

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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Table of contents

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| FROM THE CHAIR | 3 |
| ACTIVITY REPORT | 5 |
| NATURAL RESOURCES | 6 |
| BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS | 18 |
| CONFLICT MAPPING | 30 |
| ARMS TRADE & SECURITY | 38 |
| MAPS & DATA | 44 |
| ABOUT IPIS | 49 |
| MISSION STATEMENT | 50 |
| ASSIGNMENTS 2025 | 51 |
| NETWORKS AND PLATFORMS | 52 |
| OUTREACH | 53 |
| IPIS TEAM | 59 |
| BOARD OF DIRECTORS | 60 |
| CONTACT | 61 |

FROM THE CHAIR

At the publication of this new Annual Report, it is fitting to pay tribute to Honorary Ambassador Johan Swinnen, who chaired IPIS for the past decade. Under his leadership, IPIS experienced remarkable growth and unprecedented expansion. Thanks to his active engagement and representation, IPIS gained increasing recognition among diplomats, thought leaders, and policy makers, while its reports and insights came to be widely referenced by key international stakeholders.

Ambassador Swinnen tirelessly championed IPIS' commitment to durable peace and human rights. He inspired and motivated the IPIS research team, generously sharing his profound knowledge of the Great Lakes Region. He encouraged the organization to strive for excellence and to venture where others would not, fully embodying IPIS' distinctive and courageous spirit. With his well-known warmth and kindness, Ambassador Swinnen always had a thoughtful word for stakeholders, members of the General Assembly, fellow Board members, management, and staff alike. We are deeply grateful for his exceptional and unrivalled contribution to IPIS.

IPIS' expansion is taking place in an increasingly fragile geopolitical environment, where brutal

violence and war are too often replacing a world order grounded in multilateralism, dialogue, international law, and justice. Over the past twelve months, more than 240,000 people worldwide have lost their lives due to conflict-related violence. In places such as Palestine, where virtually the entire population is exposed to violence, civilians continue to bear the heaviest burden. At the same time, efforts towards conflict resolution remain insufficient. In this context, IPIS' mission is more relevant than ever. An increasing number of policy makers recognize the value of a research institute capable of providing tailored information, rigorous analysis, capacity enhancement, and policy advice – all essential building blocks for durable peace, sustainable development, and the fulfillment of human rights.

We are sincerely grateful to all our donors and partners who have placed their trust in IPIS and commissioned our work or offered collaboration. Their support enables us to undertake independent research and to deliver reports of the highest quality. Alongside continued collaboration with public agencies in Belgium, the Netherlands, and the European Union, IPIS has recently secured new assignments from governmental institutions in Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as



from private sector partners. Furthermore, IPIS increasingly works in close synergy with civil society organizations in Africa, Belgium, and Europe, seeking alignment with them to develop shared analysis and joint solutions.

Over the years, IPIS has developed recognized expertise on the role of natural resources in armed conflicts, particularly in Africa. The global race for critical raw materials increasingly acts as a catalyst for violent conflict, as illustrated by developments in Eastern DRC. IPIS' assignments in this field provide in-depth insights into the complex relationship between minerals, governance, and conflict dynamics. In parallel, IPIS continues to monitor labor conditions and human rights issues linked to critical minerals and artisanal mining as well as the social license to operation of large-scale mining companies.

IPIS also invests strongly in participating in international policy forums, organizing debates, and

communicating its findings through publications and media engagement. In Belgium, it organized a widely attended conference in the Federal Parliament with the aim to explore the conditions for a peace-oriented foreign policy, thereby promoting a strong role for diplomacy, international solidarity, and a long-term commitment to build sustainable peace in fragile state contexts.

Looking ahead, IPIS is well prepared for the future. While the organization is preparing a new five-year strategic framework (2027-2031), we are determined to further strengthen our growth trajectory and impact. A key objective will be to complement conflict analysis with stronger engagement in conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. In a world marked by rising instability and conflict, IPIS' mission is not only relevant – it is indispensable.

Loïc De Cannière, IPIS Chair

ACTIVITY REPORT

Looking back at 2025, we witnessed a year that was defined by escalating conflicts. The AFC/M23's capture of the provincial capitals of Goma and Bukavu in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in early 2025 directly impacted our team, partners, and activities focused on peace and natural resource governance. The rebel group's territorial advance and the resulting violence – both with the Congolese army and against civilians – reinforced the need for in-depth analysis. IPIS leveraged its expertise in conflict mapping and mineral resource governance to shed light on the complex interplay between natural resources and conflict. Our research highlighted the diverse drivers of violence and their lasting consequences for peace, providing actionable insights to NGOs, embassies, international agencies, and media outlets.

IPIS also studied the vectors for peace in West Africa, examining the role of policies related to pastoralism and large-scale infrastructure projects, particularly in Benin and Niger. Additionally, we gave importance to the study of overlooked crises, such as the insecurity and humanitarian fallout from the Mobondo crisis in western DRC.

Based on these insights from different countries and as geopolitical fragmentation intensified marked by the start of Donald Trump's second term, IPIS in collaboration with Search for Common Ground, facilitated peace-oriented dialogue between Belgian civil society and government actors. In a context of rising defense spending and shrinking development budgets, we made the case for peace and an emphasized the need for an integrated approach between

diplomacy, development cooperation and defense with dialogue as a key element of positive impact.

The emergence of “minerals for peace” arguments further highlighted the interconnections within IPIS's research domains. In December 2025, inspired by discussions between Ukraine and the United States, Presidents Tshisekedi and Trump signed a mineral-oriented strategic partnership alongside the Washington Peace Agreement between the DRC and Rwanda. Securing critical raw materials, essential for the energy transition and the defense sector's demands, became a pressing global issue. IPIS's research on coltan and cobalt in the DRC, and bauxite in Guinea, coupled with lessons from the extraction of traditional minerals such as gold and diamonds, provided essential insights to ensure raw material strategies remain align with human rights and environmental sustainability.

To foster conflict-sensitive and responsible policies, IPIS continued its work on business and human rights, advocating for transparency and accountability, particularly in the extractive sector. In Tanzania, post-election violence in 2025 reinforced the importance of supporting civil society in its push for greater transparency and in its engagement with extractive industry actors.

Despite budget cuts impacting development cooperation, IPIS remains committed to independent, high-quality, and impact-driven analysis, capacity-enhancement, and policy advice to support actors who want to realize durable peace, sustainable development, and the fulfilment of human rights.



NATURAL RESOURCES

Mapping mineral supply chains to understand their dynamics and impact

Mapping artisanal mining of cobalt and copper in the Congolese province of Lualaba

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation and the European Union

The global surge in demand for critical minerals has placed a spotlight on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which holds vast cobalt and copper reserves. While large-scale mining (LSM) dominates production, artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) constitutes a vital livelihood for thousands in the region.

For over 15 years, IPIS has been mapping ASM sites in eastern DRC, employing a detailed questionnaire to gather on-the-ground insights. Partnering with Congolese civil society, the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR), Resource Matters, and technical staff from SAEMAPE, IPIS developed a context-specific methodology to map the artisanal copper and cobalt sector in the province of Lualaba in order to deepen the understanding of the sector's complexities.

In mid-March, a workshop prepared teams for field visits in April and May. Mixed teams, including civil society representatives and SAEMAPE technical staff, collected primary data through interviews with miners, traders, state agents, and NGOs. The research focused on geolocating sites, documenting ownership, legal status, mining related conflicts, workforce demographics (including women and children), extraction, processing, and trading activities in the city of Kolwezi, and the territories of Mutshatsha, and Lubudi.

Despite a legal framework for the formalization of ASM, challenges persist, particularly in terms of state oversight. The tense but inevitable coexistence between artisanal mining and industrial operations is a pivotal issue for the realization of human rights and local development. The data collected will enable IPIS and its partners to develop targeted recommendations for addressing these challenges.

▼ Copper and cobalt artisanal mining site in Lualaba, DRC.



The diamond landscape in the Kasai province of the DRC

Supported by the European Union

Despite holding approximately 9% of the world's known diamond reserves and contributing 18% of global industrial diamond production and 3% of gem-quality diamonds, the Congolese diamond sector remains relatively unknown. In 2024, IPIS conducted a comprehensive study in Kasai Oriental province, home to a large-scale industrial exploitation, the state-miner MIBA and widespread artisanal diamond production.

The findings were published in April 2025 in the report *"Diamonds in the DRC: A sector struggling to shine again,"* which analyzed production trends, the distinct challenges faced by large-scale mining (LSM), companies such as SACIM and MIBA, and artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) stakeholders, as well as difficulties for state services in monitoring the supply chain, the semi-industrial actors' opaque exploitation, extortion of ASM stakeholders, and insecurity.

To foster dialogue and action, IPIS – together with GAERN (Groupe d'Appui aux Exploitants des Ressources Naturelles), CDH (Centre des Droits de l'Homme et du Droit Humanitaire), and the

Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition (KP CSC) – organized a two-day meeting in Mbuji-Mayi on 12–13 September 2025. The event included the presentation of the report's recommendations, a screening of the KP CSC documentary *"Beyond Shining Illusions,"* and an interactive session to gather feedback from local stakeholders, aiming to catalyze efforts to reverse the sector's decline and enhance its developmental impact.

Publication

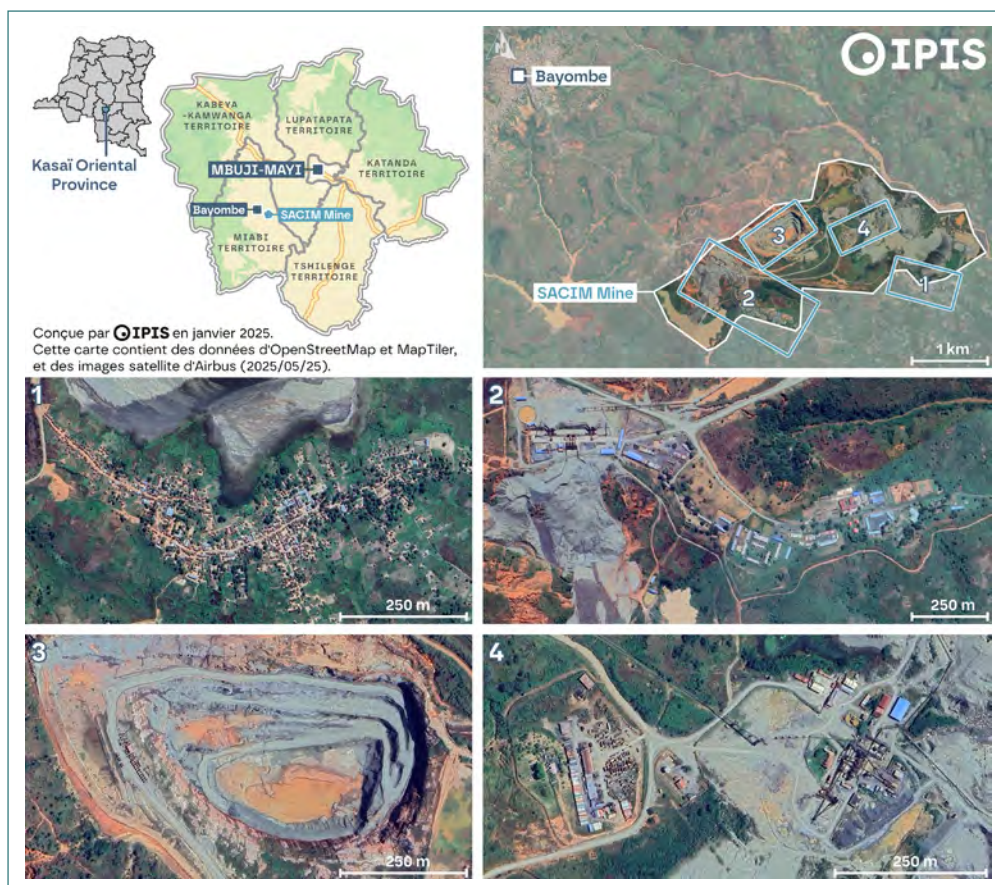


[Diamonds in the DRC: A sector struggling to shine again](#)

News post



[From decline to development: Reviving the diamond sector in Kasai Oriental](#)



◀
Satellite image illustrating the scale of SACIM's operations at the Tshibwe mine in Miabi territory, Kasai Oriental province.

Mapping artisanal and small-scale mining in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Belgian Development Cooperation, and PAX.

In 2025, IPIS continued its mapping of mining sites in eastern DRC. In Ituri, it mapped 75 sites in Djugu, Irumu, and Mambasa (February–April 2025). The findings were shared with the Madini – Minerals for Peace and Development project consortium to inform their peacebuilding initiatives. To ensure local ownership and actionable insights, IPIS, alongside Justice Plus, facilitated workshops in Irumu and Mambasa in August 2025, presenting the results to mining monitoring committees and key stakeholders.

In South Kivu’s Fizi territory, IPIS documented 19 active artisanal gold sites (November–December 2025), analyzing working conditions, cooperatives, conflicts with industrial operations, and security challenges. The study also noted a number of roadblocks controlled by armed groups operating under the Wazalendo banner, a coalition of militias allied with the Congolese army against the M23 rebellion.

In the gold-rich province of Haut-Uélé, the Kibali Goldmines – a joint venture between Barrick Mining Corporation, AngloGold Ashanti, and the Congolese parastatal SOKIMO – operates one of Africa’s most productive gold mines, with permits spanning the territories of Watsa and Faradje. According to a 2024 mapping exercise by IPIS, nearly 5,500 artisanal miners continue to work at sites that now fall largely within Kibali’s concession. Since 2014, the Congolese government has periodically attempted to halt artisanal mining in the area, often through interventions marked by excessive use of force by security forces and the backfilling of mine pits—actions that have fueled tensions and led to allegations of suppression against elements of the Congolese army. In response, PAX and IPIS collaborated on research to develop actionable recommendations for engaging artisanal miners and facilitating their transition to sustainable livelihoods, with IPIS producing a factsheet to support PAX’s advocacy efforts.

