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Ethical fashion companies are mindful of the materials they use in order to help prevent children from child labor, being sent to war, and being involved in unspeakable situations no child should ever have to experience. Ethical fashion companies like Hearts work to promote peace and prosperity, and make every effort to insure the most beneficial outcome in the name of fashion and everyone involved. The trouble is that consumers are rarely aware about how their purchases support unjust wars and violence.

THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES OF WAR AND CONFLICT FOR HUMAN SOCIETY

Those of us who live in relatively tranquil developed regions are often shielded from the harsh realities of war. In fact, sometimes because of the distance between us and regions in conflict, we may find ourselves believing that overall the world is a pretty peaceful place. Unfortunately that isn't the reality for many people who live in constant warfare throughout many other parts of the world.

BASIC STATISTICS ON WAR AND CONFLICT

Conflicts and wars occur and deepen around the world every single day. To give you an idea of just how prevalent international struggles are at this very moment, check out these basic statistics on conflict and war:^{i ii iii iv v vi vii}

- **Number of conflicts annually worldwide:** In 2009, there were 365 political conflicts, including 7 wars, and 24 severe crises. That's an increase over 2008 which saw only 130 violent conflicts.
- **Number of people living in war-torn regions:** 1.5 billion around the world – nearly 22% of all humans.^{viii}
- **Number killed in conflicts in the 20th century:** 191 million people.
- **Worldwide military spending:** \$956 billion in 2003 and \$1.1 trillion in 2007. In Africa alone, \$284 billion has been spent since 1990 – the equivalent of all foreign aid received by the region – funds which could have been used for development and empowerment.^{ix}
- **Number of small arms worldwide:** 640 million, with the majority originating from the US, the UK, France, and the Russian Federation.
- **Number of children killed by small arms:** During the 1990s, 2 million children were killed globally and 6 million seriously injured.
- **Number of people killed or maimed by landmines:** 15,000 to 20,000 annually as a result of unexploded ordinances in 60 different countries.
- **Number of refugees as a result of conflict:** The UN estimates that there are over 40 million people uprooted from their communities as a result of conflict.^x There are 7.8

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million among Iraqis, Afghans, and Pakistanis since 9/11.^{xi} There are nearly 1 million refugees who have been living in exile for 5 years or more.

- **Number of people killed in Sudan civil war:** 2 million between 1983 and 2005.
- **Number of people killed in Congolese war:** 1.7 million from 2004 to the present.
- **Number of women raped in war as a means of control and intimidation:** 250,000 to 500,000 in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide; 20,000 to 50,000 during the Bosnia-Herzegovina war in 1990; 50,000 to 64,000 in Sierra Leone; over 200,000 in the Congo over the last decade.^{xii}

From landmines to handguns, rape to fatalities, war and conflict has a devastating impact on our society.

Causes and Forms of Conflict and War

So why do wars and conflicts start? Why is it that the world has not become a more peaceful place in recent generations? Here are some of the basic reasons wars are fought:

- **Political factors:** War and conflict can result when there are elite power struggles, with one tribal or government force trying to wrest control from the other. Alternatively, when state institutions are weak, rebel groups may attempt to take control resulting in the inability of the standing government to manage different group interests peacefully. Similarly, if the ruling political authorities are corrupt, conflict may erupt as citizens try to achieve justice. Political wars are also fought when select groups are politically excluded based on race, religion, or ethnicity as was seen in Rwanda.
- **Socioeconomic factors:** This can include conflicts started as a result of social or economic exclusion, inequalities, or marginalization, poverty, or a loss of social cohesion.
- **Environmental factors:** When natural resources are either considered highly valuable or very scarce, they can contribute to greed and corruption. Additionally, environmental factors such as unjust resource exploitation and rapid population growth can also create conflict. Environmental disasters also contribute: Estimates are that conflicts arising as a result of climate change alone may cost anywhere from \$49 billion to \$380 billion annually by the year 2030.^{xiii}

Regardless of the root cause, conflict and war can take many forms. Though most people consider world wars the quintessential form of conflict, there are actually many other types:

- Conflict can be international (between two or more different countries) or internal (between two states or tribes within the same country).
- Conflict can involve combatants ranging from armies, gangs, warlords, professional soldiers, conscripted soldiers, and guerilla organizations.
- Methods of conflict include guerrilla actions, terrorist actions, targeting of civilians, and conventional battlefield techniques.

