

## Eastern Congo conflict under colonialism ghost resource plundering and the people's struggle

BreakDawn

In January 2025, the fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo escalated suddenly. The anti-government armed group "M23 Movement" captured Goma, the capital of North Kivu Province, and Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu Province, within three weeks. The area under control is equivalent to that of Connecticut in the United States, resulting in nearly 7,000 deaths and the displacement of 400,000 civilians. The 14-month-long conflict has displaced nearly 3 million people internally and claimed thousands of lives. The tottering regimes of neighboring countries such as Burundi are also facing greater crises due to the spillover of the conflict. However, this disaster, which seems to have been triggered by ethnic conflicts, is actually the festering of the historical cancer of colonialism and the continuation of the plundering of neocolonialism. From the "divide and rule" of Belgian colonists to the resource sucking of transnational capital, from the indifferent double standards of the international community to the manipulation of proxy wars, the blood of the Congolese (DRC) people is permeated with the sinful chain of imperialist hegemonic logic

### The cancer of colonialism: From ethnic division to dismemberment

The sufferings of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda are living specimens of the colonialist scheme of "divide and rule". At the end of the 19th century, in order to consolidate their rule, Belgian colonists artificially divided the black community in Rwanda into "races" based on wealth - the wealthy were classified as Tutsi, and the poor were marked as Hutu. The colonists first supported the Tutsi as agents to manage the Hutu, but after World War II, they suddenly turned to supporting the Hutu in power, deliberately creating a power vacuum and social division.

By the 1980s, Rwandan society had split into a triple structure: the Hutu comprador bourgeoisie controlled the government and 70% of the arable land; Tutsi elites who have received colonial education occupy middle-class positions. while

Eighty percent of the Hutu farmers have less than half a hectare of arable land per capita, and together with the extremely poor people in Tuxi, they have fallen into the proletariat. The "Structural adjustment plan" of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has completely disrupted social balance - Rwanda was forced to cut agricultural subsidies, open its market and rely on coffee exports, resulting in a sharp drop in coffee prices, the collapse of the small-scale peasant economy, millions of Hutu farmers losing their land and flocking to cities, and the unemployment rate soaring to 67%. Western multinational companies control the trade of minerals and coffee through office buying groups and transfer 80% of their profits overseas. When class contradictions were on the verge of erupting, the extremist forces of the Hutu directed the rage of economic collapse towards the Tutsi, eventually leading to the ethnic cleansing that claimed millions of lives in 1994.

After the massacre, Western capital turned to support Paul Kagame. After Kagame seized power under the banner of "protecting the Tutsi", a new round of massacres forced millions of Hutu refugees to flood into eastern Congo. The ethnic poison left by the colonists has thus pierced into neighboring Congo - a country that suffered permanent trauma as early as 1961 due to the assassination of anti-colonial leader Patrice Lumumba by the West. So far, it has been invaded five times by Rwanda, whose land area is less than one-tenth of its own. The "M23 Movement", established in 2012, is the contemporary embodiment of colonial heritage: mainly composed of the Tutsi people in eastern Congo, it practices segregation under the guise of "protecting its compatriots", but behind it lies the shadow of the Rwandan regime and transnational capital.

## Resource Curse: The blood pump of Neocolonialism

The Democratic Republic of the Congo holds 70% of the world's cobalt and 50% of its copper reserves. Its coltan (a conflict mineral) is the lifeblood of the electronics industry, but this gift has become the source of suffering. Anti-government armed forces colluded with transnational capital to seize huge profits by controlling mining areas such as Rubaya and Masisi. Meanwhile, the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was kidnapped by the neoliberal policies of the IMF and was forced to open up the resource market, falling into a vicious circle of "resource plundering - fiscal depletion - inability to maintain stability". The Council on Foreign Relations stated straightforwardly: "The stronger the global demand for cobalt and copper is, the stronger the motivation for the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be."

