

## Central African Republic: Shadow Economy of Central African Armed Groups, Exposed

### PRESS RELEASE

A new report published today by the Enough Project takes an in-depth look into the business models of the two main armed groups responsible for widespread atrocities in the Central African Republic (CAR), the ex-Séléka and the Anti-Balaka.

"Warlord Business: CAR's violent armed groups and their criminal operations for profit and power" exposes a shadow economy where armed factions, warlords, and illicit networks generate millions of dollars through robbery, extortion, and illicit trade in gold and diamonds.

The report, by the Enough Project's Central Africa-based field researcher Kasper Agger, argues for stronger international sanctions against key actors within illicit networks responsible for financing violence and atrocities in CAR. The report also calls for economic investments to create large-scale employment opportunities, and safeguards to prevent conflict diamonds from entering the international market.

Kasper Agger, report author and Central Africa-based field researcher at the Enough Project, said: "Leaders of armed groups that earn hundreds of thousands of dollars and control large areas across CAR have little incentive to lay down their weapons and halt violence. Such leaders must face increased pressure from U.N. peacekeepers on the ground in CAR, and the enablers that work closely with armed groups must face target sanctions, travel bans and asset freezes."

Marcus Bleasdale, Enough Project Fellow and winner of the 2014 Robert Capa Gold Medal for his photojournalism covering violence in the Central African Republic, said: "Conflict does not just happen, it is planned and financed, and if it is to endure, those finances must continue. This report is crucial in understanding how the conflict in CAR is continuing and how it is being financed. If it is to stop and peace be restored to this nation, we must stop the financing of all armed groups. This report directs us toward how we make that happen."

Sasha Lezhnev, Associate Director of Policy at the Enough Project, said: "The Kimberley Process stands at a crossroads on CAR's blood diamonds. Before the Kimberley ban is lifted, the KP must put a credible monitoring team in place on the ground that has multi-stakeholder involvement and strong support from the UN peacekeepers. Otherwise, conflict diamonds will begin flowing into our jewelry stores once again."

"Warlord Business" is the second in a new series of Enough Project reports on the dynamics of profit and power fueling conflicts in the Horn, East, and Central Africa, launched by the Enough's founding director John Prendergast.

Kasper Agger added: "The CAR economy has shrunk dramatically during the past two years of crisis, and there are very limited employment opportunities in the country. Membership in an armed group offers an attractive source of livelihood for unemployed youths. Economic investments, large scale employment opportunities and a well-resourced disarmament program are urgently needed to draw young people away from armed groups and criminal gangs that are looting and terrorizing civilians across CAR."

### About Enough's "Political Economy of African Wars" series:

*"The Enough Project is launching a new series of in-depth, field research-driven reports on the dynamics of profit and power fueling war in the Horn, East and Central Africa. Violent kleptocracies dominate the political landscape of this region, leading to protracted conflicts marked by the commission of mass atrocities by state and non-state actors. Enough's Political Economy of African Wars series will focus on the key players in these conflicts, their motivations, how they benefit from the evolving war economies, and what policies might be most effective in changing the calculations of those orchestrating the violence-including both incentives and pressures for peace." - Introduction to the series by founding director John Prendergast*

Copyright © 2015 ENOUGH Project. All rights reserved. Distributed by AllAfrica Global Media (allAfrica.com). To contact the copyright holder directly for corrections — or for permission to republish or make other authorized use of this material, [click here](#).

AllAfrica publishes around 2,000 reports a day from more than 130 news organizations and over 200 other institutions and individuals, representing a diversity of positions on every topic. We publish news and views ranging from vigorous opponents of governments to government publications and spokespersons. Publishers named above each report are responsible for their own content, which AllAfrica does not have the legal right to edit or correct.

Articles and commentaries that identify allAfrica.com as the publisher are produced or commissioned by AllAfrica. To address comments or complaints, please Contact us.

AllAfrica is a voice of, by and about Africa - aggregating, producing and distributing 2000 news and information items daily from over 130 African news organizations and our own reporters to an African and global public. We operate from Cape Town, Dakar, Lagos, Monrovia, Nairobi and Washington DC.

© 2015 AllAfrica

AllAfrica - All the Time