



# 2023 北京国际模拟联合国大会

Beijing International Model United Nations 2023

## Background Guide

### United Nations Security Council

Topic: Combatting the financing of armed groups and terrorists in Africa through the illicit trafficking of natural resources

青年携手  命运共同

JOINED HANDS , SHARED FUTURE

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# Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) of Beijing International Model United Nations 2023 (BIMUN 2023). The Directors would like to extend our sincerest welcome to all the delegates on our committee.

For years, Africa is suffering from a so-called “resource curse”, where countries’ natural resource endowments have not translated into positive economic growth. Although countries in the region have strived to generate the benefits of natural resources, little progress has been made due to long-term turmoil and conflict. An increasing number of cases indicates that the armed groups and terrorists in Africa are expanding their control over mineral deposits to receive extra sources of financing in recent years; countries started to address the issue as a matter of urgency.

In response, in October 2022, as one of the signature events of Gabon's presidency, Gabon organized a high-level debate on strengthening the fight against the financing of armed groups and terrorists through the illicit trafficking of natural resources. Although UNSC member states are generally supportive of combating the illicit trade in natural resources, countries hold different opinions concerning both tracks of discussion – either preventing the terrorists and armed groups from getting access or preventing the misuse of natural resources. Also, countries disagree upon whether sanction is an effective tool to combat illicit trade. Besides, as the illicit trafficking of natural resources often takes place where the security situation is the most turbulent and involves transnational stakeholders, it is extremely difficult to implement proposals.

Therefore, our topic: Combatting the financing of armed groups and terrorists in Africa through the illicit trafficking of natural resources features issues of extreme intricacy and entangles interests among stakeholders. This Background Guide will provide you with an introduction to the issue. Nevertheless, we welcome all your unique insights and practical proposals to prevent the financing of armed groups and terrorists from illicit trafficking of natural resources and how to better regulate natural resources.

The Directors wish you all an enjoyable and fruitful journey in UNSC, BIMUN 2023. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Best Regards,  
Directors of UNSC  
BIMUN 2023

# Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the main organs of the United Nations established in 1945 under the UN Charter. It undertakes four main responsibilities: to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights, and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations.<sup>1</sup>

The Council is composed of 15 member states, including 5 permanent member states with the "right to veto", namely China, the Russian Federation, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and 10 non-permanent member states, which are selected by the General Assembly. Besides, non-council member states that are stakeholders of the issue can also be invited to participate in the discussion, though without the right to vote.

The Council pays special attention to the stability and security of the international community. When potential violence to peace is noticed, the Council determines whether a threat or an aggressive act exists at first. And it undertakes investigations, dispatches missions or special envoys to prevent the exacerbation of threats. In some circumstances, the UNSC can impose sanctions or even authorize the use of force in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.<sup>2</sup>

Illicit trafficking of natural resources has received growing attention from the UNSC in recent years and the Council basically has adopted two tracks. On the one hand, the 2014 Resolution 2195 addressed the role of transnational crime in supporting terrorism, expressed concern that terrorists benefit from the "illicit trade in natural resources including gold and other precious metals and stones, minerals, wildlife, charcoal and oil". In 2019, Resolution 2462 centers on combatting the financing of terrorism, which noted with grave concern that terrorist groups raise funds through the "exploitation of natural resources". On the other hand, the Council has taken the misuse of natural resources into consideration, and organized several debates concerning the interdependence between conflict and natural resources since 2011.<sup>3</sup>

Particularly, the Council has put illicit trafficking of natural resources by armed groups in its agenda when it comes to the situation in African countries, such as Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali. In the case of DRC, the Council adopted sanctions as a tool. However, regarding the use of sanctions to address the issue, China and Russia questioned whether the sanctions take full respect to state sovereignty, as China argued that "the relevant sanctions measures of the Security Council must not be misused, let alone become a tool for suppressing other political and commercial players".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "What is the Security Council?" United Nations official website, Jan. 8, 2023 Accessed, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/what-security-council>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Charters, United Nations official website, Jan. 8, 2023 Accessed, <https://www.un.org/zh/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

<sup>3</sup> "Peace and Security in Africa: Financing of Armed Groups and Terrorists Through Illicit Trafficking of Natural Resources", Security Council Report, Jan.12, 2023 Accessed, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/10/peace-and-security-in-africa-financing-of-armed-groups-and-terrorists-through-illicit-trafficking-of-natural-resources.php>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

# General Introduction to the Topic

## Overview

It has long been a fact acknowledged by countries that natural resources are natural capital out of which other forms of capital are made. They contribute towards fiscal revenue, general income, and poverty reduction. However, it may also have devastating impact when it was mismanaged and illegally possessed by groups such as armed groups and terrorists because organized crime can be a source of financing or logistical support through both the illegal trafficking of goods and commodities and the illicit trade in natural resources.

Africa, the second-largest continent of the world, is rich in natural resources ranging from arable land, water, oil, natural gas, minerals, forests, and wildlife.<sup>5</sup> It is home to some 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, 8 percent of the world's natural Gas, and 12 percent of the world's oil reserves. Also, the continent has 40 percent of the world's gold and up to 90 percent of its chromium and platinum. It also owns the world's largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum, and uranium.<sup>6</sup> So far, natural capital accounts for 30-50 percent of total wealth in most African countries.

Meanwhile, Africa also ranks second in the number of armed conflicts per region with more than 35 non-international armed conflicts (NIACs) taking place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.<sup>7</sup> Also, terrorists and violent extremists including Da'esh, Al-Qaida, and their affiliates have exploited instability and conflict to increase their activities and intensify attacks across the continent. What makes the problem worse is that there are already increasing cases indicating that some of the armed groups and terrorists are harnessing natural resources to finance their operations, especially in conflict-stricken countries such as CAR and DRC.

Therefore, in order to minimize the potential security threat, the discussion of fighting against the financing of armed groups and terrorists through the illicit trafficking of natural resources was put forward once again in October 2022, when Gabon took over as President of the UNSC under the agenda item "peace and security in Africa". This marks the latest discussion of the topic in UNSC. African countries, and indeed the world, are keen to resolve the issue, but the sanction, which is currently the most widely recognized approach, has not received much consensus. In this sense, delegates are supposed to find the intricacy of resolving the issue based on past resolutions of UNSC and the achievements made by the latest high-level meeting and come up with insightful ideas to tackle the existing dilemma.

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5 "Our work in Africa", UN Environment Programme, Accessed Jan.27 2023, <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa>

6 Ibid.

7 "Today's Armed Conflict", Geneva Academy, Accessed Jan.27 2023 <https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts>

## Key Terms

### Illegal Mining

It refers to the serious behavior of natural persons or units that, in violation of the provisions of the Mineral Resources Law, mine without obtaining a mining license, enter the mining areas planned by the State the mining areas of great value to the national economy and the mining areas of other people without authorization, or my specific minerals that are subject to protective mining as stipulated by the State.<sup>8</sup>

### Illegal Shipping and Trading

It refers to shipping and trading without obtaining the operation right according to law. That is, failing to obtain the shipping and trading certificate issued by the relevant competent department and operating beyond the approved scope. If there is no money transaction or it cannot be verified that there is a money transaction, it cannot be regarded as illegal shipping and trading.<sup>9</sup>

### Financial Crime

It is the behavior that occurs in the course of financial activities, violates the financial management regulations, destroys the financial management order, and should be punished according to law, such as money laundering and financial fraud.<sup>10</sup>

### Natural Resources

It refers to those features or parts of the natural environment that have value in meeting human needs both physically or aesthetically, but under the framework of the UNSC, we tend to center our discussions on the economic definition of resources, especially raw assets that can be classified as the following four categories: mineral and energy resources, soil resources, water resources and biological resources.

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<sup>8</sup> Zabyelina, Yuliya, and Van Daan Uhm. *Illegal Mining: Organized Crime, Corruption, and Ecocide in a Resource-Scarce World*. 1st ed. 2020. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Natural Resources-Related Trade, Illicit Trade, <https://illicittrade.org/natural-resourcesrelated-trade>, Accessed Jan.15th, 2023.

<sup>10</sup> "Peace Building Initiative - Definitions & Conceptual Issues," n.d., <http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org/index818b.html?pagelId=2097>, Accessed Feb.19th, 2023.

# Current Situation

## Overview

For a long time, terrorism has severely affected the security and stability in Africa in terms of weakening the authority of the state, and fuels corruption and human rights crisis. And one of the main reasons why terrorism is difficult to eradicate is that terrorist organizations have sources of funds, a large part of which comes from the illegal exploitation of natural resources.<sup>11</sup>

The mining of precious metals and minerals in Africa is funding extremists with huge revenues and benefiting groups that control mining and trafficking routes.<sup>12</sup> According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) research, vast quantities of illegally mined gold and other precious metals are being pumped into legal markets, providing traffickers with huge profits.<sup>13</sup> Illegal mining represents the primary source of funding for terrorist organizations in their operations as statistics indicated that 75 percent of civil wars in Africa are partly funded by natural resource revenues since 1990.<sup>14</sup>

The illegal extraction of minerals, timber, charcoal, and wildlife has had a great negative impact on the national security and stability of African countries, making it difficult for some of the countries to achieve long-term and stable peace and unity, and hindering Africa's construction stable development. For instance, it provides rebels and criminal gangs with nearly \$1 billion in revenue in the DRC, and has triggered the perpetuation and prolonging of conflict in CAR.<sup>15</sup>

Over time, the UN has attached great importance to the financing of armed groups and terrorists in Africa through the illicit trafficking of natural resources. The UNSC has made a lot of progress on this issue by focusing on monitoring the misuse of natural resources and on terrorist financing. It promotes and oversees the implementation of several relevant international conventions and has adopted a number of resolutions aimed at addressing the issue through a multi-faceted and collaborative approach. As mentioned before, there are two ways to solve the problem: one is to prevent terrorist financing; the other is to prevent the misuse of natural resources.

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11 United Nations Security Council, S/PV.7351, access on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/785571?ln=en>.

12 Nearly half of world's terror victims are African, with organized crime increasingly entrenched, access on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129312>.

13 Ibid.

14 United Nations Security Council, S/PV.8372, access on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1649012?ln=en>.

15 Ibid.



## Past Efforts

### RES/2195 and RES/2482

Following the first track, on December 19, 2014, Resolution 2195 was issued in order to deal with issues related to terrorism and cross-border crime. This resolution was groundbreaking resolution that clarified the scope of sanctions and reaffirms that direct or indirect transactions and financial support to listed individuals or groups will be incorporated in the sanction list.<sup>16</sup> It also mentioned the exchange of information and cooperation among various organizations, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of United Nations Affairs, as well as the significance of African regional mechanism.<sup>17</sup> It has laid a solid foundation for subsequent resolutions with a blueprint for an effective cooperation mechanism.

