

Hunter Biden's And Elon Musk's Blood Mines

Chinese company in which Hunter Biden invested may profit from brutal crackdown at African mine

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 Hunter Biden

Hunter Biden / Getty Images

[Yuichiro Kakutani](#) -

The Chinese company in which Hunter Biden held a stake invested in a Congolese mine that was the site of gross human rights abuses and at least one death.

Biden, son of Democratic presidential frontrunner Joe Biden, joined the board of Chinese investment firm BHR in 2013, while his father served as vice president. He purchased a 10 percent stake in the company in 2017 and maintained that stake even after he resigned from the board in October. Among BHR's investments was the largest cobalt and copper mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Tenke Fungurume mine, where the Congolese military in June executed a brutal crackdown on illegal mining viewed as a threat to the mine's bottom line. Since then, the military has torched houses and

cracked down on dissent in the region—actions that drew the condemnation of human rights groups.

"Given the long history of excessive use of force by the Congolese army and its lack of appropriate training in managing public order, the DRC government must immediately withdraw its armed forces from the mines to avert unlawful killings," Amnesty International spokeswoman Sarah Jackson said in a [statement](#).

The violence came to a head in August, when the military shot a woman dead, according to [AFP](#).

BHR [finalized](#) the sale of its stake in the mine to another Chinese entity in September, a transaction that netted the firm [\\$1.1 billion](#). While Biden's legal team has [claimed](#) that the BHR shares have yet to pay dividends, he stands to benefit financially when he sells those shares. Biden's attorney did not respond to requests for comment about BHR's dealings in the Congo.

Biden's international business dealings have become a campaign issue in the 2020 Democratic primary, sparking accusations of cronyism and spurring his decision to step down from BHR's board in October. Biden has also pledged that, should his father be elected president, he would not sit on the boards or work on behalf of foreign-owned companies. Joe Biden's presidential campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

BHR leveraged financial support from China Molybdenum, a Chinese resource company, to purchase a 24 percent stake in Congo's Tenke Fungurume mine in 2017. The transaction gave China Molybdenum, which was already a majority stakeholder in

the Congolese mine, the ["exclusive right"](#) to purchase BHR's stakes in the mine in the future. Neither China Molybdenum nor BHR responded to requests for comments.

The area surrounding the Tenke Fungurume mine had more than 10,000 "artisanal" miners who often illegally acquire ores in areas reserved for the Chinese enterprise. China Molybdenum previously [identified](#) the illegal miners as a "significant security risk" that might affect production output in the future. The mine's management has asked the government to do more to secure the concession but did not urge a military solution, according to [Reuters](#).

The Congolese military evicted the alleged illegal miners in June, deploying between 600 and 800 troops in the mining concession, according to [AFP](#). Watchdog groups quickly urged the Congolese military, which has a poor human rights record, to stand down. Amnesty International said in July that Congo should "withdraw armed forces from Fungurume mines to avert bloodshed."

"The deployment of the military, if not properly managed, risks turning into untimely human rights violations, which can damage the company's reputation and the supply chain of Congolese cobalt," the South Africa Resource Watch said in a [statement](#).

The confrontation between the military and the miners quickly turned violent. The armed forces burned down dozens of homes suspected of belonging to illegal miners, severely burning a 3-year-old girl and 14-month-old boy in the process, according to [Reuters](#). Soldiers fired "stray bullets" into a mining camp that killed a woman and injured nine others, AFP [reported](#) in August.

When the Congolese military began its operation, BHR was in the process of selling its stake in the Tenke Fungurume mine to China Molybdenum. The transaction, [initiated](#) in January, [concluded](#) in September, one month before Biden stepped down from the BHR board.

The current situation at the mine is unclear, though previous conflicts in the country have led to violent outbursts requiring international oversight. In [2004](#), Congolese military personnel were tried for war crimes after they committed atrocities in the aftermath of an operation to secure an Australian-owned mining concession.

BHR previously partnered with a state-backed Chinese military aviation firm to acquire a U.S. firm that held militarily sensitive technology. The Obama administration approved the transaction. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R., Iowa) has launched an inquiry into potential conflicts of interest in the approval process, the *Washington Free Beacon* [previously](#) reported.

[Is your phone tainted by the misery of 35,000 children in ...](#)

< <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/oct/12/phone-misery-children-congo-cobalt-mines-drc>

Oct 12, 2018 Stones are rinsed and sorted near a **Congo cobalt mine**. More than 60% of the world's **cobalt** comes from the south-eastern provinces of DRC. Photograph: Siddharth Kara

[Cobalt mining, China, and the fight for Congo's minerals](#)

↳ <https://limacharlieneews.com/africa/cobalt-mining-congo/>

Cobalt mining, China, and the fight for **Congo's** minerals. The Democratic Republic of the **Congo** (DRC) is attempting to increase revenue from the 270% surge in **cobalt** prices in the last year by raising taxes on the metal five-fold. Foreign governments and corporations who benefit from lower **cobalt** prices have protested the tax hike.

