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**Perspectives on a Decades-Long Emergency:
Analyzing the Conflict-Mining-Sexual Violence
Triangle and International Initiatives in the Kivus**

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Responsibility for any errors in this report remains with the authors.

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Figure 2: Map of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, digital image, World Atlas, accessed 6 July 2023, <https://www.worldatlas.com/maps/democratic-republic-of-the-congo>.

Glossary - List of Acronyms	2
Executive Summary	3
Map	5
Introduction	6
1. Research Questions	7
2. Report Outline	7
I. Methodology	8
1. Research Design	8
2. Literature Review	8
3. Interview Process and Questionnaires	8
4. Data Analysis: Qualitative Analysis of Key Interview Findings	8
5. Ethical Considerations	9
6. Limitations	9
II. Background of the Conflict in Eastern DRC and its Mining Sector	10
1. The DRC's Extended Wars in the Kivus	10
2. The Eastern DRC Mining Sector - Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM)	12
III. Literature Review Findings	13
1. Conflict, Mining, Sexual Violence and Their Relationships	13
2. Creation of a Tripartite Narrative and the Mechanisms of International Initiatives	19
IV. Key Interview Findings and Discussion for Research Question 1	23
1. Key Interview Findings - Conflict, Mining, Sexual Violence and Their Relationships	23
2. Discussion and Analysis of Findings	28
V. Key Interview Findings and Discussion for Research Question 2	32
1. Key Interview Findings - Creation of a Tripartite Narrative and International Initiatives	32
2. Discussion and Analysis of Findings	37
VI. Conclusion	41
VII. Recommendations	43
Appendices	44
A. List of Interviewees and Coding of Interviews	44
B. Expert Interview Questionnaires	45
C. Local Story Questionnaire and Oral Consent Procedure (in French)	49
D. Consent Form	50
Bibliography	51

Armed actors/groups/organizations	State or non-state actors using violence participating in a conflict
ASM	Artisanal and Small Scale-Mining
Carré Minier	Base unit of mining space
CRSV	Conflict Related Sexual Violence
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda
IO	International Organization
Mai-Mai	Community-based armed groups/autochthonous self-defense groups in the DRC
M23	Mouvement du 23 Mars
UN	United Nations
UNSR	UN Special Representative
RAWW	Rape as a weapon of war
Sexual Violence	A range of crimes and actions, including sexual assault, abuse, rape, exploitation, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, and sexual slavery
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Purpose of the Report

Since the 1990s, eastern DRC has been the setting of alarming rates of sexual violence,* the playground of diverse armed actors,* and the vault for lucrative minerals – a situation many actors have been trying to address. While the international community and Congolese civil society presupposed the linkages of conflict, mining, and sexual violence in a triangular causal relationship guiding their actions, an array of criticisms casts doubts on its existence and on the factors' interrelations.

Therefore, this report has a twofold aim. First, it analyzes the articulation of the supposed relationship between the presence of armed groups, mineral extraction, and high rates of sexual violence in the Kivus. Second, it examines the international community's framing of this relationship and its consequences on initiatives created to address sexual violence and mining issues. Our answers warrant further investigation to establish more concrete relationships and best practices.

Methodology

This report is based on a review of the literature and a qualitative thematic analysis of insights from 16 interviews with international and local experts and key informants, including Kivusians with lived experiences.

Main Findings - Research Question 1

Our findings demonstrated the plausibility of a conflict, mining, and sexual violence triangular relationship through Kivusians' experiences, the existence of two related legal cases in the Kivus, and expert insights. Findings underlined that mineral exploitation by armed groups perpetuates conflict. Regarding the sexual violence-conflict link, findings showcase the widespread strategic use of rape and sexual violence by armed actors to control and humiliate villages. While an exact definition is difficult to pinpoint or legally prove, our interviewees widely acknowledged this intentional use of sexual violence by armed groups. Regarding mining-sexual violence links, findings suggest that a heavily patriarchal gender dynamic in mines drives sexual violence and exploitation.

Main Findings - Research Question 2

Our main findings suggest that the international community frames this triangular relationship within a one-to-one narrative. It views minerals and their extraction linked to conflict as a cause; sexual violence as a consequence; and state-building as a solution. All experts, particularly those from international organizations (IO), acknowledged this narrative while underlining its increasing comprehensiveness. Today, sexual violence initiatives guided by the narrative are more comprehensive - unlike earlier surface-level initiatives. Additionally, newer international initiatives emphasize socio-economic opportunities and women-focused policies, working toward structural change for Kivusians. Mining initiatives, while somewhat effective regarding illicit trade and sexual violence, operate within the narrative and are still criticized for severe limitations and ambiguous intent.

Key Recommendations

The international community should deploy a Commission of Inquiry to further investigate the links between conflict, armed groups, extractive industries, and sexual violence in the Kivus.

Actors should continue creating socio-economic policies, livelihood and reintegration initiatives for victims of conflict-based and mining-based sexual violence in the Kivus. Livelihood opportunities should include, but not be limited to, the mining sector and surrounding towns to permit reintegration in a critical economic sector.

The international community should further account for the local and structural realities of mining sites by including more local actors in creating mining initiatives and it should build local governments' capacities.

Figure 1: Key Recommendations



Figure 2: Map of DRC, including North and South Kivu. World Atlas

Introduction

In eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), an estimated 1.3 million women and 760,000 men, from a population of 5 million, experienced sexual violence between 1994 and 2010.² Such shockingly high rates of sexual violence drew widespread attention starting in the early 2000s. The international community deemed sexual violence endemic, developing programs that targeted sexual violence survivors. Voices in media and research suggest that the ongoing conflict, perpetuated by armed groups extracting the country's mineral wealth, is the root cause of sexual violence.

A recent example of this relationship between armed groups, minerals, and sexual violence in the DRC can be found in a legal case known as the Chance case. Decided in 2021, the mass crimes in this case highlighted the links between the three elements.³ In 2019, former Congolese army member Chance Muhonya Kolokolo formed his own militia, took control of parts of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park (South Kivu), and exploited its natural resources to buy weapons. He has been convicted of mass crimes, including crimes against humanity, for using violence, terror, sexual violence, and rape to control the local population and tax surrounding villages.⁴

While the Chance case is an example of sexual violence being instrumentalized to exploit resources and support conflict, these links are contested amid limited overall data. The identified literature is still insufficient to determine a clear causal relationship between conflict, mining, and sexual violence. Reports from NGOs, think tanks, academia, and the UN are vague, struggling to prove the relationship's causality and explain each component's role. They cite dynamics including territorial control, conflict over mining sites, socio-economic conditions, corruption, and conditions of violence in the mining industry.⁵ Moreover, international actors have constructed initiatives based on these supposed links, anchoring sexual violence as the

² Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative, "Case Study Series - Women in Peace and Transition Processes - Democratic Republic of the Congo (2001-2003)" (Geneva: 2017, 2017), 3.

³ Trial International, 'DRC: Former Militiaman Chance Sentenced to Life in South Kivu', 26 September 2022, <https://trialinternational.org/latest-post/environmental-crimes-brought-before-the-court-in-south-kivu-drc/>.

⁴ Trial International.

⁵ Annie Matundu Mbambi and Léonnie Kandolo, 'Life at the Bottom of the Chain: WOMEN IN ARTISANAL MINES IN DRC' (WILPF, 2016), https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WomenInArtisanalMinesInDRC_web.pdf; United Nations Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 'Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo', 2003; Human Rights Watch, "'You Will Be Punished' Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo" (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/12/13/you-will-be-punished/attacks-civilians-eastern-congo>; United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence' (United Nations Security Council, 2021), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/069/02/PDF/N2106902.pdf?OpenElement>.

main consequence of armed groups' mineral extraction and positing mining reforms, sexual violence policies, and state-building as solutions.

As our partner organization requested, this report focuses on the two Kivu provinces, especially South Kivu, because it is their main location.

This report has two main aims: first, it analyzes the links between the ongoing conflict in the Kivus (**conflict**), the mineral extraction sector and mining communities (**mining**), and high rates of sexual violence (**sexual violence**). Second, it provides greater understanding of the narrative guiding the international community's initiatives and their impact. Through this, it creates a baseline for further research and offers recommendations.

1. Research Questions

1. First, how can we better articulate the relationship between the presence of armed groups, the extraction of minerals, and the high rate of sexual violence in eastern DRC?
2. Second, how does the international community frame this relationship and what are the consequences of this conceptualization on their response to sexual violence in eastern DRC and regarding the country's mining sector?

2. Report Outline

This report is divided as follows:

- (I) Methodology.
- (II) Background on the conflict in Eastern DRC and its mining sector.
- (III) Literature review findings.
- (IV) Key interview findings and Discussion for Research Question 1.
- (V) Key interview findings and Discussion for Research Question 2.
- (VI) Conclusion.
- (VII) Recommendations.

I. Methodology

1. Research Design

Our research consists of a literature review complemented by a qualitative thematic analysis of insights gleaned from semi-structured interviews with key informants from international and local backgrounds.

2. Literature Review

We conducted a literature review on (1) conflict, mining, and sexual violence in Eastern DRC; and (2) related international initiatives and their narratives. Reading 150+ academic articles, NGO reports, United Nations (UN) documents, legal texts, and newspaper articles, we identified potential answers, later compared with interview findings to answer our research questions.

3. Interview Process and Questionnaires

We primarily interviewed experts in related fields and members of mining communities in the Kivus. We sent 40 interview requests. Our partner organization and academic lead provided some contacts while we independently connected with several others. Our purposive sampling of interviewees offers diverse insights from different levels (international, local, community). We conducted 16 semi-structured interviews: five academics, three local experts, two international NGO experts, two IO experts, one team of IO experts, one research assistant, and two members of Kivusian mining communities. The questionnaires were based on the literature review, research questions, and interviewees' expertise/experiences (See Appendices B and C). For Kivusians, we tailored the questionnaire to be more open-ended. To adapt to the DRC's internet issues, we drafted an oral consent protocol and gave the possibility of written interviews.

4. Data Analysis: Qualitative Analysis of Key Interview Findings

After the interview phase, we grouped findings into 40 categories which we generalized to demonstrate key insights. These were contrasted with our literature review, providing a qualitative analysis and offering answers to the research questions.

5. Ethical Considerations

As non-locals of mostly Western origin, we were cautious about reproducing colonial patterns in our research. To remedy that, we consulted the academic team and partner organization for advice. We also incorporated perspectives and findings from local actors, experts, and authors.

In light of our project's sensitive nature, especially interacting with sexual violence victims, we followed the *Belmont Report*,⁶ “do no harm” and protection principles⁷ in our interviews and consulted our academic lead to craft a comprehensive consent form (see Appendix D). To ensure our interviewees' privacy and safety, we anonymized all interviews in this report and in our data storage by referring to them through generic titles (see Appendix A). We signal an interviewee's code in parentheses after a direct quote or if their title is relevant to the argument at hand.

6. Limitations

This project faced several limitations. We could not access our partner's databases and affiliated local interviewees due to their access protocol. Therefore, our research does not incorporate quantitative analysis and mainly relies on expert interviews.

Interviews were mostly conducted online, which might have biased the research towards a category of people with internet access. However, we were able to interview two Kivusians over WhatsApp.

As this project is sensitive and bound by time and resources, we were unable to conduct fieldwork or gather local primary data. Therefore, we do not intend to generalize our answers in a broader theory.

⁶ The basic ethical principles outlined by the Belmont Report are: Respect for Persons, Beneficence and Justice. A detailed account of these principles is available here: U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, ‘The Belmont Report - Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research’, 18 April 1979, <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/read-the-belmont-report/index.html#:~:text=Three%20basic%20principles%2C%20among%20those,of%20persons%2C%20beneficence%20and%20justice>.

⁷ These encompass an array of principles including minimizing harm, protection of vulnerable populations, of researchers, collection of consent, confidentiality and anonymity, etc. A detailed account of these principles is available here: Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), ‘Graduate Institute Research Ethics Guidelines’ (Geneva: Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), 8 March 2022), https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/sites/internet/files/2023-07/230703_Geneva%20Graduate%20Institute_Research%20Ethics%20Guidelines_approved%208%20March%202022.pdf.

II. Background of the Conflict in Eastern DRC and its Mining Sector

This section provides a background of the eastern DRC conflict, the armed actors present and the regional mining sector's importance, necessary to understand the region's complexity.

