

Mobilization for the Safeguarding of Congolese Sovereignty and Autonomy (MOSSAC)

An ad hoc coalition of 81 Congolese organizations to express our concerns regarding the occupation, and our demands for a lasting peace based on security, accountability, sovereignty, and justice.



Critique of the Washington Accords and calls for mitigation

MOSSAC, 17 February 2026

Since November 2021, two large provinces in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have been progressively invaded and occupied by Rwanda and their militia, the M23. A political alliance called the Congo River Alliance (AFC) has established a parallel government in the occupied region, and governs in collaboration with the brutal military force of the M23.

Rwanda claims that the M23 is only a Congolese militia, and (contradictorily) that Rwanda's involvement in the DRC is necessary for the legitimate defense of their country. However, the UN Security Council's Group of Experts on the DRC has documented what the local population already knows: that Rwanda is using the M23 as a cover to profit from lucrative minerals (including the "3Ts + Gold": tantalum (coltan), tin (cassiterite), tungsten (wolframite) and gold) looted from mining sites in northeastern DRC, including the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu.

In December 2025, the Congolese government under Felix Tshisekedi signed three agreements with the United States under Donald Trump, two of which were also signed by Paul Kagame for Rwanda. Collectively, these three agreements are known as the Washington Agreements. Together, they are presented as part of a "Peace for Minerals" agreement, brokered by Trump and his associates.

The first of these agreements is presented as a Peace Agreement, designed to restore peace in the occupied region of the eastern DRC.ⁱ The second agreement creates a "Regional Economic Integration Framework" (REIF) allowing the United States and Rwanda to jointly exploit the DRC's resources.ⁱⁱ A third agreement, called the Strategic Partnership Agreement, stipulates that the DRC will provide a list of all its domestic coltan, copper, manganese, and gold development projects that are not currently under contract, so that the United States can decide which companies to award them to.ⁱⁱⁱ Discussions in Washington suggested that the trade agreements would be implemented in exchange for security guarantees, once the peace agreement was well underway. Therefore, the documents cannot be read independently but must be evaluated within the broader context of the "Peace for Minerals Agreement."

In the following document, MOSSAC sets out its concerns regarding the language and meaning of the Washington Accords, and recommends taking specific measures in response to the problems we identify.

1. The United States under Trump cannot be trusted to do what is required under the terms of an agreement or under international law.

Over the past year, the United States (under Trump) has supported genocide in Gaza; bombed or threatened to blockade, bomb, invade, or destroy Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, Nigeria, and/or Greenland^{iv}; sanctioned or withdrawn the United States from more than 66 international organizations, conventions, or treaties,^v including the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, and the World Health Organization; failed to pay the United States' dues owed to the United Nations; destabilized the global economy by imposing severe tariffs on most countries; ceased providing international aid by shutting down USAID; attempted to destroy the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and even sent the US military into American cities to arrest, expel, or violently kill anyone it considers a threat to Trump's agenda. How can we trust them to take the necessary steps to build peace in the DRC?

2. Similarly, Rwanda under Kagame cannot be trusted to do what is required under the terms of an agreement or under international law.

Over the past 30 years, with the direct or indirect support of certain Western and regional powers, Rwanda has repeatedly invaded the DRC, either with its own troops or through proxy forces. They have conducted peace negotiations while exploiting ceasefires, observed by the FARDC, while they take advantage of the lull to prepare assaults, aiming to recapture several towns and cities or to prepare for their next attack.^{vi} They present the world with a false and internally contradictory narrative, claiming they do not support the AFC/M23 and that the takeover is an internal Congolese matter, while simultaneously asserting that their troops are acting in self-defense against the remnants of Hutus who committed genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and then fled to Congo. They claim not to be plundering the DRC's mineral resources, yet it is well documented that they have exported ever-increasing quantities of minerals globally, while receiving €900 million from the EU to modernize their "mineral supply chain" from mines in eastern DRC to their own processing facilities.^{vii} And they have not ceased their violent and illegal war of aggression against the DRC since the signing of the peace agreement in June 2025.

3. Most of the provisions of the Peace Agreement have been repeatedly violated by Rwanda since its signing in June 2025.

Since the minerals component of the "Peace for Minerals" agreement is to be implemented only after the implementation of the Peace Agreement, it is irresponsible to begin implementing the Strategic Partnership Agreement, allowing the United States to begin taking control of mining sites, while the DRC is still fighting against brutal, unjust occupation forces acting in opposition to the UN Charter and the DRC Constitution.