News post



[Workshops to present the results of the mapping of artisanal mining sites carried out in Ituri](#)

Publication



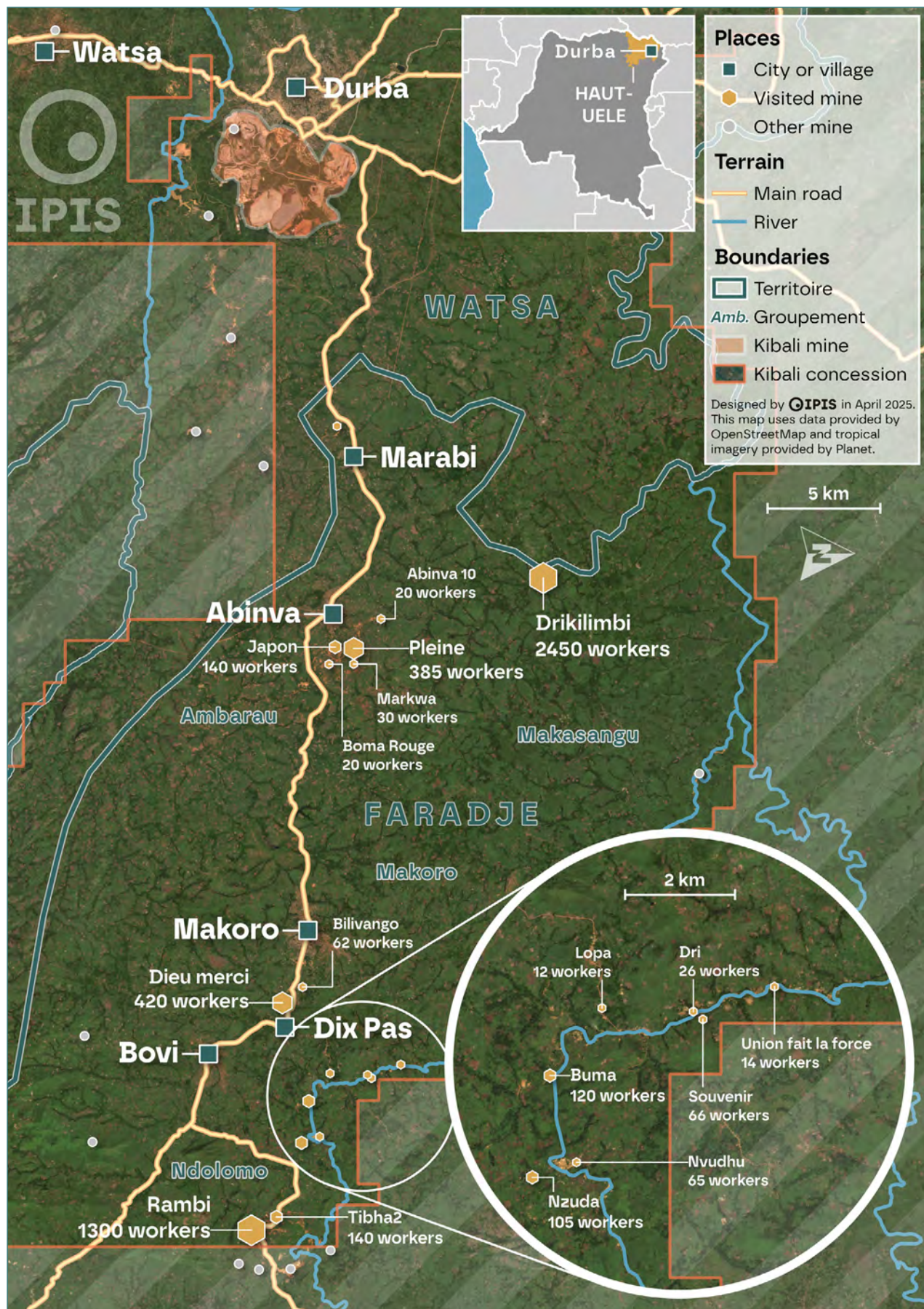
[Mapping artisanal mining sites in the Kibali gold mine concession in Faradje territory, Haut-Uélé, DRC](#)

Project page



[Madini: Minerals for Peace and Development](#)





▲ Location of mining sites visited in Faradje territory in the concession of Kibali Goldmines.

Engagement with stakeholders involved in responsible sourcing

Active participation in networks and international fora

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation and the European Union

In 2025, IPIS actively engaged in key international fora aligned with its research focus. At the OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains, IPIS co-organized a session with IMPACT, *"Why Central Africa (Still) Matters: Lessons from 15 Years of Supply Chain"*, taking stock of the implementation challenges of responsible sourcing and advocating for context-specific, co-designed solutions over top-down approaches.

At the Paris Peace Forum, IPIS delivered an intervention on the need to balance global demand for minerals with local realities to prevent conflict and build peace during the session *"Geopolitics, communities, and the future of the DRC's minerals."*

Regionally, IPIS co-hosted a high-level event in Dar es Salaam titled *"Access to justice in Tanzania's*

extractive sector: Preparing for the critical minerals rush", in collaboration with HakiRasilimali, Business & Human Rights Tanzania (BHRT), and Avocats sans Frontières (ASF). IPIS also contributed to the annual *Jukwaa la Uziduaaji*, Tanzania's national extractive sector conference in Dodoma, reflecting on lessons from the Kimberley Process and EITI, on how transparency should translate into accountability.

IPIS also maintained active engagement in multistakeholder platforms, including the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM), the Corporate Accountability Working Group, the EurAc network, the Belgian Network for Natural Resources, the OECD Multi-Stakeholder Group, the CSO EU Raw Materials Coalition, and the Kimberley Process.



◀ Jukwaa la Uziduaaji conference in Dodoma. ©HakiRasilimali

Development of a strategy for Enabel's initiatives to support stakeholders in the mining sector in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba

Commissioned by Enabel

Enabel, the Belgian agency for international cooperation, is exploring ways to support the DRC's copper and cobalt mining sector, in line with its mission to promote decent work and sustainable development, including through collaboration with the private sector.

Recognizing both the sector's potential for local development and the persistent challenges it faces, Enabel commissioned IPIS and national experts to conduct a comprehensive study. The objective was to map the mining landscape in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba, identify stakeholder needs, document existing initiatives, and propose actionable recommendations to address priority gaps.

After the initial research, dissemination workshops were organized in Kolwezi and Lubumbashi in June. These interactive sessions provided a platform for participants to share feedback and co-develop concrete suggestions for Enabel's future strategy.

Complementing this effort, a second study analyzed the governance, structure, institutional ties of the African Center of Excellence for Battery Research and Innovation (CAEB) in Lubumbashi, its collaboration opportunities with ENABEL and technical institutes. Established in April 2022, CAEB reflects the DRC's ambition to build a competitive value chain for batteries, electric vehicles, and renewable energy – a sector where Enabel envisions strategic partnerships to amplify its development impact.

▼ Women extracting copper and cobalt ore in Lualaba.



Collaborating with civil society actors to ensure monitoring and enhance accountability in the extractive sectors

Kuf(u)atilia – Incident reporting and monitoring in eastern DRC and Tanzania

Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Belgian Development Cooperation, and the European Union

Since its launch in 2018, Kufatilia (“to follow-up” in Swahili) has served as a critical incident reporting and monitoring system in the Democratic Republic of Congo, developed by IPIS and Congolese civil society partners. Active across four provinces, the platform enables mining-affected communities to report issues such as mine accidents, armed group interference, forced or child labor, violence, and illegal taxation via WhatsApp. Kufatilia members address reported incidents through mediation, stakeholder outreach, sensitization, training, and advocacy, aiming to improve safety and working conditions. In December 2025, Congolese network members convened in Kampala to design a governance structure and set ambitions for 2026, alongside a five-year vision.

Building on the success of Kufatilia, IPIS launched Kufuutilia in Tanzania’s Shinyanga region in June 2024. In Tanzania, the system is more geographically focused on specific mining zones, including near industrial mining concessions. Designated civil society organizations monitor incidents and use the platform to inform their work of community support and empowerment. In March 2025, IPIS expanded Kufuutilia to Mara region during a workshop with local CSOs. As one participant noted, *“This platform will not only enable transparency but also encourage communities to actively participate in shaping a fairer mining sector.”*

In December 2025, IPIS received the inaugural ICoCA Responsible Security Award for its work on the Kuf(u)atilia networks. The award recognized IPIS’s development of effective community-based incident-monitoring systems. Accompanying the award, ICoCA

released a case study, as well as a podcast interview detailing how the Kuf(u)atilia systems empower civil society partners embedded in key mining areas.

Building on its experience with Kuf(u)atilia, IPIS collaborated with Avocats sans Frontières to assess and enhance its Gbou-Kôkô human rights violations reporting system in the Central African Republic. The evaluation focused on refining the existing reporting methodology and assessing the technical and organizational feasibility of transitioning to a scalable online platform. IPIS’s recommendations targeted structural and technical improvements, as well as strengthening feedback mechanisms towards incident reporters.

News posts



[IPIS receives ICoCA Responsible Security Award for its Kuf\(u\)atilia incident monitoring systems](#)



[KUFUATILIA expands to Tanzania: Strengthening civil society monitoring and community support in the mining sector](#)

Project page – Kufatilia in DRC



<https://ipisresearch.be/project/kufatilia-incident-reporting-and-monitoring/>

Empowering Tanzanian communities and civil society to foster justice and human rights in natural resource governance

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In 2025, IPIS strengthened its collaboration with Tanzanian CSOs and communities to document human rights and socio-economic impacts tied to natural resource exploitation. Through initiatives like *Kufuatilia*, joint *DARUBINI* briefings, and *Voices from Tanzania*, IPIS fosters evidence-based, multi-stakeholder dialogue to drive policy reforms in resource governance.

The 2024–2025 *Voices from Tanzania* series highlighted women’s roles in ASM, focusing on gold mining in Mwakitolyo, gemstones in Kalalani, and tanzanite in Mirerani. Despite representing 25–30% of the ASM workforce, women face systemic gender discrimination and arbitrary barriers, often confining them to low-paid or undervalued tasks like crushing, sorting, and vending. Yet, women are actively resisting these constraints by forming savings groups, strengthening social networks, and establishing small businesses to overcome structural inequities. The reports advocate for targeted actions, including stronger policy implementation, improved access to finance and equipment, capacity-building, and support for women’s cooperatives, to foster inclusivity and unlock the sector’s full sustainable development potential.

In 2025, a new *Voices from Tanzania* cycle was launched on stakeholder engagement by mining companies, including some extracting critical minerals like

graphite and nickel. Participants receive a research grant and methodological support from IPIS to conduct field-based data collection and formulate their analysis in a report.

Publications



[Voices from Tanzania – Well-being and economic mobility of women in the Mirerani Tanzanite mining area, Manyara](#)



[Voices from Tanzania – Her place in the mine: Women’s struggles and aspirations in the gemstone sector of Kalalani, Tanga](#)



[Voices from Tanzania – Exploring cultural norms limiting women’s participation in artisanal and small-scale gold mining activities in Mwakitolyo, Shinyanga region](#)

Webpage



[Darubini briefings](#)



◀ Kufuatilia workshop held in Tarime.

Voix du Congo - Congolese CSOs document challenges of responsible mineral sourcing

Supported by the European Union

IPIS's *Voix du Congo* series amplifies the voices of DRC partners by supporting Congolese civil society organizations in documenting their expertise on the mining sector.

In 2025, IPIS collaborated with an anonymized South Kivu-based CSO to investigate the province's underreported coltan trade routes. Coltan, a mineral from which niobium and tantalum are extracted, gained renewed international attention in April 2024 following the M23's capture of the Rubaya mines in North Kivu, particularly due to its trade toward Rwanda and the revenues it generates for armed groups. This study addressed the neglect of South Kivu's role in this dynamic.

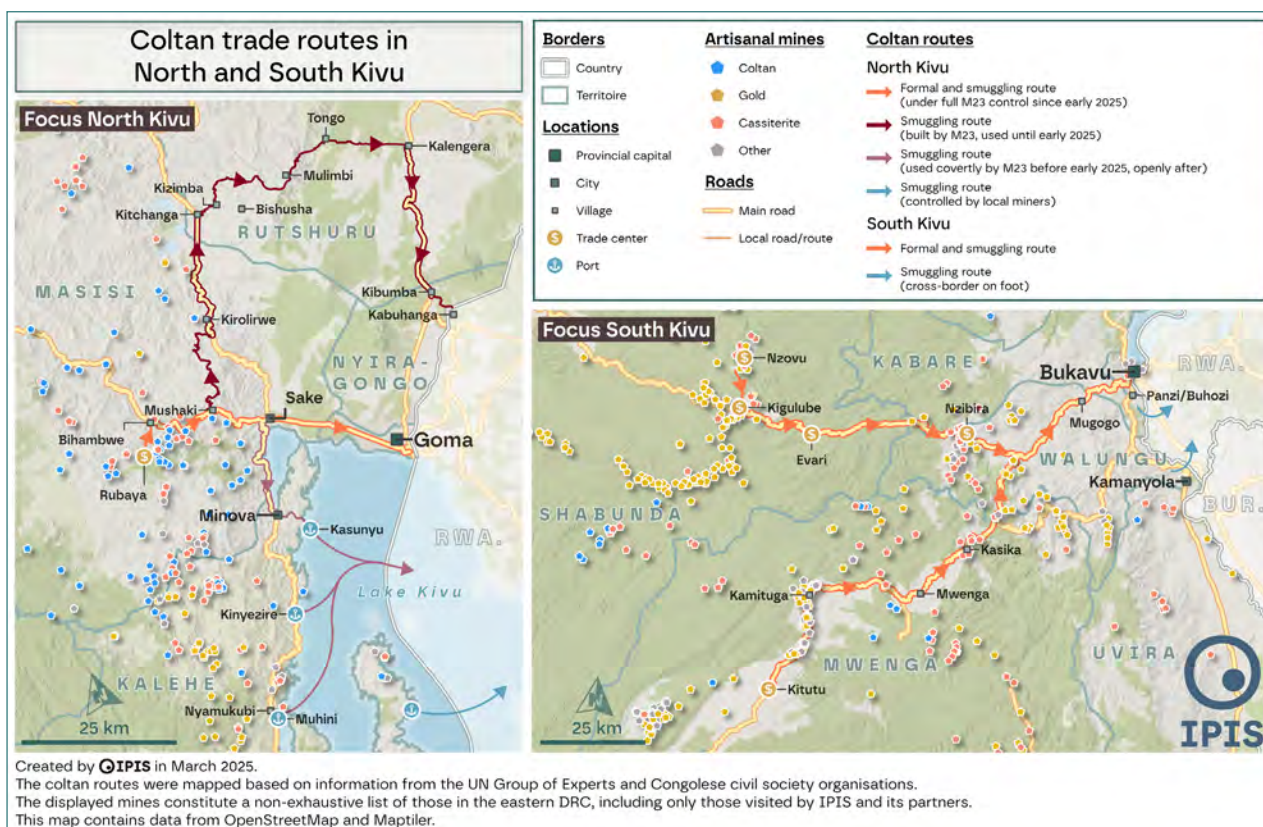
Through visits to 18 artisanal mining sites and engagement with miners, traders, state agents, and processing entities, the research analyzed the factors contributing to fraud and its practical execution. It identified three prevalent fraudulent practices: "*vragage*" (mixing coltan with cassiterite to evade controls), concealed transport via vehicles, and the exploitation of corrupt state agents and undisciplined FARDC members.

Publication



[Voix du Congo – The smuggling of coltan from South Kivu to Rwanda: Routes, factors, and implementation](#)

▼ Focus on coltan trade routes in North and South Kivu, DRC.