1. The DRC's Extended Wars in the Kivus

The first DRC regional war began in 1996, a continuation of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.⁸ In the genocide's immediate aftermath, a massive flow of Rwandan Hutu refugees settled in camps in eastern DRC which served as *de facto* military bases for Hutu *genocidaires*. Rwandan authorities attacked these camps in 1996, igniting the First Congo War.⁹ The Second Congo War (1998-2003) began when newly appointed President Laurent Kabila turned on his kingmakers, Rwanda and Uganda.¹⁰ This renewed conflict rippled through eastern DRC until peace accords in 2002 ended the war and established the 2003 DRC transitional government.¹¹

While these accords brought relative peace, the Kivus remain a region where conflict persists between the DRC's military (FARDC) and other armed actors. Following the 2009 *Goma Peace Agreement* ending the 2006-2009 *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (CNDP) Tutsi insurgency, the DRC and Rwanda launched military operations against the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), a Hutu militia preying on civilians in the Kivus.¹² In 2012, a Rwanda-backed splinter movement of the CNDP, M23, arose, capturing territory in North Kivu while claiming to protect Tutsis.¹³ Contained through a ceasefire in 2013, M23 returned in 2021 and resumed its hostilities in the Kivus, becoming one of the region's main armed groups.¹⁴

⁸ Emily Paddon, 'Beyond Creed, Greed and Booty: Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Review Article', *Africa* 80, no. 2 (May 2010): 326, <https://doi.org/10.3366/afr.2010.0207>.

⁹ Paddon, "326.

¹⁰ René Lemarchand, *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa*, National and Ethnic Conflict in the Twenty-First Century (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 34.

¹¹ Eastern Congo Initiative, 'History of the Conflict', 2023, accessed 28 March 2023, <https://www.easterncongo.org/about-drc/history-of-the-conflict/>.

¹² Human Rights Watch, "'You Will Be Punished' Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo".

¹³ Delphin R. Ntanyoma, 'M23: Four Things You Should Know about the Rebel Group's Campaign in Rwanda-DRC Conflict', *The Conversation*, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/m23-four-things-you-should-know-about-the-rebel-groups-campaign-in-rwanda-drc-conflict-195020>.

¹⁴ United Nations, 'DR Congo: Security Council Warned of "considerable" Deterioration in Restive East', *UN News*, 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1135167>.

In parallel, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) efforts in DRC since 2009 have largely been ineffective, contributing to armed group fragmentation and enmeshing armed and civilian lives. As part of DDR processes, members of dissolved armed groups were integrated into the FARDC. However, unsatisfied with the situation in the army, many would leave and form new armed groups.¹⁵ Armed groups easily reintegrate demobilized men due to the lack of economic opportunities and consequential poverty.¹⁶

Today, around 120 armed groups are present in eastern DRC, a result of factions splintering into new groups, sometimes backed by Rwanda and Burundi, externally perpetuating the conflict.¹⁷ Five armed actors were responsible for a third of recorded attacks and half of all civilian deaths between 2019 and 2021.¹⁸ Of these, the FARDC's involvement is far-reaching, from maintaining an environment of impunity to perpetrating serious abuses.¹⁹ The FDLR, composed of fragments of the pre-genocide Rwandan Army;²⁰ and the *Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo Libre et Souverain*, the biggest of the Mai-Mai* militias,²¹ are also among the five groups. While unaccounted for, M23's resurgence signals an increase in rapes and murders in their conquests.²²

¹⁵ Jason Stearns and Christoph Vogel, 'The Landscape of Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo' (Congo Research Group, December 2015), <https://www.congoresearchgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CRG-Armed-Groups-in-the-Congo.pdf>.

¹⁶ Koen Vlassenroot, Emery Mudinga, and Josaphat Musamba, 'Navigating Social Spaces: Armed Mobilization and Circular Return in Eastern DR Congo', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 33, no. 4 (1 December 2020): 832–52, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaa048>.

¹⁷ United Nations, 'DR Congo: Security Council Warned of "considerable" Deterioration in Restive East', *UN News*, 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1135167>; Marina Caparini, 'Armed Conflict, Organized Crime and Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', *CONFLICT, GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZED CRIME* (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022), 13, <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2022/other-publications/conflict-governance-and-organized-crime-complex-challenges-un-stabilization-operations.13>. <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2022/other-publications/conflict-governance-and-organized-crime-complex-challenges-un-stabilization-operations>.; and Christoph Vogel et al., 'The Landscape of Armed Groups in Eastern Congo' (Kivu Security Tracker, February 2021), 12. <https://kivusecurity.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/reports/39/2021%20KST%20report%20EN.pdf>.

¹⁸ Christoph Vogel et al., 'The Landscape of Armed Groups in Eastern Congo' (Kivu Security Tracker, February 2021), 9 <https://kivusecurity.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/reports/39/2021%20KST%20report%20EN.pdf>.

¹⁹ Vogel et al., 'The Landscape of Armed Groups in Eastern Congo' 16.

²⁰ Vogel et al. 28.

²¹ Reuters, 'Congo Army Readies to Take on Mai Mai Militia', 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL22435403>. ; Judith Verweijen, 'From Autochthony to Violence? Discursive and Coercive Social Practices of the Mai-Mai in Fizi, Eastern DR Congo', *African Studies Review* 58, no. 2 (September 2015): 158, <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2015.42>.

²² Human Rights Watch, 'RD Congo: Meurtres et viols commis par les rebelles du M23, soutenus par le Rwanda', *Human Rights Watch*, 13 June 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2023/06/13/rd-congo-meurtres-et-viols-commis-par-les-rebelles-du-m23-soutenus-par-le-rwanda>.

2. The Eastern DRC Mining Sector - Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM)

Mining in eastern DRC, specifically the Kivus, refers mainly to the ASM sector, the less formalized counterpart of large-scale mining. ASM accounts for 500,000 to 1 million local jobs and is critical for the DRC's economy through the extraction of cassiterite, coltan, diamond, gold, lithium, tungsten, and tantalum.²³ Artisanal mining is distinguished by its use of non-industrial tools and methods at a shallow depth within a delimited artisanal exploitation zone. Small-scale mining occurs through permanent operations using fixed semi-industrial or industrial tools and processes.²⁴ Beyond extraction, many more people are employed in processing, trading, and transporting minerals, and in the towns that spring up around mines.²⁵

²³ 'BGR - DR Congo', Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR), accessed 5 April 2023, https://www.bgr.bund.de/EN/Themen/Min_rohstoffe/CTC/Mineral-Certification-DRC/CTC_DRC_node_en.html; Kivu Mineral Resources, 'About Us', n.d., <https://kivumineral.com>.

²⁴ Marie-Rose Bashwira, 'Navigating Obstacles, Opportunities and Reforms: Women's Life and Livelihoods in Artisanal Mining Communities in Eastern DRC.' (Wageningen, Wageningen University, 2017), 22, <https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/navigating-obstacles-opportunities-and-reforms-womens-lives-and-l>.

²⁵ Jocelyn T. D. Kelly, Alexandria King-Close, and Rachel Perks, 'Resources and Resourcefulness: Roles, Opportunities and Risks for Women Working at Artisanal Mines in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo', *Futures*, 'The Futures of Small-Scale Mining in Sub-Saharan Africa', 62 (1 October 2014): 95–105, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2014.04.003>.

III. Literature Review Findings

This section, divided according to our two research questions, presents our literature review and offers a conceptual background and provisional answers. It includes a review of relevant literature and reports on conflict, mining, and sexual violence's linkages and on international initiatives in eastern DRC.

1. Conflict, Mining, Sexual Violence and Their Relationships

This section provides desk findings on the causes and drivers of conflict in eastern DRC, the links between conflict and sexual violence, and between mining and sexual violence. Finally, we analyze the relationship between the three and its limitations.

A. The Causes and Drivers of Conflict

Multiple factors, namely ethnicity, natural resources, and a lack of socioeconomic opportunities have been posited as conflict causes.²⁶ Although conflicts over ethnicity are widespread in eastern DRC, ethnicity-based rhetoric is more of a malleable weapon than a source of conflict.²⁷ Autesserre reinforces this, claiming that “local leaders learn to couch their feuds in the rhetoric that dominates the national discourse...”²⁸ As ethnicity is agreed to be a pretextual cause, multiple studies point towards controlling and exploiting natural resources (greed) and socio-economic situations as being more pertinent.

Greed is seen as a driving factor of this conflict. While initial findings linked minerals and the onset of conflict,²⁹ additional studies found that non-fuel minerals, like those present in the Kivus, are only linked to the duration of war through armed groups' profit.³⁰ Armed actors' control and exploitation of natural resources perpetuate the conflict, as they consolidate

²⁶ Séverine Autesserre, ‘The Trouble with Congo: How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict’, *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2008): 94–110; Miles Larmer, Ann Laudati, and John F. Clark, ‘Neither War nor Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Profiting and Coping amid Violence and Disorder’, *Review of African Political Economy* 40, no. 135 (March 2013): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2013.762165>.

²⁷ Paddon, “Beyond Creed, Greed and Booty”, 325.

²⁸ Autesserre, ‘The Trouble with Congo: How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict’, 101..

²⁹ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, ‘Greed and Grievance in Civil War’, *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (22 June 2004): 588–89, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oeq/gpf064>; Michael L. Ross, ‘How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases’, *International Organization* 58, no. 01 (February 2004): 61–62, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002081830458102X>.

³⁰ Michael L. Ross, ‘What Do We Know about Natural Resources and Civil War?’, *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (May 2004): 351–52, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343304043773>.

power and accumulate wealth through, *inter alia*, mining site takeovers, roadblocks, mineral trafficking, taxation, and embezzlement.³¹

The lack of socioeconomic opportunities and the war economy in eastern DRC fuel this dynamic and elevate it from a local to a regional level. Most civilian mineral extractors are motivated by survival in an unstable economy.³² Such grassroots forms of extraction trigger high rates of looting and other forms of violence by both militias and locals acting out of desperation.³³ Furthermore, authors argue that larger-scale conflicts tend to emerge from local land disputes, as property offers its owner rare economic stability.³⁴ Young Congolese men particularly lack economic opportunities, which armed groups offer, as well as a social network and access to critical resources. As discussed above, these conditions incentivize them to join armed groups³⁵ and even to re-enter such groups for economic survival after participating in DDR programs.³⁶

These findings suggest that a one-driver explanation for the conflict is insufficient. Nonetheless, the link between natural resources, socio-economic conditions and conflict is prominent. This finding will be compared with our interviews.

³¹ United Nations Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2003, 15; Ingrid Samset, “Conflict of Interests or Interests in Conflict? Diamonds & War in the DRC,” *Review of African Political Economy* 29, no. 93–94 (September 2002): 464, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240208704633>; and Ibrahim Steven Ekyamba, ‘Assessing the Challenges of Armed Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s Kivu Region’, *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies* 17, no. 1 (2022): 88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18186874.2021.2018340>; Peer Schouten, Janvier Murairi, and Saidi Kubuya, “‘Everything That Moves Will Be Taxed’: The Political Economy of Roadblocks in North and South Kivu (2017)”, accessed 3 April 2023, <https://ipisresearch.be/publication/everything-moves-will-taxed-political-economy-roadblocks-north-south-kivu/>; Marina Caparini, ‘Armed Conflict, Organized Crime and Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’, vi and 13; and Maria Baaz and Maria Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?: Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond*. London and New York: Zed Books., 2013, 76, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350222557>.

³² Larmer, Laudati, and Clark, ‘Neither War nor Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)’.

³³ Ann Laudati, ‘Beyond Minerals: Broadening “Economies of Violence” in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo’, *Review of African Political Economy* 40, no. 135 (March 2013): 46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2012.760446>.

³⁴ Autesserre, ‘The Trouble with Congo: How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict’, 95.

³⁵ Ibrahim Steven Ekyamba, ‘Assessing the Challenges of Armed Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s Kivu Region’, *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies* 17, no. 1 (2022): 88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18186874.2021.2018340>.

³⁶ Koen Vlassenroot, Emery Mudinga, and Josaphat Musamba, ‘Navigating Social Spaces: Armed Mobilization and Circular Return in Eastern DR Congo’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 33, no. 4 (1 December 2020): 832–52, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaa048>.

