

The children have a strange mine in the DRC.

Children still work in cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This persistent situation is more or less accepted by a large part of the world's rechargeable battery sector using this metal. Phones and laptops, electric cars: they are dependent on this "rare earth", like lithium.

Staggering numbers.

Half of the cobalt extracted for our batteries comes from Congo.

In this poor but geologically rich country, 40,000 children would work in cobalt mines for \$ 2 a day.

The mines being little or poorly supported, many landslides take place, burying these unlikely miners.

For many residents of Katanga, and even in the heart of the city of Kolwezi, the fact of going down in the mine is not a choice because this extraction is the only possible employment of the region, if we exclude the food crops.

A sector with little regard.

Outside the traditional circuit, illegal minerals are resold to often Chinese trading companies. The ores from these clandestine mines are then exported to China from where they are processed and redistributed in all countries of the world for our "clean" phones, laptops or electric cars.

These rare earths from Congo are used in the supply chains of some of the world's best known companies. Many do not even ask where the cobalt comes from. Unless they do not prefer to know it.

In car manufacturers, who rely heavily on the boom of the electric vehicle, negligence is almost widespread. Some are just beginning to check the information of their battery manufacturers, such as the American Tesla, which embodies the rise of the electric vehicle, or the German BMW. But the German competitor Volkswagen is still satisfied with the statements of its subcontractors. Fiat Chrysler, General Motors and Renault have no traceability of cobalt from their batteries. Renault says it has set up a working group with its suppliers, and joins the "Initiative for Responsible Raw Materials" - first audits by the end of the year.

But it is a totally voluntary initiative, there is no binding legislation on cobalt, unlike the minerals of the war - gold, tin, cobalt and tungsten (Dodd Frank Act 2010, European regulation applicable in 2021). For cobalt, it is still the generalized opacity in the supply chain, and thus, upstream on the conditions of extraction of this metal more and more ran - In one year, the course of the cobalt has taken 126 %. Other children will still make a funny look.

Articles rewritten from information from the NGO Amnesty International.