Governments should take strong action in response to the UN Group of Experts' findings on natural resources as a key source of funding for Congolese armed groups, Global Witness said today.

In its final report published on 12 December 2008, the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) documents how several of the main armed groups involved in recent fighting in eastern DRC rely on the mineral trade to finance their activities.

The Group of Experts' findings concord with Global Witness's own information gathered in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu in July and August 2008. In particular, both groups confirmed that the *Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda* (FDLR, the predominantly Rwandan Hutu armed group, some of whose leaders allegedly took part in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda) control a significant proportion of the trade in cassiterite (tin ore), gold and coltan. Some of these minerals are exported through officially approved *comptoirs* (trading houses) in the provincial capitals of Goma and Bukavu. The Tutsi-led *Congrès national pour la défense du peuple* (CNDP) and other groups also control certain mines and extort large amounts of money through illegal taxes.

"This report represents an important milestone in the documentation of the mineral trade as an engine of conflict", said Patrick Alley, Director of Global Witness. "Governments now have an obligation to ensure that it is acted upon without delay."

Global Witness urged UN member states to take tough action against the buyers cited in the report as trading with armed groups.

"The publication of this information is just the first step", said Patrick Alley. "Governments should hold to account the individuals and companies who are knowingly buying minerals produced by groups responsible for grave human rights abuses."

In November 2008, Global Witness published recommendations for companies and buyers to exert stringent due diligence when purchasing minerals originating from eastern DRC – a recommendation echoed by the Group of Experts.

"Until now, companies and buyers using or handling these minerals have failed to carry out basic due diligence regarding the origin of their supplies," said Patrick

Alley. “It is now up to governments to follow the leads exposed by the Group of Experts and take appropriate judicial or other measures against those who continue to trade in minerals which are fuelling one of the most violent armed conflicts.”

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**Note to editors**

1. The final report of the Group of Experts was published by the United Nations Security Council on 12 December 2008 (S/2008/773).
2. For further information on Global Witness’s findings on the involvement of armed groups and the Congolese army in the mineral trade in eastern DRC, see “Control of mines by warring parties threatens peace efforts in eastern Congo” (10 September 2008), available at [http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/drc\\_conflict.html](http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/drc_conflict.html)
3. For Global Witness’s recommendations on due diligence, see “Recommendations on due diligence for buyers and companies trading in minerals from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and for their home governments” (November 2008), available at [http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/drc\\_conflict.html](http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/drc_conflict.html)

The Group of Experts similarly recommends “that the [Sanctions] Committee urge Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure that exporters and consumers of Congolese mineral products under their jurisdiction conduct due diligence on their suppliers and not accept verbal assurances from buyers regarding the origin of their product” (see Final Report of Group of Experts, S/2008/773, section XII, paragraph 14).