

# Resource Dimension of Conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

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## Abstract

This article investigates the intricate relationship between resource exploitation and the protracted conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. There is a growing concern among academics about whether these resources play a role in triggering hostilities or shaping the tactics of armed factions. As such, the study was guided by the following objectives: to assess resource abundance as a source of conflict in eastern DRC, to investigate the external interest of the international community in conflict through control of natural resources in eastern DRC and to evaluate government policies on management of natural resources and conflict in eastern Democratic Republic Congo. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies to comprehensively address the research objectives. The target population comprised individuals and communities affected by the resource conflict, as well as key stakeholders involved in conflict resolution efforts. The study employed a stratified random sampling method, ensuring representation from diverse segments of the population. The research findings highlight a consensus among respondents regarding the significance of resource abundance in driving conflict in Eastern DRC. This perception is bolstered by the observation that insurgent factions frequently emerge in resource-rich regions. On the other hand, Government policy reforms are needed to address the underlying issues and promote peace and stability. Moreover, addressing external interference requires enhanced diplomatic engagement, regional cooperation, and measures to hold external actors accountable. Additionally, empowering local communities to resist external manipulation and promote sustainable resource management is crucial. Based on the research findings, the study recommends reforms in governance structures to enhance transparency and accountability, diplomatic engagement to mitigate external interference, and empowerment of local communities to participate in decision-making processes.

Keywords: Natural Resources, Conflict, Resource based conflict, Armed Groups.

## Introduction

Access to resources has a direct impact on power, stability, and security of the concerned parties, making resources a common cause of conflict and violence. Resource driven conflicts have been

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reported in various regions of the world, ranging from water disputes between Israel and Palestine, to diamond wars in Sierra Leone, to oil conflicts in the Niger Delta and Iraq in the Middle East. Understanding the impact of resource distribution on conflict and the ways to manage these resources is critical towards achieving peaceful development. This requires adopting integrated, inclusive, and sustainable policies that aim to achieve a more equitable and transparent distribution of resources and development outcomes for all involved.

The eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is characterized by a long-standing history of conflict, violence, and insecurity. The region has been in turmoil for decades, with multiple armed groups fighting for control of the territory and its abundant natural resources. The resource dimension of conflict in eastern DRC has been identified as a critical factor in perpetuating violent conflict and hindering development and stability in the region. The conflict in eastern DRC has its roots in the colonial period when the Belgian colonizers exploited the region's vast mineral resources, such as gold, diamonds, tin, and cobalt (Kagwanja, 2010). After independence, the region remained under the control of ruthless dictators who continued to loot its natural resources, leading to increased poverty, inequality, and conflict. The First Congo War (1996-1997) and the Second Congo War (1998-2003) further exacerbated the situation, leading to the emergence of numerous armed groups that took control of the mines and continued to exploit the resources for their benefit (Autesserre, 2010).

Eastern DRC is endowed with abundant natural resources, including minerals, timber, wildlife, and water. The most valuable minerals in the region are gold, diamonds, tin, and coltan, which are used in the production of electronics, mobile phones, and other modern technologies. The abundance of these minerals in the region has attracted illicit traders, smugglers, and armed groups, who engage in illegal mining and transport of the minerals for profit. Other resources in the area, such as timber and wildlife, are also exploited through illegal logging and poaching activities, leading to environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity (Bryceson & Jønch-Clausen, 2012).

Several actors are involved in the resource dimension of conflict in eastern DRC, including armed groups, local communities, multinational corporations, and governments. Armed groups operating in the region, such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), and the Mai Mai militias, have been accused of exploiting the minerals to fund their operations and purchase weapons (Kasereka, 2018). Local communities are often caught in the middle of the conflict, with some being forced to work in the mines for survival, while others are displaced due to violence and exploitation. Multinational corporations, especially those from neighbouring countries like Rwanda and Uganda, have also been accused of benefiting from the resources through illegal trade and exploitation (Bralirwa, 2014). Governments, have also been involved in the conflict through their policies and interventions, often exacerbating or perpetuating the situation (Deininger et al., 2011).

