



Kinshasa, 12 January 2009  
Ref.: SRS/52/2008

Dear Mr. Alley,

MONUC also welcomes the passage of resolutions 1856 and 1857 on the illicit cross-border trafficking of natural resources from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Mission will observe and report on any illegal activity, as instructed in Resolution 1856 and will share information and work intensively with the Group of Experts, as requested in Resolution 1857. ('Global Witness' Press Release, 7 January 2009).

Congo's enduring tragedy is that the trove of precious metals that could lift its people out of poverty is being used for the enrichment of others and the re-supply of armed groups fighting for a share of the plunder.

A quarter of a million people have been displaced by fighting in the east of the country since August of last year and by some estimates more than five million people have died since 1998 in conflict fueled by the DRC enormous wealth in natural resources. A return to peace and an appropriate re-allocation of returns on natural resources for the public good, could prevent enormous suffering and loss of life. A nation at peace and committed to health care and other basic services for the wellbeing of its people, could fight and win many of today's life and death struggles against enemies such as malaria, diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition. These are the battles that the Democratic Republic of Congo should be waging.

Mr. Patrick Alley  
Director  
Global Witness

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Many, if not most of the DRC present difficulties are rooted in the absence of effective State authority - particularly in areas where the nation's resources are being exploited. MONUC is helping to train Congolese security forces, build respect for the rule of law, and create institutions for good governance and accountability.

Resolution 1856 encourages the DRC to work with MONUC, specialist and financial institutions, and other countries of the region, on a plan for the effective and transparent management of its resources and mapping of the main sites of illegal exploitation.

While the Security Council has extended MONUC mandate to include monitoring and reporting on the theft and misuse of the DRC natural resources, it has also recognized that a United Nations peacekeeping force of about 17,000 cannot be everywhere at all times. The DRC is the size of Western Europe and shares long porous borders with nine other nations. We will continue to do our best on all fronts, within the limits of our capacity, but it should also be noted that resolution 1856 has placed the protection of civilians at the head of MONUC list of priorities for the year ahead.

The government of DRC has primary responsibility for protecting its resources and securing its borders, but resolution 1856 also urges near neighbors and other vested interests, to prevent cross-border support to armed groups and the illegal trafficking in natural resources that sustains them. The resolution encourages all United Nations member states to keep watch on the companies that deal in Congolese minerals - in effect, tasking all of us to be 'Global Witnesses' for the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I applaud the efforts of international non governmental organizations like yours to keep the resources issue and the best interests of the Congolese people, on the front burner.

Yours Sincerely,



Alan Doss  
Special Representative of the Secretary-General