B. Sexual Violence and Conflict in the Kivus: Between Rape as a Weapon of War (RAWW) and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

In this section, we will examine the ever-present links between sexual violence and conflict in the Kivus.^{37:38} RAWW refers to the idea that widespread sexual violence in conflict occurs as part of a military strategy/tactic, a conceptualization found in multiple UN Security Council resolutions including Resolution 1820.³⁹ It has been proposed to explain the continued sexual violence in the DRC.⁴⁰ There are multiple reasons why armed groups in the DRC may engage in strategic rape, including to punish the population, prove their manhood, dominate, intimidate, harm community cohesion, force group migration, and even exterminate a group.⁴¹ Such uses indicate that when rape is used strategically, it is used based on gendered notions of what women represent in a community.⁴²

Certain instances of rape in eastern DRC do align with RAWW, but some authors have concluded that RAWW is not adequate to explain the endemic sexual violence there. They argue that using RAWW as an explanatory tool isolates rape from other prevalent forms of violence,⁴³ eclipses other types of sexual exploitation in eastern DRC,⁴⁴ and equates frequency of wartime rape with strategy which, is not always the case.⁴⁵ Additionally, armed groups and the military in eastern DRC are highly fluid and their alliances and strategies change regularly,

³⁷ Disclaimer: This section aims at providing an understanding of sexual violence events and their relationship to conflict and armed groups through the concepts of RAWW and CRSV. Our analysis does not intend to minimize the severity of these events and their effects on the victims.

³⁸ As of 2020, more than 1000 cases of conflict-based sexual violence were officially documented in Eastern DRC. A more detailed account of these cases are available here: United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence' (United Nations Security Council, 2021), 12, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/069/02/PDF/N2106902.pdf?OpenElement>.

³⁹ UN Security Council, 'Resolution 1820' (New York: United Nations, 19 June 2008), 1, https://www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/sites/www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/files/unscr_1820_2008_on_wps_english.pdf.

⁴⁰ Ragnhild Nordås and Dara Kay Cohen, 'Conflict-Related Sexual Violence', *Annual Review of Political Science* 24, no. 1 (2021): 193–211, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102620>.

⁴¹ Jonathan Matusitz, 'Gender Communal Terrorism or War Rape: Ten Symbolic Reasons', *Sexuality & Culture* 21, no. 3 (September 2017): 830–44, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-017-9424-z>; Ambroise Bulambo, "Sexual violence against women in DRC: understanding the motivations of a crime against humanity," *David Publishing Company*, 2016: 570, <https://doi.org/10.17265/1548-6605/2016.07.004>; Denis Mukwege, 'Rape as a Weapon of War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: From Holistic Care to Transitional Justice', trans. Daniel Toudic, *Revue LISA/LISA e-Journal. Littératures, Histoire Des Idées, Images, Sociétés Du Monde Anglophone – Literature, History of Ideas, Images and Societies of the English-Speaking World*, no. vol. 20-n°53 (9 June 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4000/lisa.13875>.

⁴² Jonathan Gottschall, 'Explaining Wartime Rape', *The Journal of Sex Research* 41, no. 2 (2004): 129–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490409552221>; Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?*, 55.

⁴³ Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?*, 32

⁴⁴ Claudia Seymour, *The Myth of International Protection: War and Survival in Congo*, California Series in Public Anthropology, 43 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 66.

<https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520971417>

⁴⁵ Baaz and Stern. 31.

making long-term strategic continuity unlikely.⁴⁶ The frequency of rapes could therefore indicate breakdowns in the chain of command or organizational tolerance for rape, rather than a militaristic aim.⁴⁷ Maedl, analyzing the testimonies of 25 wartime rape victims in the DRC, concluded that they did not believe the rapes were part of most combatants' strategies.⁴⁸ While the concept of RAWW may be applicable to certain behaviors, it cannot fully explain the prevalence of rape in eastern DRC.

In light of these critiques, some academics consider CRSV more apt to describe sexual violence in this context as it is broader. Wood defines it simply as “sexual violence by armed organizations during armed conflict.”⁴⁹ Koos proposes four causes for CRSV: military objectives, social and cultural gendered power differentials, contextual conditions (weak institutions and rule of law), and individual motives (masculinity, sexual urges, proving loyalty).⁵⁰ Therefore, CRSV gives multiple potential causes and has a broader definition that addresses RAWW's shortcomings. Our literature review indicates it may be a more accurate term than RAWW to describe the conflict-sexual violence link. Through our interview findings, we will discuss this link and related terms to better understand them.

C. Sexual Violence in Mining Communities: Intersection of Socio-Economic Conditions and Vulnerabilities

Women in eastern DRC's ASM sector face enhanced risks of sexual violence, in artisanal mines and mining towns. Their social standing is precarious in these spaces, which are dominated by men, sometimes ex-combatants.⁵¹ Reports outside of the Kivus underline the statistical link between sexual violence cases and artisanal mining communities. In 2016, WILPF recorded sexual violence rates as high as 73.75% for women in ASM in Haut-Katanga (Southeast).⁵²

⁴⁶ Caparini, “Armed Conflict, Organized Crime and Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.”, 3.; Baaz and Stern. 76.

⁴⁷ Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?* 71.

⁴⁸ Anna Maedl, ‘Rape as Weapon of War in the Eastern DRC? The Victims’ Perspective’, *Human Rights Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2011): 147.

⁴⁹ Elisabeth Jean Wood, ‘Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and the Policy Implications of Recent Research’, *International Review of the Red Cross* 96, no. 894 (June 2014): 457–78, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1816383115000077>.

⁵⁰ Carlo Koos, ‘Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts: Research Progress and Remaining Gaps’, *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 9 (2 September 2017): 1936–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1322461>.

⁵¹ Rachel Perks, ‘Towards a Post-Conflict Transition: Women and Artisanal Mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo’, in *Gendering the Field. Towards Sustainable Livelihoods for Mining Communities*, ed. Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, 1st ed. (ANU Press, 2011), 180–83, <https://doi.org/10.22459/GF.03.2011.10>.

⁵² Annie Matundu Mbambi and Léonnie Kandolo, ‘Life at the Bottom of the Chain: WOMEN IN ARTISANAL MINES IN DRC’ (WILPF, 2016), 8, 15. https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WomenInArtisanalMinesInDRC_web.pdf.

Women miners and women living in mining communities often must use transactional sex to access mines/minerals or to maintain a business.⁵³ Sex workers, in particular, are vulnerable to sexual violence from clients or men who see them as easy targets and their reports are not taken seriously because of their low standing.⁵⁴ In mines and mining towns, male miners, as well as the military, police, and other armed groups, hold physical, economic, and social power over women to sexually and economically exploit them with little consequence.⁵⁵

Even with the associated risks, ASM can be a source of empowerment for many women because its informality makes it easier to enter the sector. ASM provides a consistent income with which women can support themselves and their families amid the instability, physical displacement, and loss of male wage earners associated with the ongoing conflict.⁵⁶ Despite the violence and exploitation women face, they may still choose to join the sector or work in a mining community because of the opportunities for earning a consistent living in an unstable environment.

This underlines the strong link between mining and sexual violence. We will elaborate upon this link in the findings and analyze it to understand their structural dynamics.

D. Conflict-Mining-Related Sexual Violence - Conflicting Results on a Contested Relationship

Having explicated the bilateral links between these components, we will now interrogate their triangular relationship as these connections remain abstract. One fundamental study supporting a relationship between conflict, mining, and sexual violence is Rustad et al.'s data-mapping study, which concluded that women in the Kivus and Maniema were at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence if they lived close to an ASM site, with even higher chances if the site had an armed actor nearby.⁵⁷ This triangular link is corroborated by UN reports stating it as a causal relationship as they identify instances of armed groups using sexual slavery and retaliatory attacks to control mining sites.⁵⁸

However, the exact nature of the conflict-mining-related sexual violence link remains unclear. Buss criticized such claims of causal relationships for their vague methodology, which

⁵³ Kelly, King-Close, and Perks, 'Resources and Resourcefulness', 99–102.

⁵⁴ Kelly, King-Close, and Perks, 'Resources and Resourcefulness', 99–102.

⁵⁵ Kelly, King-Close, and Perks, 101-102.

⁵⁶ Kelly, King-Close, and Perks, 103.

⁵⁷ Siri Aas Rustad, Gudrun Østby, and Ragnhild Nordås, 'Artisanal Mining, Conflict, and Sexual Violence in Eastern DRC', *The Extractive Industries and Society* 3, no. 2 (April 2016): 483, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2016.01.010>.

⁵⁸ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence', 12.

make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions on the matter.⁵⁹ First, she underlined that the presence of armed actors at a mining site does not necessarily indicate the extent to which that site is conflict-affected, as combatants could participate in mining activities independently.⁶⁰ Second, the study used UN Demographic and Health Services survey data that only asked women if they were victims of sexual violence without much detail about the circumstances of their experience. Evidence supporting an unambiguous causal relationship between the three concepts is therefore scarce,⁶¹ especially when accounting for the structural dynamics in mining environments that enable sexual violence.⁶² It is therefore challenging to determine the extent to which sexual violence in these contexts can be directly attributed to conflict, and especially to a strategic choice by conflict actors.⁶³

These challenges reflect a theme in the literature: it is difficult to collect convincing data in a large, conflict-affected country on a topic that is highly stigmatized. Lewis uncovered the structural difficulty of getting accurate data in the DRC as instances of undercounting, stigmatization of the issue, and over-counting the same sexual violence crime were highlighted in the past.⁶⁴

Moreover, positing a direct link between the three elements risks masking mining-related sexual violence separate from armed groups whether these groups are present or not. A 2015 World Bank report found that women in South Kivu mining sites feared sexual violence in everyday contexts rather than from armed groups.⁶⁵

Therefore, the relationship between conflict, mining, and sexual violence is mired with challenges complicating the establishment of a causal link, a conclusion which will be contrasted through our interview findings.

⁵⁹ Buss, “Conflict Minerals and Sexual Violence in Central Africa: Troubling Research,” 551.

⁶⁰ Doris Buss, ‘Conflict Minerals and Sexual Violence in Central Africa: Troubling Research’, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25, no. 4 (1 December 2018): 550, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxy034>.

⁶¹ Buss, “Conflict Minerals and Sexual Violence in Central Africa: Troublign Research,” 561-562.

⁶² Kelly, King-Close, and Perks, “Resources and Resourcefulness.”

⁶³ Kelly, King-Close, and Perks, 103

⁶⁴ Chloé Lewis, ‘The Making and Re-Making of the “Rape Capital of the World”’: On Colonial Durabilities and the Politics of Sexual Violence Statistics in DRC’, *Critical African Studies* 14, no. 1 (2 January 2022): 61–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2021.1902831>.

⁶⁵ Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, ‘Resources and Resourcefulness. Gender, Conflict, and Artisanal Mining Communities in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo’ (Washington DC: World Bank, 2015), 7, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/16846a8f-f4a2-5627-a8b7-f92ef10875ba>.

2. Creation of a Tripartite Narrative and the Mechanisms of International Initiatives

After uncovering conflicting findings about the tripartite relationship, this section analyzes how the international community framed this relationship and created international initiatives, specifically those on sexual violence and mining, based on this framing.

A. The Creation of the Tripartite Narrative

The international community created, starting in the early 2000s, a narrative which directly links conflict over mineral exploitation as the cause, sexual violence as the consequence, and state-building as the solution. According to Autesserre, this narrative was constructed due to the international community's desire to identify a simple explanation for the complex dynamics occurring in the DRC.⁶⁶

First, the vision of the DRC as a place of endemic sexual violence originates from a 2002 Human Rights Watch Report detailing patterns of rape perpetrated by armed actors in DRC.⁶⁷ The global perception of the DRC conflict as uniquely brutal and especially rife with sexual violence crystallized in 2010 when Margot Wallström, UN Special Representative (UNSR) for Sexual Violence in Conflict, described the DRC as the “rape capital of the world.”⁶⁸ Additionally, the OHCHR released the *Mapping Report* in 2010, an extensive report detailing the war crimes committed in the DRC from 1993 to 2003, describing sexual violence-related crimes as systemic and a technique of war.⁶⁹ A Global Witness campaign and subsequent UN Panel of Inquiry in the late 1990s disseminated the idea that “conflict minerals” are the sole cause of conflict in the DRC at the expense of other explanations.⁷⁰ The third element, state-building, was seen as the only solution in the 2000s. As other post-war measures had been attempted, a majority of ongoing issues were seen as law-and-order concerns solvable through institution building, ignoring the fact that existing authorities were also perpetrators.⁷¹

⁶⁶ S. Autesserre, ‘Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and Their Unintended Consequences’, *African Affairs* 111, no. 443 (1 April 2012): 214, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adr080>.