Engagement with the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition

Supported by the European Union

IPIS is a member of the Civil Society Coalition (CSC) of the Kimberley Process (KP), a UN-mandated certification scheme designed to break the link between the diamond trade and conflict. The KP CSC advocates for improved governance in the diamond sector by acting as a watchdog within KP structures, monitoring human rights impacts along the supply chain, empowering affected communities, and driving change at national, regional, and international levels. As a member of this coalition, an important objective of IPIS is to link grassroots research and advocacy to discussions about enhancing diamond governance in international policy fora.

In 2025, IPIS coordinated the coalition's production of the documentary *Beyond Shining Illusions*, which investigates mining operations in Sierra Leone, Lesotho, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The documentary amplifies voices of local residents and artisanal miners, exposing the often-overlooked impacts of large-scale diamond mining, including violence by security forces, environmental pollution from blasting and tailings, and a lack of socio-

economic benefits for communities. By challenging marketing narratives, the film demands accountability and fosters dialogue on how the sector can fulfill its potential to benefit local populations. IPIS researcher Hans Merket contributed analyses to the documentary, which was screened at the Kimberley Process Intersessional meeting to engage KP Participants and Observers in discussions on challenges and solutions.

Additionally, IPIS supported the coalition in organizing a webinar in September, addressing the disconnect between consumer perceptions of “conflict-free” diamonds and the harsh realities faced by mining communities, while exploring actionable steps toward a more responsible and equitable diamond trade.

Documentary



[Beyond Shining Illusions: New documentary exposes the unspoken realities of large-scale diamond mining](#)

▼ Koidu diamond mine in Sierra Leone. ©Makmende



Analyzing the impact of unconditional cash transfers in an artisanal mining zone

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In 2021, the Belgian non-profit Eight launched a two-year Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) program in three artisanal mining villages in Maniema Province of the DRC, delivering monthly mobile money payments to all households.

Building on a pilot study by IPIS that revealed notable socio-economic shifts in the first village compared to a control group, a controlled study was implemented in the second village, employing a matching methodology to assess the statistical significance of observed differences.

In 2024, 18 months after the baseline, IPIS conducted a midline follow-up survey using an enhanced questionnaire and robust analytical framework to evaluate the significance of changes over time. Published in 2025, the findings confirm substantial improvements in key indicators of socio-economic and subjective well-being among UCT recipients, including increased engagement in small businesses,

livestock investment, daily meal frequency, and access to medical care. These outcomes were absent or less pronounced in the control village.

Publication



[Impact of Unconditional Cash Transfers on socio-economic and subjective well-being in an artisanal mining community in the DRC: Highlights from a midline assessment](#)

Project page



<https://ipisresearch.be/project/analysing-the-impact-of-unconditional-cash-transfers-in-an-artisanal-mining-zone-in-maniema-province-drc/>



◀ Meeting with recipients of Unconditional Cash Transfers. ©Eight



BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS

Informing and monitoring responsible sourcing initiatives and drawing lessons learned

Assessing the impact of the Kimberley Process embargo on diamonds in the Central African Republic

Supported by the European Union

In 2013, the Kimberley Process imposed a rough diamond export embargo on the Central African Republic (CAR) in response to a violent coup and reports of rebel financing through diamond trade. Though partially eased between 2015 and 2019, progress stalled due to escalating geopolitical tensions, particularly with the arrival of Wagner Group mercenaries and Russia's growing influence in CAR's security and mining sectors. Most diamond mining zones remained under embargo until November 2024, when the KP abruptly lifted restrictions, citing improved conditions.

To address the lack of comprehensive evidence on the embargo's impact, IPIS conducted a research visit in 2024, interviewing miners, traders, officials, civil society representatives, and international experts. The resulting report evaluates the embargo's effects on artisanal mining, conflict financing, and smuggling, while examining the motivations behind its lifting

and the potential consequences for CAR and global diamond governance.

Key findings reveal that the embargo, while aimed at curbing conflict financing, had significant unintended consequences. It disproportionately affected artisanal miners, spurred a shift to gold mining, and intensified diamond smuggling, while failing to address deeper structural challenges such as corruption and weak oversight. The report aims to inform policy discussions and support more effective, community-focused approaches to natural resource governance in CAR.

Publication



[Diamonds, conflict and crime in the Central African Republic: The lifting of the last Kimberley Process embargo](#)



◀
Nakeko mining site in Nana-Mambéré, Central African Republic.

The Kimberley Process' failure to reform and the lessons for minerals governance

Supported by the European Union

The Kimberley Process (KP) Certification Scheme, launched in 2003, was a response to rebel groups funding insurgencies through the diamond trade in countries such as Sierra Leone, Angola, and Liberia. As a member of the KP Civil Society Coalition, IPIS participated in both the intersessional and plenary sessions in Dubai, which concluded a three-year review and reform cycle.

Once again, the KP failed to address critical gaps. It overlooked the role of Russian diamonds in financing the war in Ukraine and ignored Israel's involvement in the diamond trade amid grave violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza. Self-interest dominated debates, blocking the expansion of the 22-year-old "conflict diamonds" definition to cover broader violence and human rights abuses.

More fundamentally, the KP's structural flaws remain unaddressed: implementation challenges, decision-making processes, and a narrow toolbox when conflict diamonds are identified. The case of the Central African Republic demonstrated that embargoes, without robust accompanying measures, are counterproductive. The 2021 Declaration on Responsible Diamond Sourcing has yet to translate into meaningful operational change, leaving the KP increasingly detached from reality. Instead of confronting these issues, the KP prioritizes self-

promotion over self-reflection, perpetuating a system that conceals problems rather than solving them.

At the same time, some governments and industry actors continue to present the KP as a replicable success story for other minerals, including gold and critical minerals, even though due diligence and responsible sourcing discussions in other mineral sectors have generally advanced further.

In October 2025, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) convened a public discussion on lessons from the KP, while the KP itself remains resistant to similar self-reflection. One key lesson is that complex governance realities cannot be reduced to the KP's embargo logic: a simple yes-or-no verdict on whether diamonds from a given country can be traded. This may reassure downstream buyers and consumers, but it leaves little room for progressive improvement on challenges that demand long-term commitment, not disengagement through sanctions.

News post



[Why the Kimberley Process is not the answer to today's mineral governance challenges](#)



◀ Ukrainian delegation addressing the Kimberley Process at the 2025 Plenary in Dubai.

Environmental due diligence in EU tools

Supported by the European Union

In the last few years, the EU has adopted several due diligence legislations, such as the Conflict Minerals Regulation (CMR), the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), aimed at promoting responsible business practices, including in the extraction of minerals and other critical raw materials.

These frameworks seek to address both social and environmental risks associated with mineral extraction. However, their capacity to address environmental degradation – including temporary tree cover loss, long-term deforestation, water pollution, and land degradation – as well as weak resource governance in conflict hotspots remains limited.

IPIS research highlights that current due diligence obligations lack concrete, conflict-sensitive environmental policies, and their effectiveness in mitigating environmental risks is constrained. The European Commission’s recent Omnibus may further shape environmental due diligence under the CSDDD.

To close this gap, IPIS advocates for strengthening environmental provisions in due diligence frameworks

to reduce environmental damage and the risk of conflicts. This includes leveraging tools such as mine site mapping and encouraging companies sourcing from these regions to adopt proactive strategies that mitigate environmental risks and support local resilience. Civil society actors also play a crucial role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and the amplification of local voices in resource governance debates.

Briefing



[Mineral extraction, environmental harm, and conflict: The role of EU due diligence in promoting sustainable practices in conflict hotspots](#)

Publication



[Addressing conflict hotspots in environmental degradation and resource governance: The role of EU due diligence frameworks](#)



◀ Lusekeseke gold mining site in Shabunda, South Kivu.

Critical minerals: Ensuring their contribution to sustainable transitions and enhanced human rights

As global discussions on critical minerals increasingly center on securing supply, IPIS works to ensure that human rights and inclusive development remain integral to the conversation.

Mapping traceability approaches for critical minerals

Commissioned by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

As global demand for critical raw materials accelerates, digital traceability has become central to efforts aimed at strengthening responsible sourcing, ESG oversight, and supply chain resilience. However, while traceability is increasingly promoted as a key governance tool, significant questions persist regarding its feasibility, scalability, and implications, particularly for producer countries and artisanal and small-scale mining.

To deepen the understanding of the traceability landscape, GIZ commissioned a study examining

the potential and risks of traceability within critical mineral value chains. IPIS and Levin Sources partnered to conduct this analysis, assessing 27 internationally relevant traceability systems and mapping their scope and operational frameworks. They also conducted more than 20 interviews with solution providers, companies, governments, civil society and standard-setting organizations. Findings will be published in a comprehensive report comprising selected country examples from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Zambia, Indonesia and Chile.



◀ Train carrying bauxite for the COBAD company between Boké and Kamsar in Guinea.

The rising spotlight on coltan: Understanding its strategic importance and role in the Eastern Congo conflict

Supported by the European Union

The escalation of conflict in eastern DRC – marked by the M23 rebel group’s capture of Goma in January 2025, with reported Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) support – has reignited global scrutiny of coltan. The term “coltan” was coined by Congolese miners to refer to columbite-tantalite, which consists of two minerals considered strategic: columbite, containing niobium (Nb), and tantalite, containing tantalum (Ta).

North Kivu’s Rubaya region, which accounts for 15% of the global coltan supply, fell under M23 control in April 2024. The group’s subsequent expansion into South Kivu, seizing Minova, Shanje, and Lumbishi, further consolidated its grip over key mineral trading hubs in Kahele territory.

Research by the UN, IPIS, and Global Witness, among others, has exposed systemic smuggling, with up to 90% of Rwandan-labeled coltan allegedly sourced from DRC mines. This practice predates M23 but has been exacerbated by shifting control between armed groups, including the Wazalendo coalition.

Against this backdrop, the EU’s Global Gateway initiative – aimed at securing critical raw materials for its energy transition while fostering local development – faces ethical and geopolitical tensions.

The EU-Rwanda Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainable Raw Materials Value Chains, though framed by some as a tool to enforce transparency, has been criticized for legitimizing partnerships with actors implicated in territorial violations and resource exploitation. While some opposed suspending the MoU amid escalating violence, IPIS underscored in an op-ed the need for a critical, principles-based approach to such agreements. It warned that pragmatic supply-chain logic, divorced from accountability, undermines both regional stability and the Global Gateway’s developmental objectives.

Briefing



[The rising spotlight on coltan: Understanding its strategic importance and role in the Eastern Congo conflict](#)

Op-ed



[A more strategic raw materials policy is needed, but cynically looking the other way is not the solution](#)



◀ Artisanal miners carrying bags of coltan, Tanganyika territory, South Kivu.

Cobalt: Ensuring responsible mining practices and the Social License to Operate

Supported by the European Union

In the Congolese Copperbelt, the surge in global demand for cobalt has translated into acute competition among mining companies to acquire mining permits. Historically nationalized, the sector has then been privatized and progressively dominated by Chinese capital.

To ensure stable cohabitation and prevent social conflict, the Social License to Operate (SLO) has emerged as a key concept for assessing the local legitimacy of extractive operations. In 2025, IPIS contributed a chapter to the *Palgrave Handbook of Social License to Operate and Energy Transitions*, titled *A Hundred Years of Attempts to Build a Social License to Operate in the Cobalt Mining Sector of the Southern Democratic Republic of Congo*

Adopting a historical lens, the analysis underscores the deteriorating state of SLO since independence, driven by persistent human rights violations, environmental degradation, and the perceived or actual failure of large-scale mining (LSM) operations to equitably share the benefits of cobalt extraction with local communities. The study concludes that LSM actors must prioritize meaningful engagement with local

populations and civil society organizations (CSOs), alongside acknowledging harms and providing effective remedies, to restore trust and secure their social license in this pivotal region.

In a historical first, in 2025 the Tenke Fungurume Mining (TFM) operations in Lualaba province, owned by CMOOC, committed to undergoing independent third-party auditing against the IRMA (Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance) standards. IPIS is part of a civil society coalition working to support community and civil society participation in this process. Together, the coalition advocates for a transparent, safe, and inclusive audit that includes community perspectives, for more meaningful engagements between the mine and local stakeholders and for more responsible cobalt mining in the area.

Publication



[A Hundred Years of Attempts to Build a Social License to Operate in the Cobalt Mining Sector of the Southern Democratic Republic of Congo](#)



◀ Houses close to an industrial copper and cobalt mine in Kolwezi.

The socio-economic impacts of bauxite mining in Guinea

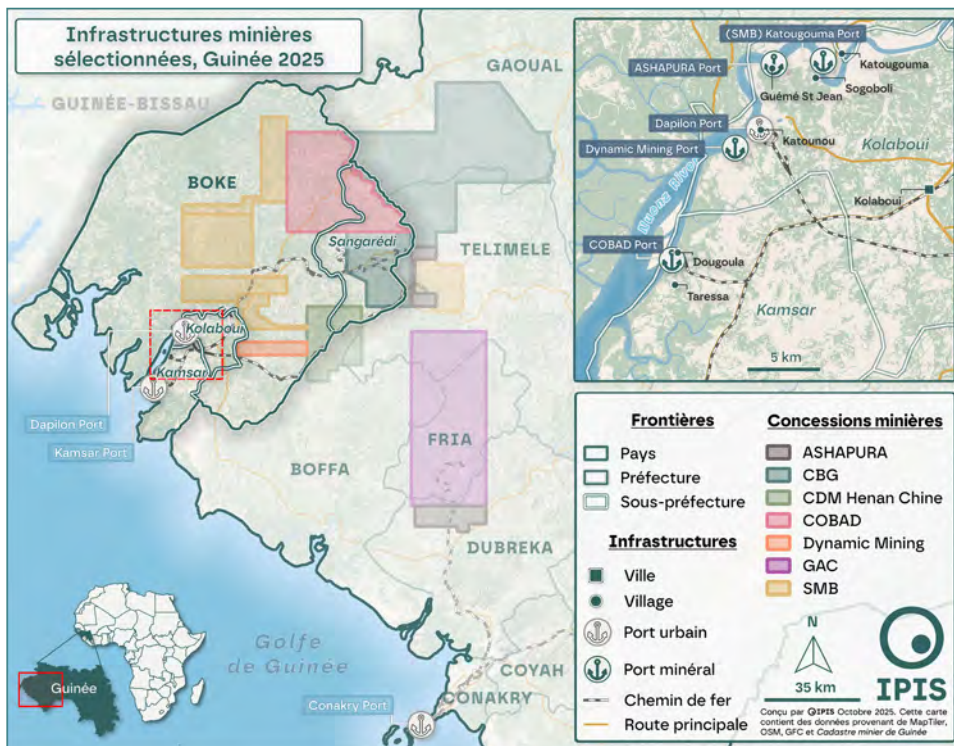
Supported by the European Union

Bauxite is used to produce aluminum, a metal that is essential to the defense, construction, aerospace, and renewable energy industries. In 2025, IPIS partnered with Action Mines Guinée to assess the socio-economic and environmental impacts of bauxite mining on local livelihoods. Together, they conducted a field study in Boké, with two missions to Sangarédi, Kamsar, and Kolaboui (May–June 2025). The team engaged with communities through focus groups and collected individual testimonies from 160 respondents.