Follows Resolution 2195 is Resolution 2482, released on 19 July 2019. It has comprehensively complemented the former one, which basically focused on the financial support of terrorist organizations through illicit trafficking and transnational criminal syndicates. It provided Member States with specific guidelines for action in the areas of border management, legislation, ratification, and implementation of global instruments.<sup>18</sup> This resolution was a model to guide countries in their joint response to terrorism. The detailed and practical program of action referred to therein provided a clear direction for the work of States facing the problem of terrorism.<sup>19</sup>

These two Resolutions both focus on conflict prevention and maintenance of security and development, and represent the milestone of countries' efforts over years.

### UNSC 8372<sup>nd</sup> Meeting

On the other hand, the Council has considered the misuse of natural resources while discussing conflict prevention and the relationship between security and development. Early attempts include the February 2011 debate concerning the interdependence between security and development (S/PV.6479), the June 2013 debate on conflict and natural resources (S/PV.6982), the January 2015 debate on inclusive development (S/PV.7361).<sup>20</sup>

The first time that UNSC officially recognized natural resources as one of the root causes of conflict is in its 8372<sup>nd</sup> meeting in 2018. The biggest contribution of this meeting is its evaluation of the impact of conflicts over natural resources on international security in a variety of ways, and its enhancing awareness on the misuse of natural resources.<sup>21</sup> Also, in the meeting, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted ways of preventing conflicts through the shared management of natural resources and of enhancing regional cooperation for peace and sustainable development.<sup>22</sup> For example, in addressing the

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Security Council. S/RES/2195, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/785567?ln=en>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Security Council, S/2018/901, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1648332?ln=en>.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Security Council, S/PV.8372, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1649012?ln=en>.

problem of illegal mining, he suggested that civil society, governments, and regional and international organizations could cooperate to regulate the source, sale, and trade of minerals.<sup>23</sup>

This meeting identified key issues in preventing the misuse of natural resources, guided member states in discussing responses in specific areas and had a significant influence on the approaches in subsequent resolution documents.

## **S/2022/728**

S/2020/728 marks a milestone in the simultaneous discussion of two important approaches to fighting terrorism. The letter submitted by the Permanent Representative of Gabon pointed out that combatting the financing of terrorists and the problem of illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources should be considered simultaneously.<sup>24</sup>

For one thing, terrorist organizations can take advantage of any available natural resources in the territories under their control and may use illicit trafficking to obtain funds, and for another, they can use the money to expand their power and occupy more natural resources, creating a vicious circle.<sup>25</sup> To effectively solve this problem that deepens the cycle in Africa, the document identifies several key issues, including the regulation of natural resources and prevention of terrorist financing, preventive measures through legislation, surveillance measures, etc.<sup>26</sup>

In all, this document provides a convergence of ideas for discussion at subsequent conferences. It also reminds countries that the illegal exploitation of natural resources is linked to the problem of terrorist organizations, which is of great significance to the world's anti-terrorism.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Gabon, S/2022/728, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3989656?ln=en>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

## Efforts in Progress

### UNSC mission in Africa

#### I. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was introduced in Resolution 2149 to help stabilize instability in the Central African Republic<sup>27</sup>. MINUSCA has fulfilled the responsibilities entrusted to it and has made important contributions to combating terrorists and maintaining stability in the Central African Republic. The mission serves as the direct supervisor and mediator of local conflicts and assists the CAR in strengthening and consolidating its grip on national power, making the government better able to manage natural resources and deal with terrorist threats.

As MINUSCA continued its work in the Central African Republic, it has achieved many of its stated objectives, such as facilitating and supporting the rapid expansion of state authority and making the CAR government more capable of managing natural resources, on which basis its functions have been expanded. For example, MINUSCA provided weapons to armed wildlife rangers in wildlife sanctuaries after conducting audits to help them have some armed capability under the armed embargo.<sup>28</sup> The Panel of MINUSCA is also responsible for focusing on the illegal trafficking networks of militants, analyzing and reporting the illegal trafficking and illegal financing of terrorist organizations, and providing important information for solving the problem.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, MINUSCA played an important role in combating terrorist organizations, protecting natural resources and preventing financing of terrorist organizations.

#### II. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)

The United Nations Organization's Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is mandated by Resolution 1279 to assist the government of the Republic of Congo in resolving internal armed conflict.<sup>30</sup>

MONUC helps to develop an overall strategy for the United Nations system in Congo based on the Integrated Strategic Framework. The strategy states that the United Nations aims to achieve the following strategic objectives in Congo: "addressing ongoing conflicts; stabilizing the conflict-affected areas; consolidating peace across the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and making development viable".<sup>31</sup>

Since its first deployment in 1999, the MONUC Mission has significantly changed and expanded its mandate to coordinate international efforts on security sector reform, in addition to supporting the building of national institutional capacity and dealing with

27 United Nations Security Council, S/RES/2149, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/768393?ln=en>.

28 United Nations Security Council, S/RES/2588, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3933992?ln=en>.

29 Ibid.

30 United Nations Security Council, S/RES/1279, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/384901?ln=en>.

31 UN. Secretary-General, S/2009/623, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/672760?ln=en>.

illegal exploitation of natural resources.<sup>32</sup> To address the problem of illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources, the technical assessment mission of MONUC identified the illegal exploitation of natural resources as one of the critical tasks.<sup>33</sup> MONUC has protected the natural resources through continuous investigation, analysis and armed support.

MONUC has contributed greatly to the stability of Congo and the protection of natural resources. It has helped reduce the illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources, therefore combating the financing of terrorist organizations through the illicit trafficking of natural resources.

## Other Organizations

### I. UN Agencies

Other parts of the United Nations, such as The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), also make important contributions to this issue. Several UN departments help address the abuse of natural resources and the financing of terrorist organizations through research, reports, recommendations, and technical support.

For example, UNODC investigates the current situation of drug and crime issues, formulates policies and measures on certain issues, assists governments in the formulation of national laws on drugs, crime, and counterterrorism, etc. In more detail, UNODC's efforts to control transnational crime and illicit trafficking are a microcosm of its work in many fields. By improving countries' ability to detect transnational crime, countering the abuse of financial institutions by criminal organizations wishing to launder illicit proceeds, UNODC has combated illicit trafficking and financing and has enhanced the capacity of States to act in these areas.<sup>34</sup>

### II. Regional Cooperation Organizations

In his report in S/PV.8372, the UN Secretary-General pointed out that natural resources must be regulated through a combination of social, governmental, regional, and international efforts.<sup>35</sup> As a great example for regional cooperations, the Kimberley Process (KP) has had great impacts. It is committed to eliminating conflict diamonds from the global supply chain, and today member states actively curb 99.8% of the global trade in conflict diamonds.<sup>36</sup>

More regional cooperation organizations have been mentioned in UN resolutions and reports. A positive example of regional organization is the African Union (AU), which has placed its focus squarely on the issue of the link between conflicts and natural resources.<sup>37</sup> Cooperation instruments such as the African Mining Vision, adopted by the AU in February 2009, have had a significant impact in addressing issues arising from

<sup>32</sup> UN. Secretary-General, S/2010/164, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/679497?ln=en>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Executive Director, E/CN.7/2004/6, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/523306?ln=en>.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Security Council, S/PV.8372, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1649012?ln=en>.

<sup>36</sup> The Kimberley Process, "What is the Kimberley Process", access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://www.kimberleyprocess.com/en/what-kp>.

<sup>37</sup> United Nations Security Council, S/PV.8372, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1649012?ln=en>.

natural resources.<sup>38</sup> Other beneficial instruments for cooperation include the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Great Lakes region, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, etc.

These excellent examples have many common points worth the reference of all countries, such as: 1. Clear task arrangement and functional definition; 2. Reliable supervision mechanism and reporting channels; 3. Pay attention to the whole process of problem prevention, solution and achievement protection, etc. In addition, the guidance of the United Nations has made the work of these cooperative organizations more rational and effective.

In the efforts from all parties, excellent cooperation has been made available to more countries as a model, and some agreements that remain problematic have been refined.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

## Key Issues

### Illegal Acquisition of Mineral Resources

#### Overview

Economically speaking, minerals are Africa's most important natural resource, which generates around 20% of Africa's economic activity. However, ironically, instead of contributing to national GDP, part of the resources is now possessed and harnessed by armed groups and terrorists and is becoming the major source of funding for global affiliates of ISIL and Al-Qaida in Africa, as well as regional terrorist groups.

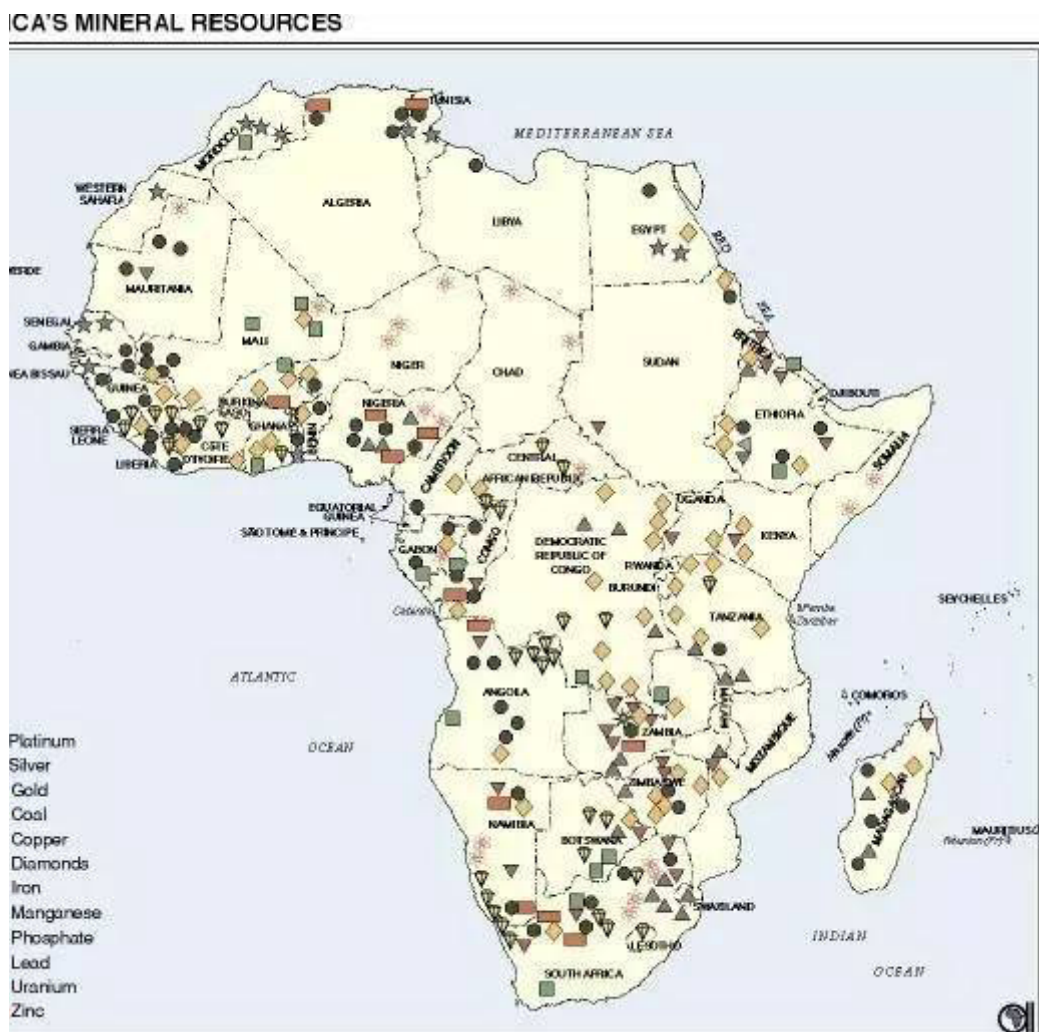


Figure 1 Africa's Mineral Resources<sup>39</sup>

Among the rich mineral resources demonstrated in the following graph, high-value resources such as gemstones, precious metals, and rare earths are more often to be the target for illicit trading. Rare earths, such as cassiterite that is used to produce tin is the single largest illegally traded mineral in Africa by volume. It is the same as the situation