⁶⁷ Autesserre, 214.

⁶⁸ BBC News, ‘UN Official Calls DR Congo “Rape Capital of the World”’, *BBC News*, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8650112.stm>; UN News, ‘Tackling Sexual Violence Must Include Prevention, Ending Impunity - UN Official’, 27 April 2010, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/04/336662>.

⁶⁹ OHCHR, ‘INFO NOTE 3. DRC 1993-2003. UN Mapping Report. Violence against Women and Sexual Violence’ (New York/Geneva, 2010), https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/CD/FS-3_Sexual_Violence_FINAL.pdf.

⁷⁰ Autesserre, “Dangerous Tales.”, 210.

⁷¹ S. Autesserre, ‘Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and Their Unintended Consequences’, *African Affairs* 111, no. 443 (1 April 2012): 218–19, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adr080>.

Sexual violence thus became, in the eyes of the international community, the primary consequence of conflict in the DRC, with the conflict's causes attributed solely to the exploitation of minerals by armed actors and state-building as the solution.⁷² This narrative's existence, development, and impact will be analyzed through our interview findings.

B. Criticism of the Narrative and Its Effects on Sexual Violence Initiatives

The prevailing narrative is criticized for oversimplifying the Congolese situation as rape-focused, perpetuating colonial stereotypes of Congolese people as brutal and barbaric.⁷³ Laudati and Mertens describe it as a rape-resource narrative⁷⁴ which creates a parallel between Congolese armed actors and predators in a “mimicry of the colonial imagery of the black savage male.”⁷⁵

This narrative pervades the creation of sexual violence initiatives and discourse in the DRC and produces five negative consequences. First, according to D'Errico et. al, the prominence of this narrative in international initiatives reinforces Western views of the DRC as a society of victimhood and of women as passive rape victims.⁷⁶ Second, it obscures the overarching women's health needs in the country, ignoring other vulnerabilities faced by women because aid is provided mostly to treat survivors and does not address structural issues related to women's health.⁷⁷ This incentivizes some women to falsely claim rape for access to healthcare.⁷⁸ Third, the narrative makes it more difficult to correctly analyze incidences of sexual violence. Laudati and Mertens demonstrate this in their analysis of a militia's mass rape of 387 women in Luvungi (South Kivu), as the media and the UN were quick to assume that it was a looting attack meant to access minerals when it was actually a retaliatory attack against civilians.⁷⁹ Therefore, the narrative can cause actors to overlook other causes of sexual violence.⁸⁰ Fourth, Autesserre shows through the Luvungi mass rape how actors use rape to obtain a voice heard by the international community.⁸¹ Lastly, authors indicate that ill-

⁷² Autesserre, “Dangerous Tales.”, 210.

⁷³ Autesserre, “Dangerous Tales.”, 215; Buss, “Conflict Minerals and Sexual Violence in Central Africa.”, 549.

⁷⁴ Ann Laudati and Charlotte Mertens, ‘Resources and Rape: Congo’s (Toxic) Discursive Complex’, *African Studies Review* 62, no. 4 (December 2019): 60, <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2018.126>.

⁷⁵ Laudati and Mertens, “Resources and Rape: Congo’s (Toxic) Discursive Complex.”, 67.

⁷⁶ Nicole C. D’Errico et al., “‘You Say Rape, I Say Hospitals. But Whose Voice Is Louder?’ Health, Aid and Decision-Making in the Democratic Republic of Congo”, *Review of African Political Economy* 40, no. 135 (March 2013): 64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2012.761962>.

⁷⁷ D’Errico et. al, 54.

⁷⁸ Charlotte Mertens and Maree Parady, “‘Sexurity’ and Its Effects in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo”, *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (3 April 2017): 970, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1191341>.

⁷⁹ Laudati and Mertens, “Resources and Rape: Congo’s (Toxic) Discursive Complex.”, 71.

⁸⁰ Laudati and Mertens, “Resources and Rape: Congo’s (Toxic) Discursive Complex.”, 71.

⁸¹ Autesserre, “Dangerous Tales.”, 217.

engineered state-building measures had negative consequences on sexual violence, enabling impunity for these crimes. The 2009 DDR process permitted soldiers to demobilize and integrate as civilians without facing prosecution for sexual violence.⁸² Furthermore, the government was given funds to bring perpetrators to justice, but they were unwilling to do so.⁸³ These created a climate of sexual violence-related impunity and the previously addressed failure of DDR processes blurred the lines between armed and civilian perpetrators.

The focus on sexual violence perpetuates a society of victimhood, obscures the need for broader initiatives on women's health, creates skewed analyses of sexual violence incidences, reinforces armed actors' use of rape. Paradoxically, the sexual violence focus has not changed the climate of impunity. These conclusions and the narrative's impact on sexual violence will be contrasted with our interviews.

C. International Mining Initiatives in Practice and Their Consequences

The tripartite narrative underlies many mineral extraction-related initiatives in the DRC which have negative consequences. These include the *Dodd-Frank Act* by the U.S. Congress in 2010⁸⁴ and the *OECD Due Diligence Guidelines*,⁸⁵ which set standards for mineral extraction and production with the intent of preventing "conflict minerals" from reaching the international supply chain.

First, the *Dodd-Frank Act* precipitated a mineral export embargo by the DRC as the country improved oversight throughout the ASM system to comply with its requirements.⁸⁶ This embargo, along with the increased value chain monitoring costs, caused economic hardship for ASM miners already in precarious positions.⁸⁷ Some miners resorted to using counterfeit authentication documents for the minerals they extracted.⁸⁸

Second, the OECD Guidelines have specifically impacted women miners and their livelihoods. They require that pregnant women be banned from all mining as a safety measure.

⁸² Sahla Aroussi, 'Women, Peace, and Security and the DRC: Time to Rethink Wartime Sexual Violence as Gender-Based Violence?', *Politics & Gender* 13, no. 03 (September 2017): 500-501, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X16000489>.

⁸³ Sahla Aroussi, 502.

⁸⁴ Nik Stoop, Marijke Verpoorten, and Peter van der Windt, 'More Legislation, More Violence? The Impact of Dodd-Frank in the DRC', ed. Rick K. Wilson, *PLOS ONE* 13, no. 8 (9 August 2018): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0201783>.

⁸⁵ OECD, 'OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chain of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas' (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016), 3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264252479-en>.

⁸⁶ Stoop, Verpoorten, and van der Windt, 'More Legislation, More Violence?', 1., 1.

⁸⁷ Stoop, Verpoorten, and van der Windt, 5; Jeroen Cuvelier et al., 'Analyzing the Impact of the Dodd-Frank Act on Congolese Livelihoods', 6 November 2014, 10.

⁸⁸ 'Conflicted: The Fight over Congo's Minerals', *Fault Lines* (AlJazeera, 2016), <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/fault-lines/2016/3/3/conflicted-the-fight-over-congos-minerals>.

According to Bashwira et al., many local women challenged this exclusion because it risked prohibiting women from mining altogether and it was an overly broad health intervention that was not applicable to all types of mining.⁸⁹ Several authors found that mining formalization supplants existing local ASM systems and negatively impacts women, who are most likely to be excluded from regulated mining or exploited by men who hold more power in miner's cooperatives.⁹⁰

These mining initiatives, anchored in the tripartite narrative as they try to eliminate conflict minerals, impact ASM miners' livelihoods, especially women that are already structurally disadvantaged in a male-dominated sector. While we compare these results with our interview findings, the broader possibility and reasoning behind mining initiatives will also be discussed.

Overall, the international community presupposed a triangular relationship, creating a tripartite narrative guiding sexual violence and mining initiatives with heavy consequences in the DRC. The subsequent sections are divided according to the two research questions. This report will first provide the key interview findings and answer related to research question 1. It will do the same for research question 2.

⁸⁹ Marie-Rose Bashwira et al., 'Not Only a Man's World: Women's Involvement in Artisanal Mining in Eastern DRC', *Resources Policy*, The Extractive Industries and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa, 40 (1 June 2014): 110, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2013.11.002>.

⁹⁰ Gabriel Kamundala Byemba, 'Formalization of Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo: An Opportunity for Women in the New Tin, Tantalum, Tungsten and Gold (3TG) Supply Chain?', *The Extractive Industries and Society* 7, no. 2 (April 2020): 424, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2020.03.001>; Christoph Vogel, Josaphat Musamba, and Ben Radley, 'A Miner's Canary in Eastern Congo: Formalisation of Artisanal 3T Mining and Precarious Livelihoods in South Kivu', *The Extractive Industries and Society* 5, no. 1 (January 2018): 75, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2017.09.003>.

IV. Key Interview Findings and Discussion for Research Question 1

This section answers research question 1: how can we better articulate the relationship between the presence of armed groups, the extraction of minerals, and the high rate of sexual violence in eastern DRC?

We will first present our interview findings, then discuss them and compare them with our literature review to provide an answer to the research question.

1. Key Interview Findings - Conflict, Mining, Sexual Violence and Their Relationships

This section will highlight key findings gathered from interviews on conflict-mining, conflict-sexual violence, and mining-sexual violence before examining findings on the links between all three.

A. Drivers and Actors in the Eastern DRC Conflict

a. *The identity of armed actors – new insights*

Our interviewees estimate the number of armed groups in the DRC to be around 120 and diverse in scale and size. Outside of the main groups, some of our interviewees highlight that most are small groups with limited agency, not organized militias. Indeed, they are “local Mai-Mai militias” (IENGO2). Numerous self-defense groups exist but are not considered in the militia estimations. One academic described, for instance, a group of 15 people who “defend their village or their territory and, you know, they don't have a uniform, they don't have weapons” (AC3). A few interviewees linked armed groups and neighboring countries, stating that, in their opinion, some groups are from Rwanda and Burundi. This external implication is felt on a community level: one Kivusian stated, “...If militias continue to bother the Kivus, we think it's the neighboring countries” (K11). Therefore, the landscape of armed groups ranges from local defense groups to foreign-backed militias.

b. *Conflict driver - minerals, armed group income source and external influence*

Most interviewees underlined the diversity of conflict drivers, emphasizing mineral extraction, outside influence, socio-economic factors, and state weakness. Minerals were repeatedly mentioned by interviewees as the main drivers of conflict, as they “enabled the

conflict to stay alive” (AC2), and “perpetuated this conflict. It has been ongoing for 30 years...” (IEIO1).

Some interviewees highlighted that the armed groups’ need for minerals prolongs the conflict. One Kivusian interviewee highlighted how armed groups profit from mineral extraction. She⁹¹ detailed that when armed groups start illegal mineral exploitation, they force civilian miners out, occupy the surroundings, and impose roadblocks. She explained the added cost she bore due to the roadblocks, stating, “we used to be able to pay even 10,000 Congolese Francs (\$5) to get there, but now we're paying maybe \$20 to get there because of the barriers” (KI1). An expert outlined how in their opinion the majority of armed groups “feast off the beast” (IEIO1) as they tax and smuggle resources.

Interviewees highlighted cases of mining exploitation by armed groups and their control over the population. They gave the example of the *Okapi Wildlife Reserve*, an Ituri park containing mines which armed groups sought to control,⁹² and the Chance case. Some interviewees explained that, in their opinion, minerals are not the only resources producing these dynamics. One academic specializing in mining underlined the economic rent-like status of all resources, as minerals could be replaced by another resource/commodity and similar dynamics of control, looting and taxation would occur.

Additionally, our expert interviewees linked minerals to outside influence on the Kivus and the disinterest in promoting peace because conflict helps companies/neighbors profit off of the “...sheer quantity of minerals” (LE2).

