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AFRICA/CONGO DR - Rebels and regular army officers united in the illicit trade of Congolese minerals

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "The lucrative trade in tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has been controlled by violent armed groups and factions of the government army for 15 years," this is the complaint by the non-governmental organization Global Witness, in presenting its latest report on how the illicit trade of Congolese minerals finances the instability in eastern DRC.
"These groups use the profits generated from the mineral trade to fund their fight," said the NGO. "The inhabitants of North and South Kivu are the first to pay the price of a long conflict marked by killings, looting, rapes and mass displacement of populations."
The report is the result of research conducted in the Congolese provinces of North and South Kivu, in Burundi and in Rwanda in March and April 2013.
It was discovered, for example, that "rebels and high-ranking officers of the Congolese and Burundian government armies profit from the gold produced in the eastern DRC. Gold is recycled through the gold-bearing sector in Burundi to be later exported to Dubai. Neither local buyers in the region of the Great Lakes nor international traders who buy gold carry out adequate controls to ensure that they do not fund conflict or human rights abuses in eastern DRC."
In a similar manner significant quantities of tin, tantalum and tungsten illegally extracted and exported to the East of the DRC are put on the international market.
To stop the businesses that finance the war in Congo, Global Witness claims that one should continue firmly on the path undertaken by the United States, with the Dodd Frank law, which punishes companies that buy the "war minerals". Even the European Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region are debating the adoption of measures to regulate the trade of minerals from the DRC. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 12/06/2013)

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