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# PAN-AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

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*In This Issue:*

## INVASION OF D.R. CONGO

### GLOBAL INTERESTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PAN-AFRICANISM

*A Summary of the Webinar Held on 12th April, 2025*

**By: Dr. Daniel Effiong Umoh**

Secretary, Commission on African Politics,  
Governance and International Relations, and

**Mr. Uko-Obong E. Friday**

Assistant Secretary, Commission on African Politics,  
Governance and International Relations

## Table of Contents

- Executive Summary
- Webinar Overview
- Panelists Bios
- Introduction
- Historical Background of DRC Conflict
- Other Highlights and Policy Recommendations

### Executive Summary

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), long known for its rich mineral resources and strategic geographic position, remains one of Africa's most conflict-ridden nations. The TPADI webinar held on April 12, 2025, convened leading African scholars and policy experts to interrogate the invasion of DRC, its historical roots, and its geopolitical implications for the African continent. The session aimed to foster Pan-African policy discourse, raise awareness about foreign exploitation, and propose viable, Africa-led solutions to restore peace and stability in the DRC.

Key themes included the historical legacy of colonial partitioning and resource exploitation (Prof. G. Macharia Munene), the continuation of imperialist interests in the DRC's eastern region (Prof. Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha), and the manipulation of ethnic divisions by foreign actors (Dr. Peter Wafula Wekesa). Further insights examined international legal frameworks that legitimize external control (Dr. Francis Khayundi) and internal governance failures that enable foreign interference (Dr. Kakai).

Participants reached a consensus that the ongoing crisis in the DRC is driven by global competition over mineral wealth, particularly in Eastern Congo. Foreign-backed militias such as M23 are symptomatic of this deeper structural problem. Speakers emphasized the urgency of continental dialogue to foster unity, political self-determination, and solidarity to counteract neo-colonial incursions and conflicts. The TPADI President, Dr. Effiong Joseph Udo, affirmed the Institute's commitment to non-violent dialogue and collective African action, noting that the Congo's fate must not be detached from the wider Pan-African vision. He also called on the African Union to assist the Congolese, in the spirit of Pan-Africa solidarity, in ending the ongoing conflict and carnage in the country.

This policy dialogue underscores the critical need for African-led peacebuilding mechanisms, legal reforms, and civic engagement strategies that affirm the continent's sovereignty and resource control.

### Webinar Overview

TPADI WEBINARS are part of the activities of every commission under The Pan-African Dialogue Institute (TPADI). Webinars present occasions where expert opinions and policy recommendations are obtained on topical issues that affect the African continent and Africans globally. This volume is a report of the one hosted by the institute on Saturday 12/04,2025, and anchored by the Commission on African Politics, Governance and International Relations.



## Panelists Bios



**Dr. Effiong Joseph Udo** (Nigerian) is a Senior Research Fellow and ongoing Consultant on Africa at the Dialogue Institute at Temple University, Philadelphia, United States of America, and Deputy Director, Centre for Deep Dialogue and Critical Thinking, University of Uyo, Nigeria. He is a KAICIID International Dialogue Fellow after his postdoctoral studies on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna, Austria. He is the international President of The Pan-African Dialogue Institute.



**Prof. G. Macharia Munene** (Kenyan), is a Professor of History and International Relations at the United States International University Africa (USIU-A). He has taught in several universities in Europe, America and Africa, including Universitat Jaume-1, Castellon, Spain; National Defence College, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya; University of Nairobi, 1986 to 1997; Kentucky State University, Frankfort, Kentucky, 1985-1986; Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1984-1985; Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, 1981-1984, etc. His academic excellence and advocacy have earned him an award as a *UN recognized Expert on Decolonization*.



**Prof. Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha** (DRC), is a Professor of Religion and Philosophy at the California State University, Northridge, United States of America, where he teaches courses among others, "Religion, Logic, and Media," "American Religious Diversity," "World Religions," "African Traditional Religions in Africa and the American Diaspora," "Liberation theology," and "Religion, Violence and Peace" since 2003. Dr. Mutombo is the Vice President of The Pan-African Dialogue Institute.



