

In a move to address the ongoing conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United States of America (USA) is pushing Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to sign a peace accord in exchange for bilateral mineral deal's.

Representatives from several nations gathered in Doha, Qatar this week to reiterate their shared commitment to peace, stability and economic development in the Great Lakes region.

The high-level meeting brought together officials from the United States, France, Qatar, Rwanda, Togo, and the DRC itself. Their goal: to chart a new course forward after years of instability and violence had ravaged the eastern part of the DRC.

According to a joint statement released by the US Department on efforts to support peace in eastern DRC, the discussions centered on the urgent need to address the humanitarian crisis in eastern DRC, where years of conflict had displaced millions and left the region in dire straits. The representatives welcomed the ceasefire declaration between the DRC government and the rebel Alliance Fleuve Congo/March 23rd (AFC/M23) movement, brokered with the help of Qatar. This was seen as a crucial first step towards lasting peace.

Looking ahead, the representatives agreed that addressing the root causes of the conflict would be essential. They reaffirmed their vow to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both the DRC and its neighbors, and pledged to support ongoing mediation efforts led by the African Union (AU) and regional organizations.

Upon signing the peace accord by both countries, a bilateral mineral deal will be signed between US, Rwanda and DRC, that would bring billions of dollars of Western investment to the region, President Donald Trump's senior advisor for Africa said on Thursday.

"When we sign the peace agreement ... the minerals deal with the DRC will be signed on that day, and then a similar package, but of a different size, will be signed on that day with Rwanda," Massad Boulos said in an interview in the Qatari capital, Doha.

Rwanda and Congo are expected to submit separate drafts of a peace agreement on Friday 2nd, May according to a peace process agreed in Washington last week as part of diplomatic efforts to end violence in eastern Congo.

In mid-May U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio will meet in Washington with the Rwandan and Congolese foreign ministers in an effort to agree on a final draft peace accord.

But before that accord can be signed, Boulos told the media, Rwanda and the DR Congo must finalize bilateral economic agreements with Washington that will see U.S. and Western companies invest billions of dollars in Congolese mines and infrastructure projects to support mining in both countries, including the processing of minerals in Rwanda.

“The (agreement) with the D.R.C. is on a much bigger scale, because it’s a much bigger country and it has much more resources, but Rwanda also has a lot of resources and capacities and potential in the area of mining as well... not just the upstream, but also midstream and downstream to processing and refining and trading,” Boulos said.

Boulos said U.S. and Western companies have told Washington they would make multi-billion dollar investments in the region once the bilateral minerals deals are signed.

Boulos also said that before the White House signing ceremony can go ahead, Washington expects both Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo to address a number of security concerns. For example, Rwanda must pull its troops out of Congo and end its support for M23 rebels. Congo must address Rwanda’s security concerns with militias such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

The US said that on Wednesday, a follow-up committee was appointed to monitor both countries’ progress towards the peace deal. This committee includes representatives from the U.S., Qatar, France, and Togo, which is representing the African Union.