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- Wars and conflicts are funded either internally or externally.

Preventing and resolving conflicts is therefore a complex problem that requires tackling the problems on many levels and by many means. Each war or conflict must be treated differently.

SPECIAL ISSUES RELATED TO WAR AND CONFLICT

How Conflict Creates or Deepens Poverty and Hunger

Regardless of the shape or form of a conflict, inevitably it will negatively impact a community in a variety of ways. Perhaps most devastating is the poverty that conflicts and wars create. There are many ways in which conflict contributes to creating poverty or worsening the plight of the poor, including the following:

- **Income loss:** People participating in the war effort aren't able to make a regular living, and civilians' lives are often disrupted to the point where they cannot earn a consistent income, resulting in widespread income reductions. For example, during Desert Storm (1990 to 1993) per capita GDP in Iraq fell from \$3,500 to \$761.^{xiv} The UN estimates that GDP drops by 63% on average in countries in conflict. In Africa, the average armed conflict shrinks a nation's economy by 15%.^{xv} Unfortunately, sometimes the poorest people are recruited by warlords to serve in their army as a form of employment for the most desperate but reluctant people.
- **Societal disruption:** Reductions in income and GDP are compounded by extensive destruction of local infrastructure and social services. Buildings such as hospitals, schools, clinics, markets, and banks may be destroyed. Frequently roads and highways are obliterated making it impossible to send aid where it is needed. These types of societal disruptions further impoverish these countries by creating obstacles for conducting everyday life.
- **Hunger as a weapon:** Adversaries may attempt to starve one another by seizing or destroying food stocks, crops, and livestock, or by cutting off supplies of food or food aid. It is estimated for instance, that during the 872 day siege on Leningrad, Russia, during which all food shipments were stopped, 1.5 million people died.
- **Disruption of education:** As schools are closed or destroyed, teachers are killed, and roads blockaded or ruined by war and conflict, regular education is disrupted or completely halted. This can set students back academically during their formative years and diminish their economic prospects as adults. Given that poverty and education are so closely connected, we can assume that the loss of education has a significant impact on a person's overall quality of life long term.
- **Loss of health and wellbeing:** Food and water shortages, lack of health facilities and medicines, and loss of other health-related infrastructure can significantly diminish the health of civilians and soldiers alike. For instance, compared to peaceful regions, African countries (many of which are in conflict) experience 50% more infant deaths, 15% more

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undernourished people, 2.5 times fewer doctors per patient, and 12.4% less food per person, all due in part to ongoing conflicts.^{xvi}

- **Loss of tourism:** Tourism is a big source of income for many developing countries, but tourists are less likely to travel to regions where there is armed conflict – 50% less likely, in fact.^{xvii} This has a profound impact on the economic wellbeing of many families and whole countries.
- **Loss of human capital:** When conflict takes humans away from useful societal contributions by deploying them in war or by causing the deaths of highly productive individuals, there is a loss of human capital. Often referred to as brain drain, this can result in a significant restriction on society intelligence and advancement in future decades.^{xviii}
- **Gender disparities:** In war, women and girls are often victims of sexual atrocities and subjugation. This can create tremendous emotional and psychological challenges for these women, which diminishes their ability to support their families and earn an income. For instance, among Afghan women who were stripped of their rights by the Taliban and subjected to higher rates of sexual violence, 42% experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), 97% experienced depression, 86% demonstrated significant symptoms of anxiety, and 21% had contemplated suicide.^{xix}

Every one of these consequences of war and conflict has the potential to increase poverty in both developing and developed countries. As poverty increases, so does a society's inability to engage in peace-making processes. It's a terrible, vicious cycle that mires entire nations in the poverty cycle, sometimes for generations.

You can clearly see the correlation of poverty and violent conflict if you examine the relationship between the two issues. It is generally understood that uneven development within a region can lead to inequality (riches for some and poverty for others). This ultimately leads to grievances between rich and poor, which can eventually explode into open conflict.

