



Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network
Réseau Afrique Europe Foi et Justice

ECHOES from AEFJN

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REFLECTION

ECONOMICS OF INEQUALITIES AND INEQUALITIES OF ECONOMICS

The recent [address of the Holy See](#) to the Third United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights is very insightful. It underlines the centrality of human beings with their Dignity and Rights in all business activities. While it is good for the business corporations to pursue their legitimate profit, it should be done with a dual consideration for the common good and the tenets of Universal Human Rights standards. In the same vein, Amnesty International identifies Human Rights as an indispensable foundation for a truly transformative post-2015 development agenda. These are salient observations in the wake of the massive land grabbing ravaging Africa and the gun point trade agreements going on between Europe and the various economic blocks of Africa. Each of them is a violation of African peoples' Rights to land and to self-determination. [Read more](#)

FROM THE AEFJN DESK

Trapped between Natural Resources and Weapons: the People of Béni

In recent months the region and city of Béni have been the stage for massacres perpetrated by armed groups in North Kivu, but this has received very little media coverage. Béni has many mines including gold on its territory near the Virunga Park, home to several armed groups. Driven especially by growing demand for new technologies, European firms continue to use minerals from eastern Congo. Indeed, minerals are financing in one way or another armed groups in the east, while perpetuating the chronic instability of a region characterized by cruel violence, economic insecurity and human rights violations. Despite the fact that raw materials are not the only driver of the DRC conflict, they amount to a lucrative business for armed groups. Clearly, *binding* European legislation is needed to remove conflict minerals from chains of international businesses, not a voluntary framework as proposed by the European Commission. In addition, the activities of the rebels in Béni territory shows that they have more than one source of funding – illicit trade in minerals and in wild animals. Therefore a single focus on a few minerals will not be enough to break the dynamic of a war economy, as any natural resource can be used to build up funds for war. A comprehensive EU-approach is needed, that takes into account the contribution of artisanal mining to local livelihoods and the local economy as well as the complex root causes of conflict. [Read more](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Land and Seed Laws Under Attack

The scramble and partition of Africa is not an event that took place in the history of economic relations between Europe and Africa; it is in fact the underlying characteristic. Although the name

has changed to development cooperation and the *modus operandi* has become more scientific and subtle, the negative impact on Africa is on the increase. AFSA (Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa) and GRAIN recently published a painstaking and must-read report that exposes the activities of the different actors in their respective development cooperation. The common denominator among them is the tacit effort that aims at making Africa the destination for easy sourcing of raw materials for European Agro business corporations. [Read more](#)

125 Church leaders ask the EU to put a stop to conflict minerals ahead of crucial votes

CIDSE has published a statement signed by 125 Church Leaders asking for binding requirements for companies sourcing minerals from conflict areas to be put into place. They also ask that the companies and the minerals covered by the proposal are widened. The Statement was first published in October 2014 and Bishops continue to sign up to the declaration as they are very concerned about the fate of communities affected by conflict that is connected to the extraction and trade of minerals. On the CIDSE website you will find the common declaration of the Bishops in English, French, Spanish and German. [Read more](#)

ACTION

Demand the EU for an Ambitious Legislation to eradicate Conflict Minerals

Write to European Parliamentarians and demand binding regulation to halt the trafficking of conflict minerals. [Click here](#). Join our Twitter action.

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK

Lenten Meditations: Year of the Religious

The secretariat is pleased to send you a series of Meditations for Lent 2015. Every week until Easter you will be able to find on the AEFJN website a Reflection prepared by the German Antenna - in French and the English. The German version is available on request. Any group or antenna who wishes to translate the series into other languages for wider usage may do so. Please let us know if you do. [Read more](#)

VIDEOS

[Church Leaders United Against Conflict Minerals](#) (3 min)

African Church Leaders call for binding legislation to eliminate conflict minerals. (French, English subtitles)

[Fast Track to an Empty Basket](#) (2 min)

How trade treaties undermine local food sovereignty.

[Conflict Minerals](#) (3 min)

Infographic and video on the lack of legislation in the EU on conflict minerals. (3 min)

[Burkina Faso migrants agricoles menacés par l'arrivée des agrobusiness](#) (4 min)

La problématique foncière au Burkina vue de la perspective des exploitations familiales. (Only in French)