<sup>39</sup> "54 Africa Mineral Resources Map", Sinoafrica, Accessed Jan.17 2023, <http://www.sinoafrica-business.com/news/show684.html>



in the gemstones industry where illicit diamond trading is rife in Zimbabwe's Marange diamond fields, Central African Republic, DRC, and Sierra Leone.

Trading of metals is often made in cash and moved back through a variety of means, including smuggling via cash couriers or via hawala, value transfer services, or potentially through virtual currencies cashed out in mobile money.

Compared with other minerals, gold is the most attractive resource for armed groups and terrorists, owing to its stable value and relative portability, as well as the inherent industry vulnerabilities relating to the cash-intensive nature of the gold trade and limited Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) oversight. Therefore, part of the gold produced illegally by the terrorists is sold to legal businesses through cash transactions with a view to concealing its provenance. The profits acquired can be later used to buy equipment, munitions, medicines, and other supplies needed to continue with terrorists' activities. Besides, armed groups can achieve illegal trafficking of gold in the name of the gold rush because the gold rush carries the lowest risks of detection and disruption. This is exactly the situation in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, particularly in the Lipatako-Gourma region.

Therefore, in order to get control over mineral resources, armed groups and terrorists are more willing to fight in areas rich in minerals, further exacerbating conflicts and instability. Affected regions include Kidal, to the north of Mali (involving JNIM fraction groups such as Ansar Edine); Bongou and Soum in Burkina Faso (involving groups such as Ansar ul Islam); and Kombongou in Niger (areas that have also suffered a number of terrorist attacks).<sup>40</sup> Such way of illegal mining ends up a long-lasting vicious circle, because the affected communities are particularly vulnerable as they live in isolated areas with a limited law enforcement presence. In the case of Congo, when the Ugandan army withdrew from Congo and Rwanda consecutively, the left behind local proxies, the Lendu Nationalist and Integrationist Front (Front des Nationalistes et Intégrationnistes, FNI) linked to Uganda, and the Hema Union of Congolese Patriots (Union des Patriotes Congolais, UPC), supported by Rwanda in turn fought for the control of gold-mining areas and trade routes, which resulted in the slaughter of at least two thousand civilians in the Mongbwalu area alone between June 2002 and September 2004.<sup>41</sup>

The UN Security Council has long been aware of the dangers of illegal natural resource extraction to regional security, and the UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) is already conducting an investigation on the issue and sending alerts and policy guidance.

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<sup>40</sup> "Concerns over the Use of Proceeds from the Exploitation, Trade, and Trafficking of Natural Resources for the Purposes of Terrorism Financing", UNSC Counter-terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), June 2022, [https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil.ctc/files/files/documents/2022/Jun/cted\\_cft\\_trends\\_alert\\_june\\_2022.pdf](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil.ctc/files/files/documents/2022/Jun/cted_cft_trends_alert_june_2022.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Human Rights Watch, "The curse of Gold", HRW, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2005/06/01/curse-gold>, accessed Feb.10, 2023.























Terrorist organisations and armed groups*	Region of operation	Revenue stream/resources exploited
FARC/ELN**	Colombia	Levies on mines and mining equipment in regions, particularly precious metals 
Taliban	Afghanistan	Mine capture in home region, 'service charges' in non-home regions on talc, gemstones, marble, gold and coal    
Hezbollah	West and Central Africa	Voluntary or forced donations, established mineral trading networks. Resources include gold, gemstones, uranium and coal    
ISIL/Al Qaeda	Eastern Syria, Western Iraq	Taxation of activities in controlled territories, sales from crude and refined oil and precious metals    
United Wa State Army	Myanmar	Control of regional tin mines, revenues from exports to China 
Al Shabaab	Somalia	Capture of acacia charcoal industry, exports of charcoal to Middle East   
FDLR/Moi-Moi/Raia Mutomboki	Democratic Republic of Congo	Voluntary or forced donations, established mineral trading networks     

Figure 2 Natural Resources Extraction and the Link with Terrorism and Non-state Armed Groups <sup>42</sup>

## Process of Illegal Mining of Mineral Resources

Unlike the poaching of biological resources, especially animal resources, the mining industry is more intensive in terms of personnel and equipment and requires more long-term investment. So, generally speaking, armed groups and terrorists have two routes: one is through controlling trade routes and mining areas, and the other is through document fraud.

Controlling mining areas and trade routes is an important strategy for terrorists and armed groups. This is mainly because long-term control of the area means a more cost-effective investment of manpower and equipment, which will be used to conduct mining operations in the long term directly. Also, control over trade routes means more income from collecting road tolls. Currently, collecting road tolls is very rampant in African countries, and it has become the most straightforward income for armed groups. According to a fuel smuggler from Qatrun, in December 2018, there were 18 checkpoints between Sebha and al-Tum (a checkpoint at the Libya–Niger border). The roughly 320-km-long road section from Qatrun to al-Tum is controlled by two Tebu armed groups (Desert Shield Battalion and Umm al-Aranib Martyrs Battalion). <sup>43</sup> Since mineral resources need to be transported by road or railway, terrorists and armed forces can take advantage of them and gain huge revenue.

Meanwhile, terrorists and armed groups may commit document fraud in connection with illegal mining and trafficking of mineral resources. They may use licenses, permits or certificates to cloak illegally sourced minerals as ostensibly legitimate so that they can get access to a protected area and use equipment and devices on a large scale. They can also do fraudulent paperwork to export illegally sourced mineral resources in legal

<sup>42</sup> OECD, Terrorism, corruption and the criminal exploitation of natural resources, <https://www.oecd.org/investment/Terrorism-corruption-criminal-exploitation-natural-resources-2017.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> CHATHAM House, "The Development of Libyan Armed Groups Since 2014", CHATHAM House, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/03/development-libyan-armed-groups-2014/4-armed-groups-southern-libya>, accessed Feb.12,2023.



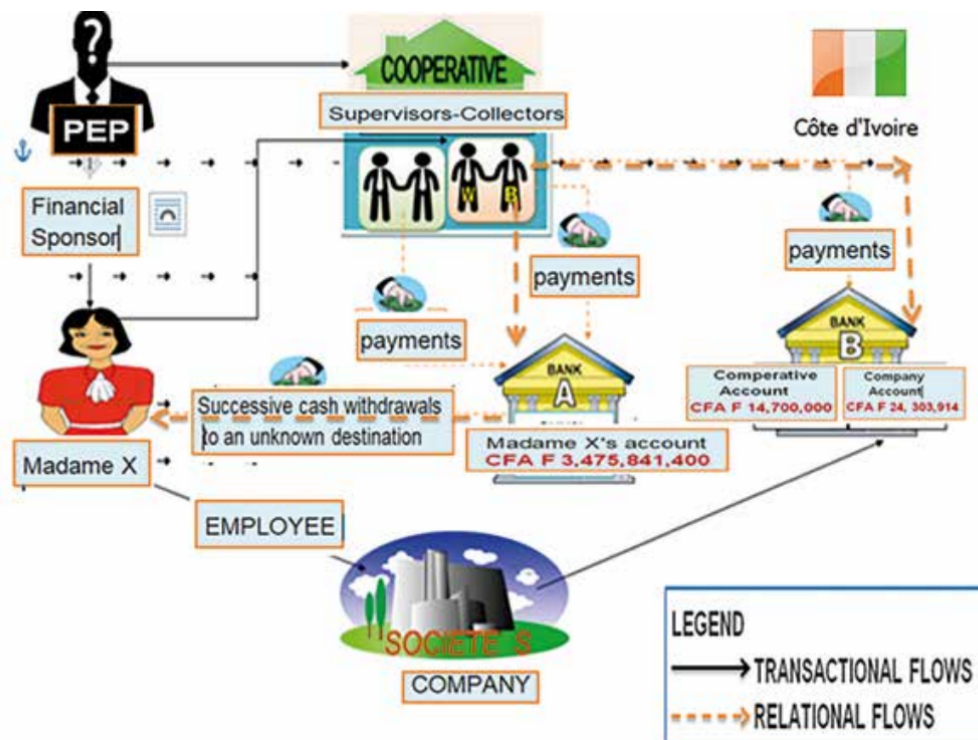
markets. Although countries like Ghana have formulated the Minerals and Mining Act correspondingly to combat such a way of illegal trafficking of mineral resources, such way of illegal mining still widely exists in African countries.

## Illicit Trafficking of Mineral Resources

The current regulatory framework is mainly based on the border inspection and customs systems of various countries under the guidance of UNODC and the list implemented for some regions under the UNSC sanctions system. However, there are still loopholes during the supervising process, especially in terms of traceability.

First, terrorists and armed groups can take advantage of the high value-to-mass ratio of mineral resources to commit money-laundering in order to disguise or conceal the sources of illegally generated proceeds. For instance, according to the estimation from the Public Eye (formerly Berne Declaration), more than 10 tons of gold, with market value of about 150 billion FCFA, was being fraudulently exported to Switzerland via Togo annually. It is difficult to trace because the proceeds from the sale of the gold are used to buy goods in the name of companies based in Burkina Faso, owned by the proprietor of a Togolese-based company.

Not only may acts of money laundering are achieved through cross-border transactions, but in many other cases, it can be seen that many transactions lack a direct operator or are done through multiple third parties with obscure transactional flows, as the case in Côte d'Ivoire. Further, much of the trafficking of mineral resources is a link to corruption. For instance, in the Sahel region, located in western and north-central Africa, the illegally sourced gold is transited outside the Sahel by armed groups and some customs officers to markets in Dubai where artisanal gold is laundered.<sup>44</sup>



Given the highly sophisticated and organized nature of terrorist and armed groups today, it is even more difficult for local authorities to trace their links to illegal mining.