It's not just income disparities that contribute to conflict creation. Absolute levels of wealth also have a huge impact on whether conflict is likely to occur in a region. The World Bank tells us that:^{xx}

- Countries like Asia and Africa where the per person GDP is \$250, the predicted probability of war onset over the next five years is 15%.
- In countries where the per person GDP is \$600, the probability of war onset is less than 7.5%.
- The probability of conflict onset in developed regions where the per person GDP is \$5,000 or more is as low as 1%.

You can also examine the issue from the point of view of political regime as well. Some regimes are more likely to foster conflict than others. Autocracies, for instance are 7 to 10 times more likely to experience an onset of political instability compared to countries with full democracies.

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Now put these factors together by examining regime type and per capita income, and you'll see this connection: Countries with the highest levels of democracy are also the countries with the highest per capita income.^{xxi} Consequently, those countries which are able to achieve political stability are more likely to provide their citizens with access to good jobs, which inevitably leads to greater per capita income, less poverty, and higher quality of life. That's a recipe for lasting peace and a prescription for preventing conflict.

Conflict and Child Soldiers

Another profoundly important issue related to war and conflict is that of child soldiers. Children are often recruited to fight adult wars in some of the most violent, brutal conflicts in the world. They are recruited to do supportive tasks, such as cook, transport goods, deliver messages, or act as spies. Some are used as slave labor to work in industries that fund the armies. Many are also involved directly in hostilities, trained to use weapons and schooled in techniques of killing and torture. Quite often, girls (and sometimes boys) are used as sexual slaves. Here are some statistics on just how big this issue really is:

- **Number of children:** 300,000 girls and boys are acting as child soldiers in adult wars, with more added to the ranks every year.^{xxii}
- **Number of countries:** The UN estimates that there are child soldiers serving in wars in 17 countries, including Burma, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Afghanistan.^{xxiii}

So how do children get trapped into becoming child soldiers? Though some children believe (at first) they have been given the choice to freely participate, most soon find out that what seemed like free was not fully so and has instead led to incredibly destructive and psychologically devastating manifestations. Many are taken from their families forcibly, and are coerced into serving against their will. Still others are removed from their villages after their families have been killed, having no choice.

Most children are first trained in special camps where they are brainwashed and indoctrinated into the army's philosophy. Intimidation techniques are used to ensure they are too terrified to leave. For instance, children are often forced to kill other children who have attempted to leave.

Not only does this gruesome practice prop up cruel, corrupt leaders with cheap, it creates a ripple effect for the societies in which these children grow up to lead. Once out of the army, these emotionally and physically scarred individuals are often prone to extreme violence and go on to drag down their communities if they do not receive help. They make dysfunctional employees, parents, spouses, and friends because of their victimization.

Children who are lucky enough to escape or be liberated, must undergo years of reintegration and healing in order to become healthy, functional individuals again. Many suffer from (forced) addictions to substances, the memories of their own actions and those against them, as well as physical injuries.

Conflict and Environmental Justice

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The environment can play many roles in conflict. It can be a victim, a cause, and a weapon used in war. Not only does the environment suffer as a result of many of the conflict-related actions taken by humans, it can be the source that intensifies existing conflicts or creates new ones. Conflict is generated by environmental issues in one of two ways. First, conflict arises when the wealthy capture scarce or valuable resources and thereby marginalize the poor and powerless groups hoarding them.

Second, conflict arises when natural resource scarcity debilitates the economic and social innovation of a community, which prevents a society from achieving collective goals such as economic growth and innovation (ingenuity is required for societies to deal with scarcity). It's a vicious cycle – communities need natural resources to ensure a strong economy and the ability to innovate ways to overcome scarcity, but natural resource scarcity saps a community's ability to innovate their way out of the scarcity problems.^{xxiv}

Environmental conflicts also arise when export commodities, such as mineral resources, are seen as a honey pot of opportunity for economic advancement. In these cases, rebel groups are incentivized to loot and steal the export resources, which can lead to conflicts and war. Because of this, a country with natural resource abundance can be impacted by resource-related conflict.

