



## Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

### Witness Biographies

### Child Labor and Human Rights Violations in the Mining Industry of the Democratic Republic of Congo

#### Panel I



**Hervé Diakiese Kyungu** is a lawyer specializing in Alternative Dispute Resolution (Negotiations and Mediation in Business Law), Human Rights, International Criminal Justice, as well as Constitutional and Electoral Litigation. He is a Member of the Board of Directors of the International Conference of Judicial Mediation, which promotes meditation in French-speaking Africa within the framework of OHADA law.

He served as a Consultant Trainer at the *Carter Center* in the DRC, leading workshops on “The Role of Civil Society Organizations and the Media in the Democratic Governance of Political Institutions” and “Electoral Reform and Increasing Women’s Participation in Political and Electoral Processes in the DRC.” He is a participant and member of the Advocacy Committee of the National Retreat on Electoral Reforms, where he previously trained observers for the presidential and legislative elections in Burkina Faso in 2015. His advocacy for human rights also brought him to serve as the legal representative of child soldier victims at the International Criminal Court. He received his state diploma in “Latin – Philosophy” in 1991 and earned his law degree in 1998 at Kongo University.



**Ambassador Eric T. Schultz** is a former senior American diplomat with decades of experience in the CIS and southern Africa. He has worked extensively with Ukraine, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Georgia, and has experience in emerging markets around the world. Mr. Schultz served as U.S. Ambassador to Zambia (2014-2017); the Deputy U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine (2010-2013); the Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow (2007-2009); Deputy U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe (2004-2007). Prior to these leadership assignments, he also worked in Georgia, Martinique, France, and Madagascar as well as serving in a number

of assignments in Washington, including Deputy Director of the NATO desk and Deputy Director of the Ukraine desk. Eric Schultz graduated from Macalester College (St. Paul, Minnesota) and holds an M.A. degree in International Studies from Denver University. Eric Schultz speaks English, French, Ukrainian, and Russian.



**Fr. Rigobert Minani Bihuzo S.J. Ph.D.** is a Congolese Jesuit priest born on October 13, 1960, in Bukavu, DRC. He is the head of the Research, Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, and Good Governance Department at the Research Center for Social Action (CEPAS, DRC (<http://cepas.online/>) and regional coordinator of the Ecclesial Network of the Congo Basin Forest (REBAC, (<https://rebaccongobassin.org/>).

He is the Co-founder of Groupe Jeremie (a Human Rights Group in Bukavu) and the founder of, a network of 50 faith-based human rights organizations in DRC (RODHECIC). From 2011 to 2017, he worked in Nairobi as the director of the Jesuit African Social Centers Network (JASCNET).

He holds a Ph.D. in Social Sciences and Economics (political science department) (Catholic University of Paris), an Advanced Degree (DES) in Political Science (Palermo) and an M.A. in theology (Montreal), and two B.A.'s in Theology and Human Sciences (Catholic University of Kinshasa) and Philosophy (St. Pierre Canisius in Kinshasa). He has earned two international awards: "Change Maker award 2005" (DIAKONIA, Stockholm) and "Young Leaders Sasakawa prize 2007" (Tokyo, 2008). Rigobert Minani is a public speaker and writer. His latest publication is the 600 pages book entitled "*Les défis de la construction de la paix en République démocratiques du Congo et l'engagement de l'Eglise* », février, 2022).



**Sasha Lezhnev** is Policy Consultant at The Sentry, where he focuses on conflict, corruption, and corporate accountability issues in Central and East Africa. He is also the founding director of the Grassroots Reconciliation Group, an organization that helps rehabilitate former child soldiers and refugees and is on the leadership council of Resolve. He was previously Deputy Director of Policy at The Sentry and the Enough Project and Policy Advisor at Global Witness. Sasha worked for nearly 3 years in Uganda with the USAID contractor

Northern Uganda Peace Initiative and peace process advisor to the Northern Uganda Mediator. He is the author of the book [Crafting Peace: Strategies to Deal with Warlords in Collapsing States](#). He holds a Master's in International Relations from Cambridge University and a B.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.



**Ida Sawyer** is the Crisis and Conflict director of Human Rights Watch. Previously, from 2018 until early 2022, she served as the deputy director of the Africa division, which covers pressing human rights issues in approximately 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

From October to December 2021, she was a Public Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington, D.C., focused on pro-democracy efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo. From April to September 2020, she served as Human Rights Watch's acting Crisis and Conflict director, overseeing and supporting a team of researchers as they responded to global crises, including Russian and Syrian strikes on civilian infrastructure in northwest Syria, aid obstruction in Yemen, rights restrictions related to Covid-19 emergency measures, and police crackdowns on protests that broke out across the United States following the killing of George Floyd.

She was previously the organization's Central Africa director, overseeing work on the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Central African Republic. From 2008 to 2016, she was based in Congo with Human Rights Watch, first in Goma and later in the capital, Kinshasa. She conducted research across Congo and in areas of neighboring countries affected by the Lord's Resistance Army. In August 2016, Congolese authorities barred Ida from continuing to work in the country, following a series of Human Rights Watch publications on political repression. She was able to return to the country in 2019, after long-delayed elections.

Ida has authored numerous Human Rights Watch reports and other documents, and she has written for publications including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Foreign Policy*. Ida conducts high level advocacy with African officials and other international actors as well as outreach with national human rights groups.

Ida came to Human Rights Watch from Cairo, where she had worked as a freelance journalist. Her previous experience in Africa's Great Lakes region includes work for Care International and the Charity for Peace Foundation in northern Uganda, as well as research in Congo on the cross-border dynamics of natural resource exploitation. Ida holds a Master's in international affairs, specializing in human rights, from Columbia University.