# Abstract

The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the world’s richest territorial states in regards to natural resources. Coltan, copper, gold, diamond and uranium are among these highly profitable primary products. These are exported and sold onto the global market, yielding large revenues. Yet, in spite of the country’s riches, more than half of the population are living in absolute poverty. The ongoing violent conflict which include more than a dozen internal and external actors have contributed vastly to the deteriorating economic situation and the political instability that has haunted the country since independence. The DRC is currently ranked at the bottom of the Human Development Index, Failed States Index, listed as ‘not free’ according to Freedom House, a worldwide respected organization dedicated to the promotion of freedom and human rights, while the level of administrative transparency is at an all time low. This project will attempt to address some of the underlying factors that have played a crucial part in the development of the DRC from colonial to post-colonial state.

In the last 127 years, the DRC has experienced colonial oppression, racism, exploitation, civil war, economic deterioration, violence, ethnic hatred, pressure from regional and international actors, political impotence, corruption, mass poverty and sheer misfortune.

This project will emphasize three important factors: Firstly, that the unrest surrounding the political sphere of contemporary DRC is not a recent phenomenon but built upon the legacy of colonial state administration and particular policy tendencies. Authoritarian rule has been the rule rather than the exception ever since the DRC gained its independence in 1960. Secondly, the economic functions and socio-economic development of the DRC is largely halted and corrupted due to the presence of natural resources combined with the low-level of development. The DRC has been cursed by its natural resources, as both internal and external forces desire control of mineral regions and thus economic profits. Thirdly, the identity and collective memory of the average contemporary Congolese are largely still influenced by its colonial past. The European-dominated discourse on racial hierarchy has left a permanent mark on post-independent DRC as is also highlighted via the adoption of colonial architecture and its usage in the post-colonial era.

The DRC today faces a wide array of problematic issues that needs to be addressed if the future is to present a different destiny for the peoples of the DRC.