<sup>44</sup> L. Raineri, 'Gold Mining in the Sahara-Sahel: The Political Geography of State making and Unmaking' (2020), *The International Spectator*, Vol. 55, No. 4, 100–117.

# Illegal Acquisition of Biological Resources

## Overview

The African continent is blessed to be endowed with extremely abundant biological resources that could have provided a long-lasting boost to Africa's economic and social development. But ironically, not only has the act of poaching and trafficking shamelessly stolen the resources which are supposedly used to improve the standard of living of African people, but a considerable proportion of the value generated has also instead become a destabilizing factor of Africa's peace and prosperity.

It seems unlikely for armed groups to be deeply involved in the illegal acquisition of biological resources and reaping huge profits from it, but as a matter of fact, illegal trade in biological resources has become an indispensable source of income for regional warlords, extremist groups, and rebel militias. Those activities include but are not limited to logging, fishing, poaching rare animals and plants, and selling processed products based on the above resources (e.g., charcoals).<sup>45</sup> Moreover, not only are the armed groups directly participating in the collection of resources, but they also penetrate deeply into stages such as transportation, trading, and even taxation.

Illegal acquisition of protected flora and fauna can be spotted in almost every disputed area throughout the African continent, for violent conflict, on many occasions, overlaps with natural environments. An estimated 80% of all the major armed conflicts have occurred within biodiversity hotspots.<sup>46</sup> The active participation of militias in multi-stages has created a complex web of production, transportation, and trading. In the case of the ivory trade, for example, the ivory trade routes throughout the African continent are extremely complex and variable and are disguised by various means, such as front companies or legal documents obtained through illegal means.<sup>47</sup> Scale and scope of terrorists' involvement have resulted in colossal loss of Africa's precious natural resources. As early as 2014, it was projected that illegal poaching of fauna and flora would amount to a loss of \$7 billion to \$23 billion annually in Africa.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, those resources have been generating a considerable number of profits for the armed groups, with the charcoal industry alone could earn between US\$111 to US\$289 million annually for militia and terrorist groups in and around African nations.<sup>49</sup>

The UN Security Council has long been aware of the dangers of illegal natural resource extraction to regional security and has introduced measures to address it. The Security

45 Lucy Westcott, UN Warns That Growing \$213 Billion Poaching Industry Funds Armed Conflicts, *the Atlantic*, June 25, 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/06/un-warns-that-growing-213-billion-poaching-industry-funds-armed-conflicts/373324/>, accessed on Jan 12, 2023.

46 Thor Hanson et al., Warfare in Biodiversity Hotspots, *Conservation Biology*, 23(3), 2009: 578–87.

47 Bradley Anderson; Johan Jooste, Wildlife Poaching: Africa's Surging Trafficking Threat, *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, May 31, 2014, <https://africacenter.org/publication/wildlife-poaching-africas-surging-trafficking-threat/>, accessed on Jan 13, 2023.

48 C. Nellemann; R. Henriksen; P. Raxter; N. Ash; E. Mrema, The Environmental Crime Crisis – Threats to Sustainable Development from Illegal Exploitation and Trade in Wildlife and Forest Resources: A UNEP Rapid Response Assessment, *United Nations Environment Program and GRID-Arendal*, 2014.

49 Ibid

Council has included an asset freeze for poachers in its region-specific sanctions resolutions in DRC and CAR. Moreover, the committee has been supporting regional anti-poaching organizations as well as offering exemptions for their weapons and equipment.<sup>50</sup>

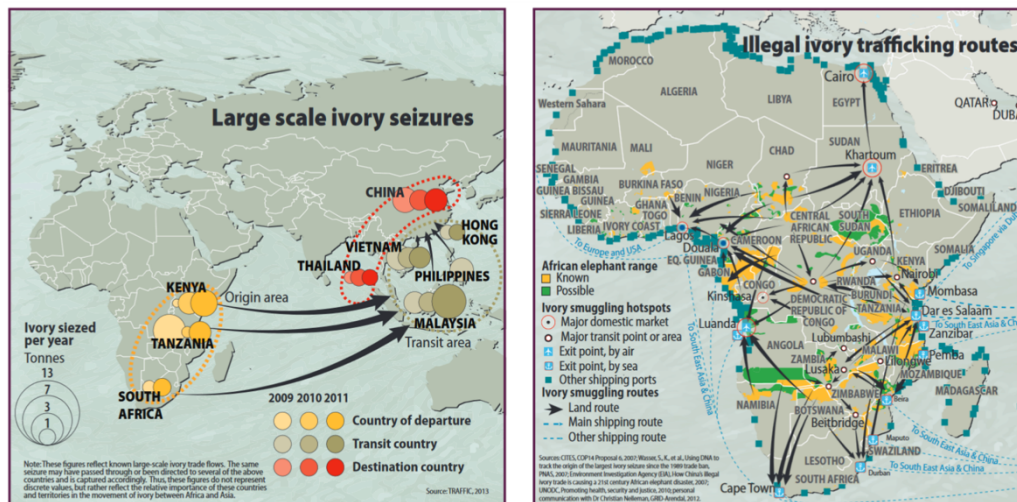


Figure 4 Major Trade Routes of Poached African Ivory<sup>51</sup>

## Collecting Biological Resources

The unauthorized collection of biological resources can be divided into two main categories: the more decentralized poaching, the more capital and labor-intensive logging industry, as well as the processing of its by-products (mainly charcoals). But compared with mineral resources, the acquisition of biological resources is less organized and more flexible, making it harder to regulate at the source.

The most prominent victims of poaching activities are elephants, rhinos, saigas, and the great apes for their high unit prices. For example, an average adult rhino horn weighs about 3 kilograms, and the black-market price for raw rhino horns is over \$75 000 per kilogram.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, for armed groups, uncertain borders of their controlled areas make mass concentrated killings their best option. In 2013, more than 9,000 elephant corpses were found at Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) program sites monitored by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and an estimated 17,000 elephants were killed within those sites that year.<sup>53</sup> This type of poaching, which reaps large profits in a short period, greatly reduces the response time of anti-poaching agencies and makes it more difficult to identify and manage.

<sup>50</sup> UNSC, Un Security Council Targets Poaching and Wildlife Trade with DRC Sanctions, *WWF*, January 30, 2014, <https://wwf.ca/media-releases/un-security-council-targets-poaching-and-wildlife-trade-with-drc-sanctions/>, accessed on Jan 15, 2023.

<sup>51</sup> Bradley Anderson; Johan Jooste, Wildlife Poaching: Africa's Surging Trafficking Threat, *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, May 31, 2014, <https://africacenter.org/publication/wildlife-poaching-africas-surging-trafficking-threat/>, accessed on Jan 15, 2023.

<sup>52</sup> Jani Hall, It's Now Legal to Sell Rhino Horn in South Africa. The World's Top Breeder Makes His Move, *National Geographic*, August 21, 2017, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/wildlife-watch-rhino-horn-south-africa-auction>, accessed on Jan 15, 2023.

<sup>53</sup> Rebel & Insurgent Militias, Poaching Facts, <https://www.poachingfacts.com/faces-of-the-poachers/rebel-insurgent-militias/>, accessed on Jan 15, 2023.

The disadvantages of anti-poaching agencies compared to equipment, communication, and firepower also make it difficult to contain poaching activities. Armed groups often establish permanent bases around protected areas and use military-grade equipment to engage in direct confrontation with rangers. Terror groups, including the Mayi-Mayi militia, M23 rebels, and other unidentified transnational insurgents from Central Africa or other neighboring countries, have murdered over 100 of the total 700 rangers in Virunga National Park in recent years.<sup>54</sup>

Logging, however, tends to be more discrete but with an even larger scale. As biofuel and waste comprise around 47.4% of the energy supply in Africa, roughly 90% of the wood consumed in Africa is used for wood fuel and charcoal.<sup>55</sup> Huge demand for necessities makes these rough-processed products indispensable and lucrative. Instead of being directly involved in the charcoal industry, armed groups will usually seek protection money from manufacturers.<sup>57</sup> Due to the huge base, its profits are also quite substantial, Militias in DRC, for instance, are able to make US\$14 to US\$50 million annually on protection fees which are commonly up to 30 percent of its value.<sup>58</sup>

## Illegal Shipping and Trading

Shipping and trading occupy a much more important position in biological resources than mineral resources, for the products of the former, are much easier to be traced back to their origin than the latter. CITES has already prohibited the international trade in products such as ivory and rhino horns for commercial purposes, thus resulting in the entire process of transportation and trading being underground only.<sup>59</sup> In the case of wood and its by-products, its special biological characteristics also make it difficult to confuse products from a specific origin with those from other regions.

So how is it possible for such an easily identifiable item can be marketed internationally? For many countries that are home to wildlife products, an obsession with poaching terrorists who are directly involved is a convenient distraction from addressing those more important issues of corruption among rangers, anti-poaching militias, military forces, and on lots of occasions, high-level government officials. Most poachers are not smugglers. It is the brokers' and middlemen's job to move the materials across borders and launder associated revenues. Those brokers and middlemen are sometimes supported and influenced by the armed groups, but on a number of occasions, they are simply independent individuals and institutions that serve as the de facto launderers for

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<sup>54</sup> Oluwole Ojewale, Terrorists and poachers take aim at the Congo Basin's guardians, *Institute for African Security Studies (ISS Africa)*, Oct 10, 2022, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/terrorists-and-poachers-take-aim-at-the-congo-basins-guardians>, accessed on Jan 15, 2023.

<sup>55</sup> Total energy supply: 2020, *International Energy Agency*, <https://www.iea.org/regions/africa>, accessed on Jan 15, 2023.

<sup>56</sup> UNEP Nairobi, Illegal Trade in Wildlife and Timber Products Finances Criminal and Militia Groups, Threatening Security and Sustainable Development, *UNEP*, June 24, 2014, <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/illegal-trade-wildlife-and-timber-products-finances-criminal-and>,

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*

<sup>58</sup> Bradley Anderson; Johan Jooste, Wildlife Poaching: Africa's Surging Trafficking Threat, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, May 31, 2014, <https://africacenter.org/publication/wildlife-poaching-africas-surging-trafficking-threat/>, accessed on Jan 15, 2023.

