

VPs working group in Lubumbashi: Supporting the management of security and human rights risks in the former Katanga

Natural Resources, Security and Human Rights:

The former Katanga region in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is home to one of the largest copper and cobalt deposits worldwide. What is often referred to as the "copper belt", is a region crucial to multinational tech and extractive companies as it provides minerals that are essential to the production of batteries of electric cars and smartphones.

Besides economic opportunities, governance challenges need to be addressed to ensure that the extraction and trade of minerals is done responsibly. In particular, companies should ensure that while securing their concessions, public security forces and private security providers do not violate the rights of communities present near to mining sites. To address this issue, a working group was created in 2008, bringing together actors from the extractive industry, private security companies, government representatives (including from the security sector) and civil society organisations willing to jointly develop ways to implement responsible security practices, consistent with international standards including the Voluntary Principles for Security and Human Rights (VPs).

Since its establishment, the working group has operated at various levels of activity. However, to effectively improve the security and human rights practices on the ground, it is crucial to ensure that these multiple stakeholders engage regularly and over the long-term. The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) and the local NGO Justicia Asbl support the Working Group in achieving this goal.

The Project:

With the support of DCAF Security and Human Rights Implementation Mechanism (SHRIM), DCAF and Justicia Asbl will take the following measures to increase the Working Group's effectiveness:



Extend the membership base and ensure wide representation within the Working Group through a stakeholder mapping which identifies key representatives from the extractive industry, private security companies, civil society and government representatives who can move forward key issues on security and human rights.



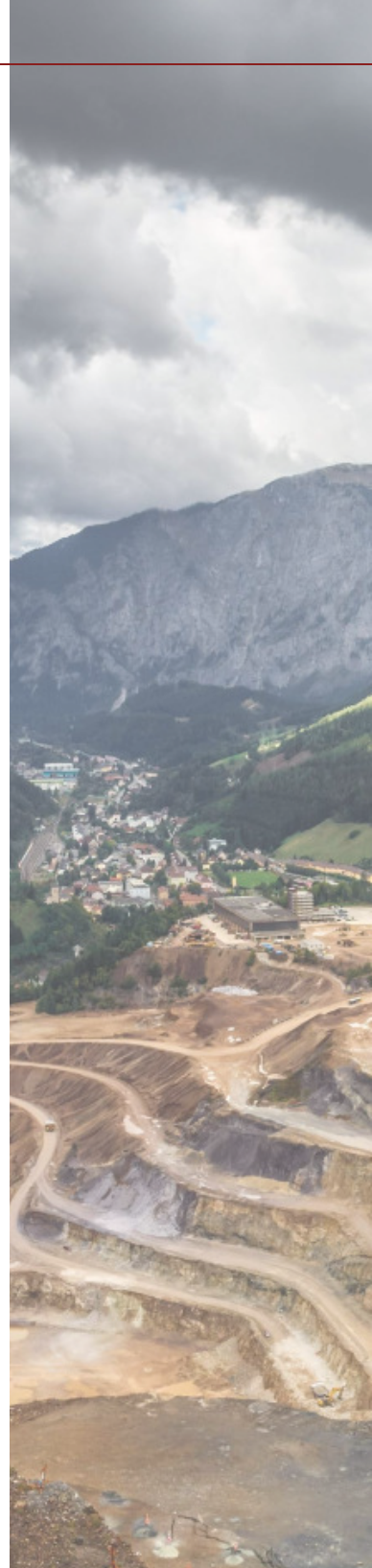
Provide technical expertise on security and human rights topics, apply best practices and lessons learnt from the experience of working groups on the VPs in other contexts (Colombia, Peru, Nigeria, Ghana, Myanmar, Indonesia).



Ensure a monthly meeting rhythm to continuously build trust between the diverse members of the working groups and facilitate sharing of sensitive information on security and human rights challenges in the region.



Link the Working Group to existing initiatives on the ground, such as the Investissement Durable au Katanga (IDAK) and other ongoing initiatives, as well as other VPs platforms in the DRC with the objective of reinforcing overall effectiveness and sustainability.



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