

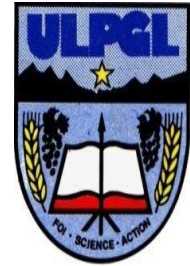


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DRC Bottom-Up News, N°002, September 2018

The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya have been in a strong diplomatic relationship since a number of years. The diplomatic missions of both countries are operating smoothly well in their respective capital cities namely in Kinshasa and Nairobi. According to Kenyan News Day Magazine, a diplomatic incident happened between DRC and Kenya Governments after the visit of DP Ruto in DRC. This is due to a « stolen USD 318m gold ». Below the article published by Kenyan news day Magazine on 22 september 2018:

<https://www.kenyanewsday.com/2018/09/22/dp-ruto-sparks-furious-diplomatic-row-between-kenya-and-drc-over-stolen-usd138m-gold/>

DP Ruto sparks « furious » diplomatic row between Kenya and DRC over stolen USD138m gold.

A furious diplomatic spat played out between Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo after Congolese intelligence officers made a cross border pursuit of Deputy President William Ruto's helicopter into Kenya. According to confidential sources that spoke to Kenyan News Day, DP Ruto is presently the centre of a furious diplomatic row with the DRC suspect his chopper was used to smuggle up to 5 tonnes of expensive solid gold out of Congo and into Kenya. The gold is reportedly worth a staggering \$138 million (sh14 billion).

The drama started playing out when senior Kenya defence officials were alerted of a foreign aircraft with armed personnel requesting to fly into Kenyan airspace in hot pursuit of DP's chopper which was returning to Kenya following Ruto's official visit to Congo. The DRC security officials reportedly told air traffic control they believed criminal elements were carrying gold smuggled out of their country using the Deputy President's diplomatic immunity. Ruto made an official visit to Congo Brazzaville on 12th september using his personal chopper and soon disappeared into Congo Kinshasa only returning to Kenya a day to the decisive parliamentary debate on the controversial fuel levy.

Before he departed Kenya, Ruto ignored security advise to take a fixed wing aircraft as he was going to overfly swathes of Congo forest which are controlled by anti-government rebels. It would appear then decision to fly by helicopter was deliberate and convenient. In Nairobi, despite demands from Congolese sleuths, the chopper in question has been promptly hidden under the pretext that it flew out of Kenya for routine service in South Africa after dropping off its VIP passenger. This explanation has only incensed the Congolese whose senior government officials have already made contact with Kenya's foreign affairs ministry demanding to inspect the helicopter.

Desperate to keep the story under wraps, DP Ruto's mediamax and the Star newspaper have this week both filed reports claiming Kenyan police launched investigations into alleged smuggled gold. Kenyan News Day established that Sports CS Rashid Mohamed Echesa, a known 419 and black money scammer and operative, may have introduced the DP to Congolese mineral smuggling racketeers as a way toward making quick money to supplement dwindling corruption money that has been impeded by President Uhuru Kenyatta fight against corruption.

Consequently, a multi agency task force comprising DCI, KRA, KCAA officials are probing the matter after receiving orders from interior CS Fred Matiangi who is acting under instructions of President Kenyatta. The President is concerned about maintaining good relations with Congo but angry that such a scandal could erupt as he is about to travel to the UNGA when DRC minerals have been placed under sanctions by the UN for abetting insecurity in the great lakes region. Perhaps even worse, the smuggling of the gold flies in the face of the purported fight against corruption and denies Kenya much needed revenue in import duties and other taxes.

In March 2011, DRC President Joseph KABILA flew in for emergency talks with President Kibabi over huge consignments of gold stolen and smuggled into Kenya from his country by a cartel suspected to be very close to the Kenyan Presidency. *The less skilled the people are, the poorer the country or the geographical area becomes.*

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