<sup>59</sup> CITES, CITES Puts Ivory Sales on Hold, CITES, October 5 2006, [https://cites.org/eng/news/pr/2006/061005\\_ivory.shtml#:~:text=CITES%20banned%20the%20international%20commercial%20ivory%20trade%20in,place%20in%201999%20and%20earned%20some%20%245%20million%29](https://cites.org/eng/news/pr/2006/061005_ivory.shtml#:~:text=CITES%20banned%20the%20international%20commercial%20ivory%20trade%20in,place%20in%201999%20and%20earned%20some%20%245%20million%29), accessed on Jan 15, 2023.



armed groups. As it is presented in the case of the ivory trade in Africa, when the militia might only receive just \$600 for an ivory tusk or a rhino horn, the trafficker, on the other hand, is able to reap a substantially higher proportion of the \$3,000 per kilogram, if he successfully bribes the customs or other officials to approve or certify transactions and paperwork.<sup>60</sup>

Some armed groups can also appear as smugglers rather than poachers and even stray outside the entire chain of transactions but still get a decent share of the profit. Al-Shabaab, for instance, controls important parts of the surrounding Juba region, which includes key corridors to Kenya. Therefore, besides smuggling on its own, Al-Shabaab in Somalia can also extract money by collecting toll fees or VAT and selling concessions.<sup>61</sup> As a matter of fact, before the UNSC took measures to deter the illicit charcoal business in Somalia, the group was earning up to US\$56 million annually, which is about 1/5 of the overall size of the illicit charcoal export.

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<sup>60</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, Wildlife and Drug Trafficking, Terrorism, and Human Security, Brookings, November 8, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/wildlife-and-drug-trafficking-terrorism-and-human-security/#:~:text=The%20role%20of%20militants%20in%20supporting,Operations%2C%20and%20can%20be%20found%20here.&text=The%20role%20of%20militants,can%20be%20found%20here.&text=of%20militants%20in%20supporting,Operations%2C%20and%20can%20be>, on Jan 15, 2023.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

## Illegal Acquisition of the Tools for Operation

### Acquisition of Critical Assets

Apart from tracking down the illegally collected finished and semi-finished products, assets or equipment that are found indispensable during the operation can also serve as indicators of potential criminal activities. Compared to products that are smuggled in huge quantities, along numerous routes, and sometimes even difficult to identify their source in the secondary market, consumables and equipment that have to be used in the course of operations are generally more identifiable, and the flow of transportation is concentrated and continuous, therefore making the law enforcement easier to backdate the existence of criminal activity.

Although artisanal mining that uses rudimentary tools and technologies is the most common form in numerous African nations, it would be impossible for the industry to operate without a high concentration of people and equipment. This pattern of operation brings a steady drain of consumption, thus making the mining industry among the optimal ideal type of sectors to conduct backtracking using consumables and equipment.<sup>62</sup> The most noticeable indicators among all consumables are probably mining dynamites, which are considered indispensable during the entire process. Moreover, the destructive mining style commonly adopted by illegal miners entails a large and steady supply of explosives. For instance, in a 2020 operation called KAFO II, targeting Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Niger, INTERPOL successfully confiscated a total of 40,000 tubes of explosives and detonators used to support illegal mining operations by armed groups in the Sahel, which, surprisingly, were believed to be only a fraction of the total amount of dynamites smuggled across the border.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile since most armed groups lack the ability to produce widely used chemical explosives, plus these products can only be sold by licensed dealers in most countries, and of course, bought only by the companies that are qualified to implement mining activities, thus making these traceable during the entire process. In the production, sales, use, and resale.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to explosives, which are a necessity in most mines, raw chemical materials regularly used in the production of some specific metals, such as mercury, a dissolving agent in gold ores, can also be used to identify the presence of illegal mining practices in the area.<sup>65</sup> The adoption of the Minamata Convention on Mercury has profound effects on the ECOWAS region, for it officially made the use of mercury in gold mining illegal. Ironically, however, there is a starring margin between nominal imports are much smaller than their actual consumption, and a large part of the margin is used for illegal gold mining in areas controlled by armed groups.<sup>66</sup>

62 Tracy-Lynn Field, Why Illegal Artisanal Mining in South Africa is Out of Control, Mail Guardian, Aug 4, 2022, <https://mg.co.za/opinion/2022-08-04-why-illegal-artisanal-mining-in-south-africa-is-out-of-control/>, accessed Jan 29, 2023.

63 AFP, Illegal gold mining funding armed groups in Sahel: Interpol, CGTN, December 21, 2020, <https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/12/21/illegal-gold-mining-funding-armed-groups-in-sahel-interpol/>, accessed Jan 29, 2023.

64 Bombs and Other Explosives, UNODC, [https://www.unodc.org/images/odccp/terrorism\\_weapons\\_conventional.html#bombs](https://www.unodc.org/images/odccp/terrorism_weapons_conventional.html#bombs), accessed Jan 29, 2023.

65 Curbing Illicit Mercury and Gold Flows in West Africa, Global Initiative Against International Organized Crime, Nov 20, 2020, [https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/gold\\_mercury\\_ecowas/](https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/gold_mercury_ecowas/), accessed Jan 29, 2023.

66 *ibid*

In the case of applying such methods to biological resource crimes, however, would encounter certain boundaries when consumables for backward extrapolation. On the one hand, compared with mineral resources, the traceability of biological products is undoubtedly simpler; on the other hand, the tools used for exploiting biological resources are of great retention and the modus operandi is flexible, making it much more difficult to locate the crime.

## Management of Workforce

In order to counter the rampant yet destructive crimes of poaching and trafficking natural resources in Africa by armed groups, it is of great importance to identify actors involved in such crimes. Further investigation is needed to gather empirical evidence on which stakeholders are there to really make the crimes possible. According to current research, criminals involved in illicit poaching and trafficking can be divided into mainly two sections, respectively organized armed groups and non-state actors.<sup>67</sup>

For one thing, those organized armed groups always commit such crimes out of profit-seeking purposes, such as criminal groups al-Qaida and ISIS who regard illegally exploiting the natural resources of the regions they invade as an endless source of income.<sup>68</sup> Those armed groups and terrorist groups will recruit people who believe in them, buy people from human traffickers, and capture enemies they defeat in wars they have waged. According to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), human trafficking is more a means of exploiting individuals to fight for organizations and follow their instructions than a financial gain source.<sup>69</sup> Those victims of human trafficking not only are forced into labor and enslaved by armed groups but also become a terrorist tactic. For example, they use human trafficking to intimidate populations and decimate communities, institutionalize sexual violence and slavery, and drive recruitment efforts. Moreover, their transnational organized crime of illegally trafficking natural resources often has a close relationship with other criminal activities, such as the illicit trade in arms, money-laundering, and drug-smuggling.

For another, non-state actors focus more on their subsistence or self-sufficiency. The possible reasons that explain why they conducted such crimes maybe that they either aren't aware of the severity of such crimes, or are heavily reliant on the high and one-off payment they gain from the illegal actions. For example, when the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) took place between 1995 and 2006, many refugees escaping war in Sudan fled to Garamba, where they had no better choice but to become housing poachers to make a living.<sup>70</sup> However, no evidence-based study that discerns the reasons behind what makes non-state actors participate in illegal wildlife trades is founded.<sup>71</sup> In other words, the global society's knowledge about non-state actors involving in the illegal trafficking of natural resources is far from sufficient, which places huge problems on the international and national investigation of criminals.

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<sup>67</sup> Katherine Lawson, Alex Vines. "Global Impacts of the Illegal Wildlife Trade: The Costs of Crime, Insecurity and Institutional Erosion." *Chatham House*, February 2014.

<sup>68</sup> Linda Thomas-Greenfield. "Remarks by Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield at a UN Security Council ..." *United States Mission to the United Nations*, August 19, 2021. Accessed January 29, 2023. <https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-linda-thomas-greenfield-at-a-un-security-council-briefing-on-reformed-multilateralism/>.

<sup>69</sup> FATF. "Financing of the Terrorist Organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)." *Financial Action Task Force*, 2015. Accessed January 29, 2023. <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/methodsandtrends/documents/financing-of-terrorist-organisation-isil.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Katherine Lawson, Alex Vines. "Global Impacts of the Illegal Wildlife Trade: The Costs of Crime, Insecurity and Institutional Erosion." *Chatham House*, February 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

## Possible Solutions

### Integrating the Techniques of Financial Crimes

Incorporating the investigations of financial crimes into natural resources and wildlife crime investigations forms an integral part of preventing further conflict and thus guaranteeing prosperity and stability in Africa, for it can largely enhance the law enforcement department's ability to identify unusual activities and thus be able to locate criminal groups more precisely.

The UNSC has already updated the listing criteria for sanctions regimes in which individuals and organizations who are associated with the illicit trafficking of natural resources would receive financial-related sanctions such as asset freeze, but due to the organizational structure that the criteria for sanctions are enacted under contexts of specific regions as well as the nature of sanction criteria makes it difficult to effectively punish players who are indirectly involved in the chain of illegal natural resource trade, its limitations are still more prominent. The United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Exclusive Directorate (CTED) Trends Alert in June 2022 has conveyed its concern over a disconnect between the resolute attitude expressed by policymakers and the actual level of proactive investigation and prosecution of cases aimed at identifying possible links between the illicit trafficking of natural resources and terrorism financing.<sup>72</sup>

### Investigation of Financial Activities

The advantage of financial surveillance lies in its ability to infer and locate criminal groups by reversing the various footprints inevitably left by various activities on the illicit web. These footprints include but are not limited to trading instruments of crime, financial relations arising from smuggling activities, money generated from illegal trading transactions, and money laundering.

Member States have been taking actions to deter such criminal activities by identifying some types of environmental-related crimes as predicate offenses for money laundering, but considering the length and the complexity of the illicit chain, more efforts are urgently needed to collect information on the scope and scale of the money flow generated from exploitation, trade, and trafficking of natural resources in order to support armed groups and terrorists.

While expanding the scope of supervision, the capability of the related parties to effectively organize their supervision over the whole process is equally important. More metrics naturally lead to an increase in the intricacy of the monitoring system, which gives rise to the difficulty of supervision must also rise. This means that the Member States, especially those who lack the specific natural resource domestically, should nevertheless consider these risks in their national risk assessments (NRAs). With the presence of NRAs and related legal frameworks, more detailed checks will be made possible on the demand side, thus breaking the inextricable link between the legal sector and criminal activities.

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<sup>72</sup> United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Exclusive Directorate, Concerns over the Use of Proceeds from the Exploitation, Trade, and Trafficking of Natural Resources for the Purposes of Terrorism Financing, *CTED Trend Alert*, June 2022.



Otherwise, the boundaries between knowingly or unknowingly, illegally or illegally, may not be easy to define.<sup>73</sup> Taking precious metals as an example, formal banking sectors have been spotted to import gold and precious minerals, which are sourced from high-risk regions but refined and repackaged by foreign companies. A more detailed review of specific types of precious metals, with guidance from the NRA, could go a long way toward reducing the incidence of such events.