Recommendations for concerns 1, 2,3 :

The United States must keep its word, having presented the Washington Accords as a set of agreements where peace comes first, followed by economic cooperation. Cooperation cannot take place under the threat of arms.

The African Union and the United Nations must exert their full influence, including by adopting strong international sanctions and establishing an armed protection force:

- To enforce all the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 2773, adopted in February 2025;
- To compel the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of all Rwandan troops and Rwandan-backed militias from the DRC; and
- To ensure that the anti-democratic “parallel government” of the AFC, supported by the brutal actions of the M23/Rwanda, withdraws immediately and is completely dissolved.

The United Nations must withdraw its contracts with Rwanda that establish Rwandan peacekeepers, funding and provision of munitions having been documented to support the Rwandan invasion of eastern DRC -- including the diversion of funds and personnel intended for Rwandan peacekeepers in Mozambique to support the aggression in DRC, and more recently, the launch of drones by their peacekeepers in the Central African Republic to attack the Kisangani airport in the DRC.

The European Union must terminate its €900 million memorandum of understanding with Rwanda to develop a strengthened mineral supply chain, knowing that this will only serve to support the continued plundering of conflict minerals from the DRC.

4. There was no input, participation or widespread transparency in the preparation of the Peace Agreement, the Regional Economic Integration Framework or the Strategic Partnership Agreement; therefore, they do not represent the wishes of local leaders, civil society or the general public in the affected area of eastern DRC.

In reality, these agreements were negotiated in a context that amounts to a gun to the head of the Congolese people, and therefore have no real legitimacy.

Recommendations for the concern 4 :

A high-quality, inclusive national dialogue must be organized in Kinshasa, bringing together key political actors not directly involved with armed groups, civil society actors, and opposition members genuinely committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC and the well-being of the Congolese people. Kinshasa would be the ideal venue to maintain the image, unity, and proper respect for the Congolese constitution, thereby ensuring maximum participation in the process.

All sectors of Congolese society should be invited to participate, with the exception of armed groups. Given the difficulty for residents of the occupied zone and neighboring provinces (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema, and Tanganyika) to travel to Kinshasa, it is imperative to ensure that traditional authorities and elected officials, members of civil society, educators, small

businesses, the poor, displaced persons, mine workers and artisanal miners, minority communities such as Indigenous Peoples, and other key stakeholders from these provinces can contribute to the dialogues through recorded interviews, which will then be transmitted to the central dialogue coordinators.

The topics discussed in the dialogues should include, among other things:

- What atrocities and human losses did they suffer during the invasion and occupation?
- What material losses did they suffer, particularly in land, homes, income, and businesses?
- What kind of justice do they need for the war to finally end?
- What compensation should they receive?
- What types of infrastructure and other material damages need to be repaired for life to return to normal?
- What types of violence do they fear will continue?
- What are their concerns regarding the future exploitation of minerals and other resources by foreign interests?
- What benefits do they expect to gain from trade agreements with the United States?
- What can be done to prevent future invasions and occupations?
- How can the FARDC be strengthened and their loyalty increased?
- What should the role of the Wazalendo be in the future?
- What aspects of law and governance can be strengthened to prevent the recurrence of invasions, looting, or mine takeovers by militias?
- How can the government be reorganized on the ground to regain authority over areas occupied by the M23/Rwanda?

Following the dialogue, the conclusions will be shared and considered based on their approval by the participants, ultimately helping the sponsors to articulate the position of the people and the country.

Apolitical "Citizen Monitoring Committees" should be established in each affected province and territory to monitor and ensure compliance with the implementation of the recommendations adopted during the Dialogue Sessions. If a Monitoring Committee asserts that the recommendations are not being monitored or implemented, the Committee may seek redress from a competent court within its province.

5. The language of the Regional Economic Integration Framework is very detailed and includes good objectives as well as proposed mechanisms for implementation. However, virtually nothing in the document is mandatory – it is essentially just a written proposal.

The objectives will only be achieved if the DRC, Rwanda and the United States can move forward in an environment conducive to cooperation; in other words, without armed conflict.

6. The language of the Regional Economic Integration Framework emphasizes cooperation, despite the fact that on the ground there is a daily atmosphere of extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence, forced labor, compulsory military service, disappearances and other serious human rights violations committed by the invaders.

