13 Chinese nationals were on Sunday, August 27 arrested by authorities of Malemba-Nkuru province in Democratic Republic of Congo for illicit mining of lithium.

According to the authorities in the province, the accused were living in a large enclosure at the Government Reserved Area, where there are three large deposits filled with minerals.

Local civil society welcomed these arrests and called on the government to get involved to stop what it describes as looting of the province’s mineral resources.

In a statement by provincial spokesperson, Claude Kyasangolo, this arrest is an act to be encouraged.

“It is up to the national government to get involved in the mining situation in the Malemba Nkulu territory where systematic looting, illicit exploitation, non-execution of specifications and other irregularities are breaking records,” Kyasangolo added.

Under the law in DRC, the offence is contrary to and punishable under Section 1(8) (b) of the Miscellaneous Offences Act Cap M17, 1983.