

25.06.

18:15–19:45 Uhr
P 5
(Philosophicum)

ifeas

Institut für
Ethnologie und
Afrikastudien

2024

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Beyond “Conflict Minerals”: The politics of war and violence in Eastern Congo

Eastern Congo is entering its fourth decade of protracted violent conflict. With deep roots in colonial and postcolonial history, violence has escalated in border regions with Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda since the early 1990s. Throughout two major regional wars (1996-1997 and 1998-2003) and a conundrum of no-war-no-peace ever since, violence against civilians and mass displacement continued unabated. Despite deep-seated and diverse political, economic and social drivers of conflict, much of Congo's quagmire is usually attributed to the exploitation and trade of rare minerals and, subsequently, conflict resolution policies and international intervention have aimed at reforming the governance of natural resources from the region. Yet, none of these policies have had a lasting positive effect on human security and regional peace to date. While eastern Congo forms a broader arena of multiple, interlaced conflict dynamics involving questions of governance, land and identity, the recent escalation of violence around the resurgence of the M23 rebellion forms a discursive and geopolitical pivot of the current phase of the conflict. Understanding the underlying causes of more than three decades of crisis therefore requires attention historical as much as recent evolution, as well as to the multiple dynamics of conflict beyond Western tropes of resource wars and ethnic conflicts.

Christoph Vogel is a researcher and writer specialising on politics and conflict in Central Africa. He is the former Research Director of the Insecure Livelihoods Project at Ghent University and a former UN expert on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Christoph holds a PhD from the University of Zurich and is a co-founder of Ebuteli Institute. He widely published on conflict dynamics in the Great Lakes region, including academic books and articles as well as numerous essays for popular media.

Weitere Informationen: www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de

Institutskolloquium Sommersemester 2024 Leitung: Nico Nassenstein

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