How can cooperation – including cross-border infrastructure, shared industrial zones, cross-border tourism and cross-border markets – begin to happen in this near-genocidal atmosphere of brutality and total disregard for the rights and humanity of the Congolese people?

7. The Regional Economic Integration Framework speaks of the importance of local and provincial engagement, without recognizing that the targeted provinces are currently under the occupation of invading forces.

How can a legitimate regional economic framework be developed and implemented when a substantial portion of the land and resources in question is under occupation and parallel governance by an invading force?

8. Despite the obligation to end the conflict first, the United States under Trump is already moving forward in parts of the Strategic Partnership Agreement that supply minerals to the United States – while the conflict, expansion and atrocities led by the Rwandans continue to rage in the eastern DRC.

According to the Regional Economic Integration Framework, “The provisions of this Framework take effect upon satisfactory execution of the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) set out in Appendix A of the Peace Agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda, done at Washington, June 27, 2025 and the Operation Order (OPORD) negotiated at the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism (JSCM) meeting of September 17-18, 2025 and approved by the Joint Oversight Committee (JOC) of the Washington Agreement on October 1, 2025. Satisfactory execution of the CONOPS and OPORD is to be determined by the JOC.”^{viii} But instead, in recent months, the United States has demanded a list of all mineral sources that the DRC can make available to them and is busy assessing requests from numerous American mining interests. Many of these requests come from Trump's donors, friends and relatives, as he has developed a foreign policy that supports his kleptocratic form of governance.

Recommendations for concerns 5, 6, 7,8 :

It is clear that none of the potential benefits of participating in the Regional Economic Integration Framework can accrue to the DRC until the armed conflict ceases, the occupiers withdraw from the DRC, the violent “parallel government” is dissolved, and land and resources are returned to their rightful owners. To put this formally, the Congolese parliament should consider revisiting the Peace Agreement and the Regional Economic Integration Framework to correct their shortcomings and make both agreements contingent upon the prior implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2773, adopted in February 2025.

9. Although it pretends to promote the value-creation (processing) of minerals in the DRC, the Regional Economic Integration Framework aims to eliminate obstacles (including reputational barriers such as disrespect for Rwanda) to the export of minerals out of the DRC.

It appears that the main objective of the agreements is to find a way to normalize and legalize the current practice of plundering minerals and other resources out of the DRC.

10. The Regional Economic Integration Framework gives other countries a meaningful voice on what the DRC can do with its own resources and its own economy.

The Framework aims to integrate regional economic activities at the local, national, and international levels, with activities jointly controlled by the DRC, Rwanda, and the United States, as well as any other (unspecified) invited entity. Furthermore, Rwanda and the DRC commit *"to coordinate with private sector actors to provide policy stability, regulatory predictability, and transparent enforcement to attract long-term, high-quality investment at scale."*^{ix}

11. The bilateral Strategic Partnership Agreement between the United States and the DRC requires the DRC to maintain policies, regulations and enforcement measures that provide an environment that foreign investors consider stable and conducive to long-term investment.

This means that protecting local communities and the environment in the DRC is a lower priority. The agreement also grants the United States preferential access to Congolese mineral reserves and requires the DRC to amend its legislation and potentially its Constitution. It even gives Washington a role in managing mineral resources through a joint mechanism involving both governments.^x In doing so, the Strategic Partnership Agreement reduces the DRC's ability to control its own land and resources. Congolese and international analysts have stated that this is a dangerous impact of the Washington Agreements.^{xi}

In a petition filed in January 2026, Congolese lawyers challenged the constitutionality of the Strategic Partnership Agreement. "The lawyers argue that the agreement violates the Congolese Constitution, which requires that any amendment to national laws and/or the Constitution be subject to democratic review and approval by Parliament or by popular referendum. In particular, the agreement contravenes Article 214 of the DRC's Constitution, which governs the ratification of international agreements that alter domestic law. The petition also contends that the agreement violates Articles 9 and 217, which enshrine national sovereignty over natural resources, as well as Article 12, which guarantees equality before the law."^{xii}

Recommendations for concerns 9,10, 11 :

The United States Congress must demand a voice in the terms of the Washington Accords and must use its power to ensure that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC are not infringed upon by the U.S. government or its private companies. In other words, they must not exert economic, judicial, political, legislative, regulatory, or military pressure on the DRC to make decisions and take measures that benefit the United States at the expense of the Congolese people.