Regarding the methods of conducting such investigations, the need for parallel investigations has been regarded as a priority. Parallel investigations enable more than one criminal, civil, administrative, legislative or regulatory investigative body to investigate the same conduct. Most illicit chains are sufficiently large to accommodate investigative agencies with overlapping jurisdictions, which, inevitably, have different focuses of investigation. Such investigations would possibly end up with each agency prescribing unique remedies at each investigative agency's disposal, thus making it easier to determine the real or intended use of the proceeding and ultimately understand transnational financial flows and how they may benefit terrorist groups.

Meanwhile, more efforts need to be made concerning improving expertise across the government sector. Information-sharing and evidence base of relevant investigations would be very helpful in building a shared understanding of this type of linkage.

## Facilitating Prosecution of Offenders

From the Horn of Africa across the eastern and central regions of the continent, some of the deadliest conflicts in the world are fueled by natural resources, but the world still lacks initiatives to make the perpetrators pay the price for their illegal behavior

Although the UNSC has applied sanction against environmental crime offenders in specific areas, the problem of the benefits of crime outweighing the costs of crime remains to some extent. Firstly, a significant portion of the indirect participants in the crime chain are not subject to sanction policies, and even if they are included as targets of sanctions, the negative consequences they may bear will still be hardly comparable to being criminally prosecuted, which is exactly what is lacking in the international law system today.

If such cases are to be prosecuted internationally, the UNSC needs to find a way to incorporate the matters discussed in the topic into the international criminal justice system to either refer situations to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or set up new international criminal tribunals.

There are two options available, and it does not have an either/or relationship. If the crime is prosecuted from the perspective of environmental damage, of the four core crimes over which the ICC has criminal jurisdiction as set out in Part 2 of the Rome Statute, only Article 8(2)(b)(iv) refers directly to the natural environment, which requires "intentionally launching attacks" that will cause "widespread, long-term and severe damage to the non-human environment" on the context which "would be clearly excessive" regarding "the

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<sup>73</sup> United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Exclusive Directorate, Concerns over the Use of Proceeds from the Exploitation, Trade, and Trafficking of Natural Resources for the Purposes of Terrorism Financing, *CTED Trend Alert*, June 2022.

concrete and direct overall military advantage anticipated."<sup>74</sup> If such activities were to be charged on the basis of supporting terrorism, they shall fall into the category of crimes against humanity or war crimes. Whichever measure is adopted, attention must be paid to whether its coverage effectively deters criminal behavior.

If member states' domestic laws are used to prosecute, UNSC peacekeeping bodies need to work more closely with their partners to improve member states' prosecutorial and criminalization capacities. The UNSC has much experience in helping to restore justice in the regions where it is based, such as the Special Criminal Tribunals it helped establish in Central Africa, and also has the ability to integrate environmental crimes associated with terrorist organizations into existing systems.<sup>75</sup> The Council's local institutions can work with their partners to help member states establish prosecutors specializing in natural resource crimes, improve the relevant regulatory framework and enhance the capacity of courts to hear cases.

Regardless of the method of prosecution, it could weaken the power of perpetrators who orchestrate criminal networks but are physically absent at crime scenes. Moreover, prosecutions can invite the participation of victims and witnesses, which helps to restore dignity and cohesion among the people affected.

## Strengthening the Capacities of National Institutions

Helping member states that lack the ability to maintain stability to build and gradually improve their own governance capacity is the best long-term solution to the problems under discussion, and it is also the UNSC's duty to maintain world peace and security.

But in many cases, the UN's efforts to help build law enforcement capacity against natural crimes in the countries where it is based have not been a complete success. One reason is that local forces are too powerful for local security forces and the UN to gain effective long-term control over specific areas. Secondly, the Security Council's assistance to the host country has been limited and diluted because of the corruption and rent-seeking problems within the country.

## Establishing Effective Control Over Natural Resources

The UNSC has given anti-environmental crime practitioners much support in its policy. Anti-poaching workers are included in sanction exemptions to be better equipped in a more timely manner. But the Council still needs to find more efficient solutions to better help rangers in their work, given the many limitations of their weaponry, so as to prevail with "smart power". Facilitating the introduction of key equipment, such as long-endurance drones, could significantly reduce their response time and ease the pressure on rangers' daily patrols. Such equipment has already been used successfully in Kruger National Park in South Africa and has shown great potential for upgrading.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/law/icc/index.html>, accessed on Jan 16, 2023.

<sup>75</sup> CAR Special Criminal Court Now Fully Operational, UN Peacekeeping, <https://minusca.unmissions.org/en/car-special-criminal-court-scc-now-fully-operational>, accessed on Jan 16, 2023.

<sup>76</sup> Caitlin Looby, Drones are a knife in the gunfight against poaching. But they're leveling up, *Mongabay*, Oct 18 2021, <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/10/drones-are-a-knife-in-the-gunfight-against-poaching-but-theyre-leveling-up/>, accessed on Jan 16, 2023.

UNSC can also lead the way in organizational reforms. Since 2003, the United Nations Police (UNPOL) has been mandated to support comprehensive reform efforts of host-State police services and other law enforcement institutions, which, of course, has made enhancing law enforcement capabilities in host countries one of the focuses of UN peacekeeping efforts. So, in addition to equipment, it is also important to integrate the agenda of environmental crime to support armed groups into the security sector reform agenda. The council can provide advisory service and professional training to host-state police, national services, and other law enforcement entities on environmentally responsive policing norms so as to share UNPOL's expertise on environmental-related issues.<sup>77</sup>

The most important and long-lasting solution, however, is to maintain good relations between law enforcement and the community. The deep involvement of terrorists in the legitimate business allows illegal activities to be carried out with the cover and even support of the community at all points. The only way to solve the puzzle is to nurture mutual trust between law enforcement and practitioners.

When it comes to environmental protection, the UNSC shall work with its partners to strengthen its coordination with civil society and academia in order to understand the linkages better and increase local resilience towards the threat. The first step is strengthening the population's sense of belonging to the natural environment so they can realize that this development model is unsustainable. Moreover, through governmental programs that incorporate good governance, employment for youth, respect for human rights, and local people's sense of access to environmental protection will be enhanced. All of these would disrupt the networks behind these crimes.

When it comes to counter-terrorism, the first and foremost concern is to raise awareness or understanding of terrorism-financing risks among relevant professionals, which elevates their ability to notice any signs of terrorist activities and alert the competent authorities accordingly. Furthermore, unified, standardized, and traceable regulation and licensing of the trade in natural resources, especially for small-scale enterprises, could enable the relevant authorities to oversee the dynamics in each sector and make extortion more difficult for terrorist groups.

## Enhancing Domestic Scrutiny of Smuggling

There is no more urgent issue for the Council to address than to improve the capabilities of border control and law enforcement. The problem of rampant cross-border smuggling on the African continent is largely due to the low level of border management. Africa, as the world's second-largest continent, had less than a quarter of its borders demarcated in 2007, and even now, there are only 350 border checkpoints on the entire continent.<sup>78</sup> Among the 414 roads that cross international borders, only 69 have at least one border checkpoints.<sup>79</sup> That's why reducing uncontrolled borders, strengthening institutional capacity to effectively monitor the movement of people, goods, and services, breaking down information barriers and establishing intra-regional database sharing are critical to African border security.

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<sup>77</sup> Preventing and Addressing Environmental Crime through UN Policing, United Nations Peacekeeping, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/preventing-and-addressing-environmental-crime-through-un-policing>, accessed on Jan 16, 2023.

<sup>78</sup> Review of Maritime Transport 2019, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), January 31 2020.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid*

The African Union (AU) has launched AU Border Governance Strategy (AUBGS) to tackle the above issues by adopting innovative strategies to encourage African countries to utilize and adapt smart technologies that can effectively report illegal activities on their borders. The project mainly focuses on coordination, capacity building, and community involvement.

For border coordination, a unified standard and a database are established to monitor trans-border activities. For capacity building, digital technologies such as satellite positioning systems (SPSS), cellular communication systems (CCS), radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, and geographical information systems (GIS) are all applied to form a response system for vehicles to prevent trans-border smuggling. Meanwhile, new technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies can as well increase tax revenue management and trade volume between African countries to bolster socio-economic development and growth.<sup>80</sup>

Ending cross-border natural resource smuggling cannot be the sole focus of its efforts; other criminal indications, such as firearms, ammunition, and explosives, can also be used to manage cross-border smuggling. As early as December 2015, the council had proposed an Arria formula for illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons for poaching in Africa, but growing environmental crime and small arms smuggling in recent years have made the development of a new roadmap for a cross-cutting approach to both agendas imperative.<sup>81</sup>

## Regional & International Efforts

### Countering Regional and Transborder Activities

Solving complex problems in any region requires specific countermeasures and actions, and regional organizations can well meet this demand. The UN has always been committed to establishing and guiding regional cooperation organizations to solve regional problems in the most appropriate and precise way. Some of the UN missions already in operation, such as MINUSCA and MONUC, have produced and continue to play an active role. Member States should also continue to support the work of these UN missions.

In some cases, however, the missions may be deliberately used by some States as a tool to limit the local government and to gain profits. The arms embargo sanction, for example, initially helped to prevent the flow of weapons to illegal militants in CAR, but then became a constraint on the CAR government's efforts to strengthen its defense forces. Therefore, the function, operational mode, and supervision mechanism of regional cooperation organizations need to be considered in detail. If issues such as the restructuring of

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<sup>80</sup> AU High-Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET), Enhancing Border Security In Africa Using Smart Border Control Technologies, *African Union Development Agency*, Oct 05, 2021, [https://www.nepad.org/blog/enhancing-border-security-africa-using-smart-border-control-technologies#\\_ftn4](https://www.nepad.org/blog/enhancing-border-security-africa-using-smart-border-control-technologies#_ftn4), accessed on Jan 16, 2023.

<sup>81</sup> Letter dated 9 December 2015 from the Permanent Representatives of Angola and Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, *United Nations*, S/2015/953, [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/815431?ln=zh\\_CN](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/815431?ln=zh_CN), accessed on Jan 16, 2023.

regulatory mechanisms and the exploitation of mandates are addressed, UN missions will be able to engage with specific local issues in a more competent and trustworthy manner for the government and can significantly reduce the negative impact on local government. Although regional organizations have a high capacity to deal with local problems, they are weak in the face of international problems. Assistance from specialized international organizations is needed to address specific aspects of transnational or international dimensions, such as illicit trafficking in natural resources.

