



## **Redefining 'Conflict-free' behind natural resources in the DR Congo**

8 May 2019 – 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

NIAS Creative Campus 18-20 St. John Street, London, EC1M 4NX

### **Participants**

**Chair: Dele Williams**, NIAS CEO

**Andrej Sagaidak**, NIAS Research Assistant

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### **Overview**

Since 1998, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the African Great Lakes region have come under the world's spotlight for exporting 'conflict minerals' defined as natural resources extracted in a conflict zone and sold to perpetuate the fighting. The protracted issue regarding the mining and export of conflict minerals from eastern Congo initially fuelled and continues to sustain one of the deadliest global conflicts since World War II. For over a decade, companies in industrialised countries have purchased the mineral notwithstanding war and lawlessness in the DRC. Not only did the extraction of coltan deprive the Congolese people the prosperity they deserved, but the country is still suffering one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

Conflict minerals include tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold often referred to as the 3TGs. 'Conflict-free' now a label applied to products, suppliers, supply chains, smelters, and refineries that, based on due diligence, do not deal with 3TGs that benefit armed groups. Our project's aim is to advance the term to increase the compliance of companies who use the term 'conflict-free' in relation to their produce and operating standards.

The discussion of the event challenged the global approach towards the mining industry in the DRC. The concluding remarks of the meeting included:

- Legality does not necessarily procure legitimacy.
- Making OECD Guideline mandatory would not solve the problem of conflict minerals.
- 'Conflict-free' term could be redefined to 'conflict-reducing' to provide a better understanding for consumers who buy products containing resources from the DRC.

- The UK may face challenges auditing and regulating its mining companies post-Brexit as it lacks a mandatory law regarding conflict minerals
- The consumers play a key role in changing corporate responsible behaviour and treatment of workers in the DRC

The next event will be in September 2019 regarding the 2018 Congolese new Mining Code and what implications it would have on the global mining corporations.

### **Tags**

Topics: conflict minerals, OECD, Dodd-Frank Act,

Regions and themes: DR Congo

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