Findings revealed significant disruptions to fishing and livestock farming. The expansion of mineral ports and increased barge traffic reduced fish stocks, exacerbated by mangrove destruction. Interviewees also reported

accidents and damaged fishing equipment. Coexistence with mining operations proved challenging for livestock farmers, with frequent accidents between mining trucks and livestock, alongside allegations of water source pollution and depletion, critical for pastoral activities. The research also examined the transparency and effectiveness of information-sharing, consultation, and compensation mechanisms for affected communities.

Based on these insights, IPIS and Action Mines Guinée aim to develop actionable recommendations for mining companies, local authorities, and national policymakers to mitigate adverse impacts on economic activities crucial for the population’s food security.



Map of bauxite mining concessions, mining ports, small-scale fishing ports, and railroads in Guinea.



The COBAD mining company’s vehicle yard, situated amid pastures within its concession in Sangarédi, Boké Prefecture.

Documenting the harms and benefits of natural resource extraction to promote accountability

IPIS' research and corporate engagement on extractives in Tanzania

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation and the European Union

Williamson diamond mine

Since 2022, IPIS has conducted multiple rounds of data collection on challenges surrounding access to remedy following serious human rights abuses and environmental harm at the Williamson diamond mine in Tanzania's Shinyanga region. This work follows the 2021 settlement reached by Petra Diamond, the mine's majority owner at the time, with 96 Tanzanian claimants before the UK High Court. The case involved allegations of beatings, torture, unlawful detention, shootings, sexual violence, and killings by the mine's private security contractor. As part of the settlement, Petra committed to establishing an independent grievance mechanism (IGM) to investigate and provide remedy to individuals who had suffered harm in connection with the alleged abuses. In 2023, IPIS published a report assessing Petra's efforts to restore community relations and remediate the legacy of these abuses.

In 2025, IPIS continued to monitor the IGM's implementation, analyzing its impact on claimants' sense of justice. Through engagement with people seeking remedy, IGM staff, and independent monitors, the research draws broader lessons on the effective implementation of remediation through operational-level grievance mechanisms. The findings will be published in a chapter of the forthcoming book *Leadership in a Just Transition: Remedy in Minerals Value Chains*.

The fragile local context further deteriorated in November 2022, when the mine's tailings dam breach released a large mudflow into the villages of Nyenze and Ng'wagh'olo. The accident impacted land, water access and livelihoods, and occurred just as Petra Diamonds began implementing its restorative justice process.

Between 2022 and mid-2025, IPIS conducted 34 interviews with local residents to document the accident's long-term impacts and assess the remediation efforts undertaken by Williamson Diamonds. In 2025, IPIS published a briefing analyzing these perspectives, evaluating whether restoration measures aligned with community needs and how these responses affected trust between the mine and affected populations. Residents reported confusion over compensation, limited information-sharing, and insufficient participation in decision-making. Artisanal miners, lacking formal claims, were largely overlooked.

Briefing

[After the tailings dam collapse: Community perspectives on compensation and restoration at the Williamson diamond mine, Tanzania](#)

Evolution of the tailings spill at the Williamson diamond mine, Tanzania 2022-2024



▲ Evolution of the tailing spill at the Williamson Diamond Mine.

Barick North Mara Gold Mine

Barrick's North Mara gold mine is another mine with a legacy of allegations of violence by security forces against artisanal miners entering the concession in search of gold in the mine's waste material.

Over the past two decades, numerous reports have documented instances of excessive force resulting in civilian injuries and deaths. These allegations have raised persistent concerns about the management and oversight of security arrangements around the mine. The mine relies on a mixed model of public security, private security and community guards to

secure the concession. This has created unclear lines of accountability, with limited access to remedy for those who suffer harm and few visible consequences for those responsible.

IPIS presented its preliminary findings at a side event of the United Nations Human Rights Council conference, "*Safeguarding human rights in complex environments: Addressing the use of military and security enterprises in protection, exploitation, and conservation of natural resources*," organized by the UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries and TRIAL International.



▲ North Mara gold mine in Tanzania.

Exchange on corporate engagement

In June 2025, IPIS organized a two-day workshop in Dar es Salaam with 11 CSOs, including grassroots organizations working directly with communities living near extractive sites, as well as policy-oriented CSOs engaged in advocacy and regulatory dialogue.

In Tanzania, an increasing number of companies across the gold, diamond, oil, gas, and critical minerals sectors invite CSOs to periodic engagement meetings. Workshop participants noted, however, that many of these efforts often prioritize public relations over genuine dialogue to address community concerns.

As one participant noted:

“At times, these meetings feel like they’re mainly meant to shape what we say if journalists ask us questions. We’re often only invited when there’s a challenge—like negative media coverage or visits from international stakeholders.”

While companies need to move beyond box-ticking approaches, CSOs also bear responsibility. The workshop aimed to share lessons, identify best practices, and develop a "do's and don'ts" framework for CSO participation. Key outcomes included rules of engagement setting out the principles, modalities, and conditions for effective dialogue, alongside measures to safeguard CSO independence.

News post



[CSOs gather in Dar es Salaam to strategize on engagement with extractive sector companies](#)

▼ Workshop in Dar es Salaam



The Niger-Benin Export Pipeline

Supported by the European Union and the Belgian Development Cooperation

Building on its research into the impacts of large-scale oil infrastructure in East Africa (the East African Crude Oil Pipeline in Tanzania), IPIS has been assessing the socio-economic impacts of the Niger-Benin Export Pipeline (NBEP) and its potential for regional cooperation and local development. Operational since March 2024, the NBEP is Africa's longest crude oil pipeline and connects the oil fields of Agadem in eastern Niger to the port of Sèmè-Kpodji in southern Benin.

In Benin alone, the project includes a 687 km buried pipeline, pumping and maintenance stations, and a marine terminal complex, directly affecting over 600,000 people through compulsory land acquisition. On the other hand, the investment came with promises for significant local benefits including over 3,000 jobs, social infrastructure and economic advantages. As such, the NBEP project clearly has the potential to boost socio-economic development in Benin. Yet, experiences across the continent show that large oil infrastructure projects can also bring long-lasting harm when they fail to adequately prevent,

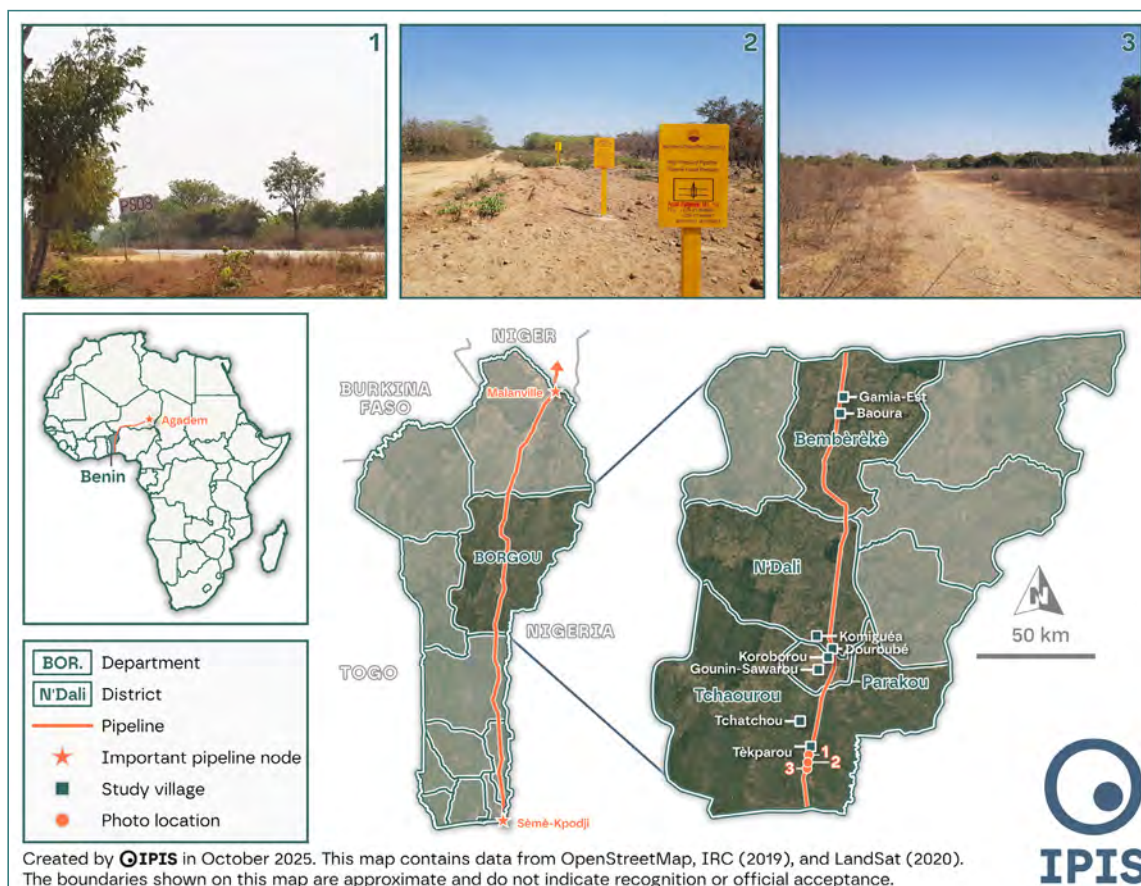
mitigate and remediate their negative impacts on local communities and the environment, while also falling short on local development promises.

IPIS and Laboratoire Société-Environnement (LaSEn) from the University of Parakou (Benin) collaborated to document local experiences and perceptions in eight affected villages in Benin's Borgou department. Through 205 semi-structured surveys, the study captures grassroots insights on the lived local impacts of large-scale extractive infrastructure projects, with broadly applicable learnings to ensure these projects realize sustainable local development ambitions that are respectful of rightsholders' rights.

Publication



[Large-scale infrastructure as an instrument for local development? The Niger-Benin Export Pipeline and its impact on rural communities in northern Benin](#)



◀ The Niger-Benin export pipeline (NBEP) and its location in Benin.



CONFLICT MAPPING

Mapping conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Providing context on the AFC/M23 crisis in eastern DRC

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

In 2023-2024, IPIS analyzed the motives behind the resurgence of the Rwandan-backed M23 rebel group in eastern DRC. Early 2025, the group captured Goma Bukavu, displacing millions and exacerbating an already acute humanitarian crisis. IPIS published a Q&A analysis emphasizing the need to consider the multiplicity of conflict drivers, including land disputes, the role of local authorities in land management, natural resources and regional dynamics involving Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi.

As M23 expanded its territorial coverage, IPIS produced regular outputs, including monthly-updated maps of M23's territorial influence in North and South Kivu, derived from ACLED data on M23-related incidents. Additionally, mediation processes unfolded and M23 solidified its presence by affiliating with the Congolese movement Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC) and establishing a parallel administration. IPIS sought to contextualize these ground-level, regional, and international developments during its annual event, *"Prospects for Peace in Eastern DRC: Mediation Efforts, Conflict Drivers, and Regional Stakes."*

The diplomatic landscape featured two parallel negotiation tracks: the Doha talks between the DRC and M23, and the U.S.-brokered Washington negotiations between the DRC and Rwanda. Despite these diplomatic efforts, violence persisted, with repeated ceasefire violations, forced recruitment, and mass displacement.

IPIS also examined the long-term security implications of the crisis, including the systematic

replacement of customary authorities in M23-controlled areas with AFC/M23 loyalists, extending the group's influence over local governance and economic activities, such as mineral supply chains. Additionally, IPIS analyzed the Congolese government's use of the Wazalendo coalition—comprising various armed groups—to counter M23, a strategy that introduced further complexities into the conflict dynamics.

Publications

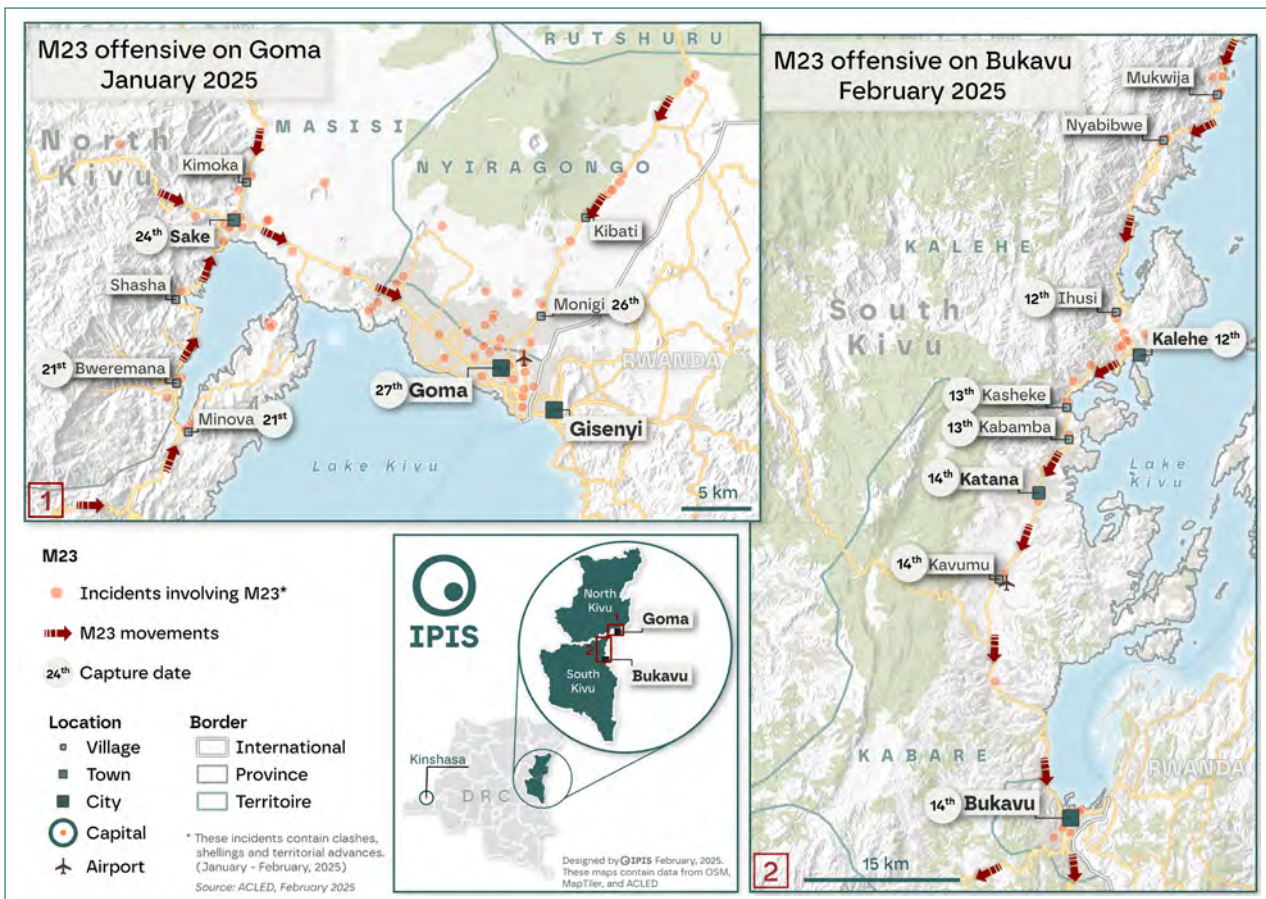
[The \(new\) M23 offensive on Goma: Why this long-lasting conflict is not only about minerals and what are its implications? – Q&A](#)