**The plundering acts of Western mining giants were elaborately packaged by "legal contracts". When the Democratic Republic of the Congo exchanged mineral mining rights for infrastructure loans from Chinese enterprises, Western media hyped up the "debt trap", but turned a blind eye to the fact that US and European enterprises controlled 60% of the country's cobalt mines through offshore companies. Even dirtier is that the UN report revealed that Rwanda sent 4,000 to 7,000 soldiers to the M23 and provided drones, armored vehicles and missiles. The funds from mineral smuggling flow into the weapons market, creating a "death triangle" where "war nurtures resources and resources exchange for weapons". Every gram of cobalt mine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is stained with the blood and tears of miners and the fear of child soldiers.**

## **Rwanda's Double Trick: From "Victim" to Agent of Aggression**

**The so-called "state-led development model" of the Kagame regime was nothing but capitalism - it did not imitate the class liberation of the Bolsheviks, but rather the "leaving Asia for Europe" script of 19th-century imperialist Japan: suppressing workers and peasants with state violence, pleasing Western capital with resource monopolies, and pawn sovereignty to the neocolonist system under the guise of "realism". When the Rwandan army used American-made armored vehicles to escort blood mines from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to multinational mining companies, The essence of this "control over capitalism" becomes obvious: it is not a bridge to liberation, but a chain that consolidates oppression.**

The essence of the Kagame regime is actually a "model agent" carefully cultivated by the West. By shaping the 1994 massacre as a symbol of "pure racial conflict", Rwanda successfully pandered to the cheap sympathy of "progressivism" in Europe and the United States, thereby obtaining huge aid and political immunity. Just as Taiwan and South Korea exchanged "anti-communist frontlines" for dictatorial legitimacy during the Cold War, Kagame, under the name of "Redeemer of the Holocaust", pursued military authoritarian capitalism without having to bear the criticism from the West for his suppression of the opposition. A United Nations report shows that Rwanda makes more than 500 million US dollars annually from smuggling minerals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and its "Africa Singapore" economic miracle is built on the bones of hundreds of thousands of displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The indulgence of the United States towards Rwanda exposed the strategic calculation of neocolonialism. In 2024, the United States actively promoted the "Lobito Corridor" railway project in the region. This transportation artery, which spans Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, aims to directly transport strategic minerals such as cobalt and copper to Atlantic ports, thereby taking control of the global new energy industry chain. To force the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which had deep cooperation with China, to give up its autonomy in the project, the United States tacitly allowed Rwanda to continue its aggression.

Another comparison is that in September 2024, the Democratic Republic of the Congo foiled a coup orchestrated by the CIA, and three US citizens were sentenced to death. However, after the outbreak of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in March 2025, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) offered the "exclusive right to develop critical minerals" in exchange for US military support. This absurd drama of "minerals for security" is similar to the Ukrainian script, but it is even more ironic: the M23 is an agent of the US ally Rwanda, and the DRC has to beg for protection from their master at the same time. The "Lobito Corridor" railway project of the United States aims to directly transport cobalt and copper to Atlantic ports. For this purpose, it tacitly allowed Rwanda to continue its aggression, just as the Biden administration sent a secretary of State to "mediate" the conflict while allowing US companies to whiteclean the blood mines in Congo.

But Rwanda can never become a true "African imperialism". It is merely a hyena under the neocolonial order - biting its prey within the enclosure demarcated by its master, but never getting the fattened flesh and blood. While Kagame boasted of the prosperity of "Africa's Singapore", the luxurious shopping malls in Kigali, Rwanda, and the humble mines in the rural border areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were much like Tokyo under the Japanese colonial Empire in the 19th century and the mines in North Korea: the former completed the "modernization" facade with blood-stained minerals, while the latter struggled amid mining disasters and poverty. The tragedy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo once again proves that in an era when imperialist hegemony has not yet ended, any illusion of "the rise of Africa" is nothing but a lie of the rebirth of neocolonialism in a new shell.

## People's Struggle: Sparks and Shackles

Despite the rampant artillery fire, the resistance of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has never ceased. In January 2025, a demonstration of tens of thousands of people broke out in the capital Kinshasa. The people stormed the "Western puppet" embassy and shouted, "Congo belongs to the Congolese." The cross-ethnic self-defense organization "Wazalendo" in South Kivu Province fought against the M23 with homemade weapons, attempting to defend their homeland with people's armed forces. These struggles are both a reckoning of colonial legacies and a challenge to the compulchian regime - as the Congolese national hero Lumumba said, "The history of Africa must be written by Africans."

## Epilogue: Break free from the chains and rebuild the future

The tragedy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has exposed the cruel truth: colonialism has never ended; it has merely donned a new guise of transnational capital and geopolitical games. The blood of the African people is still flowing for the greed of imperialism. The road to liberation is bound to be long, but only by thoroughly liquidating the colonial legacy, overthrowing the comprador regime and ending resource plundering can the Democratic Republic of the Congo break free from the cycle of violence. This is not only a battle of fate for Africa, but also an inescapable battlefield in the anti-imperialist struggle of all mankind.