

## **R8 EU has to take their responsibilities about DRC's conflict !**

Proposer: Ecolo j - Jong Groen - DWARS  
Agenda item: 8. Resolutions

### **Motion text**

1 The conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) cannot be reduced  
2 to isolated events or simplified narratives. Rather, it is the product of deeply  
3 rooted structural factors, including colonial legacies, regional power  
4 struggles, and the global demand for natural resources. Our aim is to provide a  
5 concise yet essential historical and contextual background. This overview  
6 underscores the continuity between past and present forms. It also situates the  
7 role of the EU, within a broader framework of responsibility, accountability,  
8 and policy coherence.

### **History**

#### Belgium

11 Late 1860s, King Leopold II, king of Belgium, developed an early obsession with  
12 colonies as a prerequisite for making Belgium a “great power.” He presented his  
13 plans in international forums as humanitarian and scientific missions to combat  
14 slavery and bring “civilization” and Christianity, but historians agree that  
15 profit-seeking was the primary driving force.

16 Leopold granted large tracts of territory as concessions to private companies  
17 such as the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company and the Société Anversoise, which  
18 in return surrendered a portion of their profits. These companies were allowed  
19 to levy taxes in kind, organize forced labor, and deploy their own armed forces  
20 to enforce rubber quotas. As a result, large parts of the country were  
21 transformed into giant rubber plantations, where the population had to harvest  
22 rubber only to subsequently hand it over far below the world market price. The  
23 labor regime was characterized by extreme coercion, violence, and terror,  
24 especially in the rubber zones.

25 Historical and demographic estimates vary, but many studies speak about millions  
26 of deaths as a result of murders, hunger, overwork, disease, and declining birth  
27 rates during Leopold's reign.

28 Under heavy international pressure and growing Belgian political resistance, the  
29 Belgian state took the Congo Free State in 1908 over and transformed it into the  
30 Belgian Congo. At this time, the economic core shifted from rubber and ivory to  
31 mining: copper, cobalt, uranium, gold, and diamonds from regions such as Katanga  
32 and Kasai became the focus. The Union Minière du Haut-Katanga (UMHK), was  
33 founded in 1906 as a joint venture with the Société Générale de Belgique and  
34 British partners, it became one of the most profitable mining companies in the  
35 world and controlled an estimated 70% of the Congolese economy. Companies such  
36 as UMHK and Belgian Congo Oil Mills developed their own paternalistic "state" :  
37 they built mining towns, hospitals, schools, and infrastructure, but under  
38 strict racial segregation and labor discipline. Profits flowed primarily to  
39 Belgian shareholders and holdings, while Congolese workers received low wages  
40 and remained subject to colonial control. A large part of the profits was used  
41 to urban projects in Belgium to finance, primarily in Brussels and the  
42 surrounding area. The Empain Group, Brufina (now ING Belgium), and de Cominière,  
43 all Belgian companies, controlled infrastructure, energy, and transport.

44 In Antwerp, during the 1885 and 1894 world exhibitions, "Congolese villages"  
45 displayed over a hundred Congolese people in degrading conditions. Used as  
46 propaganda by Leopold II, these exhibitions aimed to legitimize colonialism by  
47 reinforcing racist hierarchies and showing the so-called "civilizing work",  
48 similar to the "human zoos" seen across Europe.

49 The independence of Congo on June 30, 1960, was barely prepared and created a  
50 power vacuum that ultimately led to the Congo Crisis and the assassination of  
51 Patrice Lumumba with involvement of the Belgian state and the CIA. Following  
52 Lumumba's assassination and the gradual suppression of alternative governments,  
53 Mobutu finally came to power in 1965. He installed a long-lasting dictatorship  
54 (Zaire) that relied on patronage, repression, and close ties with Western states  
55 and companies in exchange for access to raw materials.

## 56 Rwanda

57 Colonial intervention profoundly disrupted the order in Rwanda. The borders,  
58 drawn without taking into account local realities, froze spaces that were  
59 previously interconnected, and thus became subject to new tensions. Influenced  
60 by anthropometry, a pseudoscience aimed at classifying and hierarchizing  
61 "races," the colonial administration imposed a racialized reading of society.  
62 The Tutsis were then defined as coming from a people of herders of so-called  
63 "Hamitic" origin, supposedly superior to the Hutus and the Twas. This  
64 racialization of Rwandan society has major consequences on the genocide of the  
65 Tutsis in 1994 and up to today.

66 At the end of the 1950s, in a context of rising independence demands and under  
67 pressure from the United Nations, Belgium profoundly modified its policy in

68 Rwanda. Whereas it had until then relied on Tutsi elites, it now chose to  
69 support the Hutu majority, considered more numerous and more docile. After  
70 independence, in 1962, Belgium continued to support Rwandan authorities  
71 dominated by the Hutus until the genocide, which lasted from April to July 1994  
72 made at least 800,000 victims.