The conflict in eastern DRC has had a range of negative impacts, including widespread violence, human rights abuses, environmental degradation, and economic underdevelopment. Violence in the region has led to thousands of deaths, sexual violence, and displacement of populations (Kasereka, 2018). Human rights abuses, such as forced labour and child exploitation, are also prevalent in the mines (Autesserre, 2010). Environmental degradation, including deforestation, soil erosion, and contamination of water sources, has also been reported, leading to long-term environmental damage (Bryceson & Jønch-Clausen, 2012). The economic impact has been equally devastating, with the exploitation of the resources benefiting a few individuals and perpetuating poverty and underdevelopment for the majority of the population (Kagwanja, 2010).

The resource dimension of conflict in eastern DRC is a complex and intertwined issue that has had far-reaching negative impacts on the region's people and the environment. The conflict has its roots in the colonial period and has been perpetuated by various actors, including armed groups, local communities, multinational corporations, and governments. Addressing the resource dimension of the conflict in eastern DRC requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes and involves all stakeholders, including local communities, multinational corporations, and governments. This paper aims to examine and synthesise existing data and the quality of evidence presented in reviewed literature and notable research publications concerning resource conflicts in Eastern DRC.

## **Theoretical Framework**

There are several theories that may assist towards understanding the causes of conflicts in Eastern DRC. The resource abundance theory is a perspective that explains how the abundance of natural resources can influence conflict and violence. The theory suggests that countries or regions that possess vast natural resources such as oil, minerals, and land, experience conflicts due to the unequal distribution of these resources and the struggle for power, control, and profit. Resource abundance theory argues that instead of promoting development, natural resource wealth leads to conflicts, corruption, and economic stagnation (Karl, 1997).

Some of the most prominent proponents of the resource abundance theory include Paul Collier. In his book, "The Bottom Billion," Collier explains how natural resource dependence contributes to conflicts, poverty, and failed states in low-income countries (Collier, 2007). He argues that natural resource wealth creates rent-seeking behaviours, reduces the accountability of governments to citizens, and provides a source of financing for rebel groups and insurgents. Another prominent proponent of resource abundance theory is Michael Ross. In his book, "The Political Economy of the Resource Curse," Ross argues that natural resource abundance has a negative impact on economic growth, environmental quality, and political institutions in developing countries (Ross, 2015). He suggests that countries that depend on natural resource exports are prone to corruption, cronyism, and authoritarianism, which lead to conflicts and violent extremism. In their study, "The Curse of Natural Resources," Sachs and Warner argue that natural resource wealth has a negative

impact on economic growth and that resource-rich countries have lower levels of human development and political freedom.

The resource abundance theory is a general framework and does not apply universally to all resource-rich countries. This is because some countries rich in natural resources have effectively managed their wealth to promote sustainable development. For instance, Middle East countries, Norway and Australia rich in natural resources have experienced economic development, political stability, and social welfare. Additionally, the theory neither provides insights into the challenges that many resource-rich countries encounter nor underscores the importance of effective resource governance and diversification strategies.

## **Methodology**

The researcher employed the mixed method research design involving both quantitative and qualitative techniques to study the resource dimensions of the conflict in eastern DRC. The quantitative technique provided data on the actors involved in the conflict in eastern DRC, specific resources that are the source of the conflict, their economic value and management policies in place. On the other hand, the qualitative technique sought to provide data that provided an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the abundance of natural resources and the incidence of conflict in eastern DRC.

The researcher's topic, "Resource Dimension of Conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) falls under the area of study of conflict studies and peacebuilding. This area of study focuses on understanding the causes of conflict, their dynamics and strategies for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. In the case of eastern DRC, the conflict is primarily driven by competition over natural resources. The exploitation and trade of these resources have fuelled conflict, displacement, and human rights violations for decades. Overall, the study provides insights into the complex linkages between abundant natural resources, conflict incidence and peacebuilding. Therefore, understanding these dynamics is important for promoting sustainable peace and development in the eastern DRC.

The target population for this study encompasses individuals and communities directly impacted by the resource conflict in eastern DRC. Additionally, it encompasses crucial actors engaged in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace in the region, such as government authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other pertinent establishments. The objective was to collect valuable thoughts and viewpoints from a wide array of stakeholders with a vested interest in the administration and resolution of the conflict.

