



global witness

In their Own Words

Quotes from Global Witness Report on the Militarisation of Mining in the DRC, *Faced With A Gun What Can you Do?*

All quotes below are from interviews carried out by Global Witness in North and South Kivu (eastern DRC) unless otherwise stated.

Involvement of the Congolese army in the exploitation of minerals

"When you're faced with a gun, what can you do, as a simple civilian? [...] They ask for money [...] They ask for gold or cassiterite. Whatever happens, you have to give it." - *A miner from Shabunda (South Kivu) describing extortion at military roadblocks. Bukavu, 28 July 2008.*

"If a person has a rank in the army, he has access to natural resources." - *UN official, Goma, 22 July 2008.*

"Please tell the government to tell the military to stop this. The population is suffering." - *Miner in Tubimbi (South Kivu), 29 July 2008.*

"They don't want to leave because of the minerals [...] All the commanders send money back from the minerals to the provincial commander [...] Everyone knows what is happening but no one dares to say it." - *UN official, Bukavu, 28 July 2008.*

"There is a mineshaft people call '10th military region'. No one can touch it." - *Congolese researcher describing the gold mining area of Mushinga (South Kivu). Bukavu, 25 July 2008.*

"Soldiers never mine [...] It is not possible" - *Captain Musa Kyabele Freddy, commander of the 2nd company of the 12th integrated FARDC battalion, Tubimbi (South Kivu), 29 July 2009.*

"You can't export fraudulently if you don't have the support of the army [...] The state itself has destroyed all the structures of the state [...] Fraud is the rule." - *Senior civil servant, Bukavu, 28 July 2008.*

Involvement of the FDLR in the exploitation of minerals

"They don't want to leave because of the natural wealth. They are like bees swarming on honey. They prefer to die there." - *Resident of Bukavu, referring to the FDLR, 26 July 2008.*

"The Congolese can't set up business in competition with the FDLR. They may just sell minerals which belong to the FDLR. The FDLR are becoming very rich. They have been sitting on these minerals for 14 years". - *Human rights activist from South Kivu discussing the FDLR's control of the mineral trade, 25 July 2008.*

"If a mine is discovered by the population, the FDLR come and take it over [...] No one can stop them. People just observe." - *Member of Congolese non-governmental organisation, Goma, 22 July 2008.*

"People simply can't refuse to work for them" - *Member of Congolese NGO describing the relationship between the FDLR and Congolese civilians, Bukavu, 24 July 2008.*

"We are their meat, their animals. We have nothing to say." - *A miner from Shabunda, subjected to extortion at FDLR roadblocks during his 340-km trek from Shabunda to Bukavu on foot, Bukavu, 28 July 2008.*

"We are only involved in agricultural activities [...] It is totally false that the FDLR are involved in mining in this area. All we do is buy things like soap." *Commander of an FDLR brigade in South Kivu, Luvungi, 31 July 2008.*

Collusion between the Congolese army and the FDLR

"The collaboration is quasi-official." *Human rights activist, Goma, 8 August 2008.*

"[The FDLR] just want guarantees of security [...]. You have to get to know them and get to know their reality here [...]. God did this - made for them to be in an area where there are natural resources. Otherwise [...] people would have died." *Senior army official speaking in a personal capacity, Bukavu, 30 July 2008.*

"[The FARDC and the FDLR] don't attack each other. Where both are present, they share the spoils and both extort from the population." *Human rights activist, Bukavu, 27 July 2008.*

"[In certain areas, the FDLR] are stronger and more numerous than the FARDC [...] They are masters of the place." *NGO representative from Bukavu, 21 July 2008.*

"The FARDC have to go through FDLR areas. They negotiate with each other. They agree not to attack each other. They respect each other's zones. They each administer their own zones and collect 'taxes'." - *Congolese researcher explaining the arrangements between the FARDC and FDLR in strategic locations in Shabunda (South Kivu). Bukavu, 25 July 2008.*

Involvement of other armed groups in the exploitation of minerals

"The *mai-mai* take everything. They don't give anything to the miners." - *Local development worker discussing mai-mai involvement in gold mining in Mukera, near Fizi, Baraka, 2 August 2008.*

Traders

"We all end up buying minerals which, in some way, have been produced illegally. You can't just ask us to stop. We have no alternatives other than closing." - *Representative of a comptoir (mineral trading company), Goma, 9 August 2008.*

"Everyone knows who the FDLR intermediaries are but they won't say in case it implicates them. The FARDC are also involved. Everyone, including the authorities, is involved [...] They all know each other but won't say [their names]. But we know which *comptoirs* they sell to [...]" - *UN official, speaking about the relationship between traders and armed groups. Bukavu, 28 July 2008.*

"The *comptoirs* are seen everywhere around the mines." - *Official of a humanitarian agency, Goma, 7 August 2008.*

"Your hypothesis according to which we should verify the exact origin of every kilo of exported material is inappropriate in the current context in Congo." - *Letter to Global Witness from F. Muylaert of Belgian company Trademet, 22 January 2009.*

At the international level

"Natural resources are not on the table of topics in peace talks. Almost every other issue is. Yet it's one of the keys to resolution of the conflict." - *UN official, Goma, 22 July 2008.*

Note on attribution of sources:

- FARDC refers to the Congolese army (*Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo*).
- FDLR refers to the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (*Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda*). The FDLR is a predominantly Rwandan Hutu armed group, some of whose leaders are alleged to have participated in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.
- *Mai-mai* were originally local self-defence groups, in different parts of North and South Kivu. They have become increasingly involved in the armed conflict over the last ten years, fighting against a variety of other armed groups.