The Congolese parliament must annul the government's signature on the Strategic Partnership Agreement, given that this agreement constitutes a violation of the Congolese constitution and sovereignty.

12. The Washington Accords represent a step backward from UN Security Council Resolution 2773, reducing the requirements for Rwanda, imposing preconditions before Rwanda withdraws its troops, while diminishing protections for the DRC and eroding its sovereignty.

Resolution 2773 of February 2025 offers much stronger protections to the DRC, protections that are not based on preconditions and do not erode the DRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity, nor do they give away its resources.^{xiii} Why should the DRC backtrack, thereby rewarding Rwanda for its continued aggression, invasion, occupation, and resource plunder?

13. The Peace Agreement protects Rwanda's territorial interests beyond those of the DRC.

Point 1 of the Agreement, “Respect for the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s Territorial integrity,” calls on the DRC to neutralize the FDLR before the withdrawal of Rwandan troops—which offers no protection whatsoever against a hostile invasion by Rwandan troops or against the financing and direction of the violent occupation by Rwandan proxy forces. Similarly, Point 2 of the Agreement, “Respect for the Republic of Rwanda’s Territorial Integrity,” calls on the DRC to neutralize the FDLR. These first two points promote Rwanda’s false narrative that its sole involvement in the DRC concerns legitimate self-defense against the FDLR. Where is the protection of the DRC’s territorial integrity against incursions by Rwandan troops?

14. The Peace Agreement incorporates a previous 2024 agreement called CONOPS, based on Rwanda's false narrative that they are only in the DRC because they are defending themselves against the FDLR.

This agreement is inherently impossible to implement, because it requires the DRC to neutralize the FDLR, but the FDLR are located in territories controlled by the Rwandan proxy force, the AFC/M23, and inaccessible to the Congolese army.

Recommendations for concerns 12, 13,14 :

The African Union and the United Nations must exert their full influence, including by adopting strong international sanctions and establishing an armed protection force:

- To enforce all the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 2773, adopted in February 2025;
- To compel the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of all Rwandan troops and Rwandan-backed militias from the DRC; and
- To ensure that the anti-democratic “parallel government” of the AFC, supported by the brutal actions of the M23/Rwanda, withdraws immediately and is completely dissolved.

15. The initial concept of the Washington Accords, as promoted by the United States, was that they would provide security in exchange for minerals. But how does the United States intend to provide security-related personnel, equipment, weapons, funding, or training?

According to a December 4, 2025 press release from the U.S. State Department^{xiv}, there is a "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Concerning an Expanded Security Partnership," but the text of this agreement is not publicly available. The only known form of security currently under development is the establishment of a for-profit private mercenary force provided by Erik Prince (head of the former company known as Blackwater; now heads Vectus Global) to defend American interests in the DRC, a service for which the companies involved will likely pay them.^{xv, xvi}

Recommendations for concern 15 :

The "Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and the DRC concerning an expanded security partnership" must be made public. We cannot trust the Washington Accords unless we see how they address security issues, including personnel, weapons and other equipment, funding, training, intelligence sharing, joint missions, and specific obligations regarding non-support for proxies.

16. The Peace Agreement does not address responsibility for wars of aggression, the commission of war crimes and atrocities, violations of international law, violations of human rights, the establishment of a parallel government, or the decades of land seizures and resource plundering in the DRC.

By ignoring these essential dimensions of the current situation, the Agreement essentially rewards Rwanda for its invasion and erases the record so that no investigation, justice or compensation for the crimes committed will take place.

Recommendations for concern 16 :

If the Washington Accords fail to address the issues of impunity and culpability, a separate tribunal must be established to gather testimony and evidence concerning the commission of war crimes and atrocities, violations of Congolese and international law, human rights abuses, the establishment of an illegal parallel government, and decades of land grabs and resource plundering in the DRC. This tribunal must be able to:

1. Refer crimes to the International Criminal Court for prosecution;
2. Refer crimes to the International Court of Justice for prosecution;
3. Prosecute and adjudicate cases against governments or government subsidiaries, organizations, armed militias, private companies, and individuals found guilty of crimes;
4. Impose sentences that reflect the gravity of the crime and the culpability of the convicted individuals or entities; and
5. Require perpetrators to provide compensation to the victims of their crimes.

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