

Extractive industries and private security in conflict- affected areas – examples from Colombia and DR Congo

Joris van de Sandt

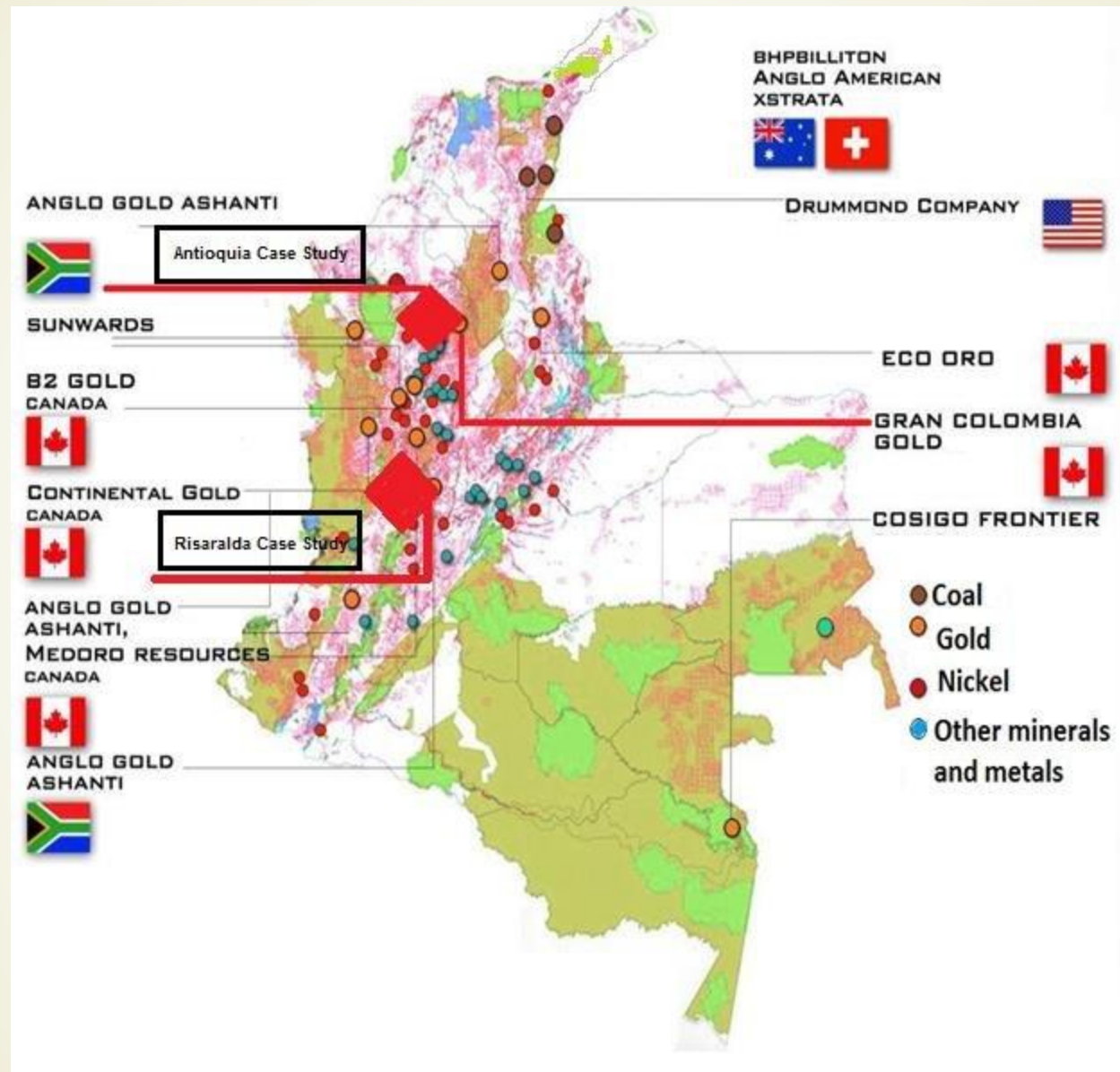
PAX

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Private Security in Conflict-Affected Areas: Colombia and DRC

- ▶ Large and emerging extractive sector, and agro-industrial and large infrastructural projects; Producing companies make use of private security providers (ubiquitous).
- ▶ PAX: work on theme Business, Conflict and Human Rights for over 15 years. Locally: research and campaigns on (in/direct) involvement of companies in serious human rights violations in the context of armed conflict (CAHRAs: Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas).
- ▶ In regional programs: carry out or fund research, advocacy (making abuses visible), and support affected communities in standing up for their rights. Dark Side of Coal, Unpaid Debt, Kibali mine in DRC.
- ▶ Work on human rights violations by private security providers has not been central focus of our work in countries/regions, but we do come across it all the time.





A photograph of two soldiers in a forest. They are wearing camouflage uniforms and caps. The soldier in the foreground is holding a rifle, and the soldier behind him is holding a video camera. The background consists of trees and dry leaves.

La Región Minería

Una mirada a los convenios entre AngloGold Ashanti y el Ministerio de Defensa

1 septiembre, 2020

Relations and Collaborations between Security Actors

- Relations and cooperation between different security actors: security department of company, private security providers and public security forces (police, army and prosecutor's office).
- In project sites: security departments of companies (company installations, coordination/intel), private security providers (patrolling fenced zone), special army divisions (Mining and Energy battalions).
- Law in Colombia and the DRC: "cooperation agreements" with public security; agreements are classified, evidence of far-reaching cooperation/coordination of activities (information sharing).
- Twilight zone > Extractive company can pass on liability, not clear what army and police are doing on behalf of or at the behest of the mining/private security company > Conflict of interest.

Congo lawmakers tell Barrick to secure mine perimeter after deadly protest

By Hereward Holland

2 minute read



Examples of Practices from Colombia and the DRC

- ▶ Colombia during armed conflict: Testimonies of former paramilitary commanders: Private security firms (allegedly) shared information on “suspect persons” (trade unionist and social leaders) with para/military that committed gross human rights violations.
- ▶ Colombia post-peace agreement: Evidence that private security firms are involved in profiling leaders of civil society organizations (infiltration). Community leaders protesting against environmental impacts of mining are arbitrarily arrested and interrogated by police or army units under contract to the mining company. Trade union leaders who fight for rights are threatened by illegal armed groups.
- ▶ Northeastern DRC (conflict-affected area): Communities protesting against the demolition of their homes after their involuntary resettlement are met by state security forces using excessive force (resulting in deaths and injuries). Individuals are subsequently arbitrarily detained by the police or army and legally prosecuted.

Barrick's Tanzania gold mine hit by new police abuse accusations

[Bloomberg News](#) | March 16, 2022 | 9:53 am [Intelligence](#) [Top Companies](#) [Africa](#) [Gold](#)



The North Mara gold mine is one of the three operations Barrick has in Tanzania. *(Image courtesy of [Twiga Minerals](#) / [Instagram](#).)*

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Position (PAX), points of attention for HR Due Diligence

- ▶ *Private security companies must be trained in the principles of the democratic rule of law and the right to protest > Respect for civil space*
- ▶ *Providers must not take sides in a conflict between a mining company and the local population, stigmatizing critical voices (HR defenders or trade unions).*
- ▶ *Private security providers are not allowed to pass on security information to public security forces such as the police and the army, as this leads to serious risks and human rights violations.*
- ▶ *Contracts between mining companies and public security services are undesirable but should at least be public, grey areas are dangerous.*
- ▶ *Unclear what cooperation agreements entail, lack of accountability > outsourcing of legal risks by private (extractive and security) companies.*