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By *Philippe Le Billon*

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A generous endowment of natural resources should favour rapid economic and social development. The experience of countries like Angola and Iraq, however, suggests that resource wealth often proves a curse rather than a blessing. Billions of dollars from resource exploitation benefit repressive regimes and rebel groups, at a massive cost for local populations. This Adelphi Paper analyses the economic and political vulnerability of resource-dependent countries; assesses how resources influence the likelihood and course of conflicts; and discusses current initiatives to improve resource governance in the interest of peace. It concludes that long-term stability in resource-exporting regions will depend on their developmental outcomes, and calls for a broad reform agenda prioritising the basic needs and security of local populations.

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About the Author

Philippe Le Billon is Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia with the Department of Geography and Liu Institute for Global Issues. His research interests include natural resources and armed conflicts, and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

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