

Djugu Territory Mining Attack: CODECO Militia Assault on Chinese-Linked Gold Mine (July 2024)

Banyali-Kilo Sector, Djugu Territory, Ituri Province, DRC

1.94642° N, 30.04823° E

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Incident Date: 3 July 2024

Fatalities: 6 Chinese nationals, 2-3 Congolese soldiers, 6 CODECO

Injured: 8–9 Chinese nationals reported taken hostage, reportedly moved to Digene, a CODECO stronghold in Djugu; figures vary by source

Aggressor(s): CODECO (Coopérative pour le Développement du Congo), a predominantly ethnic-Lendu militia

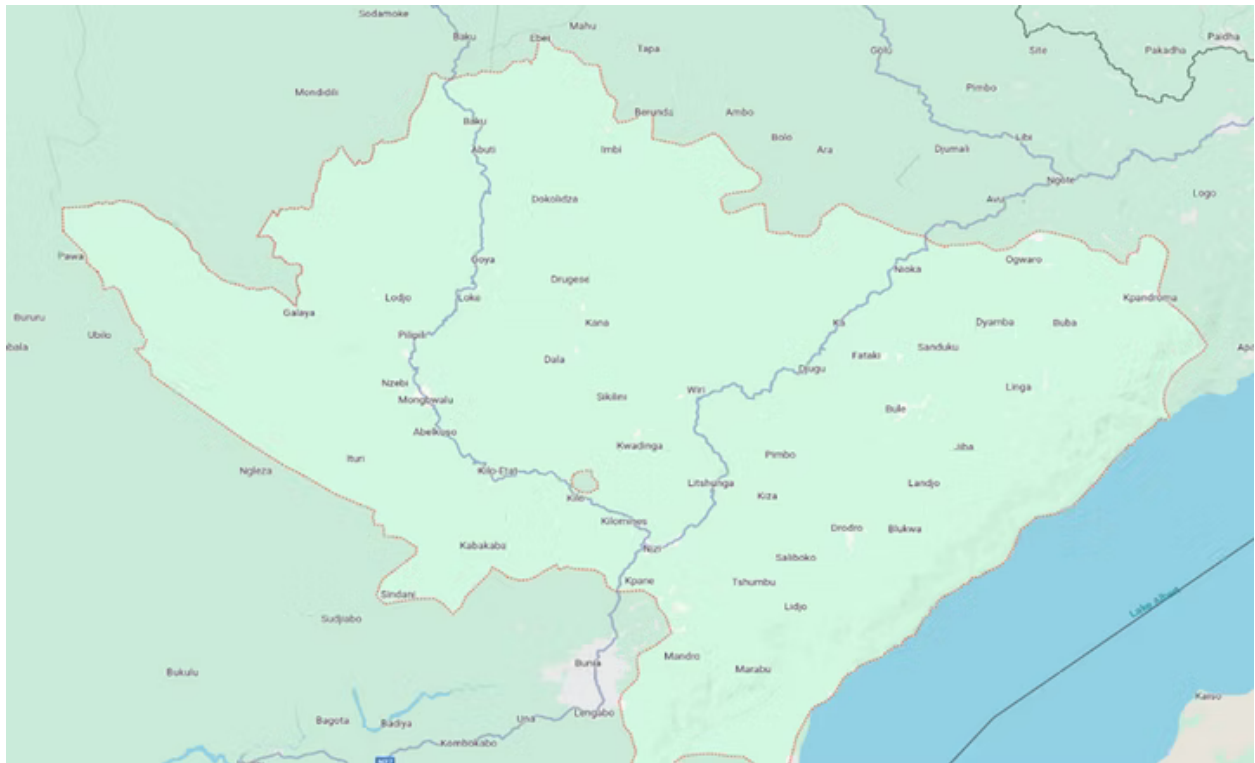
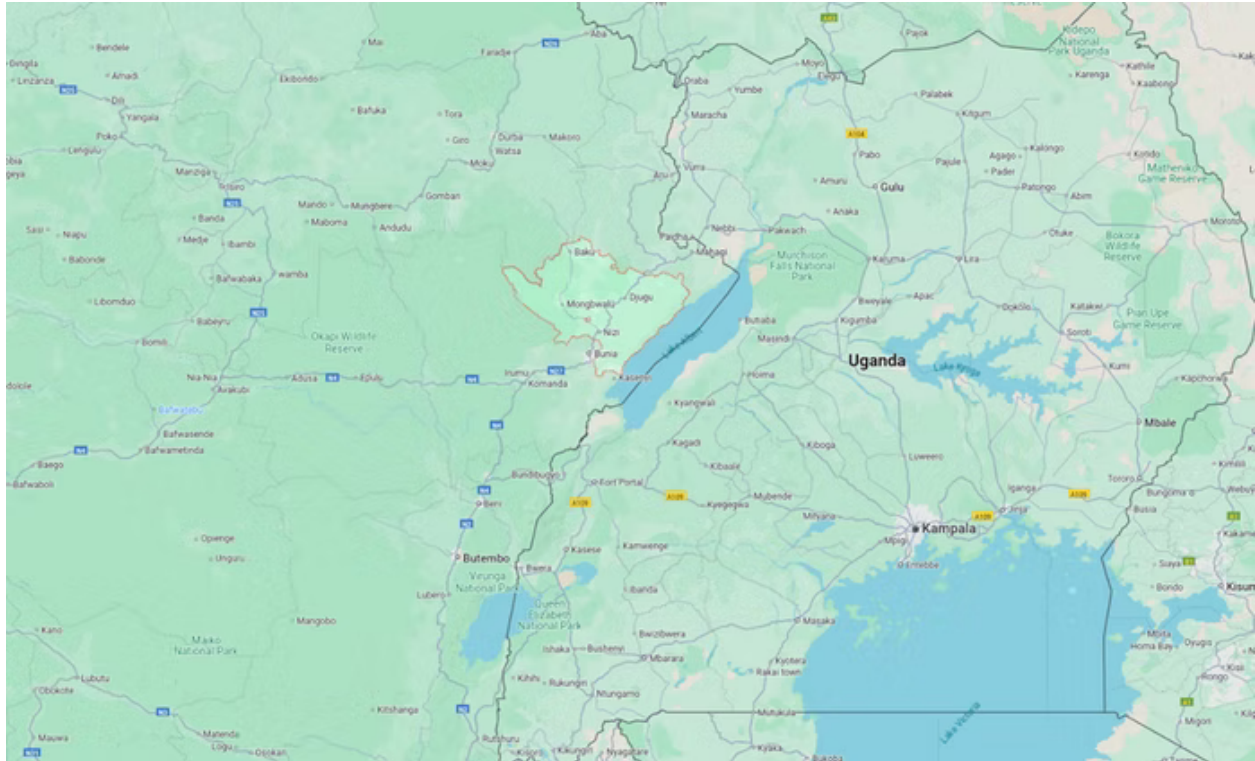
Victim(s) Profile: Chinese nationals engaged in artisanal/informal gold mining; FARDC soldiers guarding the site