The environment is also used as a weapon in acts of ecoterrorism. Armies can cut off water supplies, pollute crops, or burn down forests, all in an attempt to harm the enemy. Some examples of how the environment is involved in conflict include:^{xxv}

- **Agent Orange in Vietnam:** This toxin was used by US forces on food sources and foliage in Vietnam during the war to cripple the country's ability to feed itself and to create widespread illness.
- **Kuwaiti Oil Wells:** As Iraqi military retreated in 1991, they deliberately released gaseous pollutants including sulfur dioxide which rained down like black snow up to 1,500 miles away.
- **Depleted uranium weapons:** These weapons contain nuclear waste products which are released as a radioactive dust cloud on impact. The fine dust spreads over vast areas, penetrating soil, water aquifers, and crops, polluting ecosystems for thousands of years. These weapons were used by the US military in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, by NATO in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Kosovo, and by the US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The environment is clearly an important factor in conflicts and wars. Tackling environmental issues, therefore, is one way to not only prevent potential conflict; it is also a serious humanitarian factor to consider in the middle of war.

Conflict and Water Scarcity

Many experts have said that wars of the future will be fought not over oil, but over water. That's because of increasing levels of water scarcity throughout the world. Water scarcity is defined as having less than 1,000 cubic meters of water available per person per year. Water stress, on the other hand, is where less than 1,500 cubic meters of water are available per person per year.

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Water wars occur where more than one tribe, region, or country share a water source, such as a river or a lake, and there are disagreements over who can have access to the available water. Conflict can arise when limited water supplies are required by both parties in order to survive. Water is also an important resource in many industries, including agriculture, oil and gas, and manufacturing. Conflict can therefore arise over water resources as a result of profit motives.

Not only do water shortages *lead* to conflicts over remaining supplies of water, wars also *contribute* to water shortages. During the Eritrean-Ethiopian War of 1998-2000, for instance, the region faced severe water shortages, but because of the costs of war the government didn't have any funds to address the water problems. Additionally, sometimes water systems are deliberately destroyed and/or poisoned during war, further compounding water problems.^{xxvi}

The following statistics illustrate the relationship between water and war:

- **Global fresh water limits:** Though the globe is covered in water, only 0.75% is actually available as fresh water for human use. The rest is either salt water or frozen in polar ice caps. Fresh water is consumed faster than it is replenished throughout the world, with even more fresh water polluted by agriculture, industry, and the oil and gas sectors combined. Fresh water is therefore becoming increasingly hard to find and is often called a non-renewable resource.
- **50% of the world's population:** It is estimated that water stresses will impact 3.9 billion people (half of the global population) by 2030. Currently, 2.8 billion people are living with water stress.^{xxvii} Two examples: 669 Chinese cities are currently short of water. Water scarcity in the Nile, which runs through Ethiopia, the Sudan, and Egypt, could impact 340 million people by 2050.^{xxviii} Situations like these could lead to serious international conflicts.
- **Water scarcity = food scarcity:** Since water is necessary for the cultivation of crops, food scarcity puts additional strains on a community's water supplies. It takes 1,000 tons of fresh water to cultivate 1 ton of grains. As both water and food become scarce, panicked populations may turn to violence to survive.
- **Current water conflicts:** Already there have been signs of political unrest because of water scarcity in regions such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Egypt, India, and Kenya.

Like other environmental issues, water is incredibly important as a cause and a consequence of war. If the world hopes to prevent some of the most challenging conflicts of the future, water scarcity must be overcome.

HOW INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTES TO WAR AND CONFLICT

Industry is a huge consumer of natural materials, energy, and water. From extraction to production to disposal, these resources are important components for creating consumer and commercial goods that are shipped all over the world. By engaging in international business relations in regions impacted by conflict and war, businesses – knowingly or not – can fuel the violence by financially supporting systems connected to those perpetrating the conflict. Two of the most obvious examples

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of this include issues of property rights and funding conflict materials such as blood diamonds. But much more fundamental is how industry contributes to local economies.

