
East Congo to ban raw tin ore exports in 2009

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Reuters reported that Congo will force its tin rich eastern provinces to export only refined ore in a move that has drawn harsh criticism from local mineral traders from January 2009.

Mr John Kanyoni president of Association of Exporters of Minerals in North Kivu said that the January deadline set by the government was unreasonable. He added that "You can do this kind of thing in Katanga, where the Belgians left behind lots of infrastructure. But we only found out there was tin here a few years ago. There's nothing here."

The government wants Congo to be an exporter of value added metals rather than just raw materials such as tin ore cassiterite. Last year it introduced similar measures in Katanga province, its copper and cobalt mining heartland.

The latest rule targets the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema in the violence ravaged eastern borderlands, which produce the majority of cassiterite exported from the former Belgian colony. Currently cassiterite mined in the three provinces is exported as raw ore, most of it by mineral traders in North Kivu's capital Goma.

Mr Juma Balikwisha provincial mines minister of North Kivu said that "Instructions have come down from Congo's capital Kinshasa that beginning in January we will no longer export raw minerals, they must be concentrate."

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