[M23's territorial advances in May – From Doha to Goma: The disconnect between diplomacy and reality in Eastern Congo](#)

[M23's territorial advances in June – A long path to peace: Renewed efforts to resolve the M23 conflict in Eastern Congo](#)

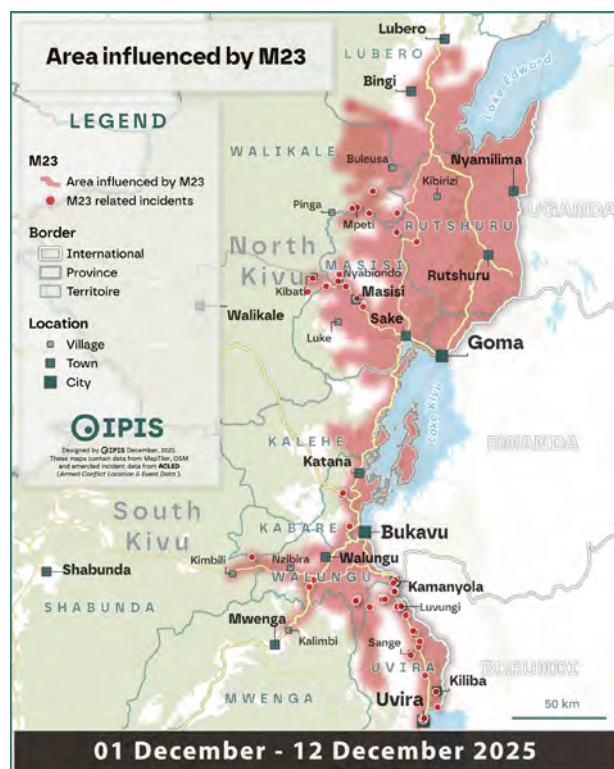
[M23's territorial advances in July, August, and September 2025 – Escalating violence and fragile peace in eastern DRC's Kivu regions](#)

[Shifting frontlines in October, November and December – Limits of diplomacy: AFC/M23 advances after Washington Accords](#)



▲ Rwanda-backed M23 offensives on Goma and Bukavu in eastern DRC.

▼ Area influenced by M23 in December 2024 and December 2025.



Understanding the “Wazalendo” phenomenon and its impacts on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In response to the limitations of the Congolese army (FARDC) in addressing the AFC/M23 crisis, both the army and later the Congolese government opted to mobilize non-state armed groups, known as Wazalendo (“patriots”), to combat the M23 rebellion alongside state forces. The decision in September 2023 to create the *Volontaires pour la Défense de la Patrie* (VDP), a selection of Wazalendo groups, was unprecedented, as the collaboration was officially sanctioned, thereby legitimizing certain non-state actors with histories of human rights abuses and destabilizing activities in North Kivu.

The partnership between FARDC and VDP introduces significant long-term security risks, particularly in light of past failures in rebel-military integration and the government’s concurrent efforts to implement Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs. Moreover, the VDP operate without formal remuneration, often resorting to predatory practices – including illegal taxation, roadblocks, and resource exploitation – to sustain themselves, progressively eroding community trust.

Research conducted by IPIS, in collaboration with (anonymized) local partners, highlights the ambiguous role of these groups, their diverse compositions, and their complex relationships with state and other non-state armed groups such as the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), which are a contentious point in the conflict. As the conflict persists, the critical challenge remains: how

will the government address the demobilization of thousands of VDP fighters, some of whom are implicated in war crimes? The mobilization of *Wazalendo* not only risks undermining current and future peace processes but also underscores the need for a political, rather than purely military, solution – one that addresses root causes such as land disputes, socio-economic inequalities, and communal discrimination. Ultimately, sustainable peace in eastern DRC requires an inclusive approach based on national dialogue to resolve what is fundamentally a political problem.

In March 2025, IPIS presented some of these findings during a webinar organized by the University of Antwerp: *“VDP/Wazalendo and the proxy war against M23: a blessing or a curse for (future) security and stability in Eastern Congo.”*

Briefing

[Promoting DDR programmes while arming non-state armed groups: Congo’s paradoxical conflict resolution policies in the context of the M23 insurgency](#)

Publication

[The emergence of the Wazalendo in the fight against the AFC/M23 in North Kivu: Current situation, challenges and prospects](#)



◀
Wazalendo militiamen fighting M23 rebels march in Sake, DRC. August 31, 2024. ©Moses Sawasawa

Informing the response to the Mobondo-induced humanitarian crisis: A study on intercommunity violence in western DRC

Commissioned by Caritas International Belgium and supported by the European Union

While international attention has focused on the violent conflicts in eastern DRC, an intercommunity conflict on the outskirts of Kinshasa is sinking into a spiral of violence, with very little attention from national authorities and international partners. To date, the conflict has resulted in over 5,000 deaths and left 280,000 people displaced.

At its center is the poorly understood Mobondo militia, whose violence, rooted in land disputes, socio-economic marginalization, and the collapse of customary institutions, has spread across four provinces. By destroying crops and rendering farmland inaccessible, the crisis even impacts food prices in the DRC capital.

Despite the name “Mobondo” suggesting a homogeneous threat, the reality is far more complex. To help inform and strengthen the humanitarian response and peacebuilding efforts in the region, Caritas

International Belgium, CDJP-Kinshasa and IPIS collaborated to investigate the motivations, structures, and dynamics of the armed actors involved. By situating intercommunity tensions within their historical, administrative, and socio-economic contexts, the study aims to contribute to conflict resolution strategies grounded in rigorous local analysis.

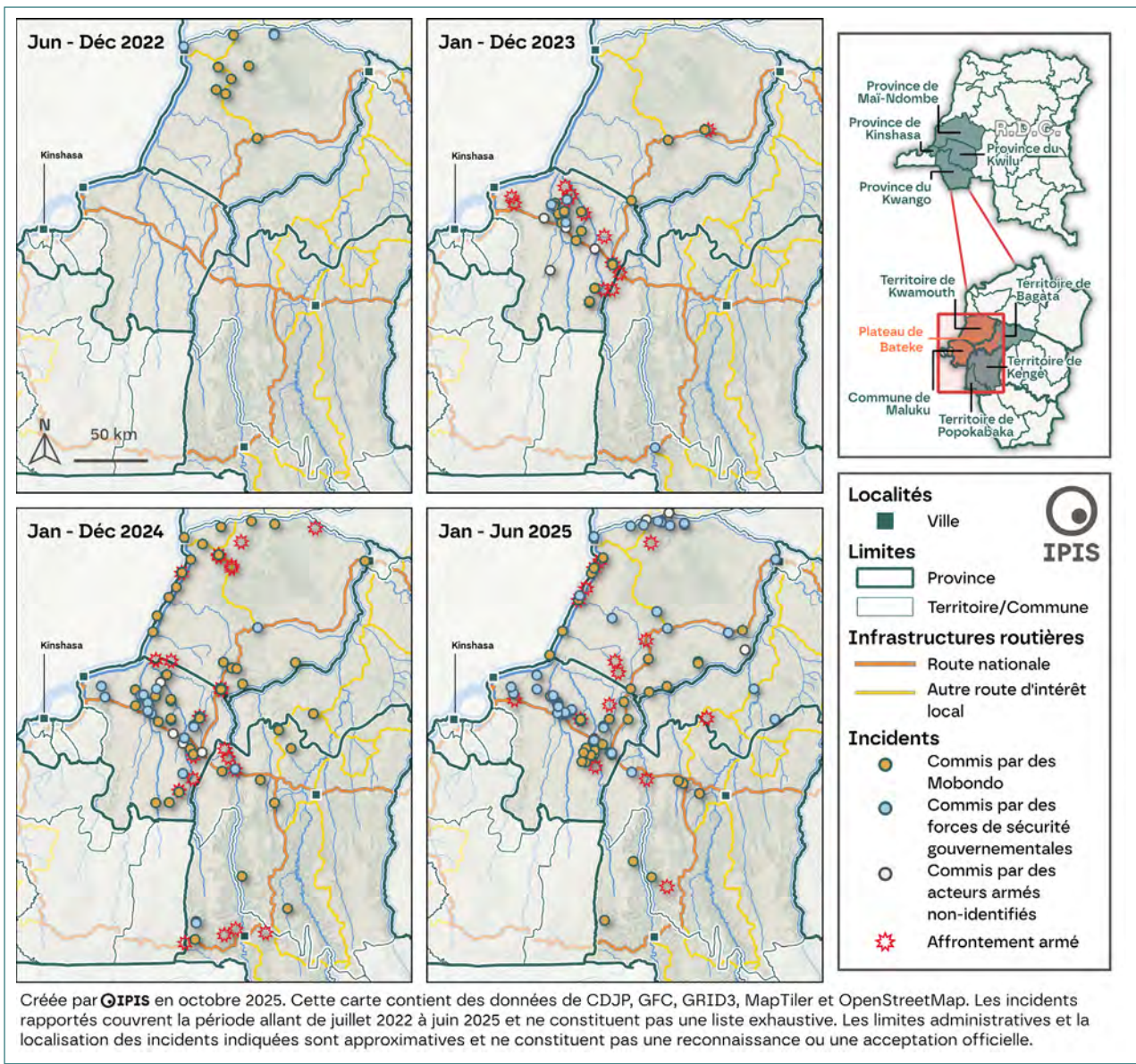
The report, released in November 2025 as part of an advocacy campaign, was presented at a Brussels conference, *"Le poids du silence – Comprendre la crise oubliée aux portes de Kinshasa"*, aiming to raise international awareness of this overlooked crisis.

Publication

[The weight of silence: How the Mobondo revolt is shaking western DRC](#)



◀ In Batshongo, 160 km from Kinshasa, displaced Yaka people are settling on the outskirts of the village.
©Colin Delfosse



▲ The spatial distribution of incidents over time highlights the territorial expansion of the Mobondo crisis.



Assessing drivers of conflict in Sahel and West Africa

Since 2020, West Africa has been experiencing political turmoil characterized by a series of coups d'état, which led to the emergence of two blocs: the coastal countries, which are still members of the Economic Community of

West African States (ECOWAS), and Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, who founded the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) in 2023 and withdrew from ECOWAS in January 2025.

Pastoralism in a regional perspective: Cross-border challenges from Niger and Benin

Supported by the European Union

An IPIS Insight published in 2025, grounded in a comprehensive literature review and primary data from Nigerien civil society organizations as well as current and former transhumant pastoralists in Benin, examines pastoralism's potential to foster peace, stability and the sustainable mitigation of climate-related challenges in the region. Challenging the prevailing narrative that frames pastoralism as a driver of conflict, this Insight argues that pastoralism could be part of solutions for peace and sustainability. It offers socio-economic benefits and connection in rural and remote areas, helps secure and occupy

remote land otherwise left uncontrolled to illegal and criminal activity and supports sustainable food production adaptable to the realities of the demographically and environmentally changing (semi-) arid West African context.

Publication

[Pastoralism in West Africa: From a vector of conflict to a tool for peace and sustainability?](#)



◀ Livestock market in Tchaourou, Benin.

Benin's sedentarization policy: What are the impacts of the limitation of pastoral mobility?

Supported by the European Union

In response to mounting national security threats, West African governments have been intensifying restrictions on pastoralist mobility since 2019, particularly in coastal countries such as Ivory Coast, Togo, and Benin. Traditionally key destinations for migrating Sahelian pastoralists and their herds, these nations have implemented policies to curb transboundary transhumance as a means of mitigating the spread of jihadist violence and growing farmer-herder conflicts and societal fragmentation within their territories. Together, these measures have led to a transhumance system that is smaller, shorter, and more insecure.

While Benin's livestock sedentarization project introduces an innovative peacebuilding approach, it

also marks a significant departure from long-standing regional traditions and customary practices that hold socio-cultural significance and have historically contributed to regional peace and stability.

To assess the implications of this shift, IPIS has engaged with pastoralists, agro-pastoralist organizations, farmers, and agricultural representatives in Benin's Borgou department to document their lived experiences with the impacts of the sedentarization policy. The study explores how this policy may influence local and regional dynamics – potentially fostering peace or, alternatively, exacerbating conflicts over land and resources.

▼ Pastoralist camp in Parakou, Benin.





ARMS TRADE & SECURITY

Research on arms transfers and due diligence in the arms trade sector

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, along with the second term of US President Trump, has reignited debate and policies about Europe's rearmament. NATO member states are boosting their defense budgets, and Europe has developed its *ReArm Europe* and *Readiness 2030* plans, providing significant leverage to the arms industry. However, the persistent challenges of human rights risks tied to the end-use of arms – evident in

conflicts like Gaza, Yemen or Sudan – as well as the diversion of arms remain critical issues that cannot be overlooked.

IPIS' arms trade work connects different central issues that play a role within the framework of the recent geopolitical developments and the resulting increased focus on security and defense in Europe.

Analysis of the draft Flemish decree on arms trade

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In 2024, responding to industry pressure to ease arms exports, the Flemish government announced its intention to replace the 2012 Arms Trade Decree. Building on legal analyses of this decree, conducted in collaboration with Amnesty International, IPIS has been closely monitoring the upcoming legislative

process toward a new legal framework for regulating arms transfers in Flanders. IPIS participated in a government consultation in June 2025 and prepared its analysis in anticipation of the draft legislation, expected in 2026.



Securing critical minerals for defense

Supported by the European Union

The Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), while positioned as a catalyst for the EU's energy and digital transitions, is increasingly intertwined with defense and security objectives, raising significant policy questions. The CRMA's role in satisfying the defense industry's escalating demand for raw materials, critical for arms production, reflects a broader push to strengthen Europe's defense capabilities. IPIS explored in a briefing the relationship between the CRMA and the defense industry, underscoring

the need for transparency to ensure that the EU's raw materials strategy remains aligned with its sustainability commitments.

Briefing

[The EU Critical Raw Materials Act and the defence industry](#)

Establishing corporate responsibility and accountability for companies active in the arms value chain – what is in the CSDDD and what is needed

Because arms transfers are closely linked to the States' geopolitical interests and defense policy objectives but also have a potential negative human rights impact, they are highly regulated and subjected to a strict export licensing process. In 2024, IPIS published a comprehensive report advocating for corporate accountability in the arms trade sector, emphasizing that companies must move beyond passive compliance with state export licensing and instead adopt a proactive role in conducting human rights due diligence. This call for shared responsibility gained further relevance with the adoption of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) in June 2024, a landmark effort to enforce corporate accountability for human rights and environmental impacts. While the European Commission's initial draft Directive was indisputably

and wholly applicable to the arms sector, its final text introduced significant exclusions, particularly in downstream activities such as the sale and use of arms. In response to these potential gaps in accountability, IPIS published a paper identifying and proposing interpretations to the Directive's ambiguities. The paper advocates for stricter national provisions by EU Member States to ensure alignment with international due diligence standards.