73 The Rwandan Genocide helps explain the current situation in the Kivu region,  
74 which, situated between Rwanda and the rest of the RDC, experienced a profound  
75 shift in its dynamics.

## 76 **Current situation**

### 77 On the ground

78 After the Rwandan genocide, rebel group composed mostly of ethnic Tutsis emerged  
79 called M23. It first launched a rebellion in 2012, briefly capturing Goma before  
80 being pushed back. The group has been inactive for years, but resurged in 2022  
81 with renewed support from Rwanda. Rwanda's involvement is the most contentious  
82 element of the current conflict. Rwanda was accused of providing troops,  
83 weapons, and direct military support to M23, accusations that Rwanda denies.  
84 Rwanda's stated concern is the presence of the Democratic Forces for the  
85 Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a Hutu military force with ties to the 1994  
86 genocide, which operates in eastern DRC and has at times cooperated with the  
87 Congolese army.

88 In January 2025, M23 launched a major offensive and captured Goma. Rwandan  
89 troops reportedly fought alongside the rebels, a development that prompted the  
90 DRC to officially sever diplomatic ties with Rwanda. The human toll of this  
91 specific offensive was devastating. Estimates suggest that between 900 and 2,000  
92 people were killed in the fighting, while hundreds of thousands of civilians  
93 were forced to flee. Although M23 declared a ceasefire in early February 2025,  
94 the occupation left the region in a state of high-stakes instability that  
95 persists into 2026. Rwanda and Uganda have intervened repeatedly, sometimes with  
96 genuine security concerns, with economic motives, turning the eastern DRC into a  
97 place for proxy warfare, where countries indirectly confront each other through  
98 military and economic support of different actors. Currently, 8.2 million people  
99 are displaced, projected to reach 9 million by end-2026, including 5.8 million  
100 internally displaced. Nearly 15 million people are in need of humanitarian  
101 assistance. Disease outbreaks, food insecurity, and sexual violence (use as a  
102 weapon of war) are extremely present.

## 103 **EU relationships**

### 104 The European Union's raw materials partnerships

105 The European Union's raw materials diplomacy is a central pillar of its  
106 industrial strategy, aimed at securing access to mineral reserves that are  
107 essential for European industry. To achieve this, the EU establishes strategic  
108 partnerships and policy dialogues. At the same time, the EU implemented the  
109 Conflict Minerals Regulation requiring EU companies to ensure their imports come  
110 from responsible sources only. However, these partnerships have encountered  
111 significant ethical and geopolitical problems, most notably regarding the EU-  
112 Rwanda strategic partnership, intended to develop "sustainable value chains",  
113 signed in February 2024. Reports from the United Nations and other international  
114 organizations suggest that minerals exported from Rwanda are often illicitly  
115 smuggled from the DRC, which is inextricably linked to violent activities.

#### 116 Budgetary and military support to Rwanda

117 The EU provides military and budgetary assistance to Rwanda primarily through  
118 the European Peace Facility. The EU justifies this support as a commitment to  
119 "African solutions for African problems" and as a means to protect regional  
120 interests. However, this military support is highly controversial due to the  
121 lack of traceability of funds.

122  
123

#### **Demands :**

124 We, as FYEG, call upon the EU, its member states, and the international  
125 community to:

- 126 • Create a unified, credible and effective response to the crisis in the  
127 DRC, which guarantees that diplomatic, humanitarian and economic actions  
128 are fully aligned and mutually reinforcing.
  
- 129 • Increase humanitarian aid to guarantee access to food, medical care, clean  
130 water, and the protection of displaced persons
  
- 131 • Take strong and decisive measures towards Rwanda to reflect the gravity of  
132 the reported violations
  
- 133 • Suspend the EU-Rwanda protocol on sustainable raw materials value chains
  
- 134 • Ensure that any future cooperation with Rwanda is done under strict and

135           **enhanced transparency requirements**

- 136           • **Strengthen EU regulation on conflict minerals to prevent financing armed**  
137           **groups through the illegal exploitation of natural resources.**
  
- 138           • **Stop all military cooperation with all parties involved in the conflict,**  
139           **where there is a clear risk that such equipment could be used to commit**  
140           **serious violations of international humanitarian law**
  
- 141           • **Increase targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for serious**  
142           **violations of humanitarian law**
  
- 143           • **Respect and support the decisions of the African Court on Human and**  
144           **Peoples' Rights and the International Court of Justice in order to uphold**  
145           **international law and ensure accountability**
  
- 146           • **Cover their colonial history extensively in primary and secondary**  
147           **education.**
  
- 148           • **Develop a broad European awareness campaign regarding the traces of their**  
149           **colonial past.**
  
- 150           • **Implement measures to limit the use of natural resources used over the**  
151           **world.**
  
- 152           • **We call on the European Green Party for a common position based upon the**  
153           **above calls, to ensure a coherent, unified and effective response.**

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