In the early hours of 3 July 2024, CODECO militia fighters attacked an artisanal gold mining site operated by Chinese nationals at Wazabo village, in the Banyali-Kilo sector of Djugu Territory, Ituri Province, northeastern DRC. Six Chinese nationals and at least two Congolese soldiers guarding the site were killed; a further eight to nine Chinese workers were reportedly taken hostage and moved to Digene, another area of CODECO influence in Djugu. The attack was confirmed by the Djugu territorial administrator, the Ituri army

spokesperson, a Red Cross representative for Djugu, and the Banyali-Kilo sector chief, and was condemned by China's foreign ministry.

According to Djugu territorial administrator Ruphin Mapela and Banyali-Kilo sector chief Innocent Madukadala, CODECO fighters attacked the mining camp at Wazabo overnight, encountering Chinese nationals digging for gold and opening fire on the site and its FARDC guard detail. The Red Cross representative for Djugu, Dhekana Ernest, said the corpses of the dead were transported to the city of Bunia. Ituri army spokesperson Lieutenant Jules Ngongo confirmed the deaths of the Congolese soldiers, stating they were killed during the army's attempt to repel the attack, and that six CODECO fighters were killed in the exchange. Separately, Dr. Vital Tungulo, president of the Nyali-Kilo association representing the local Nyali community, said eight to nine Chinese nationals were captured and taken to Digene, a locality further inside CODECO-held territory in Djugu.

CODECO (Coopérative pour le Développement du Congo) is a militia drawn primarily from the Lendu farming community, historically in conflict with the rival Hema herding community over land and political representation in Ituri. The group has been accused by the United Nations of attacks that may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, and has carried out repeated attacks on displaced-persons camps, farming villages, and mining sites across Djugu Territory since 2017, including strikes on other Chinese-linked and Congolese-operated mining operations. China's foreign ministry publicly condemned the attack and called on Congolese authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice and improve protection for Chinese nationals and companies operating in the DRC.





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