Therefore, minerals and their profits seem to be the main reason for the conflict’s perpetuation.

c. Conflict driver - resources linked to socio-economic opportunities

Our expert interviewees linked the lack of socio-economic opportunities, widespread poverty, limited access to public services, and ongoing land conflicts to conflict as locals fight for minerals. One academic noted that in Ituri, another eastern province, the conflict is structured through land disputes and the lack of adequate legislation. Asked about why land

⁹¹ The gender of our interviewee is indicated here as it is important to understand her lived experience and perspective.

⁹² As outside of the scope of this study, we did not develop the case of the *Okapi Wildlife Reserve* exhaustively. It however refers to a 2021-2022 situation of mining and armed groups trying to control the gold mining sites in the Ituri Park through taxation. Detailed information on this is available here: UN Group of Experts Established pursuant to Resolution 1533 (2004), ‘Letter Dated 10 June 2022 from the Group of Experts Extended Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2582 (2021) Addressed to the President of the Security Council’ (New York: United Nations, n.d.), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3977153>.

was a driver and if this is related to minerals, they underlined that “access to land then means access to the minerals” (AC2), motivating actors to take control of land. One of our Kivusians underlines this pattern as she⁹³ depicts people disputing *carrés miniers** saying, “the *carré minier* is mine, the *carré minier* is mine,” (KI2) which, in her opinion, creates a war between individuals exacerbated by armed groups trying to exploit these resources without authorization. Therefore, the lack of socio-economic opportunities in eastern DRC led to violent exploitation of resources, perpetuating the conflict.

Overall, interviewees highlighted the conflict-mining link and how armed groups’ resource exploitation, lack of socio-economic opportunities, land disputes, and poverty fuel the conflict.

B. Sexual Violence in the DRC - Between Mines and Conflict

a. Rape, soldiers, CRSV and RAWW

Overall, a number of experts equated the presence of soldiers with the perpetration of sexual violence. Additionally, RAWW in eastern DRC was suggested as an adequate concept by a number of our interviewees. They highlighted that, in their experience, armed groups strategically use the threat or enactment of sexual violence to control villages, usually alongside other forms of extreme violence and atrocities meant to humiliate communities and destroy their social fabric, resembling patterns of RAWW. Furthermore, a few experts suggested that certain armed groups, such as M23, use a clear *modus operandi* including rape to attack villages, an idea corroborated by Kivusians. Regarding CRSV, insights showcase its use in technical debates and when discussing sexual violence perpetrated by armed groups outside of attack situations. It was used by our team of IO experts to refer to sexual exploitation of women by armed groups in mining sites during their occupation, while RAWW specifically described strategies used by armed groups during an attack on a site (IEIO3). A local expert called RAWW the fundraising term, while CRSV is the technical term.

A number of interviewees provided limitations to the qualification of RAWW in the DRC on the grounds of the situation’s complexity in terms of perpetrators and perspectives. Experts suggested that the conflict’s entanglement with society has made it harder to prove distinctions between civilian and combatant perpetrators. One local expert outlined that

⁹³ The gender of our interviewee is indicated here as it is important to understand her lived experience and perspective.

statistically, while Panzi Hospital has been receiving an average number of 1500 survivors per year since 2012,⁹⁴ perpetrators may have shifted from mostly FDLR members to FARDC members, following the DDR process as “...they just kind of changed their uniforms” (LE2). Nowadays, there are more civilian perpetrators. They explained that this change could be attributed to the demobilization of ex-combatants or to the ongoing impunity for sexual violence crimes.

Difficulties also exist legally. One legal expert noted that it is difficult to link it to a war crime, as there is little evidence of militia organization and battle intensity. However, this expert suggested that some organizations, such as TRIAL International, were able to make parallels using other charges to secure reparations for rape victims by armed groups in the Kokodikoko⁹⁵ and Ndarumanga⁹⁶ cases in South Kivu (IENGO1).

Interviewees underlined armed groups’ use of rape to control civilians and communities, emphasizing the use of RAWW as a practical term mostly describing immediate attacks and for fundraising, while CRSV was viewed as a technical term detailing broader sexual violence patterns. However, RAWW is difficult to prove legally and perpetrators’ roles are often blurred.

b. Gender dynamic, mining, and sexual violence

The presence of a patriarchal gender dynamic in the DRC was highlighted by several interviewees. Some shared that labor is divided along traditional lines and gendered behaviors are expected, although women do have careers nowadays. One interviewee suggested that the patriarchal gender relations predating the conflict are the reason for high levels of sexual violence. An international expert underlined how ‘the inferiorization of women and gender-

⁹⁴ According to our expert, the average number of survivors treated at Panzi Hospital since 2012 is 1500. For the past five years (since 2018) if one includes all three Panzi Hospitals in South Kivu, the average is 1500/year. However, according to our expert, more are treated in Panzi’s partner facilities and during mobile clinic missions.

⁹⁵ While this case is briefly discussed later on, it is important to note that Kokodikoko’s militia was judged on crimes against humanity and reparations were requested from the Congolese state judged unable to protect the victims. More detailed information is available here: TRIAL International, ‘Verdict Eclatant Dans l’Affaire Kokodikoko (RDC)’, *TRIAL International*, 19 November 2019, <https://trialinternational.org/fr/latest-post/verdict-eclatant-kokodikoko/>.

⁹⁶ While this case is not discussed later on it is important to point out that this was the first ever conflict-related sexual violence case where a defendant was convicted for enforced pregnancy by a national criminal court. ‘DRC: Conviction for Forced Pregnancy and Other Crimes against Humanity for Warlord Ndarumanga’, *TRIAL International*, 17 May 2023, <https://trialinternational.org/latest-post/drc-conviction-for-forced-pregnancy-and-other-crimes-against-humanity-for-warlord-ndarumanga/>.

based violence are largely anchored in socio-cultural norms... that want women reduced to familial and reproductive functions” (IEIO3).

Women are exploited in mining towns and by their fellow miners, including through sexual violence anchored in male-dominated gender dynamics according to our interviewees. For several experts, this sexual exploitation often presents itself in sex work the women have to perform in order to feed themselves and their children, stigmatizing them further. Indeed, one Kivusian explained that sometimes women have to sleep with men to access valuable minerals to sell for subsistence, and if not, they end up with scraps. Another Kivusian said that women are so often exploited that there is a specific term for them: *creuseurs sans bêche* (*diggers without spades*) (KI2). This term refers to mining through sexual exploitation instead of tools. She⁹⁷ underlined that women around mining towns were generally considered “vegetables” as their presence meant that they were ready to sell their bodies for minerals (KI2). One Kivusian explained that a decade ago, women in mining sites were seen as curses, thus men preferred that they stay outside of the mines, a statement corroborated by the other Kivusian. However, these phenomena are less present today, according to them.

Interviewees highlight how sexual violence and exploitation in mining towns are structural as women are considered less than men, even though this is changing.

C. Conflict Mining Sexual Violence

a. Expert insights

The potential existence of links between conflict, mining, and sexual violence prevailed in our interviewees’ opinions. They suggested that armed groups in and around mines aim to control natural resources and mining communities through violence, including sexual violence against women and girls. Our team of IO experts highlighted the existence of quantitative studies done by IOs in Mungwalu (Ituri) and Durba (Haut-Uélé) mining zones on sexual violence committed by armed groups, military, and police against women.

While no Kivu-specific quantitative study was named, interviewees provided key insights of this phenomenon in the region. The Chance case is one example from our legal expert of this dynamic wherein armed groups used sexual violence to control an area that brought them profit from mineral extraction (IENGO1). The same expert provided another case where the three intersect less clearly, the Kokodikoko case, as the militia raided villages to loot

⁹⁷ The gender of our interviewee is indicated here as it is important to understand her lived experience and perspective.

and briefly control surrounding *carrés miniers*. One academic detailing their field experience around Kivusian mines highlighted how armed groups fought to keep control of mines which resulted in some sexual violence, a phenomenon they describe as “... almost like a triangle between mines, militarization, and sexual violence” (AC3).

b. Community-level support for these links

More practically, a Kivusian recounting her⁹⁸ experience outlined the violence associated with armed groups’ presence in the mines and shared how they use this violence to control the mine and gain profit. She also outlined that armed groups will rape before extracting minerals. According to the other inhabitant, this is used as a distraction for other armed group members to gain access to the mines.

Therefore, according to our interviewees’ experiences and analyses, this triangular relationship between conflict, mining, and sexual violence is observable in the Kivus.

2. Discussion and Analysis of Findings

Having outlined the interview findings regarding the conflict, mining, and sexual violence links and their triangular relationship, this section will now highlight how they confirm or complicate conclusions established in our review of the literature and answer the research question.

A. Conflict and Minerals - An Ever Stronger Link

The complexity of conflict drivers in eastern DRC is evident in both our literature review and interviews. More precisely, interviewees emphasized minerals and socio-economic conditions as major drivers. Our interview and desk findings concur: armed groups are reliant on minerals to sustain their operations, prolonging the conflict through embezzlement, roadblocks, and smuggling to fund weapon purchases. Furthermore, socio-economic factors and poverty push civilians toward grassroots mineral extraction and integration into armed groups which provide them with otherwise-inaccessible opportunities.

⁹⁸ The gender of our interviewee is indicated here as it is important to understand her lived experience and perspective.

Our findings therefore confirm the strong link between conflict and mineral extraction.⁹⁹

B. Sexual Violence and Conflict in Eastern DRC - a Widespread Phenomenon with Complex Incarnations

Our interview findings complicate our literature review and reveal a nuanced debate on the definition and dynamics of wartime sexual violence in eastern DRC. While confirming the continued prevalence and existence of the conflict-sexual violence link, both interviewees and the literature review indicate recent challenges in distinguishing between civilian and combatant perpetrators due to the blurred lines following the 2009 DDR process.

While interviewees acknowledged the complexity of sexual violence in the conflict, most suggested that RAWW is relevant to describe the dynamics related to armed group attacks. Sexual violence is described as being perpetrated by armed groups, such as M23, as part of a larger strategy and *modus operandi* which includes atrocity crimes to control and humiliate villages, but it is difficult to legally link it to a war crime.

On a purely definitional level, CRSV is considered more technically complete because it incorporates RAWW, but is less relevant. The team of IO experts has used it to discuss sexual violence committed by armed groups outside of direct attacks. According to our interviewees, RAWW is more broadly used because it is well-known and brings greater attention. It underlines intentionality and strategicness, and not sexual violence as a byproduct of conflict.

Overall, analysis explicates the link between conflict and rape as it is tactically used by armed groups.

C. Sexual Violence and Mining - A Confirmed Structural Link

Our interviews affirmed our literature review on the sexual violence and mining link. Interviewees highlighted the deeply gendered dynamics in mining towns, as women are considered vegetables and curses, outsiders, and tools, although such ideas may be declining today. The interviews expanded upon these concepts, highlighting sexual exploitation as a corollary to the sexual violence which exists in mining settings. Sexual exploitation includes sex work as one's livelihood or the need to perform transactional sex to access minerals. These

⁹⁹ Ethnicity as a cause/driver was seldom mentioned by our interviewees even when asked about it. The interviewee discussing it only underlined the pretextual cause that is already confirmed in the literature, pushing us not to discuss it.

new aspects offer greater insight into the range of abuse and exploitation women experience in eastern DRC's ASM sites and communities.

Overall, our analysis of interview findings corroborates the literature about how conflict is related to mining, mining is related to sexual violence, and conflict is related to sexual violence. We will now discuss how the three concepts are linked.

D. Conflict-Mining-Sexual Violence Relationship

While our literature review provided a critical account of the conflict-mining-sexual violence relationship in eastern DRC and several doubts on its existence, interview insights contradict these statements. Both experts working on the DRC and Kivusians underlined that sufficient links exist between conflict, mining, and sexual violence to constitute a relationship among the three factors. The literature review highlights methodological difficulties in scientifically linking the three concepts. However, Kivusian interviewees underlined their lived experiences of the phenomenon. International experts also referred to studies, reports, and recent Kivusian legal cases (Kokodikoko, Chance) to conclude that rape and sexual exploitation are used as a strategy by armed groups to control and/or loot mining sites. This key finding underlines that, while the potential causality needs still to be studied, the tripartite relationship passes the hoop test of plausibility.