Publication

[Due diligence in the arms sector: Possible implications of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive](#)



IDF Merkava Mk4 in southern Gaza, May 2025.
Source: IDF Spokesperson's Unit, CC BY-SA 3.0.

Policy advice on small arms and light weapons (SALW) controls

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

IPIS' collaboration with the Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S⁴) Initiative has enabled the visualization of arms diversion across Greater West Africa. By mapping a sample of over a hundred attacks on security forces and peace operations, the project highlights how diverted arms, captured by jihadist groups and bandits, fuel violence in the region, including against civilians. While government and regional officials frequently cite "porous borders" as a primary threat to national security, the analytical note emphasizes the need to address this challenge within the countries' borders. The note underscores both some of the successes achieved and the persistent challenges in safeguarding state-owned lethal materiel, to inform policies and practices.

In partnership with the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), IPIS supports advocacy and campaign efforts to strengthen small arms and light weapons (SALW) controls and reduce gun violence. In 2025, IANSA and IPIS produced thematic briefing papers and factsheets to inform and coordinate advocacy among IANSA members. These publications explored the obligations of states regarding SALW control, as the misuse and proliferation of SALW are directly tied to serious human rights violations.

Additionally, IPIS and IANSA launched a series identifying key synergies in international and regional

instruments addressing SALW control measures. This series helps IANSA members navigate these different legal frameworks.

In 2025, IPIS also started collaborating with a IANSA member, Gun Free South Africa (GFSa), to share analyses on how gun violence affects communities. The case study being prepared by GFSa as part of IPIS' Voices series discusses the organization's work with mothers who lost their sons due to gun violence helping them to deal with their losses and to hold the state accountable.

Publications

[Countering illicit arms and armed groups across Greater West Africa: Re-setting priorities and the utility of large-scale data](#)

[Synergies of Prohibited Activities in the International, Regional and Sub-Regional Instruments on the Regulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons \(SALW\) and/or Firearms](#)

[Human Rights Obligations and the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons](#)



Peace and security in Belgian foreign policy

Facilitating dialogue between Belgian civil society organizations to promote conflict-sensitive policies

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

Since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, and following Donald Trump's 2024 re-election, the European security paradigm has shifted. The multilateral order and the "peace dividend" appear to have come to an end, replaced by rising defense spending (e.g., NATO's 5% standard) and the specter of conventional conflict. Meanwhile, Western withdrawal from African peacekeeping and the erosion of UN mandates highlight the fragility of civilian protection. Despite frameworks like the 3D approach or the Triple Nexus, skepticism persists due to perceived inefficacy and political motivations.

In this context, the Belgian development cooperation sector faces critical questions: How does it position itself amid a resurgent arms race, and how can it sustain attention for peacebuilding and conflict prevention? To explore this, IPIS, the NGO Federation, 11.11.11, and Search for Common Ground hosted two working sessions: "*Security in Europe: What role for international solidarity?*" and "*Foreign military operations, peacekeeping, and the 3D approach*". The goal: equip organizations with perspectives and arguments to use in their own policy work as well as alternative narratives to navigate debates dominated by security.



◀ MINUSMA in Gao, Mali, 2017.
©Dutch Ministry of Defense

▲ Destruction caused by Israeli bombing of Jabalia camp, Gaza Strip. ©UNRWA

Engaging with the Belgian Parliament on the need to invest in Peace

On 20 October 2025, IPIS, in partnership with Search for Common Ground, convened a high-level conference at the Federal Parliament on peace and security in Belgian foreign policy. The event underscored the critical interplay between the traditional pillars of defense, diplomacy, and development, the so-called “3Ds”. IPIS Director Filip Reyniers opened the discussions by reflecting on the shifting dynamics of international relations, noting the retreat of Western states from multilateral peace operations, the mounting pressures on diplomacy, and the growing prioritization of national interests.

He argued that sustainable peace demands proactive investment in conflict prevention, as a singular focus on defense alone cannot guarantee global stability.

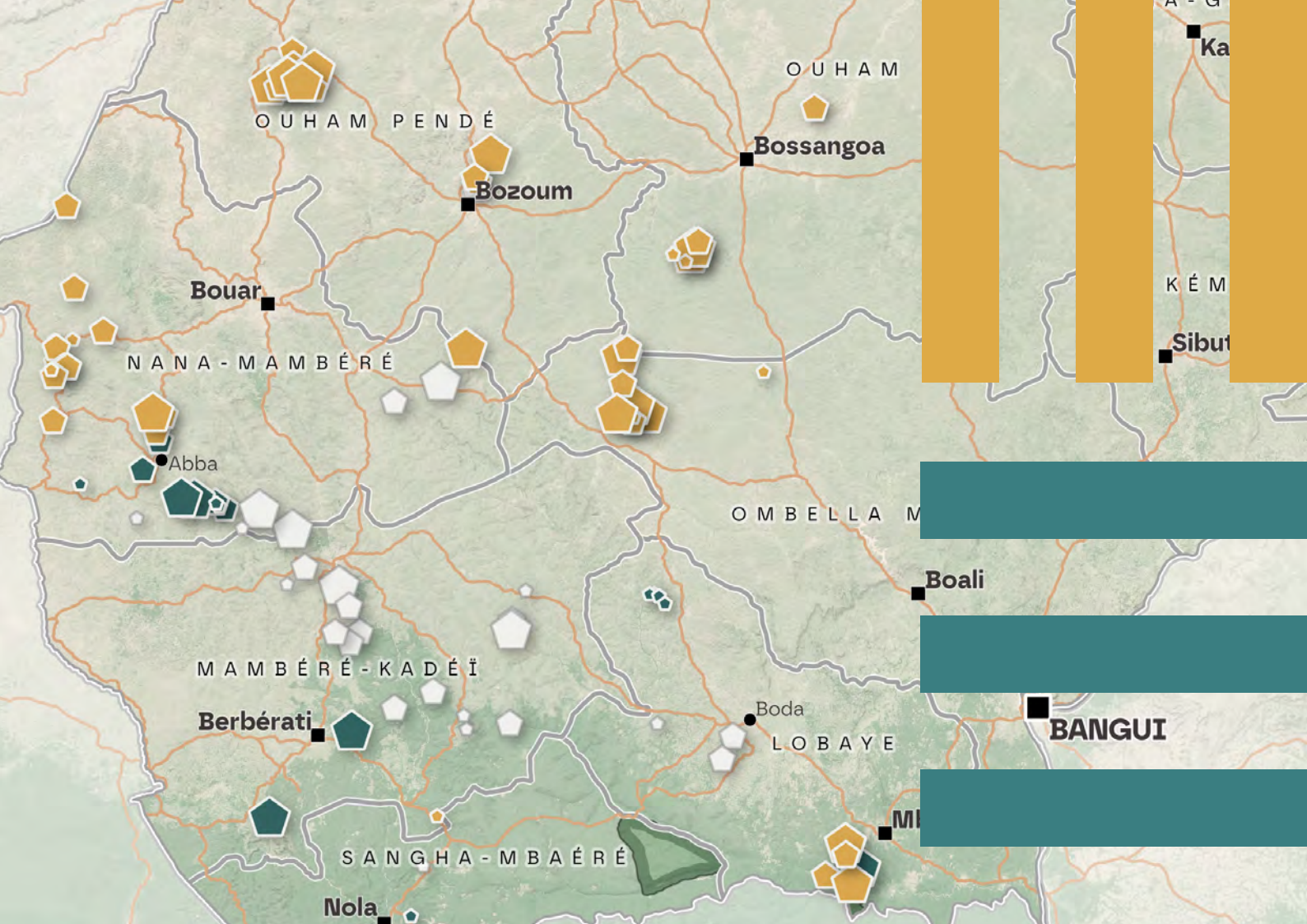
Two panels examined Belgium’s stance in European security architecture and the roles of military action, diplomacy, development, and peacebuilding in conflict zones. Participants emphasized peace as an ongoing process and advocated for dialogue to foster collaboration. The conference launched a vital debate that IPIS will continue with policymakers, experts, and civil society.

News post

[Peace and security in Belgian foreign policy – Key takeaways of our recent conference at the Federal Parliament](#)

- ▼ **Conference on peace and security in Belgian foreign policy at the Belgian Federal Parliament.**





MAPS & DATA

IPIS designs interactive and static maps as an integrated part of its research methodology and upon external requests.

ipisresearch.be/home/maps-data/

Visualizing data on artisanal mining areas and mineral supply chains in eastern DRC

IPIS continuously collects primary data on the interference of armed groups in mining, the types of minerals extracted, mineral pricing, mine worker demographics, trade routes, and environmental issues in eastern DRC.

Through its interactive webmap and open data dashboard, IPIS provides observers, suppliers, and policymakers with easy access to this data. These tools aim to deepen their understanding of the challenges and opportunities within artisanal mineral supply chains.

In 2025, IPIS expanded its dataset by adding data from visits to 75 artisanal mining sites in Ituri province (Djugu, Irumu, and Mambasa territories) and 19 in South-Kivu province (Fizi territory). We

also published data from 18 visits to artisanal mines in Haut-Uele province (Faradje territory) that were carried out in 2024.

Webmap

<https://ipisresearch.be/home/maps-data/maps-of-drc/interactive-map-of-artisanal-and-small-scale-mining-exploitation-in-eastern-drc/>

Open data dashboard

<https://ipisresearch.be/home/maps-data/maps-of-drc/open-data-dashboard-on-artisanal-and-small-scale-mining-in-eastern-drc/>

Using satellite imagery to map tree cover loss in and around the Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks in North and South Kivu, DRC

Commissioned by Institute of Policy Development of the University of Antwerp

In 2025, the Institute of Policy Development of the University of Antwerp conducted research into the interplay between armed conflict and forest-cover loss in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. To support this research, the Institute commissioned IPIS to map annual tree cover loss in both parks using satellite imagery, cross-referencing these environmental changes with violent incidents linked to two armed groups active in the region in recent years: the Forces de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the M23. The findings, which explore the dynamics of rebel governance and its impact on forest resources in eastern DRC, will be published in 2026 accompanied by illustrative maps produced by IPIS.

► Sign presenting a map of the Virunga National Park

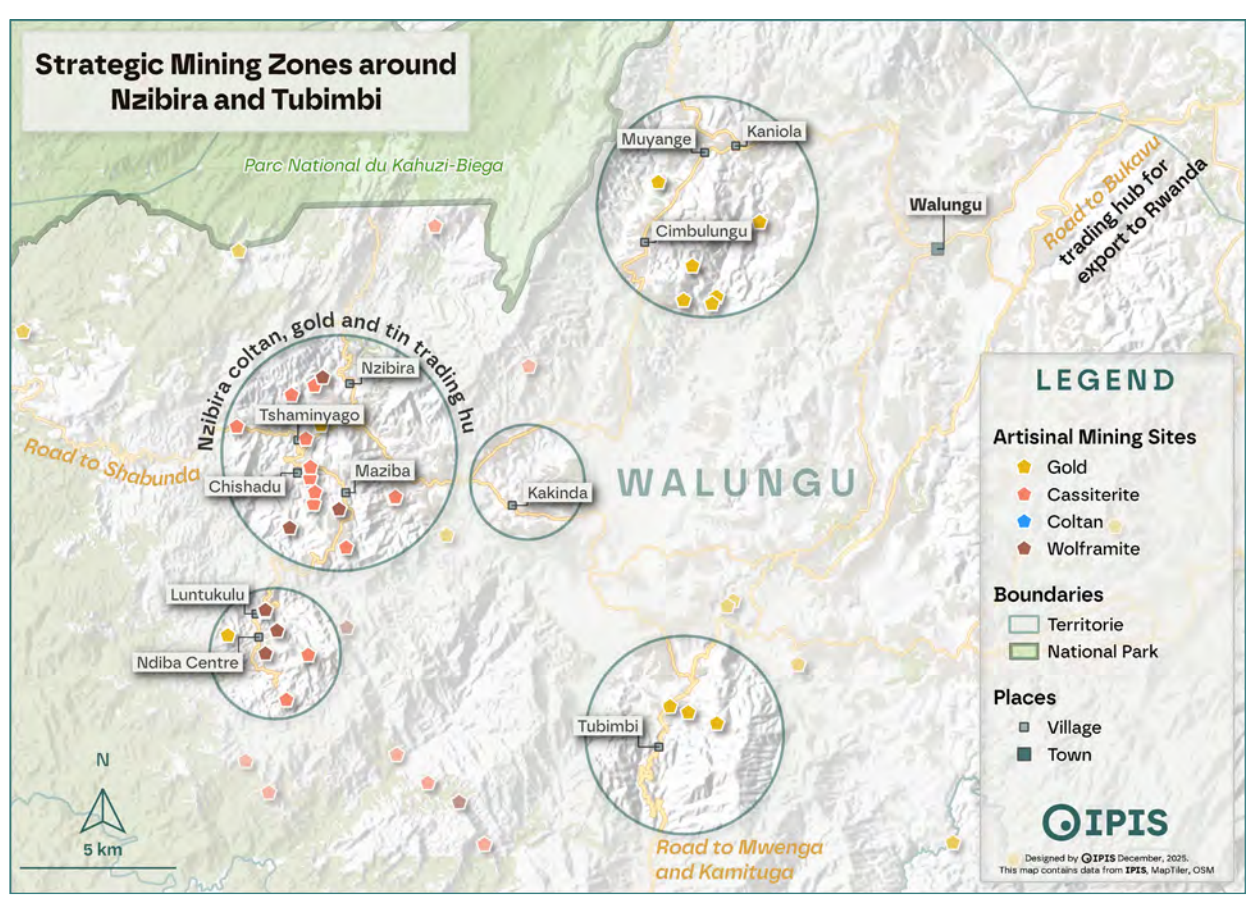
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Mining sites and the M23's territorial control in eastern DRC: IPIS maps for the UN Group of Experts on the RDC