**Dr. Peter Wafula Wekesa** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, Archeology and Political Studies at Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya. His research focuses mainly on issues of border community relations, border resources, identity politics, and international relations. He is an accomplished academic with many publications to his credit.



**Dr. Francis Khayundi** is an Assistant Professor of International Law at the United States International University – Africa and an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya. At USIU-Africa, he teaches and researches International Law, International Organizations, Refugee Protection, Human Rights, Governance, Data Protection, and International Relations.



**Dr. Pius Kakai Wanyonyi** holds a Ph.D from Kenyatta University where he is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, Archaeology and Political Studies. He is a peer reviewer with Kenya's Commission of University Education and some of the positions he has held include; Secretary, Historical Association of Kenya; and Chair, Department of History, Archaeology and Political Studies, Kenyatta University. Dr. Kakai has published very wide in both domestic and foreign journals. He is currently the Director, Commission

on African Politics, Governance and International Relations of The Pan African Dialogue Institute.

## **Introduction**

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has endured a long and tragic history marked by continuous invasions, exploitation, and instability. From the colonial era to present-day geopolitics, Congo's vast mineral wealth and strategic location have attracted a litany of foreign interests. The TPADI webinar held on April 12, 2025, offered a critical exploration of these dynamics by leading African scholars and policy experts.

## **Historical Background of DRC Conflict**

Prof. G. Macharia Munene, the keynote speaker, situated Congo's turmoil within a historical context that dates back to the 1884–85 Berlin Conference, which laid the foundation for European colonization. He argued that Congo was partitioned for the convenience of European powers, notably giving King Leopold II personal control over what became known as "Leopold's Congo." This set in motion a legacy of exploitation and brutality, including the enslavement and killing of millions. As Congo transitioned from Belgian rule to independence in 1960, it remained a target of Cold War power struggles and mineral-driven conflicts. He also revealed how Cold War calculations kept Congo at the heart of global rivalries. The assassination of Patrice Lumumba and the long reign of Mobutu Sese Seko were linked to Western strategies to maintain dominance over Congolese resources. Even after Mobutu's fall, regional alliances and rivalries, especially involving Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, continued to inflame conflict, often under the pretext of security but rooted in resource exploitation.

More recently, extra-continental powers like the U.S., China, France, Turkey, UAE, and Russia have pursued access to Congolese minerals by supporting armed groups or engaging in deals with local authorities. President Tshisekedi's reported engagement with representatives linked to the U.S. President Donald Trump reflects the persistence of extractive geopolitical strategies.

## **Highlights from Other Panelists**

Panelists highlighted that Eastern and Western Congo function almost as distinct regions, with the East bearing the brunt of foreign-sponsored conflicts due to its concentration of valuable minerals. Prof. Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha decried how external forces manipulate internal divisions, especially ethnic and regional cleavages, to fuel unrest. Dr. Peter Wafula Wekesa expanded this analysis, pointing out that ethnicity and borders are used as tools by global powers to maintain instability.

Legal scholar Dr. Francis Khayundi contextualized the role of international law in enabling these invasions. The Berlin Conference, and later Cold War diplomacy, provided legal and political cover for foreign domination under the guise of development, trusteeship, and governance. He called for African nations to re-examine and reform international agreements and institutions that perpetuate dependency.

Dr. Kakai questioned the complicity of some African leaders in perpetuating external control through poor governance and collusion with exploitative forces. He warned against internal

fragmentation and emphasized the urgent need for Pan-African solidarity and a reinvigorated commitment to unity.

Panelists agreed that the cycle of violence in DRC will continue unless Africans reclaim agency over their resources, redefine development on their terms, and push back against both internal and external actors that perpetuate conflict. The Congo crisis, as the speakers noted, is a mirror of Africa's wider struggle—an embodiment of both Pan-African agony and the urgent call for Pan-African consciousness and action.