However, the salience of each element is context-dependent. A helpful example of this can be found in the differences between the Kokodikoko and Chance cases. While the armed group under Chance used sexual violence to control mines in a specific area and imposed taxation and forced labor systems on surrounding villages, Kokodikoko's armed group moved from village to village and used torture and sexual violence to loot the *carrés miniers* rather than exerting control at the point of extraction. These two different *modus operandi* used similar types of violence for similar aims, but mining was arguably more relevant in the Chance case. The two cases show how different elements of the triangular relationship take precedence in different situations and how that emphasis could be argued to various conclusions.

The conflict-mining-sexual violence relationship, according to our interviews, clearly exists to some extent and is supported by the lived experiences of inhabitants and by legal cases in the Kivus. But given the complex circumstances of the conflict, identifying the nature of the relationship between the three elements is challenging. The legal case examples and the community perspectives on the question could be starting points for further research.

In conclusion, the first part of this report sought to better articulate the links between conflict, mining, and sexual violence. Through expert interviews and lived community experiences, this report was able to articulate this relationship in a clearer manner. It was found that this relationship likely exists but that its expression varies on a case-by-case basis, warranting further research. Overall, our findings showcase that armed groups, seeking minerals and resources for profit, use rape and sexual violence to access, loot, or control mines. This relationship is also articulated through the links between the different elements, such as mining-related sexual violence based on structural dynamics, ever-present conflict-related sexual violence, and resources as the main driver of the Kivus conflict.

V. Key Interview Findings and Discussion for Research Question 2

This section provides an answer to research question 2: how does the international community frame this relationship and what are the consequences of this conceptualization on their response to sexual violence in eastern DRC and in the country's mining sector?

We will first present our interview findings, then discuss them and compare them with our literature review to provide an answer to the research question.

1. Key Interview Findings - Creation of a Tripartite Narrative and International Initiatives

This section details our interview findings regarding the international community's conceptualization of the triangular relationship and its subsequent initiatives in eastern DRC: the tripartite narrative, the deployment of international initiatives, and future solutions.

A. Tripartite Narrative Construction and Criticisms

a. *“Rape capital of the world” - foundation of a heavily criticized discourse*

When asked about the reasoning behind the UNSR's description of the DRC as the “rape capital of the world,” our interviewees suggested that she may have intended to call attention to the DRC's situation. Our team of IO experts stated that this characterization was a way to bring the attention and resources of the international community to the problem of rape in the DRC (IEIO3). A local expert underlined that this strong statement might have been necessary due to the international community's blind spot when it comes to the country. Finally, one academic offered mixed perspectives, as it may have been an accurate description of the DRC's high levels of rape at the time, even if its framing deserves criticism.

This international discourse was heavily criticized by our interviewees for its colonial undertones. According to one academic, it disregards the logic and rationales of warfare, framing the country within a “heart of darkness” (AC2) narrative, “where nothing is rational, and it's just chaotic” (AC2). Other academics echoed this criticism, adding that it resonates with “savage, victim, savior” (AC3) and “white savior” (AC1) metaphors, and is inscribed in colonialism as sexuality and reproduction are “tools of empires” (AC3). One NGO expert criticized the narrative for conveying an image that “as a woman living in the DRC, we're all

raped” (IENGO2) even though “wherever there is war or conflict, women suffer from sexual violence” (IENGO2).

Our interviewees outlined that the international community’s discourse on sexual violence, while possibly warranted, is questionable due to its neocolonial undertones and the image of Congolese women it promotes.

b. The tripartite narrative: acknowledgment, defense, criticisms

The tripartite narrative linking conflict over minerals with sexual violence and state-building was widely acknowledged by all interviewees that witnessed its existence in their work and initiatives. However, interviewees offered a range of perspectives on its applicability. One academic criticized the narrative as oversimplified and said that the authors who present it do not accurately represent how experts and the community view it on the ground, especially nowadays. Another asserted that authors overlook the fact that the situation now is different from what it was 20 years ago and that the narrative itself has evolved.

Expert IO interviewees defended the narrative, saying that even though the conflict has many causes and consequences, the narrative is simply meant to highlight the most obvious connections to promote action (IEIO1, 2, 3). These same interviewees underlined that the originally identified narrative is blind to newer policy developments on gender, conflict, and mining.

Interviewees therefore, while acknowledging the narrative, also highlighted its limitations through critiques of inapplicability, changes over time, and oversimplification.

B. International Initiatives

a. Construction of international initiatives on state-building and sexual violence

Interviewees working in IOs described the approaches that their organizations are taking to address conflict and sexual violence in the DRC, highlighting different perspectives on how best to support Congolese people. Several mentioned the importance of increasing state capacity and fostering respect for the rule of law and the justice system, with one interviewee saying that “the necessity to have a more present state is very very clear” (IEIO1). This reflects the state-building solution proposed by the tripartite narrative. International expert interviewees discussed their organizations’ women’s empowerment initiatives such as mining cooperatives, sexual violence initiatives, gender-comprehensive policies, monetary support, and women’s clubs, emphasizing the necessity of a gendered lens in all DRC projects. They underlined that

women were a priority focus group and ever-present in their programs, creating comprehensive women-focused initiatives.

b. Criticisms and limitations of international initiatives

Several interviewees criticized international initiatives and their design on various grounds. International experts underlined structural limitations and the difficulty of implementing projects in the Kivus due to security concerns, economic conditions, and the complex, low-capacity context, which make it difficult to implement long-term capacity building and labor initiatives. Experts also cited state weakness as an impediment. They underlined the state's lack of rule of law, institutional capability, and local coordination to pursue justice for victims and that some "...areas are so remote... in order to denounce... a regular crime, the nearest police post is probably hours by walk" (IENGO1). They also noted that in some areas, NGOs (and sometimes armed groups) have replaced the state.

Academics and NGO experts criticized past international initiatives for their misguided strategies and lack of contextual knowledge. Past DDR and peacebuilding projects placed demobilized combatants in former enemy territory or offered alternative careers that were poorly matched to the setting, such as a "...career in music" which "unless you're a superstar it's very difficult" (AC2). Other programs excluded women who had been involved in the conflict by requiring DDR beneficiaries to possess a firearm, which many did not, as they "played support functions (cooks, bearers, wives)" (IENGO2). Another local expert described a broader pattern of disconnect between the reality on the ground and the preconceptions of international (mostly private) actors, often having to convince them of the frequency of sexual violence, especially linked to mining.

Multiple interviewees underlined that a focus on sexual violence, as encouraged by the narrative, overshadows other issues at hand, such as non-sexual violence and gender inequality, and it diverts funding from other necessary projects in the Kivus. Experts highlight how this focus overshadows structural solutions that could bring sustainable change to the region, addressing the conflict's symptoms rather than its causes. One interviewee described it as "a Band-Aid... but like it is not a cure" (LE2).

Negative effects of sexual violence initiatives on their beneficiaries were highlighted. An international expert explained how they heard that sexual violence initiatives accessible

only to victims, such as reparation funds,¹⁰⁰ doubly stigmatized their beneficiaries by making their victim status publicly evident and offering exclusive access to aid. They outlined how this double stigmatization “hampers their insertion in society” (IENGO1) because victims were “seen as different” (IENGO1).

All actors criticized international initiatives and showcased their misguided design, lack of contextual knowledge, and consequences for sexual violence survivors.

c. Construction of mining initiatives

In addition to the *OECD Guidelines* and *Dodd-Frank Act*, an international expert highlighted that contemporary mining initiatives include a range of mechanisms, from local to international levels, spearheaded by external and regional actors such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The EU’s mining-related projects, for instance, work on supply chains and build miners’ capacities, also augmenting the state’s taxation and traceability enforcement capabilities and fostering local transformation.¹⁰¹ This expert acknowledged the need for skill-based training for miners but underlined the difficulty of implementing such solutions in the Kivus due to the prevalence of ASM and the conflict situation. Mining initiatives are therefore presented as comprehensive, though difficult to implement.

d. Critical perspectives on mining initiatives

While mining initiatives have been beneficial in some cases, several of our interviewees were skeptical of their efficiency, scalability, and potential instrumentalization. A Kivusian underlined that in her¹⁰² experience, these initiatives benefitted women and increased supply chain transparency through resource tracing. While unable to technically explain why, she said

¹⁰⁰ These funds have been under discussion for a few years and offer monetary and financial reparations to victims of sexual violence and sometimes other crimes. For more general information on diverse funds, please see following links: UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), ‘Vers La Mise En Place d’un Fonds National de Réparation Des Survivants Des Violences Sexuelles En RDC’, 29 October 2021, <https://drc.unfpa.org/fr/news/vers-la-mise-en-place-dun-fonds-national-de-reparation-des-survivants-des-violences-sexuelles>; Cour Pénale Internationale, ‘Le Fonds Au Profit Des Victimes Lance Un Appel à Contribution Pour Financer Les Activités de Réparation En Faveur Des Victimes de Violence Sexuelle Liée à Des Conflits’, *Cours Pénale Internationale*, 13 March 2023, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/fr/news/le-fonds-au-profit-des-victimes-lance-un-appel-contribution-pour-financer-les-activites-de>.

¹⁰¹ An Expert IO interviewee detailed the EU mining initiatives and very recent efforts to ensure the EU’s access to sustainable and diverse minerals with possibly an effect on human rights promotion and conflict prevention. For more general information please see following link: European Commission, ‘Critical Raw Materials: Ensuring Secure and Sustainable Supply Chains for EU’s Green and Digital Future’, *European Commission*, 16 March 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1661.

¹⁰² The gender of our interviewee is indicated here as it is important to understand her lived experience and perspective.

that this tracing helped reduce fraud, which subsequently decreased sexual violence in mines by virtue of increased regulation.

Mining initiatives are, however, criticized by a number of local experts and academics. First, one academic asserted that because some mineral routes, such as coltan and cassiterite, are easily monitored by initiatives, miners migrated towards minerals with less controllable routes like gold. Second, initiatives' pilot sites usually include mines with medium to low violence rates, as IOs are not “going to go somewhere where there is violence” (AC4). This inaccessibility affects their goals and implementation mechanisms, lowering their impact on high-violence mines which could require different approaches. Third, a number of interviewees argued that mining initiatives are often instrumentalized by foreign actors to justify their “clean” supply chains, “...claim that they’re [private companies] not doing anything wrong” (LE2), and minimize public perception of their complicity in mining-related violence and conflict.

While one interviewee underlined the positive effects of mining initiatives, they were criticized on structural issues.

e. International solutions - interviewees’ way forward

During their interviews, experts underlined ways forward, proposing comprehensive initiatives encompassing transitional justice, state-building, gender lenses, socio-economic livelihoods, and the importance of a local approach.

Interviewees advised the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms to address decades of conflict and sexual violence. According to our legal expert, this is preferable to individual prosecution because there are thousands of cases going back twenty-five years. With such a vast amount of aging evidence, transitional justice is cautiously encouraged by interviewees. A stronger, more willing state would need to lead such efforts, as one IO expert pointed out that “we are not going to do transitional justice for them. It has to mature on the social and political levels...we could intervene then” (IEIO1).

Some of our experts underlined the need for a more effective state, which, in their opinion, “needs to come back” (IEIO1) and a strengthened judiciary system. They stated that this would include “the empowerment of women in the political and economic spheres” (IEIO1).

Multiple interviewees argued that transforming women's socio-economic livelihoods and supporting youth are key targets. They emphasized the need for holistic economic, legal, and political reforms which would create jobs outside of or adjacent to the mining sector. Some interviewees highlighted the need for holistic, professional care for sexual violence victims instead of just Band-Aid assistance.

Interviewees expressed a need for a local or hybrid approach. According to them, international actors can address the government and support bigger schemes while local organizations are well-situated to work on community resilience and prepare complementary programs. Some outlined how local initiatives, such as those by the Panzi Foundation, are already successful in effecting sustainable change.

Overall, our interviewees' insights on international solutions underline the need for sustainable change and paths forward through structural measures focused on women.

2. Discussion and Analysis of Findings

Having outlined key interview findings regarding the international narrative and initiatives, we will now analyze the development and evolution of the conflict-mining-sexual violence relationship's framing through a tripartite narrative and its impact on international initiatives to answer our research question.

