



## **Conflict Minerals Trade Act of 2009 (H.R. 4128) Talking Points**

Amnesty International USA supports the Conflict Minerals Trade Act of 2009 (H.R. 4128) as a positive step in the effort to stem the flow of conflict minerals from the DRC and help bring an end to rampant human rights abuses.

### **About The Conflict**

- Armed conflict in eastern DRC has been nearly continuous since the mid-1990s. Millions of people have died, some as a result of direct attacks. Most have died from hunger and from preventable diseases, due to being forced from their homes.
- Rape, sexual mutilation, and sexual slavery are taking place in epidemic proportions in DRC, especially in the combat zones in the east. Many of these crimes against women and girls are committed by members of the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) or of rebel armed groups. A culture of impunity has developed.

### **About Conflict Minerals**

- Many of the mines that produce minerals in the DRC are located in combat zones in eastern DRC and are controlled by armed groups. In other cases, armed groups collect "taxes" on minerals being transported from the mines of eastern DRC. The proceeds of the sale of minerals and the so-called taxes help to finance the activity of the armed groups, and thus perpetuate the fighting.
- The trade in "conflict minerals" is complex. Disrupting the supply chain that connects mines in eastern DRC will require action on many levels.

### **About The Bill**

- H.R. 4128 is designed "to improve transparency and reduce trade in conflict minerals" from the DRC.
- The bill defines "Conflict Minerals" as columbite-tantalite (coltan), cassiterite, wolframite, or their derivatives.
- These minerals are all used in the production of cell phones, game consoles and other consumer electronic devices.
- H.R. 4128 would address the problem of conflict minerals by requiring the US government to produce and circulate maps identifying mines producing coltan, cassiterite and wolframite and controlled by armed groups, or producing minerals that are "taxed" by armed groups.
- Companies under US jurisdiction would be required to demonstrate that products they make or sell do not use these conflict minerals.
- The US government also would be required to take action to ensure that Congolese conflict minerals do not enter the international markets by crossing regional boundaries (into Rwanda, Uganda and other transit countries).
- The bill would enable the US to attack the problem of impunity in DRC by providing training to Congolese security forces, including training on human rights, and by helping to reform the justice system.