The Kimberley Process is a good example. The Kimberley Process, which began in May 2000, is a framework developed by diamond-producing countries to reduce the devastating social impact of the conflict diamond trade.<sup>82</sup> By requiring member states to meet their "minimum requirements", establish relevant national laws, comply with transparent trading standards, exchange key statistics, limit the objects of trade, and provide legal proof, the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) proves that rough diamonds can be "conflict-free" and their shipping flow can also be protected.<sup>83</sup>

The participants of KP actively prevent 99.8% of the worldwide trade.<sup>84</sup> The Kimberley Process has well-regulated the flow of diamonds, thereby effectively reduced the flow of illegally mined diamonds and tackled the problems caused by diamond mining. Several actions included in KP are worth learning: establishing a certificate system, monitoring through "review visits", exchanging data regularly, etc. Meanwhile, the member States actively accept oversight from "the Civil Society Coalition".<sup>85</sup> All these actions have given KP a global reach and have helped to reduce diamond-related conflicts. The success of the Kimberley Process in reducing the flow of conflict diamonds by regulating sources, establishing a certification system, and limiting counterparties to reduce diamond-related conflicts is worth learning for other partnerships.

Specialized international organizations can solve specific problems in their respective fields through established procedures, but it is difficult to deal with related illegal acts. For example, although KP is effective in reducing the normal trade in conflict diamonds, it is difficult to curb the illegal mining and transportation of mineral resources, and a large amount of illegally mined diamonds are still used to fund terrorist organizations. Specialized international organizations lack the ability to deal with international problems across fields. If countries can solve this problem, then these transnational and multi-field crimes will be better suppressed.

Therefore, more international cooperation needs to be achieved, and more information sharing and active cooperation between relevant organizations need to be taken.

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82 The Kimberley Process, "What is the Kimberley Process", access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://www.kimberleyprocess.com/en/what-kp>.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

## Experience and Practice Sharing

Under the framework of the United Nations, countries have established a multi-level information exchange system.

At the global level, representatives conduct status analysis and data sharing at Security Council meetings and other platform and guide the formation of resolutions to regional issues. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) is a perfect example of combating global issues through cooperation, and its way of sharing the experience of actual practice is worth analyzing. An open-ended working group of government experts has been established to hold substantive discussions on practical issues.<sup>86</sup> The experts in the group share information and discuss action through meetings held at the United Nations, such as those held on 15, 16 and 18 October 2012.<sup>87</sup> Several information sharing modalities were described in the background paper (CTOC/COP/WG.3/2012/2) prepared by the Secretariat, including videoconferencing and regional cooperation networks.<sup>88</sup> The document also mentioned several practices, such as pertaining to extradition, mutual legal assistance, special investigative techniques, etc.<sup>89</sup>

As mentioned, the member states of the CTOC share information and discuss actions by setting up expert groups, holding meetings and video conferences, which help member states to accurately understand the current situation, discuss and solve regional problems in a targeted way and provide guidance to other countries. Such an efficient and effective framework of experience and practice sharing is a great template for all countries to learn from.

On the basis of existing information exchange platforms, countries and organizations can learn from excellent cooperation such as the CTOC and make better use of the UN platform to share data on a larger scale and in a more comprehensive way, so as to strengthen international cooperation and solve transnational and international problems.

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<sup>86</sup> UN Secretariat, Best practices and experiences in using the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime for international cooperation and the role of regional networks, access on Jan. 13th, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/733488?ln=en>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.



## Country Positions

### China

With strict national bans on trafficking the wild-related products and active international participation in prohibiting illegal activities, China is one of the major actor in combating illegal trafficking of natural resources of armed groups and terrorists.<sup>90</sup> As early as a decade ago, China has paid attention to illegal actions of trafficking and auctioning of products that came from wildlife, such as rhino horn, elephant ivory and tiger bone. An official ban on such activities slashed mainland China auction sales volume by almost half in 2012. In addition, on the base of respecting National sovereignty of African countries, China has supported the work of the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and the African Union in helping countries manage their resources and enhance their governance capacity to effectively reduce the profit space of illegal smuggling of resources.<sup>91</sup> China has also entered into force of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) for more than 30 years, which is the first multilateral environmental treaty that China ever joined, for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, in many international conferences that aim to reach consensus on measures to maintain peace in African countries, China promotes multi-pronged approach to address security threats, including but not limited to strengthening support to disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation efforts.<sup>93</sup>

Due to its positive participation in relevant activities of cracking down on terrorists and armed groups, as well as illegal trafficking of natural resources, China remains active in UNSC conferences, with its firm belief that respecting state sovereignty should be attached great importance to and natural resource sanctions is well worth more serious consideration.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, though China advocates international cooperation, the principles are influencing its actions in the global stage.

Supporting the idea that African governments themselves should play a leading role in resource management, China has always assisted African countries to develop soundly and utilize natural resources reasonably, following the principle of equality, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. In the future, China will still insist that all countries in the international community should support African countries in harnessing their own natural resource dividend and making greater contribution to maintaining peace and stability and achieving common development.<sup>95</sup>

90 United Nations, "Will China Say No to Wildlife Trade?", *United Nations*, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/will-china-say-no-wildlife-trade>.

91 Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, "China Chamber of Commerce Mobilises Participants for Investment Conference in Africa's Great Lakes," *Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes*, December 31, 2019, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://ungreatlakes.unmissions.org/china-chamber-commerce-mobilises-participants-investment-conference-africa%E2%80%99s-great-lakes>.

92 CITES, "Thirtieth Anniversary of CITES in China," *CITES*, accessed February 6, 2023. [https://cites.org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110408\\_SG\\_remarks\\_China\\_30th.php](https://cites.org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110408_SG_remarks_China_30th.php).

93 United Nations, "Speakers Stress Combating Illicit Trade in Natural Resources That Fuels Conflict, at Security Council Briefing on Democratic Republic of Congo, Great Lakes | UN Press," *United Nations*, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15078.doc.htm>.

94 UNSC, "Peace and Security in Africa: Financing of Armed Groups and Terrorists through Illicit Trafficking of Natural Resources, October 2022 Monthly Forecast," *UNSC*, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-10/peace-and-security-in-africa-financing-of-armed-groups-and-terrorists-through-illicit-trafficking-of-natural-resources.php>.

95 The State Council of PRC, "Wang Yi chairs UN security council open debate on 'peace and security in

## US

The United States has also paid much attention to the problem of natural resources. On July 1, 2013, US has promulgated the Executive Order No. 13648 which addressed the primary effects of wildlife trafficking on American national interests, and established the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking.<sup>96</sup> The United States is committed to cooperating with government agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and private enterprises in other countries to reduce the market demand for wildlife, strengthen the protection of wildlife and marine life, and enhance the enforcement of relevant laws and the law enforcement capacity of relevant agencies.<sup>97</sup>

Domestically speaking, US has established U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations involved in wildlife trafficking by providing its domestic and international resources, expertise, and authorities.<sup>98</sup> The country has also enacted several laws and acts to restrict illegal natural resources trafficking, such as the revision in 2016 of Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 that emphasizes increase protection for African elephants when illegal trades in ivory flourished.

The United States has also engaged bilaterally and multilaterally to raise the challenges posed by the increasingly rampant wildlife smuggling activities to a more obvious position, paying particular attention to the connection between this criminal activity and global wildlife protection, safety, health and economic development. For example, the United States is striving to establish a global regional wildlife enforcement networks (WEN) system to help improve communication and strengthen response.<sup>99</sup>

In UNSC conferences concerning combating the financing of armed groups and terrorists in Africa through the illicit trafficking of natural resources, US has always promoted sanctions as significant measures against it. The country believes that the ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to result in a positive change in behavior.<sup>100</sup> For example, dealing with the case of illegal gold trafficking from DRC by Belgian businessman Alain Goetz and some companies, US proposed to designate subjects that were alleged to be involved in it under the 1533 DRC sanctions regime.<sup>101</sup>

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Africa," The State Council of PRC, accessed February 6, 2023. [https://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/wangyi/202105/20/content\\_WS60a71016c6d0df57f98d9d88.html](https://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/wangyi/202105/20/content_WS60a71016c6d0df57f98d9d88.html).

96 Homeland Security, "Illegal Trafficking of Wildlife and Other Natural Resources - DHS." *Homeland Security*, March 25, 2022, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/ICE%20-%20Illegal%20Trafficking%20of%20Wildlife%20and%20Other%20Natural%20Resources.pdf>.

97 The USA Federal Government, "National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking - Whitehouse.gov," National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, *The USA Federal Government*, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nationalstrategywildlifetrafficking.pdf>.

98 Homeland Security, "Illegal Trafficking of Wildlife and Other Natural Resources - DHS." *Homeland Security*, March 25, 2022, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/ICE%20-%20Illegal%20Trafficking%20of%20Wildlife%20and%20Other%20Natural%20Resources.pdf>.

99 USAID, "Combating Wildlife Trafficking: Basic Page," *U.S. Agency for International Development*, December 9, 2022, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://www.usaid.gov/biodiversity/wildlife-trafficking>.

100 U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Alain Goetz and a Network of Companies Involved in the Illicit Gold Trade," *U.S. Department of the Treasury*, March 17, 2022, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0664>.

101 UNSC, "Peace and Security in Africa: Financing of Armed Groups and Terrorists through Illicit Trafficking of Natural Resources, October 2022 Monthly Forecast," *UNSC*, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-10/peace-and-security-in-africa-financing-of-armed-groups-and-terrorists-through-illicit-trafficking-of-natural-resources.php>.



## Russian Federation

Russia stands for offering comprehensive assistance through the UN channels to enhance relevant national mechanisms. However, the country emphasizes that such assistance should only be offered if interested states request, which ensures that the assistance given by the international stage fully accounts for their national interests and specifics when African countries are ready for receiving help. Russia believes that despite efficiency of operation and convenience for management, uniform approach to rendering assistance is unacceptable.<sup>102</sup>

Russia has emphasized the role played by national governments of African countries to combat the illegal armed groups and terrorists by maintaining security, stability and control over natural resources, and at the same time stressed the importance of respecting national sovereignty and doubt the natural resources sanctions. For example, Russia even blocked the president's statement made at the meeting-Public debate on conflict prevention and natural resources on 19 June 2013 in the UNSC, arguing that the issue was not within the mandate of the Security Council.<sup>103</sup>

Another important point Russia stands is about sanctions that have been imposed on some African countries. The country insists that there is a lack of balance of sanctions which may disrupt African countries' original plans of state-building and might deprive some states of establishing absolute control over their national territories. Additionally, Russia doubts the effectiveness of sanctions in preventing weaponization of the illegal armed groups and terrorists, which may in turn give these criminals opportunities to be better equipped than governmental troops, as what Central Africa went through.<sup>104</sup>

## UK

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has countless natural resources such as arable land, petroleum, coal and other minerals such as iron ore, limestone. In the UK, agricultural land use takes up about 69% of the total land area use, and agricultural industry employment occupies about 1.5% of the total labor force. As for a wide variety of minerals, UK owns abundant deposits but seldom carries out real excavation projects, because of cheap import prices brought about by globalization and environmental protections inside the country<sup>105</sup>. Therefore, though UK has relatively less direct relationship with illegal poaching or trafficking of natural resources in Africa, it has diverse experience in coping with natural resources and gaining economic development by using natural resources.