Industry's Impact on Local Economies and the Effect on Peace

Companies working in war-prone regions and developing countries have a choice to either make a positive contribution to the communities in which they work, or to take as much as they can in the name of profit, without regard to the wellbeing of those living near their operations. Profit-hungry companies generally operate on the principle that the lowest price is the highest virtue. As a result, they end up contributing to two issues that have the potential to spur on war and conflict:

- **Paying unsustainable wages and unfair trade:** When corporations fail to pay their employees a living wage or refuse to conduct fair trade with producers, these individuals may find it impossible to rise above poverty. As a result, they may resort to finding employment with militant groups. Alternatively, they may seek out violent means to take what they have no money to buy. Though the conflict may not be aimed directly at the corporation, it is because of this latent sense of poverty that individuals and communities are often pushed into violence.
- **Turning food into commodities:** Food crops are often coopted for use in industry, such as corn for biofuels, which takes sustenance out of the mouths of those living in poor communities where the crops are grown. In the US, the cultivation of crops for biofuels is expected to increase demand for water by 12% in the next 20 years, which creates a double impact – food *and* water shortages. This issue has already created conflict between local groups and corporations, and is placing demands on world food prices as the cost of growing crops like corn rises with demand.^{xxix} People who have lost their food source or rights to natural resources will often resort to violence to be able to feed their families.
- **Reinforcing cultural inequities:** Without a proper understanding of local culture and tensions between groups along ethnic, racial, or socioeconomic lines, a corporation may do business that reinforces cultural divides. For instance, the ruling power in a region may be the wealthiest and have the most connections to the international market, making them an ideal trading partner for coffee. But if that ruling power steals the coffee from its so called enemies, then the international corporation is inadvertently supporting conflict in that region.^{xxx}

It's really simple – take too much, and you'll incite poverty, anger, and violence. Unfortunately, that's a fault industry is often guilty of. The issue of fair trade and living wages aren't the only ones that can fuel conflict.

How Industry and Property Rights Intersect with Conflict and War

Countries rich and poor have been endowed with varying quantities of natural resources, yet for those countries with corrupt governments, natural resources may be more of a curse than a blessing. In fact, some policy analysts have coined the term “resource curse” to refer to those poor countries that have valuable resources but are run by repressive governments or are embroiled in war. The curse of resources results when property rights for those valuable resources are not

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properly enforced because of corrupt dictators, or civil warriors who sell off parcels of land and resources without the permission of those who own it.

The resource curse ultimately leads to a form of theft. The firms (often multinational organizations) that buy the resources from the repressive regimes are essentially receiving stolen goods and passing those stolen goods on to you, the consumer.^{xxxii}

A good illustration of this principle can be seen with the issue of water. This non-renewable resource is needed in virtually every industry in the world:

- To grow cotton and cultivate corn
- To drill for oil and natural gas
- To convert fossil fuels into plastics
- For mining and diamonds

Industry is extremely thirsty, and therefore highly motivated to have a steady, cheap supply of water. Multinational companies will often relocate in order to take advantage of bigger water resources in other countries where environmental laws are lax and unenforced.

Perhaps even more disturbing is that many multinational companies have been buying up the rights to fresh water in a gamble for profit as fresh water becomes scarcer. Oxfam estimates that since 2001, 227 million hectares of land in developing countries has been sold or leased, mostly to international investors in the tourism, mining, forest, agriculture, biofuels, or industrial sectors, with 50% of this activity occurring in Africa. These agreements include the rights to all water on the land for 50 to 99 years.^{xxxiii}

Not surprisingly, these water rights are often purchased without permission from community members or the local indigenous people who need the water for food production, sanitation, and drinking water. By allowing these companies to “steal” their water, corrupt or powerless governments put an incredible strain on local communities, especially during dry seasons, and this can ultimately lead to conflict and violence and lots of unnecessary death.