A. Framing of the Relationship Through a Comprehensive Narrative and its Impact on Initiatives

Our literature review and interviewees agree that the framing of the conflict, mining, and sexual violence relationship occurs through a tripartite narrative linking conflict mining as the cause, sexual violence as the consequence, and state-building as the solution. It has impacted the international community's actions and actors still navigate within it. Interviewees justified the narrative's use, citing both data and personal experiences in the DRC. First, minerals were identified as a cause of conflict by interviewees as discussed above. Second, the international community's foundational discourse on sexual violence in the DRC was both highlighted and criticized in our literature review and interviews. Experts denounced the colonial undertones present in describing the DRC as the rape capital of the world even though some considered this initial angle necessary to prompt international action. This discourse

influenced the international community's initiatives, fully orienting them toward sexual violence. Third, our experts concur with the literature review, emphasizing state-building as a solution that anchors initiatives in the narrative. Nowadays state-building solutions are proposed alongside other initiatives which incorporate gender-comprehensive policies, local approaches, and laying the groundwork for transitional justice.

However, our interview and literature findings differ regarding the narrative's ubiquity. Although the literature showcases the existence of a tripartite narrative undergirding international action, interviewees pointed out that it is not a complete description of the situation. Experts highlighted how this criticism is, in itself, simplistic and outdated as the narrative has evolved to a broader understanding of the situation.

Therefore, international initiatives frame the relationship and create initiatives within a similar yet more comprehensive narrative which views (1) minerals as the main cause of the ongoing conflict, although linked to socio-economic conditions; (2) sexual violence as one of the main consequences; (3) and state-building as one of the means to address these issues, with a greater emphasis on women and socio-economic livelihood policies.

Having analyzed how the international community still frames the relationship within an evolved version of the original narrative, we will now analyze its influence on the deployment of sexual violence and mining initiatives.

B. Sexual Violence Initiatives - A Framing Shift Into Gender-comprehensive Initiatives

In our literature review, we highlighted that the narrative framing had created a singular focus on survivors of sexual violence in the Kivus. This further stigmatized them, disadvantaged others, and created initiatives that did not address prevention. Some of our interviewees agreed on these issues within past initiatives. They offered an array of criticisms from overlooking gender dynamics and exacerbating stigma to proposing unfit DDR and socio-economic solutions.

Somewhat contrasting the literature, recent programs focus on sexual violence while also working towards broader women's empowerment goals, such as socio-economic integration and capacity building for mining and other livelihoods. This shows that

organizations are increasingly aware that initiatives with too narrow a focus on sexual violence act as Band-Aids rather than offering structural transformation.

Interview findings indicate that the initiatives' focus on sexual violence is not as pronounced as it previously was, contrasting our literature review. Due to the above-mentioned change in narrative, organizations seem to have shifted their approach to tackle the larger web of inequalities through a gender-sensitive framing, not just a sexual violence framing.

C. Mining Initiatives - Positive Impacts but Limited Substantial Change

Both interview and literature findings underscore that mining initiatives are framed within the narrative, aiming to resolve the conflict's supposed main driver, mineral extraction. However, interviewees suggest that implementing these initiatives might be difficult given the Kivusian context. Additionally, our findings conflict regarding the instrumentalization of mining initiatives to deflect blame rather than enact structural change.

Regarding contextual limitations, our literature review outlined how mining initiatives lead to negative outcomes for women miners and increase illicit trade. While one interviewee underlined positive impacts on illicit trade and women, most concur with these criticisms. Insights provided additional limitations. Kivusian mining is primarily done through ASM, which lacks easily regulated industrial-level operations and allows for illicit trade of less traceable minerals such as gold. The region's ongoing instability also makes it difficult to implement structural policies.

Regarding instrumentalization and lack of interest, some findings suggest that while framing these initiatives in the narrative, actors might have no interest in actually resolving the situation. International experts differed on this matter. For local experts, external actors develop initiatives which absolve them of their connection to so-called conflict minerals while they benefit from extraction. International experts named newer initiatives created by the international community (EU/UN) as examples of locally centered actions. They underlined that newer supply chain initiatives, such as the EU 2023 *Critical Raw Materials Act*, intend to work with state/local authorities to reach the initiative's goals and provide structural change.¹⁰³

Interviews and literature agree on the narrative's impact on mining initiatives and their negative effects. However, interview insights underline the limitations present in the Kivus.

¹⁰³ European Commission, 'Critical Raw Materials: Ensuring Secure and Sustainable Supply Chains for EU's Green and Digital Future', *European Commission*, 16 March 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1661.

Additionally, conflicting findings exist on the real intent of mining initiatives, as locals criticize them for their instrumentalization while internationals emphasize new hybrid approaches meant to help locals.

The second part of this report sought to analyze how the international community frames the conflict-mining-sexual violence relationship and the impact of this conceptualization on their response to sexual violence in eastern DRC through mining initiatives. Through our analysis, we found that they framed the relationship through a tripartite narrative and linked it to state-building. While a simplified narrative was common in the 2000s, it is now more comprehensive.

The narrative's increasing nuance made sexual violence less predominant in DRC-focused initiatives and diversified sexual violence responses. Nowadays, international initiatives also encompass women's empowerment, gender-sensitive initiatives, socio-economic livelihoods, and more locally minded state-building meant to enact structural change. We observed, therefore, a general framing shift toward local and women-focused policies in political and socio-economic fields.

Results on mining initiatives underlined that while they still act within the framing, they are limited by the difficulty of effecting change in the Kivus. Findings on intent and instrumentalization remain conflicting as locals insinuate that external actors have ulterior motives, while internationals highlight their willingness to work with the DRC state and local populations to enact change.

VI. Conclusion

This report aimed to address two questions posed by our partner organization: (1) an inquiry into better understanding the relationship between conflict, mining, and sexual violence in eastern DRC; and (2) an examination of the international community's framing of this relationship and the consequences of this conceptualization on their response to sexual violence and regarding the country's mining sector.

Our results were significant, contradicting existing literature regarding the articulation of a triangular link between conflict, mining, and sexual violence. This link was more robust than initially envisioned based on its contested status in academic literature. Through analyzing expert and Kivusians interviews, this report underlined the potentiality of this relationship. On the use of sexual violence by armed groups against civilians in relation to mining, our findings suggest its strategic use during attacks on villages done to loot nearby natural resource sites or control them. Bilateral links between conflict-mining, conflict-sexual violence, and mining-sexual violence were corroborated in both literature and interviews. The latter provided new insights on the crucial role of minerals as a driver of conflict, the intensity and incarnations of conflict-based sexual violence, and the structural gender dynamics and the range of sexual violence faced by women in/around mining sites.

Regarding the framing of the triangular relationship and its impact on international initiatives, our results are less innovative. They point towards the framing of the relationship through a one-to-one conflict-mining, sexual violence, and state-building narrative of which actors are fully aware. However, this narrative grew and diversified since its creation. Initiatives today are anchored in a more evolved and comprehensive version of it. This anchoring has a strong impact on sexual violence initiatives, as sexual violence is regarded as neither the only consequence nor the sole focus of the international community's policies in the DRC. While sexual violence initiatives are still prominent, the international community also works on broader women-focused and socio-economic policies. Mining initiatives, on the other hand, are still anchored in the narrative and face criticism. While such initiatives might alleviate the situation and provide some local solutions, they face severe limitations. Their altruistic role is also doubted in our findings, as conflicting perspectives either point towards their instrumentalization as blame deflectors or defend them on the ground of their hybrid approaches.

Due to the previously underlined limitations, this report acts a baseline, providing answers for further research. More specifically, additional research is needed on question 1 to

fully flesh out this potential triangular relationship and propose a clear picture to the international community. This could include victim-centered research approaches with trained researchers, incorporating more community perspectives, grounded theory investigation in specific sites, or cross-mapping of armed groups, mining sites and sexual violence data in the Kivus.

VII. Recommendations

1. On the potential links between conflict, mining, and sexual violence:

- The international community should deploy a Commission of Inquiry to further investigate the links between conflict, armed groups, extractive industries, and sexual violence in the Kivus.

2. On issues of impunity, justice, rule of law, and reconciliation in the Kivus:

- The international community should assist the DRC state by funding more local sources of justice and solidifying the local and regional Kivusian justice system by augmenting mobile courts, tribunals, and trials related to sexual violence and crimes against humanity.
- All actors should support the creation of local transitional justice mechanisms and a truth commission to establish accountability and justice for victims of mass crimes and atrocities, including sexual violence.

3. To build more comprehensive sexual violence and gender international initiatives:

- Actors should continue creating socio-economic policies, livelihood and reintegration initiatives for victims of conflict-based and mining-based sexual violence in the Kivus. Livelihood opportunities should include, but not be limited to, the mining sector and surrounding towns to permit reintegration in a critical economic sector.

4. To craft comprehensive and sustainable mining initiatives:

- The international community should further account for the local and structural realities of mining sites by including more local actors in creating mining initiatives and it should build local governments' capacities.
- Civil society actors should continue investing in socio-economic reintegration projects to build the capacities of local communities in the Kivus and to provide an incentive for IOs to invest in the region.

Appendices

A. List of Interviewees and Coding of Interviews

As part of the anonymisation process, the research team anonymized all interviewees and coded them through different categories, numbers, and gender. Numbers were randomly generated. We created five different categories: Academic, referring to professors and well-established researchers; Research Assistant, referring to doctoral students; Local Experts, referring to individuals from local organizations; International NGO Experts, referring to individuals from international NGOs; International Organization Experts, referring to individuals from international organizations; and Kivusians, referring to local interviewees from the Kivus who lived in mining communities. Please find a full list of interviewees below.

Title	Code
Academic 1	AC1
Academic 2	AC2
Academic 3	AC3
Academic 4	AC4
Academic 5	AC5
International Organization Expert 1	IEIO1
International Organization Expert 2	IEIO2
International Organization Team of Experts	IEIO3
International NGO Expert 1	IENGO1
International NGO Expert 2	IENGO2
Local Expert 1	LE1
Local Expert 2	LE2
Local Expert 3	LE3
Research Assistant 1	RA1
Kivusian 1	KI1
Kivusian 2	KI2

B. Expert Interview Questionnaires

You will find below an exhaustive list of questions asked to our interviewees. For anonymity, privacy and confidentiality reasons we anonymized questions. We did not include specific questions that could reveal the identity of our interviewee or the name of their organization. Therefore, some organization-specific questions and expertise-specific questions were left out to protect our interviewees.

General Questions

- Would you please give us a broad overview of your work in the DRC, the timeline, the position that you occupied and how long you lived and worked there?
- We know some of your work was specifically in the Ituri province. We're studying eastern DRC generally with a focus on the Kivus, specifically. Did you visit or conduct studies in those provinces? Can you give us your impressions of eastern DRC and the situation there?
- Can you please tell us more about the work that is done and was done by your organization on the situation in eastern DRC, specifically on subjects related to sexual violence and conflict minerals?
- For a number of authors, conflict minerals are furthering the eastern Congolese conflict and the political economy of violence in the country, while others argue that ethnicity and property are the main drivers. What, according to you/(name of organization), have been the major challenges to achieving peace in eastern DRC?

Gender and Sexual Violence in Eastern DRC

- What patterns of violence, if any, characterize the conflict in eastern DRC according to you/the Organization?
 - How is/isn't sexual violence related to the general violence of the conflict?
 - Has your organization identified potential causes for widespread sexual violence in the DRC? Could you elaborate on them?
- How would you (as an organization) characterize gender relations in eastern DRC? Have you seen any links, during your work, connections/links between this dynamic and sexual violence?
- In your experience, who are the main perpetrators of sexual violence, including rape, in eastern DRC?
- The act of sexual violence against women is seen by some perpetrators and people living in the DRC as a dishonorable and humiliating act not only for the women but also for the community. This weakens the social fabric of the target community and leads to the exclusion of women victims of sexual violence. What is your/your organization's analysis of this situation? What could actors do to mitigate the exclusion of women to increase social resilience? What uses of this act by militias and other armed groups are observable?

- In our literature review we highlighted academic works that underline how sexual violence in the DRC does not generally fulfill the legal/conceptual criteria (alternatively: general does not meet the conceptual criteria) of Rape as a weapon of war (RAWW). In this specific context, academics favor the use of Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) as a framework for understanding the events. Can you please tell us more about (Organization Name)/Your's perception of sexual violence against women and girls in eastern DRC and how would you categorize it? (Alternatively: What is your perception of sexual violence against women and girls and how would you classify it?)
- In our literature review, we highlighted findings that showcase how mining is related to sexual violence, both at the site of extraction and in mining towns. In your experience as a protection officer, did you come across mining-related sexual violence?
- In your publications you talk about how international aid primarily, or exclusively, funds support for victims of sexual violence. Could you please describe these initiatives in more detail?
- Could you elaborate on this dynamic and the relationships between international aid, support for sexual violence survivors, and the needs of the broader population in the DRC
- What were, in your opinion, the shortcomings of international Initiatives in addressing sexual violence?

