

Talk to your Senator about Conflict Coltan

Goma, DR Congo is the site of much mineral wealth and natural resources. These resources are at the base of the conflict raging in eastern DR Congo right now. We are all implicated in this conflict as DR Congo holds over 70% of the world's coltan.

Just as diamonds are mined to finance conflicts - coltan (used in the Sony PS2, laptops, and mobile phone chips) is another scarce resource that can be traded for weapons or other supplies. The conflict is rooted in the fight for who controls the resources with several other neighboring countries implicated in the battle.

Senate Bill 3058 endeavors to do what we've already done with diamonds- to enforce restrictions to make sure that we don't end up with conflict coltan in our mobile phones.

Please send or email a letter to your senator to ask them to support this bill. You may use the following letter:

Honorable ()

331 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Rape & Exploitation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Dear Senator ():

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the worst places in the world to be a girl or woman. Everyday women as old as 87 and babies as young as 10 months are raped by militiamen, soldiers, policemen and civilians. There are hundreds of thousands of victims—2000 RAPES were reported in June, 2008, in just one Province (North Kivu) of the DRC. There is a pervasive atmosphere of impunity that encourages rape at will.

Although the recently passed House Resolution 1227 condemns the ongoing epidemic of sexual violence in the Congo, such resolutions carry no sanctions and are ignored by the governmental powers in the DRC. Legislation with some teeth in it is necessary, such as the Conflict Coltan and Cassiterite Act of 2008 (SB 3058). Similar to the legislation banning importation of blood diamonds, SB 3058 will require that coltan be certified as conflict free before being imported. Coltan is a necessary

ingredient for the manufacture of cell phones, computer games, monitors and numerous other high tech instruments. Restrictions on its import would compel not only Congolese government to take action to eliminate coltan related conflict, but also would put pressure upon the U.S. manufacturers of technological instruments to ensure that their products are conflict-free.

The Congolese live in dire life threatening and life ending conditions because DRC is entangled in 10 years of war which has contributed to the death of over 5.4 million people to date. This conflict is not just an internal African implosion but rather it is a battle for coltan, diamonds, cassiterite and gold, destined for sale in London, New York and Paris - the metals that make our technological society vibrate and ring and bling. In addition to high death rates, the war has lead to the use of child soldiers, child slavery in mines, the mass displacement of peoples, and the widespread use of rape as a weapon of war and the transmission of HIV infection by rape. Shockingly, notwithstanding the epidemic of HIV in the DRC, of the \$45 billion dollars authorized by Congress to fight HIV (PEPFAR) only \$15 million is allocated for the DRC.

I urge you to join as a co-sponsor of SB 3058, legislation that is essential to put meaningful sanctions behind well-meaning resolutions.

Sincerely,

Your Name