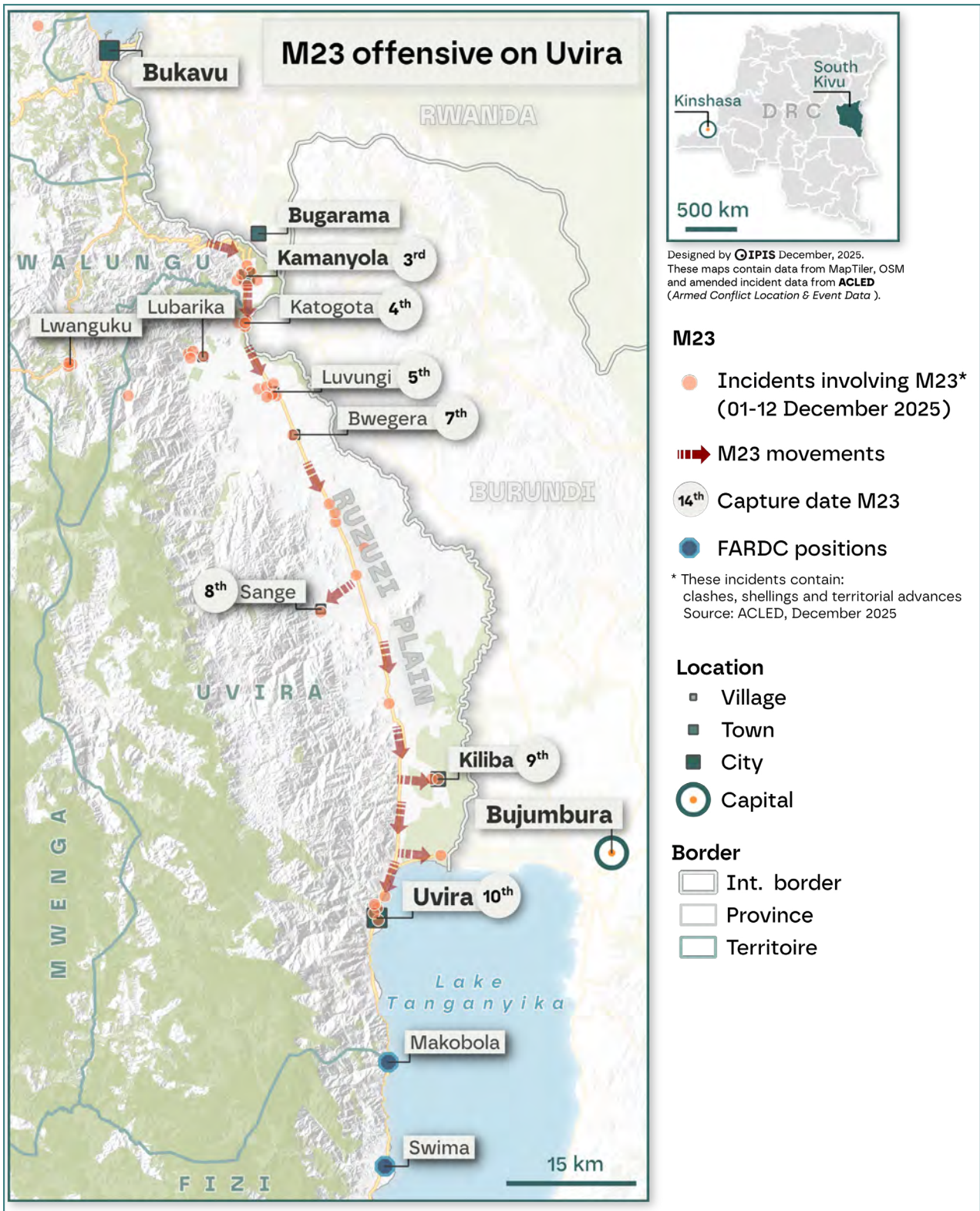
The UN Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo is mandated to produce periodic reports analyzing support to armed groups, perpetrators of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses, and the impact of mineral extraction on conflict dynamics, with a particular focus on North and South Kivu and Ituri.

The Group contacted IPIS to provide maps of mining sites around Nzibira and Tubimbi (South Kivu), as well as a subset of IPIS's map on the territorial control of M23. Both maps were featured in the Group's December 2025 report, [S/2025/858](#).



▲ Map visualizing the location of strategic mining areas around Nzibira and Tubimbi, Walungu territory, South Kivu.





▲ M23 offensive on Uvira in South Kivu, in December 2025.

Mapping incidents resulting in the diversion of lethal materiel

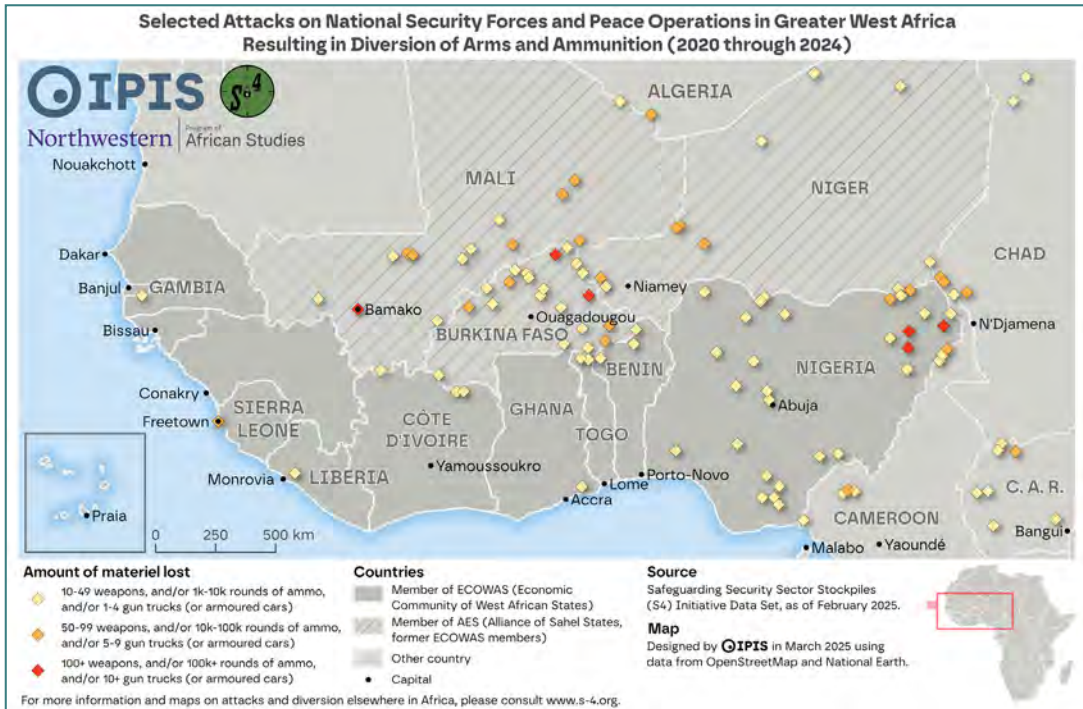
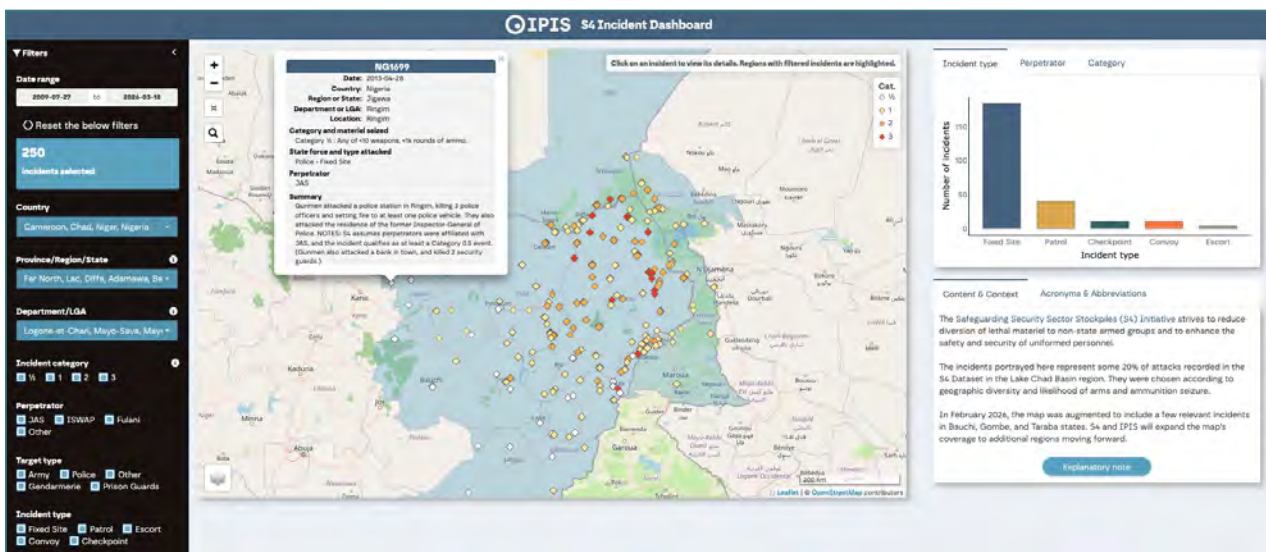
In 2025, IPIS continued its collaboration with the Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S⁴) Initiative to map attacks on security forces resulting in the diversion of lethal materiel. IPIS transformed the former S⁴ webmap into an interactive dashboard with more options of filtering on incident location and details, while S⁴ added 100 additional incidents into the dataset.

Dashboard

<https://ipisresearch-dashboard.shinyapps.io/s4-dashboard/>

Project page

<https://ipisresearch.be/project/the-management-of-lethal-materiel-in-conflict-settings/>



▲ Dashboard visualizing incidents compiled by the S⁴ initiative.

◀ Selected attacks resulting in the diversion of arms and ammunition in greater West Africa.

ABOUT

TIPS

Mission statement

IPIS is an independent research institute that provides tailored information, analysis, capacity enhancement, and policy advice to support those actors who want to realize a vision of durable peace, sustainable development, and the fulfillment of human rights.

Throughout the years, IPIS has developed a geographic focus on sub-Saharan Africa and a thematic focus on natural resources, conflict motives of armed actors, business and human rights, and international arms transfers. Within this scope, IPIS strives to be a center of excellence in field-based research.

The research program **Natural Resources** brings in-depth research on the exploitation of natural resources. IPIS has a unique expertise on natural resources, its links to conflict, and its financing, development, environment, human rights, and governance.

The research program **Arms Trade & Security** focuses on the human rights impacts of both legal and illicit arms transfers. Within this framework, IPIS' research revolves around these main areas: the international, regional, and national arms trade control frameworks, due diligence in the arms sector, and a critical assessment of Belgian arms exports.

The research program **Conflict Mapping** aims to map the various motives of conflict actors. A significant part of this research is devoted to the collection of reliable data on the field and its visualization into cartographic material.

The research program **Business & Human Rights** deals with the role of the private sector, corporate respect for human rights, and corporate accountability in our focus regions. In the course of many years, we have witnessed the potential of private companies to create wealth and promote peace, as well as conflict and inequality. The research focuses on all aspects of sustainable development, respect for human rights, and the implementation of self-regulatory and legal frameworks.

In order to ensure that our research and expertise reach as wide an audience as possible, IPIS often complements research with capacity enhancement. Increasingly, IPIS offers stand-alone capacity enhancement, designed to meet the needs and knowledge gaps identified by partners and clients. IPIS often deals with sensitive information and in handling this we pursue deontological principles such as reliability, critical sense, impartiality and check & double-check.

Assignments 2025

United for peace and sustainable development in fragile and conflict-affected settings

For the Belgian Development Cooperation

Addressing drivers of conflict, and promoting the fulfillment of human rights, sustainable governance of natural resources, climate justice and environmental protection through evidence-based research and grassroots collaboration

For the European Commission, Foreign Policy Instrument

Madini kwa amani na maendeleo/ Minerals for peace and development – Strengthening regional stability in the Great Lakes

For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Artisanal mine mapping and study in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

For the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

Kufatilia – Incident reporting and monitoring

For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (Madini), the European Commission (FPI), and the Belgian Development Cooperation

Mapping intercommunity violence in Mai-Ndombe to inform the response to the humanitarian crisis in western DRC

For Caritas International Belgium

Development of a strategy for Enabel's initiatives to support stakeholders in the mining sector in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba.

For Enabel

Analyzing the governance, structure, institutional ties, and opportunities for collaboration with the African Center of Excellence for Battery Research and Innovation (CAEB) in Lubumbashi

For Enabel

Feasibility assessment of introducing a system for reporting and documenting human rights violations in the Central African Republic

For Avocats sans Frontières

Mapping of traceability approaches for critical raw minerals

For Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Facilitating data collection on civilians' perceptions of armed actors in fragmented conflicts

For the Center for Security Studies of the ETH Zurich

Mapping tree cover loss in Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks in eastern DRC

For the Institute of Policy Development (IOB), University of Antwerp

Development of a static map depicting selected attacks on security forces and peace operations resulting in the diversion of arms and ammunition in greater West Africa

For the Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S⁴) Initiative

Producing maps to visualize data from a mining baseline study for a major World Bank infrastructure project in a West African country

For Levin Sources

►
“Colline 1” mining site in
Mwenga territory, South Kivu.

Networks and platforms

- Kimberley Process (KP)
- European Partnership for Responsible Mining (EPRM)
- Public Private Alliance for Responsible Mineral Trade (PPA)
- European Network for Central Africa (EurAc)
- Board of the Flemish Peace Institute
- Belgian Network on Natural Resources (BNNR)
- Working Group on Corporate Accountability (11.11.11)
- European Raw Materials Coalition
- Multi-Stakeholder Group of the OECD
- Brussels Group on Arms Exports
- International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA)
- Observers of the Critical Raw Material Board's Subgroup on Public Knowledge

Memberships

- A-net, Library Network of the University of Antwerp
- Flemish Study and Documentation Centre for non-profit organizations (VSDC)
- NGO Federation: Flemish federation of Development NGOs
- Sociare, Socio cultural employers' organization



Outreach

Lectures, workshops and presentations

January

20 January

Panelist on webinar “Arms trade due diligence - lessons from other sectors”, Flemish Peace Institute.
Hans Merket

23 January

Speaker at the event “Strategic reset: redesigning EU-Africa partnership”, organized by the European Council on Foreign Relations.
Guillaume de Brier

28 January

Briefing to Enabel’s incoming country directors on the geopolitics and responsible sourcing of critical raw materials in Africa.
Filip Reyniers

February

18 February

Presentation on natural resource extraction and (regional) conflict dynamics in eastern DRC to the International Trade (INTA) Monitoring Group of the European Parliament.
Ken Matthyssen

27 February

Exchange with the Belgian Development Cooperation on natural resources in eastern DRC.
Filip Reyniers, Erik Gobbers, Marieke Haagh, Guillaume de Brier, Ken Matthyssen, and Lisa Loeper

March

6-7 March

CSO workshop and launch of the Kufuatilia incident monitoring system in Mara region, Tanzania.
Hans Merket & Elard Mawala

13 March

Exchange on due diligence and the need to involve producer country perspectives with representatives of the G7 team working on diamond traceability, the KP CSC and IPIS.
Hans Merket

20 March

Interventions on due diligence by the defense industry (and state authorities) at the conference “Investing in defense: What choices will Flanders make? - Global tensions and defense investments. Concrete approaches and challenges for Flanders within an international context.”
Filip Reyniers & Markus Fahlbusch

25 March

Online presentation “Volontaires pour la Défense de Patrie/Wazalendo and the proxy war against M23: a blessing or a curse for (future) security and stability in Eastern Congo” during the seminar organized by the University of Antwerp, Great Lakes of Africa Centre.
Erik Gobbers

25 March

Speaker at the panel discussion “Access to justice in Tanzania’s extractive sector: Preparing for the critical minerals rush”, co-organised by IPIS, HakiRasilimali, Business & Human Rights Tanzania (BHRT) and Avocats sans Frontières (ASF) in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.
Hans Merket



27 March

Induction training on international arms transfers regulations and peace oriented foreign policy for NGO board members of the Flemish Peace Institute.