[Never Mind the Mines. In Congo, There's Cobalt Under the ...](#)

◁ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-03-28/never-mind-the-mines-in-congo-there-s-cobalt-under-the-house>

Mar 28, 2018 **Congo** Dongfang says it's working to eliminate child labor, rather than stop buying from small-scale **mines**. Apple lists its parent, Huayou **Cobalt**, as an approved smelter.

[Congo Genocide - 30 people in 30 countries](#)

< <https://30peoplein30countries.home.blog/tag/congo-genocide/>

Oct 7, 2019 How many people were killed in the **Congo genocide**? The criminal king claimed **Congo** as his personal territory and sent his soldiers there to kidnap Congolese men to work as slaves to mine **Congo's** wealth. Between eight and ten million people died from Leopold's **genocide**.

[Congo and cobalt critical - MINING.COM](https://www.mining.com/web/congo-and-cobalt-critical/)

◁ <https://www.mining.com/web/congo-and-cobalt-critical/>

Dec 22, 2012 The copper deposits in the Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of the **Congo** are the world's top producers of **cobalt** and the political situation in the **Congo** influences the price of ...

[Special report : Inside the Congo cobalt mines that exploit ...](#)

◁ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcJ8me22NVs>

Feb 27, 2017A Sky News investigation has found children as young as four working in dangerous and squalid conditions in **Cobalt mines** in the Democratic Republic of the **Congo** for as little as 8p a day. Sky's ...

[Blockchain to track Congo's cobalt from mine to mobile - The ...](#)

< <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Blockchain-to-track-Congo-cobalt-from-mine-to-mobile/2560-4288736-m8b3cwz/index.html>

Gold miners at the Chudja mine in north-eastern **Congo**.
Blockchain is to be used for the first time to try to track **cobalt's**
journey from artisanal **mines** in DRC through to products used in
smartphones and electric cars. FILE PHOTO | REUTERS

[Inside the murky business of cobalt mining in DR Congo](#)

◁ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll7aUgeK3-o>

Feb 20, 2018 **Cobalt** is an essential component of batteries for smartphones and electric cars. Around 60% of it comes from just one country, DR **Congo** - and most of the metal is exported to China.

Elon Musk's worst nightmare: child labor and cobalt supply ...

◁ <https://www.mining.com/web/elon-musks-worst-nightmare-child-labor-cobalt-supply/>

May 1, 2017Lithium-ion batteries contain more **cobalt** than lithium, says Lior Gantz of the Wealth Research Group, and discusses the element's predicted shortage. News Markets

[Elon Musk Needs More Cobalt - And So Do We](#)

◁ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/judeclemente/2018/05/09/elon-musk-needs-more-cobalt-and-so-do-we/>

May 9, 2018 **Elon Musk** Needs More **Cobalt** - And So Do We.

China is gobbling up as much **cobalt** as it can: " There's a Global Race to Control Batteries—and China Is Winning ." " Following these acquisitions, China now controls 62% of refined **cobalt** production worldwide .". China has been systematically hoarding such strategic commodities,...

[Elon Musk says Tesla "might get into mining" - MINING.COM](#)

◁ <https://www.mining.com/elon-musk-says-tesla-might-get-into-mining/>

Jun 17, 2019 **Elon Musk** says Tesla "might get into mining" ...
Falling prices aren't good news for **cobalt**, lithium, nickel and graphite producers. But with electric vehicles only making up a tiny fraction ...

[One Small Company Is Going to Make Elon Musk Regret His Words](https://www.energyandcapital.com/articles/one-small-company-is-going-to-make-elon-musk-regret-his-words/77154)

◁ <https://www.energyandcapital.com/articles/one-small-company-is-going-to-make-elon-musk-regret-his-words/77154>

Aug 17, 2017 And **Elon Musk** has promised to source all the **cobalt** for his batteries from North America. As you can see from the table above, Canada is the only country that makes the top 10 list. There are a few companies there producing the material, but they only produce a combined 7,300 MT a year so far.

[Is cobalt the commodity of the future? | Technology | Mining ...](#)

< <https://www.miningglobal.com/technology/cobalt-commodity-future>

May 28, 2015 "The new currency for smart commodity investors will be **cobalt**, which is poised to play a growing role in everyone's life if the vision of American billionaire **Elon Musk** to have a Tesla Motors battery powering homes comes to fruition," said Andrew Critchlow, commodities writer for The Telegraph.

[Tesla Has Found Yet Another Safe Haven For Cobalt](#)

↳ <https://insideevs.com/news/336482/tesla-has-found-yet-another-safe-haven-for-cobalt/>

Jan 14, 2018 Ironically, it's called **Cobalt**, Ontario and it only has a population 1,100. Although **cobalt** is critical to lithium-ion batteries, it's been the subject of some controversy.