The sampling method employed in this study was stratified random sampling. Stratification involved dividing the target population into distinct subgroups based on relevant characteristics such as geographical location, socioeconomic status, and level of involvement in the conflict.

Random sampling was then applied within each stratum to select participants, ensuring that every individual within the population had an equal chance of being included in the study. This method allowed for the representation of diverse perspectives and ensured that the sample reflected the larger population affected by the conflict in eastern DRC.

Questionnaires were widely used in the research as they enabled the researcher to collect data from a large group of individuals in a short period. They were useful in collecting both qualitative and quantitative data and were administered in different formats, including paper-based questionnaires, and google forms. This instrument was easy to construct, cost-effective, and easily accessible, making it suitable for the study. However, questionnaires have limited depth in terms of the data collected, have low response rates, and may have self-report bias. The researchers ensured that the questions were clear and unambiguous, the response options were appropriate, and the questionnaire design was user friendly.

Interviews involved asking open-ended questions to individuals to elicit data about their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards the study area. They were useful in collecting qualitative data, including opinions, feelings, motives, and beliefs. They were conducted either face to face or over the phone and were both structured or unstructured, depending on the research objectives.

## **Literature Review**

The end of the Cold War and economic globalization are widely acknowledged to have had a significant impact on warfare globally (Kaldor, 1999), and they also helped to increase the importance of natural resources as causes or drivers of violent conflicts (Berdal, 2003). One group of scholars has examined the correlation between an abundance of natural resources, conflict, and poor economic performance. Economists argue that there exists a conflict between the plentiful supply of natural resources and sustainable economic growth (Lamb et al. 2009). It was widely debated in the late 1980s that "natural resource abundance (or at least the abundance of particular types of natural resources) increases the likelihood that countries will experience negative economic, political, and social outcomes" (Rosser, 2002). A first group of scholars looked into the connection between an abundance of natural resources and subpar economic performance. For instance, economists contend that there is a conflict between the abundance of natural resources and economic expansion (Lamb, Moore, & Smith, 2009). The failure to handle significant resource earnings in a sustainable way by the governments of these nations contributes to part of their justification.

Other studies highlight the avarice or greed of armed factions for profits from natural resources as a pivotal factor in comprehending the initiation and perpetuation of armed conflicts (Collier & Hoeffler, 2005). According to Collier, a pioneer in this field of study, "conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance" (Collier, 1999). His initial work,

frequently co-authored with Hoeffler, advances the 'opportunity hypothesis,' positing that violent insurgency occurs when there is an opportunity for plunder. In subsequent work, Collier revisited his model and introduced a 'feasibility hypothesis,' where rebellion arises where it is both financially and militarily feasible (Mildner, et al. 2011).

Mwayila Tshiyembe, (2004) a Congolese scholar has written on the link between the resource dimension of conflict and globalization. In his book, "Globalization and Geopolitics in the Congo," Tshiyembe argues that the conflict in eastern DRC is not driven solely by the greed of armed groups, but is rather a consequence of the global economic system. He suggests that the neoliberal policies imposed on the DRC by international financial institutions have led to the exploitation of natural resources by multinational corporations, with little benefit to the Congolese population. Tshiyembe also highlights the complicit role of the international community in perpetuating conflict in the region.

Other scholars have delved into the relationship between a deficit in democratic governance or good governance and an excess of natural resources. Jensen and Wantchekon (2004) posit that resource-dependent African nations like Algeria, Nigeria, Libya, Gabon, Cameroon, and the DRC tend to exhibit higher levels of autocracy or encounter significant challenges in establishing democratic systems. The "state capacity model" (Fearon & Laitin, 2003) places the government as the central actor primarily responsible for conflict. Resource rents, as an additional source of revenue for the government, can erode state institutions by incentivizing rent-seeking behaviour and heighten the likelihood of conflict. Weakened state institutions can facilitate the capture of power by rebel groups. An alternative model, the "rentier state model," suggests that states heavily rely on revenue from oil exports, with the government deriving the majority of its income from a single source. This theory posits that rentier states often grapple with weak governance, corruption, and authoritarianism. The ruling elite in such countries become less accountable to the populace and more focused on preserving their power and wealth, through control of natural resources. Le Billon terms state-centric mechanisms as the "resource curse," wherein the government assumes a central role in either exacerbating or containing conflict.

