

Sokam Holdings CEO Meets with U.S. Congress to Discuss China and Ending the Exploitation of Child Labor in the DRC

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, November 15, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Yesterday, Elphine Kakudji, the CEO of Sokam Holdings of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), met with Congressman Smith, Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, and others to discuss the need for a strong US-DRC business and government relationship to counter and stop the exploitation of child labor in the DRC by China and other foreign entities.

According to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "Child and forced labor taint the supply chain of cobalt, a mineral that is a critical component in lithium-ion batteries and other products important for modern technologies, including electric vehicles. Fully four-fifths of the world's cobalt is buried under the ground in the Democratic Republic of the Congo ("DRC"), and the mining and refining of the mineral is dominated by Chinese companies. 80% of the DRC's cobalt output is owned by Chinese companies, refined in China, and then sold to battery makers around the world. Mining of cobalt is linked to grave human rights abuses, including the exposure of miners to unsafe worksites and reliance on child and forced Congolese labor, as well as environmental degradation. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that at least 25,000 children are working in cobalt mines in the DRC".



Elphine Kakudji, CEO of Sokam Holdings of the Democratic Republic of Congo, with Congressman Smith, Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, at yesterday's hearing on China and child labor practice

According to Chairman Smith, "China's long repressive arm is ubiquitous in the DRC. Located in central Africa, the DRC is massive and blessed with natural resources, including metals and minerals. It is a country that has been brutally pillaged throughout history—fueled by corrupt men's unquenchable thirst for power, riches, land, rubber, copper, palm oil, and now, cobalt—all at the expense of innocent men, women, and children. To this day, child and forced Congolese

laborers toil in hazardous conditions to extract cobalt from unsafe mines, including artisanal mines in the DRC.

Hastily dug artisanal mines are always subject to collapsing—and many have indeed collapsed, crushing, amputating, and killing miners, including children. It's impossible to escape the disastrous environmental impacts of cobalt mining in these communities—as the very air they breathe and the water they drink are contaminated by toxic chemicals, dirt, and sediment. The biggest beneficiaries of this cobalt continue to remain silent and refuse to face this uncomfortable truth: From dirt to battery, from cobalt to cars, the entire system is fueled by violence, cruelty, and corruption.”

Link to source material: <https://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/from-cobalt-to-cars-how-china-exploits-child-and-forced-labor-in-the-congo>

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