



"WE ARE NOT ALONE. AFRICA, ASIA AND FREE AND LIBERATED PEOPLE FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD WILL ALWAYS BE FOUND AT THE SIDE OF THE CONGOLESE."

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What is Coltan?

Coltan is short for Columbite-tantalite - a black tar-like mineral found in major quantities in the Congo. The Congo possesses 64 percent of the world's reserves of coltan. When coltan is refined it becomes a heat resistant powder that can hold a high electric charge. The properties of refined coltan are vital elements in creating devices that store energy or capacitors, which are used in a vast array of small electronic devices, especially in mobile phones, laptop computers, pagers, and other electronic devices.

Foreign Corporate exploitation

Over the past 14 years, foreign corporations have been deeply involved in the exploitation of coltan in the Congo. The coltan mined by rebels and neighboring countries (Rwanda, Uganda & Burundi) is sold to multi-national corporations. The United Nations (UN), in four studies from 2001 – 2003, implicated several companies in sourcing coltan from the Congo and say that these companies serve as "*the engine of the conflict in the DRC.*" **Major U. S. players identified by the UN Studies include: Cabot Corporation**, Boston, MA; **OM Group**, Cleveland, Ohio; **AVX**, Myrtle Beach, SC; **Eagle Wings Resources International**, Ohio; **Trinitech International**, Ohio; **Kemet Electronics Corporation**, Greenville, SC; & **Vishay Sprague**. Malvern, PA.

Corporations from other countries have been a part of the coltan exploitation chain. These companies include but are not limited to Germany's HC Starc and EPCOS, China's Nigncxia, and Belgium's George Forrest International.

Once the coltan is processed and converted to capacitors, it is then sold to companies such as Nokia, Motorola, Compaq, Alcatel, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Lucent, Ericsson and Sony for use in a wide assortment of everyday products ranging from cell phones to computer chips and game consoles.

What are some of the uses of coltan in modern society?

- Laptop computers
- Cellular phones
- Jet engines
- Rockets
- Cutting tools
- Camera lenses
- X-ray film
- Ink jet printers
- Hearing aids
- Pacemakers
- Airbag protection systems
- Ignition and motor control modules, GPS, ABS systems in automobiles
- Game consoles such as playstation, xbox and nintendo
- Video cameras
- Digital still cameras
- Prosthetic devices for humans - hips, plates in the skull, also mesh to repair bone removed after damage by cancer