Filip Reyniers

22 May

Participation in the roundtable “Global business and investor roundtable on the conflict in eastern DRC” in London.

Filip Reyniers

April
4 April

Participation in the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences roundtable, “Strategic minerals, mining and society”. Discussion on the strategy adopted by the DRC for the management of its mineral wealth and the role for CSOs and Europe in supporting ESG in the race for minerals.

Guillaume de Brier

9 April

Presentation “The political economy of critical raw materials in the African Great Lakes Region” to Great Lakes Regions Envoys of EU member states.

Ken Matthysen

23 April

Participation in the roundtable “Beyond traditional roles: How can a better public-private cooperation forge mutually beneficial partnerships?”, organized by the Belgian Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs.

Filip Reyniers

May
5 May

Moderation of a panel-discussion organized by IPIS and IMPACT at the OECD forum on responsible mineral supply chains “Why Central Africa (still) matters: Lessons from 15 years of supply chain due diligence.”

Ken Matthysen

8 May

Participation in IRMA’s Cross-Sector Dialogues at the OECD forum on responsible mineral supply chains.

Mieke Thierens

19 May

Briefing for EU member states’ representatives on M23 and natural resources at the EU delegation in Kinshasa.

Ken Matthysen

June
2-3 June

Organization of a workshop on corporate engagement in the mining sector with Tanzanian civil society organizations in Dar es Salaam.

Hans Merket & Elard Mawala

5 June

Online briefing to the US embassy in London on the DRC and the dynamics around minerals extraction.

Filip Reyniers, Ken Matthysen

12 June

Participation in the consultation organized by the Flemish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the upcoming revision of Flanders’ Arms Trade Decree.

Filip Reyniers & Markus Fahlbusch

12 June

Participation in the roundtable “Human rights due diligence in firearms exports as Europe “rearms”.”

Maureen Walschot

16-18 June

Restitution workshops for mining stakeholders in Kolwezi and Lubumbashi on the research commissioned by Enabel on the copper and cobalt sector in Lualaba and Haut-Katanga.

Ken Matthysen & Zacharie Bulakali

17 June

Moderation of the event “Translating transparency into accountability (EITI & the Kimberley Process)” at the Jukwaa la Uziduaji (the National Extractive Conference) in Dodoma, Tanzania.

Hans Merket

July
2 July

Briefing on diamonds in the Central African Republic and the impact of the Kimberley Process embargo to European, American and Canadian government representatives.

Hans Merket

4 July

Visit of the EU Special Representative to the Great Lakes Region, Johan Borgstam, at IPIS
Filip Reyniers, Erik Gobbers, Guillaume de Brier, Ken Matthysen

August

22 August

Workshops in Irumu and Mambasa on the results of the mine site mapping conducted in the framework of the Madini project.
Patient Birindwa



▲ Workshop in the province of Ituri.

September

11 September

Presentation of the study "Geopolitics of high-value minerals in Africa" at the Belgian Royal Higher Institute for Defence.
Filip Reyniers

16 September

Speaker at an in-depth dialogue between companies and civil society on implementing and sustaining responsible supply chains in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the wider region, organized by Search for Common Ground USA.
Ken Matthysen

19 September

Speaker at a side event of the United Nations Human Rights Council "Safeguarding human rights in complex environments: Addressing the use of military and security enterprises in protection, exploitation and conservation of natural resources", organized by the UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries and TRIAL International.
Hans Merket

25 September

IPIS annual event in Brussels: "Prospects for peace in eastern DRC: Mediation efforts, conflict drivers and regional stakes."
Ken Matthysen & Zacharie Bulakali

25 September

Introduction to the exchange session with the Belgian NGO Federation "What role does international solidarity play in the current security discourse?", organized by 11.11.11, IPIS and Search for Common Ground.
Filip Reyniers

October

1 October

Meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the latest security challenges in eastern DRC.
Patient Birindwa, Zacharie Bulakali, Erik Gobber and Ken Matthysen

2 October

Facilitation of the workshop session "For a fair governance of critical minerals: Rethinking the role of the artisanal sector in the EU-RDC partnership?" at the EurAc Conference "Pathways to stability: Rethinking the EU's role in the Great Lakes."
Marieke Haagh, Ken Matthysen, Maureen Walschot, Patient Birindwa and Zacharie Bulakali

16 October

Second exchange session with the Belgian NGO Federation "Peacebuilding/3D", organized by 11.11.11, IPIS and Search for Common Ground.
Filip Reyniers

16 October

Online participation in Mercedes-Benz' sustainability dialogue: Exchange on ASM formalization, and the role for downstream actors.
Ken Matthysen

20 October

Keynote address at the conference "Peace and security in Belgian foreign policy", co-organized by IPIS and Search for Common Ground at the Belgian Federal Parliament.
Filip Reyniers



▲ **IPIS' annual event in Brussels.**

21 October

Speakers at the roundtable on diamonds and the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme at the Global Maritime Forum's 2025 summit in Antwerp.
Hans Merket & Filip Reyniers

22-24 October

Engagement in the "Technical workshop on the formalization and professionalization of the artisanal mining sector in the DRC", organized by the Madini project, SAEMAPE and GIZ in Kinshasa.
Patient Birindwa & Zacharie Bulakali

23 October

Meeting with the Belgian Ambassador and Special Envoy for energy security and critical raw materials Geert Muylle at IPIS.
Filip Reyniers, Guillaume de Brier

28 October

Intervention on the need to balance global demand with local realities to prevent conflict and build peace at the session "Geopolitics, communities, and the future of the DRC's minerals" at the Paris Peace Forum.
Guillaume de Brier

28 October

Moderation of the event "Practical approaches to DDR and conflict resolution through ASM" at the Paris Peace Forum.
Guillaume de Brier

28 October

Online presentation of the research conducted by IPIS, DIIS, Caritas and CDJP on the Mobondo crisis in Western DRC to representatives of UN agencies in Kinshasa.
Ken Matthysen

November

4 November

Presentation to Enabel of the final results of the study on local development challenges in the copper and cobalt sector in Lualaba and Haut-Katanga.
Ken Matthysen

7 November

Presentation to Enabel of the study on the Centre d'Excellence Africain pour la Batterie (CAEB), Lubumbashi.
Guillaume de Brier

8 November

Intervention during the talent academy of the political party Les Engagés: "International conflicts: From major crises to forgotten conflicts."
Filip Reyniers

20 November

Moderation of the panel "The clean energy transition in the DRC: Opportunities and challenges of the Lobito Corridor initiative organized by FERN during the EU Raw Materials Week.
Guillaume de Brier

20 November

Speaker at the event "The weight of silence - Understanding the forgotten crisis on the outskirts of Kinshasa", organized by Caritas International Belgium in Brussels.
Ken Matthysen

27 November

Presentation on conflict actors in the Great Lakes region to future teachers of history and geography at the EPHEC University in Brussels.
Guillaume de Brier

December

3 December

Annual strategic meeting of the Kufatilia network in Kampala.
Jan Leysen & Patient Birindwa

12 December

Presentation of research findings on the Mobondo crisis in Western DRC to representatives of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Ken Matthysen

Presence in the media

In 2025, IPIS shared its expertise with a wide range of Belgian and international media outlets, including press, radio, and television. The capture of Goma and Bukavu by the Rwandan-backed M23 rebellion brought global attention to mineral extraction in eastern DRC, as well as the challenges in supply chains and sourcing policies. Through interviews, IPIS analyzed the diverse conflict drivers and the regional geopolitical and international dynamics at play. Additionally, diamond and critical mineral governance remained central topics of IPIS' contributions.

Mineral governance and conflict dynamics in the Democratic Republic of Congo

[Halt illegal imports of conflict minerals from DRC, campaigners urge EU](#)
January 15, 2025 (The Guardian)

[Rebellen vallen met steun van Rwanda Congoese stad binnen en dat wordt gezien als een oorlogsverklaring](#)
January 27, 2025 (Trouw)

[Minerali e milizie come si e arrivati presa goma e crisi rd congo](#)
January 27, 2025 (Il Sole)

[Pourquoi la guerre reprend au Congo: "Tout le tableau de Mendeleïev se trouve dans le sous-sol de la région"](#)
January 28, 2025 (7sur7)

[Onrust in Congo: hoe de mineralenhandel de geopolitiek rond Goma bepaalt](#)
January 29, 2025 (De Tijd)

[DR Congo conflict: Why is the EU under pressure to reconsider its minerals partnership with Rwanda?](#)
January 30, 2025 (Euronews)

[Your phone, a rare metal and the war in DR Congo](#)
February 1, 2025 (BBC)

[En vidéo – Pourquoi la RDC est-elle si convoitée par le Rwanda?](#)
February 1, 2025 (Le Temps)

[The Role Of Minerals And Tech Firms In The DR Congo Conflict](#)
February 3, 2025 (AFP)

[Est de la RDC: au-delà des minerais, d'autres moteurs dans le conflit](#)
February 3, 2025 (AFP)

[Quel est le lien entre votre téléphone, un métal rare et la guerre en RD Congo ?](#)
February 4, 2025 (BBC Afrique)

[Pour le Rwanda, jusqu'où ne pas aller trop loin](#)
February 27, 2025 (Le Vif)

[Graphics A tinderbox conflict in Congo is ready to explode](#)
March 5, 2025 (Reuters)

[Wealth and Warfare Empower a Rwanda-Backed Militant Group in Congo](#)
March 20, 2025 (The New York Times)

[Congo's most powerful rebel militia is earning millions from a coltan mine – and the metal is ending up in our phones](#)
April 24, 2025 (NZZ)

[Congo's coltan miners dig for world's tech – and struggle regardless of who is in charge](#)
May 18, 2025 (The Associated Press)

[Rwanda's dictator gambles future on Congo invasion](#)
May 25, 2025 (The Telegraph)

[The World's Most Ignored War Explained](#)
June 12, 2025 (Johnny Harris)

[Minerals and Violence](#)
June 24, 2025 (BBC 4 - The long view)

[DRC hit by record deforestation in 2024, satellite data show](#)
November 26, 2025 (MONGABAY)

Responsible sourcing

[Traçabilité des minerais en RDC : retour aux affaires pour l'ITSCI malgré les risques](#)
July 2, 2025 (Agence Ecofin)

[Congo controleert wereldhandel in kobalt en dat kan gevolgen hebben voor de prijs van onze auto's en smartphones](#)

October 7, 2025 (De Standaard)

['Herhaal de fout van bloeddiamanten niet voor kritieke mineralen en goud'](#)

November 21, 2025 (MO*)

Arms transfers and peace

[Veiligheid is meer dan tanks en raketten](#)

June 23, 2025 (De Tijd)

Mining in the Central African Republic

[Civila fördrivs och mördas när ryska Wagnergruppen gräver guld i Afrika](#)

January 4, 2025 (SVT Nyheter)

Diamond governance

[CAR Wants Countries Behind Russian Diamond Ban Suspended From KP](#)

April 25, 2025 (JCK)

[Un rapport d'IPIS sonde les profondeurs de la crise diamantifère et appelle à des réformes cruciales](#)

May 23, 2025 (Mine.cd)

[La Centrafrique, cas d'école des limites du Processus de Kimberley sur les diamants](#)

June 25, 2025 (Agence Ecofin)

[Conflict Diamonds: Report Challenges KP Lifting of CAR Embargo](#)

June 30, 2025 (IDEX Online)

[Centrafrique : malgré la levée de l'embargo, le diamant peine à briller](#)

July 16, 2025 (RFI)

[Le Botswana veut prendre le contrôle majoritaire de De Beers](#)

October 24, 2025 (RFI)

[Industry calls for urgent reform to eliminate trade in conflict diamonds](#)

November 16, 2025 (Financial Times)

[Diamonds in the DRC: A once-thriving industry struggles to survive](#)

November 20, 2025 (Mining Review Africa)

[Kimberley Process Meeting Ends With "Everybody Frustrated"](#)

November 26, 2025 (JCK)

[Traçabilité des diamants : pourquoi la réforme du Processus de Kimberley est aussi complexe](#)

December 2, 2025 (Ecofin)

[Unikt dokument: Här träffar SVT:s Johan Ripås diamantsmugglare](#)

December 29, 2025 (SVT Nyheter Förstasida)

[Diamantexpert: "Dubai är som en stor tvättmaskin för diamanter"](#)

December 29, 2025 (SVT Nyheter Förstasida)

Website and social media

IPIS reaches its audience via its website and social media channels such as LinkedIn and Instagram.

89,435 users

209 followers

5,396 followers

1,130 subscribers

IPIS Team

On 31 December 2025, the IPIS team was composed of the following persons:

Filip Reyniers
Director

Mieke Thierens
Researcher

Jan Leysen
Programme Manager

Jules De Feyter
Office Assistant

Anne Hullebroeck
Office Manager

Elard Mawala
Liaison Officer Tanzania

Lilian Ogolla
Project Officer

Niko Berghmans
Research &
Communication Intern

Ken Matthysen
Researcher

Erik Gobbers
Researcher

Marieke Haagh
Researcher

Zacharie Bulakali
Liaison Officer DRC

Patient Birindwa
Liaison Officer DRC

Stefaan Van wal
GIS & Data Researcher

Associate Researchers

Guillaume de Brier
Researcher

Laure Gerig
Communication Officer

Simon Schweitzer
GIS & Data Researcher

Peer Schouten

Hans Merket
Researcher & Policy
Manager

Lisa Loeper
Programme Manager

Maureen Walschot
Researcher

**Liliana Lizarazo
Rodriguez**

Han Verleyen
Programme Manager

Markus Fahlbusch
Researcher

Emanuele Lucci
Project Officer

Brian Wood



Board of directors

On 31/12/2025, the Board was composed of the following persons:

Chair

Loïc De Cannière

Co-founder of Incofin IM, an independent impact investment management company.

Members

Saartje Boutsen

Co-founder Studio D, sustainable business management agency.

Dirk Timmermans

Education Advisor – Coordinator,
Chair of the UN Association workgroup Education.

Arnim Langer

Professor of International Politics at KU Leuven and Director of the Center for Peace Research and Development (CRPD).

Eva Berghmans

Expert in human rights and migration issues.

Eric de Deckere

Sustainability Manager at the European Chemical Industry Council.

Geert Phlix

Director and senior consultant, ACE Europe.



Independent research and
capacity enhancement for
*durable peace, sustainable
development and human rights*