TPADI President Dr. Effiong Joseph Udo concluded by affirming the Institute's advocacy for peaceful, Africa-led conflict resolution strategies, emphasizing dialogue and unity over militarization. He thanked the panelists for giving the best of their scholarships to enlighten participants on the situation in the DR Congo. He noted that what happens in the Congo was of paramount interest to the institute and should be of concern to everyone in Africa. "As Pan-Africanists, we believe that an injustice to one African is a tragedy to all Africans", he said. He regretted that the natural resources in Congo have become a curse that has sent millions of Congolese children, youth, women and men to their early graves, and sadly there seems to be no end in sight. Dr. Udo further stated that every Congolese blood spilled in the ongoing war is feeding the devilish greed of its leaders and enriching the foreign collaborators and sponsors – the neocolonialists. He encouraged all to embrace dialogue, peaceful and non-violent approach to this conflict against picking arms, as violence has never solved a conflict. He called on the African Union to assist the leaders and citizens of Congo to resolve this prolonged conflict through dialogue and deep thinking or our people will continue to die like fools.

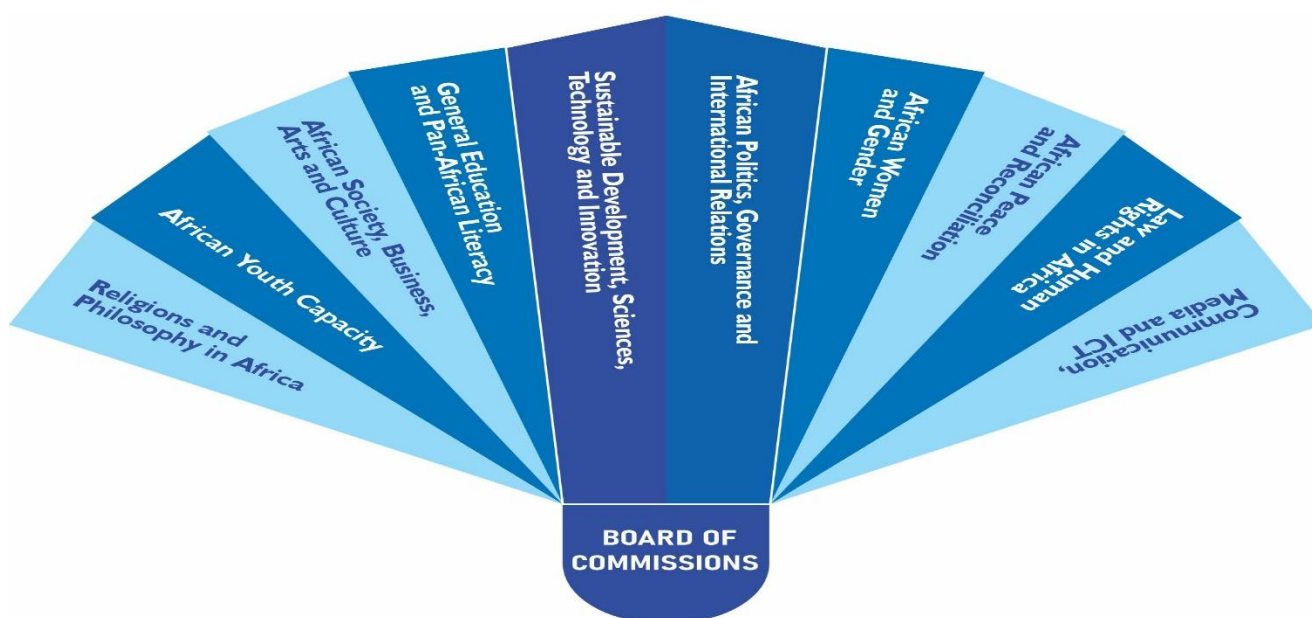
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*The Pan-African Dialogue Institute (TPADI)*

Email: [info@africadialogue.org](mailto:info@africadialogue.org) | [tpadi@uniuyo.edu.ng](mailto:tpadi@uniuyo.edu.ng) | Web: [www.africadialogue.org](http://www.africadialogue.org)

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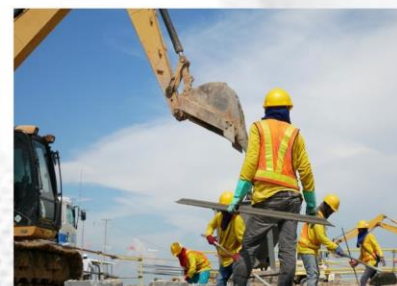
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