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NOTE ON THE NEED TO LET SOME TIME TO IMPLEMENT A THOROUGH CONTROL SYSTEM ON ARTISANAL MINING IN EASTERN DRC

In French we say : « Il n'est pas possible de vouloir une chose et son contraire ». (You cannot have a will and its opposite in the same time).

The Dodd-Frank Act clearly aims at helping the population in Eastern DRC by cleaning the mining activity. Almost every actor along the whole mineral chain too. Plus the government. Plus the civil society, national and international. Except some high rank army officers and patrons of armed groups and bands who get profit from the extorsions and order sexual violences to keep their grasp and terror on the people... Everyone knows that.

So does the state, but this is a fragile state which hopefully is able to issue good and sane laws and regulations but is almost completely unable to have them applied.

Thus the civil society, at local, provincial and national levels, with the help of such international cooperation agencies and know how as the German GIZ, the Canadian PAC, and so on, involved itself these last years into efforts to improve the whole situation, in accordance with government agencies and business actors.

Thanks to their commitment and funds, several procedures to assess the artisanal mining products along the supply chain are now in the design process. Only one (iTSCi) was already on a test stage on the field and had to be cancelled because of the suspension measure taken by the Congolese government, which end to-day, March 10. Another important actor (the German BGR/GIZ) was delayed but has scheduled anew his intervention... PAC/ICGLR is nowadays on the brink...

Now if the Dodd-Frank regulations are applied from April this year it will ruin all these efforts and condemn hundreds of thousands of people in Eastern DRC to keep under the terror of these maffiosi barons, instead of improving the whole situation. Even in Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, thousands of people will be badly affected.

Another French saying goes like this : “L'enfer est pavé de bonnes intentions !” (Hell is paved with best thoughts).

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Directeur

P.S. This position paper is written by a Belgian Jesuit priest, who lives in this country since more than 40 years and surveyed the mining activity from the year 2001 (the “coltan boom”) as part of his duty to work on development matters.

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