The analysis of existing literature reveals a lack of consensus on how to conceptualize and address challenges related to resources in conflict-affected areas. Moreover, prevailing concepts have not undergone rigorous empirical testing. In particular, there is limited understanding of how conflict impacts the frameworks that govern resource management, delineate access and control rights, and how communities respond to these frameworks. Most analyses presuppose a motivation driven by rapacious desire and pay little attention to efforts in establishing or supporting local governance structures. Additionally, there is an evident correlation between government actions and conflicts over resources. The surge in demand for these consumer products, unfortunately, has not translated into economic prosperity. Instead, proceeds from illicit mining of valuable minerals found in these products have been redirected towards acquiring weapons and sustaining ongoing conflicts.

## Discussion and Findings

### The Natural Resource Based Conflict

Since the end of the 1980s, there has been much discussion about the existence of a ‘resource curse’, the idea that “natural resource abundance or at least the abundance of particular types of natural resources increases the likelihood that countries will experience negative economic, political and social outcomes” (Rosser, 2006). Economists Sachs & Warner (1995), Auty (2001), Niemeyer (2004), Atkinson and Hamilton (2003), and Lamb et al. (2009) contend that the availability of natural resources and economic expansion are not mutually exclusive. Their justification includes the fact that the governments of the afflicted nations are unable to sustainably handle significant resource earnings. Another set of scholars focused on the connection between a dearth of democracy and the wealth of natural resources. Cameroon, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Gabon, and the DRC are examples of resource-dependent African nations that tend to be more autocratic or have significant difficulties establishing democracy (Jensen, & Wantchekon, 2004).

Ross (2001) investigates potential reasons for the mismanagement of economies by resource-exporting governments. Ross argues that this could be partially explained by the fact that state-owned firms with poor management frequently dominate the industries in resource-dependent nations and that the governments of these states are unable to uphold property rights. Often, they have used different measuring techniques, such as indices of resource availability to calculate natural capital in dollars per person, to find less evidence for the presence of a resource curse (Brunnschweiler, 2008). Additionally, there are issues with the suggested direct causal link between resource abundance and unfavourable development outcomes like clientelism, authoritarianism, and corruption.

The resource curse is primarily discussed at the level of nation-states in the reviewed literature. Development outcomes should also be assessed at the sub-national level because different regions within the Eastern DRC frequently have notable variations in terms of natural resource endowments and produce diverse results (Carter, 2008). Additionally, the majority of the research on the resource curse that were surveyed take a strictly macro-level perspective. Their main objective is to look at broad political and economic patterns and are less interested in explaining societal dynamics at the micro level. As a result, little is known about how various parts of the resource curse have affected diverse end-user groups. According to Basedau and Lay’s (2009) research on the effects of oil wealth and dependence on violent conflict, for instance, the availability of high per capita resource revenues explains why the resource curse persists in some situations while a stabilising rentier effect is seen in others (i.e., regimes obtaining peace through the use of revenue from abundant resources like oil). Multivariate cross-country regressions have been used by the authors to support their claim that greater resource wealth per capita is generally correlated with lower levels of violence. Although there is an intriguing general trend suggested

by these results, conflict-affected people are completely ignored. The authors also ignore population disparities and the repercussions of local conflicts by depending solely on resource richness per capita.

To sum up, three major themes have dominated the literature on the resource curse: the connection between an abundance of natural resources and subpar economic performance; the connection between an abundance of natural resources and lack of democracy; and the connection between an abundance of oil and rent-seeking behaviour. The indices used to gauge the availability of natural resources, the examination of the causal mechanisms underpinning the resource curse, and the literature's heavy emphasis on states have all come under criticism.

