



**AFRICA EUROPE FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK
RESEAU FOI ET JUSTICE AFRIQUE EUROPE**

174, rue Joseph II str.
B 1000 BRUSSELS - Belgium
Tel. +32.(0)2.234.68.10 / Fax. +32. (0)2.231 14 13
email: aefjn@aefjn.org
<http://www.aefjn.org>

1604 Working Group News on Natural Resources April 2016

1. Community rights widely abused by cobalt mining in Democratic Republic of Congo

Human rights violations and environmental pollution are happening in Democratic Republic of Congo as a result of cobalt mining, including water pollution and forced evictions. Cobalt is used in rechargeable batteries for smart phones and laptops. About half of all mined cobalt comes from DRC. The mining takes place close to towns and villages. Local communities are regularly cut off from their farmland and water sources near mines, without any say in the matter.

[Read more](#)

2. Over 140,000 signatures for the Swiss Responsible Business Initiative

A large number of Swiss citizens want multinational corporations to respect human rights and the environment abroad. In April 2015, 77 civil society organisations launched a popular initiative demanding greater responsibility for multinational corporations. The initiative came shortly after the Swiss Parliament rejected a motion to that effect. Forced labour in shrimp fisheries, abusive child labour in cocoa production, human rights violations in gold mines – these examples are only the latest of a long list of troubling activities carried out by Swiss companies abroad.

[Read more](#)

3. Mining giant Vedanta argues UK court should not hear Zambia pollution case

One of the world's largest mining companies is expected to argue in the London high court on Tuesday that Zambian villagers should not be allowed to bring a case alleging pollution of their water from a copper mine to the British courts. The high court hearing could have a far-reaching impact for communities seeking legal redress in Britain and for London-based multinational companies with subsidiaries in developing countries. Should the court decide for the companies, it could allow those with subsidiaries in developing countries to avoid being sued in London. English courts have jurisdiction over any company that is domiciled within their territory. But if the court decides for the villagers it will confirm London as a world legal centre to test corporate behaviour in poorer countries. Many of the world's biggest mining and oil companies have headquarters in London.

[Read more](#)