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<sup>102</sup> Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, "Statement by Permanent Representative Vassily Nebenzia at UNSC Debate," *Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations*, October 6, 2022, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://russiaun.ru/en/news/061022n>.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, "Statement by Permanent Representative Vassily Nebenzia at UNSC Debate," *Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations*, October 6, 2022, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://russiaun.ru/en/news/061022n>.

<sup>105</sup> Sawe, Benjamin Elisha, "What Are the Major Natural Resources of the United Kingdom?" *WorldAtlas*, February 12, 2019, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-major-natural-resources-of-the-united-kingdom.html>.

UK also has some insights into establishing sophisticated systems to combat modern slavery, a heinous crime that consists of slavery, servitude and human trafficking. In 2016, 3805 potential victims of modern slavery were identified and referred in the UK<sup>106</sup>. These practices may be applied to our conference as well.

Additionally, UK has always paid attention to tackling illegal wildlife trade and provided financial aids to applicants. In 2021, UK commits additional £7.2 million to combating the illegal wildlife trade by 17 projects with the help of Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, a UK's government grants scheme<sup>107</sup>.

## France

For one thing, France has limited natural resources reservation the whole,<sup>108</sup> but is tightly associated with trafficking both in human beings and wildlife<sup>109</sup>. As one of the largest economies in the EU, France exerts massive influence on legal and illegal wildlife trade in the EU.<sup>110</sup> According to TRAFFIC, France has always been a country that reports seizure records as a destination and transit point for illegal wildlife trade. Major airports in France are involved in trades for illegal natural resources. For example, Paris-Charles de Gaulle

Airport in Paris is identified as important trade hubs for wild meat from Africa. EU-TWIX, US seizure data and TRAFFIC's global seizure database also emphasize the position of France as an exit point and transit hub in the transport of ivory products from Africa to Asia.<sup>111</sup>

For another, France has 12 overseas territories which are scattered at all over the world, from the subarctic to the Antarctic. That's also the reason why France is a host to a significant biological diversity and possesses five of the 36 biodiversity hotspots,<sup>112</sup> which makes France very much responsible to reverse the current loss of biodiversity.

France has made relentless efforts to crack down on illegal wildlife trades, but they are not sufficient to deal with such complicated crimes. For example, in 2016, France has attempted to combat illegal wildlife trade by adopting restrictions of governing ivory trade and participate in international/regional enforcement operations and assisting the capacity building in some countries in Africa. To deal with the problems, France has not only strengthened domestic legislation at its border, but also adopted stricter domestic measures governing wildlife trades.

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106 UK GOV, "Modern Slavery Training: Resource Page," *GOV.UK*, September 2, 2021, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-training-resource-page/modern-slavery-training-resource-page>.

107 UK GOV, "UK Commits Additional £7.2 Million to Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade," *GOV.UK*, October 1, 2021, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-commits-additional-72-million-to-tackling-illegal-wildlife-trade>.

108 Kiprop, Joseph, "What Are the Major Natural Resources of France?" *WorldAtlas*, July 16, 2018, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-major-natural-resources-of-france.html>.

109 Council of Europe, "Greta Publishes Its Third Report on France - Action against Trafficking in Human Beings - Publi.coe.int," *Council of Europe*, March 9, 2022, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/-/greta-publishes-its-third-report-on-france>.

110 Shiraishi H., Escot L., Kecse-Nagy K. and Ringuet S. "The role of France in wildlife trade: An analysis of CITES trade and seizure data." WWF and TRAFFIC, 2020. Accessed January 28, 2023.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

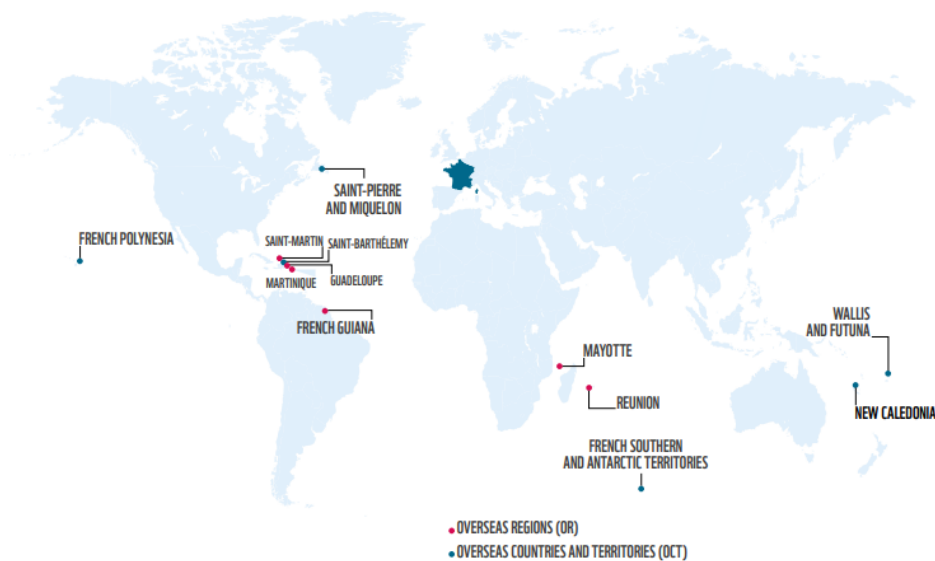


Figure 5 Map of France overseas  
Source: Kolodziejski (2018)

## Gabon

Gabon is an upper-middle-income country, mainly due to its sufficient oil resources in the offshore waters, which accounted for 38.5% of GDP and 70.5% of exports in Gabon in 2020.<sup>113</sup> Known as “the country of forest” and “the country of wood”, Gabon is a country endowed with various wildlife and rich natural, forestry and mining resources. The climate of the country is dominated by tropical rainforest, and the forest coverage rate is very high, up to 88%. Gabon’s forests are wildlife and megafauna’s significant habitat, including three-fifths of the remaining critically endangered forest elephants, western lowland gorillas, mandrill monkeys, forest buffalos, and noteworthy birdlife.<sup>114</sup>

Despite of such great resources it has, the country cannot make full use of them because it faces significant criminal threats resulted from poaching and illegal trafficking by armed groups and terrorists, which has caused not only environmental damage, such as biodiversity loss, but also huge economic recession<sup>115</sup>. In order to deal with the problem, Gabon has made relentless efforts to preserve biodiversity and natural resources, it has constructed 13 national parks since 2000, which account for 11% of the national territory, and established an anti-poaching unit to patrol its rainforests in 2020.<sup>116</sup> Gabon also works hard to reduce emissions, which makes it a net carbon absorber and a leader in net zero emission initiatives.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>113</sup> World Bank, “Overview,” *World Bank*, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/gabon/overview>.

<sup>114</sup> UNEP, “Gabon Leads Africa in the Preservation and Conservation of Forests.: United Nations Development Programme,” *UNDP*, July 23, 2021, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.undp.org/africa/blog/gabon-leads-africa-preservation-and-conservation-forests>.

<sup>115</sup> CBFP, “The UNODC supports Gabon’s efforts to combat wildlife and forest crime,” *Partner’s news*, December 1, 2021, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://pfbc-cbfp.org/news-partner/crime-UNODC.html>.

<sup>116</sup> UNSC, “Peace and Security in Africa: Financing of Armed Groups and Terrorists through Illicit Trafficking of Natural Resources, October 2022 Monthly Forecast,” *UNSC*, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-10/peace-and-security-in-africa-financing-of-armed-groups-and-terrorists-through-illicit-trafficking-of-natural-resources.php>.

<sup>117</sup> World Bank, “Overview,” *World Bank*, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/gabon/overview>.

Gabon has also stressed the importance of fighting against illicit trade in wildlife in UN conferences. Gabon co-sponsored a General Assembly resolution in 2015, which urged member states to adopt decisive national-level measures to prevent, combat, and eradicate illegal trade in wildlife, and also encouraged member states to review and amend their national legislation in order to ensure that crimes connected to illegal trade in wildlife are prohibited strictly for domestic money laundering.<sup>118</sup>

## CAR

The Central African Republic is one of the least developed countries in the world, ranking second from the bottom in the world economy. It is known as Africa's "emerald" because of its rich forest resources.

The Central African Republic is rich in mineral resources, mainly diamonds which account for 1/2 of the country's distribution area and produce about 400000 carats annually; As of 2014, there are also uranium (20000 tons of reserves), iron (3.5 million tons of reserves), gold, copper, nickel, manganese, chromium, tin, mercury and limestone (8 million tons of reserves). Besides, oil has also been found in the north.

Although the country is abundant with rich natural resources, it is proved that CAR lacks appropriate management of its natural resources. For one thing, it has been torn apart by war, forcing nearly a quarter of its 4.5 million inhabitants to flee their homes. This has not only resulted in a lacking of labor force, but also made it difficult to track down the exploitation of natural resources in such a small country that has limited territory. For another, due to the imperfect system and some artificial constraints, such as cumbersome administrative procedures and misunderstanding of local residents, as well as the serious pollution of the mining industry, the development prospect of the mining industry in CAR is worrying.

However, CAR has close relationship with UNSC, which has been assigning CAR humanitarian assistance for quite a long time, through the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)<sup>119</sup>. MINUSCA has been focusing on peacekeeping and security maintenance in CAR, which includes the solution to the continued exploitation by armed groups of mining resources<sup>120</sup>. Overall speaking, CAR remains active to work for its own rights as well as benefits, and has complex interaction with other member states in UNSC.

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<sup>118</sup> UNSC, "Peace and Security in Africa: Financing of Armed Groups and Terrorists through Illicit Trafficking of Natural Resources, October 2022 Monthly Forecast," *UNSC*, accessed February 6, 2023. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-10/peace-and-security-in-africa-financing-of-armed-groups-and-terrorists-through-illicit-trafficking-of-natural-resources.php>.

<sup>119</sup> UN, "Mandate," MINUSCA, *UN*, January 25, 2022, accessed January 28, 2023. <https://minusca.unmissions.org/en/mandate>.

<sup>120</sup> UNSC, "The situation in the Central African Republic," *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, 2021, accessed January 28, 2023. [https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/part\\_i\\_2021\\_car.pdf](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/part_i_2021_car.pdf)

## Questions to Consider

1. How can international cooperation be strengthened to combat the financing of terrorist organizations through illicit trafficking of natural resources by changing the mechanisms of existing cooperation?
2. Why is Africa the region most affected by illicit trafficking of natural resources? How is the issue related to the characteristics of politics among African countries?
3. How can better information and data sharing mechanisms be established to help countries understand the financing of terrorist groups through illicit trafficking of natural resources?
4. How should the focus of countermeasures shift according to the different products the industry manufactures and the segments on the industrial chain?

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