### **Resource Abundance and the Conflict in Eastern DRC**

Collier and Sambanis (2002) assert that the existence of plentiful natural resources may contribute to the establishment of organised armed organisations looking to profit from ongoing economic activity. When there are natural resources that can be looted, this frequently occurs. The two experts contend that while there are many economic prospects, the presence of natural resources in low-income nations along with social polarisation increases the possibility of revolt (Collier, & Hoeffler, 2004). Additionally, this idea seeks to pinpoint the underlying causes of this phenomenon. It provides a more thorough explanation of the reasons behind conflict in locations like the Eastern DRC. The theoretical foundations on how civil wars start have been built on this concept.

While attempting to maintain control over the resource-rich areas, the government has been accused of marginalising peripheral peoples. This paradigm, however, places the blame for civil wars on rebels while ignoring government persecution and its role in igniting civil order. Many conflicts in the DRC are influenced by these perceptions. Exclusion and marginalisation are features of resource constraint. According to some scholars, groups get into fights to try to close resource distribution gaps across the countries. Exclusion and marginalisation relate to different levels of exclusion from the distribution of power and resources. Eltigani and Ateem (2007) demonstrated that economic dependency on natural resources, extreme poverty, and the failure of political institutions are more likely to be the causes of civil war in Africa than ethno-linguistic distinctions. Armed organisations will inevitably form in areas where the government is unable to pay attention to grievances from the margins.

In the political economy of armed conflict, there are more motivations for fighting than have been previously theorised, in addition to avarice and resentment. Exploitation-induced poverty can lead to insurrection. Resources can support and finance the rebels or the government during hostilities, as was seen in Angola. On the other hand, conflicts involving natural resources tend to be shorter and more frequently result in a party's triumph (Ballentine, & Sherman, 2003).



The core of what has previously been viewed as ethnic strife in Africa, is resource control or sharing. There is a significant indication that a resource curse lies behind the ethnic and nationalistic political mobilisation in Africa, where resource-induced wars are the norm. Resource contestation-related conflicts necessitate equitable and inclusive resource sharing mechanisms from responsive government. This is the paradox that abundantly resourced nations like the DRC grapple with, marked by slower economic growth and incessant violence.

### **Natural Resources Governance and Conflict in DRC**

The potentially devastating impact of corruption and attempts by diverse parties to syphon off the riches produced by natural resources are issues that weak institutions frequently find difficult to manage. Control over the benefits from local natural resources is frequently a key driver of ethnic or identity-based conflicts, making the governance of natural resources particularly crucial in the setting of split societies (Haysom, et al., 2009).

Despite this, the value of natural resources has not always been seen as high enough to warrant special consideration in constitutions or peace treaties. Natural resources frequently fall under general laws dealing with the treatment of revenue and fiscal and financial difficulties in many nations when they do not make up a sizable portion of the economy (as is the case in a majority of Western states). Similarly, in peace treaties, natural resource deals are frequently only briefly discussed. In more recent constitutions and legal agreements, it is more common to handle natural resources differently from other parts of the wealth-sharing arrangement. There are several causes for this. Natural resources are a major source of wealth in many nations. Because of this, these resources are generally seen as a national treasure that ought to be equally distributed. They frequently foster a strong sense of local community ownership over their expansion and the earnings that follow. Finding a balance between these regional interests and the wider relevance of natural resources to the development of a nation is difficult. It is frequently necessary to reconcile this strain and any ensuing conflict through constitutions or peace treaties (Haysom, et al., 2009). Therefore, it becomes crucial to acquire conceptual clarity regarding the different kinds of challenges that may come up during discussions over natural resources. People with experience in these discussions say there are three general categories that agreements to regulate natural resources can fall under, as highlighted below:

- ❖ **Ownership of natural resources.** In order to balance the claims of private ownership, community and customary rights, and state ownership, the regime controlling the property ownership of natural resources must frequently be a contentious matter. In constitutional talks over natural resources, deciding who owns what is frequently the most contentious issue. The administration, control, and distribution of natural resource profits

are connected concerns that are sometimes misinterpreted as being resolved by ownership (Ossowski, et al., 2008).

❖ **Allocation of the power to manage and develop natural resources.** The allocation of the power to manage and develop natural resources is an essential responsibility for any government. This decision can have far-reaching effects on the environment, economy, and society. The government may centralize this power by allocating it to an agency or department or decentralize it to local communities or private industries. The type of natural resource being managed can also influence the allocation of power. Sustainability should be a primary consideration when making decisions about natural resources. Moreover, the interests and needs of all stakeholders, including indigenous communities and international organisations, should be taken into account. Transparency and accountability must also be maintained to ensure that natural resources are managed and developed fairly and responsibly. Overall, the allocation of power to manage and develop natural resources requires careful consideration, foresight, and a commitment to sustainable practices.