Peacebuilding

- Can you please tell us more about the international initiatives' architecture from IOs and International NGOs occurring in the DRC specifically regarding human rights, sexual violence and state-building? What are, in your opinion, the main drivers of these initiatives and what were they trying to achieve and address?
- During your field work and work on the DRC did you notice peacebuilding initiatives and projects that addressed sexual violence specifically? If yes, would you tell us more about the projects you encountered on the ground? If yes also, what proportion would you say these sexual violence-focused projects represented of all peacebuilding initiatives you encountered in the DRC?
- (If they have expertise on violence in the DRC) What patterns of violence characterize the conflict in eastern DRC?
 - If yes, would you be able to tell us more about the role of gender in the conflict?

International Narratives, Discourses, and Initiatives on Sexual Violence

The UN Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict Margot Wallström called the DRC “the rape capital of the world” in 2010. What would you say drives this characterization? What consequences does it have in your opinion/your organization's on present-day international initiatives regarding the DRC, specifically on sexual violence against women and girls?

In our literature review, we identified a predominant narrative that has guided a number of international initiatives in the DRC. This narrative provides a one to-one account of the situation, consequence, and solution for the eastern DRC conflict: conflict minerals are the cause, sexual violence against women and girls are the main consequence, and state-building interventions are the solution.

- (For Experts) Would you say what you have seen during your research/field work supports the existence of such a narrative in the DRC?
 - (For organizations) How would you say (Name of Organization) situates itself regarding this narrative in its work on the DRC?
 - How much does this narrative influence international initiatives and projects in eastern DRC and the responded deployed by (international) organizations such as (Name of Organization?)
 - How would you say the international initiatives in the DRC on peacebuilding, sexual violence and mining reforms affected the actions of armed actors and other warring factions in the DRC?
- Multiple international initiatives have been focused on conflict-free/clean mining guidelines such as Dodd-Frank and the OECD Due Diligence Guidelines. Would you say these initiatives achieved what they envisioned or had effects on the current conflict?
 - Do you see such initiatives affecting ASM, specifically? If so, how?
 - Can you please tell us more about clean mining initiatives and their international guidelines such as the OECD Due Diligence Guidelines and if they achieved what they envisioned regarding the reduction of the current conflict in the Kivus?
 - What is (Name of Organisation)'s involvement regarding international initiatives and the international discourse related to sexual violence, conflict and mining in eastern DRC?

Specific Questions

- According to our research, your organization today still focuses on uncovering sexual violence against women and girls in eastern DRC, including the Kivus, as well as creating initiatives related to healing and justice for victims and perpetrators. Could you tell us more about the organization's actions on this? Is there any progress being made on creating accountability and justice through international initiatives led by your or other organizations?
- Your organization is heavily involved in wartime sexual violence in the DRC as well as on human rights and (small-scale) mining in the country. Are you aware of any recent study or inquiry made by the organization related to conflict minerals and sexual violence?

In multiple documentaries and in our own literature review we highlighted that responsible mineral sourcing and international initiatives related to conflict-related sexual violence also had negative impacts on the livelihoods of women, especially women miners and women around mining sites in the Kivus.

- What are your opinions on such statements? What would (Name of Organization) do to circumvent these negative effects of international initiatives on the lives of women and girls in the Kivus?
- Can you tell us more about the relationship between international initiatives related to mining and the situation of women in the east of the DRC?

- How could responsible mineral sourcing help improve the livelihoods of women in the DRC?

Mapping Report

In 2010, the OHCHR released the Mapping Report, a 1100+ document retracing a decade of violence, conflict, atrocity crimes, and human rights violation in the DRC between 1993 and 2003. It was also one of the fundamental reports focusing on the provision of a comprehensive picture of the sexual violence occurring in the DRC and its eastern part.

- What would you/(Name of Organization) say is the legacy of this mapping report and related actions on uncovering conflict-related sexual violence and international initiatives in the DRC today?

Specific questions asked in French to some organizations

- Quelle est l'implication de votre organisation dans les initiatives internationales et le discours international sur les violences sexuelles, les conflits et l'exploitation minière dans l'est de la RDC ?
- Les nouveaux partenariats négociés par votre organisation comprennent-ils des initiatives axées sur l'exploitation minière responsable et propre ? Dans l'affirmative, quelles mesures cherchent-elles à mettre en œuvre ?
- Votre organisation se concentre-t-elle davantage sur l'exploitation minière industrielle ou l'exploitation minière artisanale et à petite échelle est-elle également incluse ?
- Comment le partenariat entre votre organisation et la RDC est-il structuré ? Dans quelle mesure les acteurs locaux sont-ils impliqués dans la planification et la mise en œuvre ?
- Quel travail effectue votre organisation concernant les réformes du système de justice spécifiquement sur les violences faites aux femmes ?

Safety of Women in Mines and Mining Towns

- Can you tell us more about experiences related to your own and other women's physical safety while in and around the mines?
- You and other authors also write about how women must take on what is almost a persona of a "miner" while they work. How does this impact both physical safety and their ability to be themselves?
- Similarly, can you tell us more about the gender relations both at mining sites and in mining towns? Are they different from those of the country you studied's broader society?
 - What sort of gender roles and expectations are expressed in these mining spaces?
- Would you be able to tell us more about gender expressions in and around the mining sites and if (and how) these have a role in gender relations in this space?

End of The Interview

- Do you know anyone else we should interview or authors/articles we should read?
- Do you know much about DRC context that might assist us in thinking through your research?

C. Local Story Questionnaire and Oral Consent Procedure (in French)

Following a brief presentation of each other we clearly underlined that the only native French speaker able to carry an interview in French is a man. We did our best to reassure the interviewees that they had the possibility to only refer or talk to the other woman in the room or with our partner. We then proceeded with the following:

Oral Consent

- Consentez-vous à ce que cet entretien soit enregistré et utilisé dans le cadre de notre recherche ?
- Comment souhaiteriez-vous être identifiée (nom et titre, titre générique, pas du tout) ?
Remarque : si vous souhaitez que nous arrêtions l'enregistrement ou que nous changions la manière dont nous vous identifions, vous pouvez le demander à tout moment.
- Votre participation à cet entretien ne fera l'objet d'aucune compensation financière ou matérielle. Y consentez-vous ?

General Questions

- Pourriez-vous nous parler de vous, de vos origines, de votre histoire et de la manière dont vous avez été amené à travailler avec Panzi ?
- Quelle est votre expérience de l'exploitation minière en tant que femme ? Pourriez-vous nous parler de la perception qu'ont les gens des activités minières menées par des femmes ?
- Pourriez-vous s'il vous plaît, nous en dire plus sur la sécurité générale des femmes et des filles dans les villes minières et sur leurs relations avec les hommes ?

- Pourriez-vous nous en dire plus sur la situation politique actuelle dans les Kivus et sur l'existence de milices dans la région ?
- Pourriez-vous nous en dire plus sur la présence de milices ou de groupes armés dans les villes minières où vous avez vécu ou que vous avez traversées, ainsi que sur les routes utilisées pour le transport des minerais ? Serait-il possible d'en dire un peu plus sur les raisons pour lesquelles vous pensez qu'ils sont présents ?
- Avez-vous entendu parler de violences ou de flambées de violence dans les villes où les milices sont présentes, en particulier de violences à l'encontre des femmes ?
- (Question finale si vous avez le temps) Est-ce que vous ou quelqu'un que vous connaissez est familier avec les initiatives d'exploitation minière propre ? Si oui, pouvez-vous nous en dire plus sur leurs effets sur les femmes et la sécurité ?

D. Consent Form

(Please see document attached below)

Consent Form

Name of Participant:

I accept to be interviewed for the research project entitled “ARP 03_05 Conflict-mining-related sexual violence; peace-building in the Democratic Republic of Congo and its dependence on a responsible global economy”. The Interviewers have explained objectives, procedures, and implications of my participation in the research to me. I have also received a brief synopsis as well as a copy of this consent form. The Interview will be between 45 and 60 minutes.

For any question relative to the research or to withdraw your consent at any time, you can communicate with Carla Laudien, Alexandre El Meouchi and Katie Maloan by email at arp2023.drc@graduateinstitute.ch

By agreeing to participate in this research, I understand:

- 1.) That my participation involves a semi-structured interview.
- 2.) That the information will only be used for the purposes of any publication following from this research, that my name will only be explicitly used if I agree to it, and that my identity will be protected if requested.
 - a.) I am willing to be identified by name and title
 - b.) I am willing to be identified by generic title only
 - c.) I am unwilling to have my identity disclosed in any way
- 3.) That no information I disclose will be used in interviews with other participants in such a way as to allow them to identify the sources of information.
- 4.) That the interview tapes and notes will be kept in a secure environment and destroyed seven years upon the completion of the research.
 - a.) I consent to the interview being audio taped
 - b.) I do not consent to the interview being audio taped
- 5.) My participation in the project is voluntary. I can choose not to respond to specific questions and can ask for my answers not to be captured on tape. I can also decide to withdraw from the project at any time. If I do, it is up to me to decide whether any

material provided to the project director can still be used for the purposes of the research.

- 6.) I have received a brief synopsis of the project, was able to ask additional questions about its objectives, and understand my role in it. Upon consideration, I freely accept to participate.

Participant

Date

Interviewer 1

Date

Interviewer 2

Date

Formulaire de consentement

Nom du/de la participant(e):

J'accepte d'être interviewé(e) de manière bénévole dans le cadre du projet de recherche intitulé "ARP 03_05 Conflict-mining-related sexual violence; peace-building in the Democratic Republic of Congo and its dependence on a responsible global economy". Les intervieweurs m'ont expliqué les objectifs, les procédures et les implications de ma participation à la recherche. J'ai également reçu un bref résumé ainsi qu'une copie de ce formulaire de consentement. L'entretien durera entre 45 et 60 minutes.

Pour toute question relative à la recherche ou pour retirer votre consentement à tout moment, vous pouvez communiquer avec Carla Laudien, Alexandre El Meouchi et Katie Maloan par courrier électronique à l'adresse arp2023.drc@graduateinstitute.ch.

En acceptant de participer à cette recherche, je comprends :

- 1.) Que ma participation implique un entretien semi-structuré.
- 2.) Que les informations ne seront utilisées qu'à des fins de publication suite à cette recherche, que mon nom ne sera explicitement utilisé que si j'y consens et que mon identité sera protégée si je le demande.
 - a.) J'accepte d'être identifié(e) par mon nom et mon titre
 - b.) J'accepte d'être identifié(e) uniquement par un titre générique
 - c.) Je ne souhaite pas que mon identité soit divulguée de quelque manière que ce soit
- 3.) Qu'aucune information que je divulgue ne sera utilisée dans les entretiens avec d'autres participants de manière à leur permettre d'identifier les sources d'information.
- 4.) Les enregistrements et les notes des entretiens seront conservés dans un environnement sécurisé et détruits sept ans après la fin de la recherche.
 - a.) Je consens à ce que l'entretien soit enregistré
 - b.) Je ne consens pas à ce que l'entretien soit enregistré
- 5.) Ma participation au projet est volontaire. Je peux choisir de ne pas répondre à certaines questions et demander que mes réponses ne soient pas enregistrées. Je peux également décider de me retirer du projet à tout moment. Dans ce cas, il m'appartient

de décider si le matériel fourni au directeur du projet peut encore être utilisé aux fins de la recherche.

6.) Ma participation au projet est faite sur une base bénévole et ne comprend aucune compensation financière, matérielle ou autre.

7.) J'ai reçu un bref résumé du projet de recherche, j'ai pu poser des questions supplémentaires sur ses objectifs et je comprends mon rôle dans ce projet. Après réflexion, j'accepte librement de participer.

Participant

Date

Intervieweur 1

Date

Intervieweur 2

Date

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Interviews and Primary Data Generated

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