❖ **Treatment of natural-resource revenues.** The treatment of natural resource revenues can have a significant impact on the overall economy of a country. When resources are extracted, the profits generated can provide a crucial source of income for many nations. However, how these revenues are managed can also have negative consequences if they are not used wisely. One approach to managing natural resource revenues is to allocate them towards public expenditures such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social welfare programs. This can have a positive impact on the country's development, as investments in these areas can improve the quality of life for the population and strengthen the country's economy. Another option is to use the revenue to pay off debts or to save for future generations. However, it is also important to consider potential negative effects such as the creation of a resource curse. This occurs when a nation's economy relies too heavily on the extraction of natural resources, leading to a lack of development in other sectors and a dependency on the volatile commodities market. Therefore, it is crucial to have effective policies in place that promote sustainable and responsible management of natural resource revenues. This may include transparency and accountability measures, responsible environmental practices, and effective regulation and oversight.

### **External Interest on Natural Resources and Conflict in the DRC**

International interference on natural resources management can be well understood when more references are made with regards to how regional and multinational corporations (MNCs) are created and handled. Since the conflict in DRC started, both phases one and two, a lot of treaties

have been formed but their implementation has neither borne fruits nor benefited of the DRC citizens.

Foreign countries and companies have for many years been interested in the natural resources of Eastern DRC. They have been extracting these resources, mainly minerals, and exporting them to their home countries for processing and use in their industries. This extraction has often been done without the consent of the Congolese people, and many times, the extraction has been accompanied by illegal activities such as exploitation and smuggling, making it difficult for the Congolese government to get its fair share of revenue. The quest for control over these resources has led to violent confrontations between different groups, including the Congolese military, rebels, and armed militias. This has further perpetuated the violence. Similarly, the proliferation of small arms within the great Lakes region has led to increased violence and insecurity in the country. These conflicts have resulted in the displacement of millions of people, widespread human rights abuses, and the loss of thousands of lives. Furthermore, this external interest has led to a situation where the Congolese government has little control over the use and management of its natural resources. The government has not been able to effectively regulate the industry, leading to exploitation and environmental degradation.

## **Conclusion**

The ongoing crisis in the Eastern DRC is founded in both a history of predation and corruption, as well as the enduring aftermath of the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda. Today, Eastern DRC is dealing with a volatile mix of local, regional, and international crises. The war and the illicit exploitation of natural resources in the country has subjected its citizens to a disastrous situation that desperately needs reform. The external interest in DRC's natural resources has largely fanned the conflict. The exploitation of these resources without proper regulation and the lack of accountability by the multinational corporations has fuelled violence and insecurity, further exacerbating the country's crisis. Any efforts towards peace building and stability in the eastern region of DRC must therefore include addressing the exploitation of natural resources and clamping down on illegal activities around them.

## **Recommendations**

The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) should give top priority to implementing thorough reforms in policies related to the management of natural resources. The changes should prioritize transparency, accountability, and active community participation in decision-making processes concerning resource extraction. Furthermore, it is imperative to adopt policies aimed at combating corruption and guaranteeing the fair allocation of advantages derived from natural resource earnings.

International collaboration and diplomacy must be strengthened to tackle foreign meddling in the conflict dynamics of the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo should actively collaborate with neighbouring nations, regional entities, and international allies in order to efficiently counteract external pressures. Diplomatic endeavours ought to prioritize the advancement of peace, stability, and the sustainable management of resources in the region.

**Community Empowerment and Participation:** It is important to empower and encourage local communities in Eastern DRC to actively engage in decision-making processes related to resource management. Measures should be taken to enhance the availability of information to the community, reinforce local governance frameworks, and provide assistance to community-driven resource management initiatives. By enabling communities to assert authority over their natural resources, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) can enhance its ability to withstand external manipulation and promote sustainable peace and development in the long run.

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