If you need further proof of the way industry impacts water scarcity and contributes to conflict, here are some concrete examples:

- **Soft drink companies:** The largest corporate consumers of water in the world are soft drink companies. It takes soft drink makers between 2.4 and 4.1 litres of water to produce a litre of end product (soda). Nine out of 34 bottling plants operating in India are currently located in areas designated as water-stressed.^{xxxiii} Conflicts in India and many other countries have already occurred as indigenous groups try to obtain reparation for the loss of their water resources.
- **Oil and natural gas extraction:** The process of fracking for oil and natural gas not only consumes huge quantities of water; it also results in massive quantities of polluted

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wastewater laced with cyanide, copper arsenic, and selenium. In Peru, there are over 148 conflicts between communities and corporations over the use of water and water pollution caused by mining activities.^{xxxiv} In the Western Colorado, six oil companies (including Shell and ExxonMobil) have obtained water rights for the equivalent of 6.5 billion of gallons of water, inciting many local groups to protests and violence.^{xxxv}

Industry can have similar impacts on many other natural resources, including timber, fossil fuels, food crops (corn used for biofuels, for instance), and so on. By appropriating resources, using more than their fair share, and leaving behind big environmental messes, industry can be an indirect, but significant contributor to conflicts worldwide.

When water is scarce because of industrial overuse, conflicts can occur between domestic users, farmers, livestock keepers, hydropower plants, and industries. In a struggle to survive, individual water users will often engage in selfish water extraction behaviors, either out of necessity or out of profit motivation. Consider for instance, water used for food production. Many regions are naturally unsuitable to grow certain crops. But driven by the lure of cash crops, individuals will convert land into agricultural fields and then irrigate as much as is needed in order to grow enough to turn a profit. These unsustainable farms drain water resources unnecessarily. This is a widespread problem: 20% of all food production is unsustainable, relying on groundwater resources that are diminished faster than they are replenished.^{xxxvi}

But violation of property rights to steal resources like water isn't the only threat to peace. Industry also pollutes water, which further diminishes the available water for domestic and agricultural use. Fact: 70% of all industrial waste in developing countries is dumped into water untreated.^{xxxvii}

Conflict Minerals and Gems

Two special cases in the conversation of industry and war deserve particular mention: blood diamonds and conflict minerals. People are most familiar with the issue of blood diamonds, which are diamonds that originate from mines controlled by militant groups and rebels in regions such as Africa. These diamond mines are worked usually by poorly-paid laborers or slaves, who experience dangerous and often life-threatening conditions.

Once they are extracted from the earth, conflict diamonds are sold by these rebel forces, with the money going to finance their purchase of weapons and illegal activities. When companies purchase these conflict diamonds, they are indirectly supporting warlords and rebel armies, and the atrocities they perpetuate. Here are some statistics on how blood diamonds have fuelled wars and conflicts:

- **Countries impacted:** Wars in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have been hotbeds for diamond mining and resulting diamond-funded rebel wars.^{xxxviii}
- **Death toll:** The estimated death count as a result of the trade of blood diamonds is 3.7 million.^{xxxix}

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- **Size of the problem:** While it is extremely difficult to estimate the size of the blood diamond market, the illicit trade of conflict diamonds is thought to make up 20% of the global diamond trade.^{xi}
- **Corruption:** The UN estimates that \$23 million of conflict diamonds leave Côte d'Ivoire for Ghana every year, where they are being certified as conflict-free.^{xii}
- **Violent reinforcement:** In many mining operations, theft is violently prohibited. Rebel overlords will often cut off the hands or fingers of people attempting to steal diamonds for themselves.

The second material that deserves attention in the industry and war discussion is that of important minerals, such as tungsten, tantalum, and tin. Known as the 3Ts, these minerals are found in huge quantities in many African countries, and are key minerals used in the manufacture of technological devices such as cell phones, iPods, and computers.

Like blood diamonds, conflict minerals are controlled by militant groups and exploited in order to fund wars. In the DRC, for instance, there are 13 major mines for these minerals, 12 of which are controlled by Congolese army or militia groups. Money used from the sale of these high-value minerals is used to fund the war in the DRC, which to date has resulted in the deaths of millions of people, and the rape of over 200,000 women and girls.^{xiii}

HOW INDUSTRY CAN BE AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Wars and conflicts have a devastating impact on human health, wellbeing, and happiness. Ethical consumerism has a reverse impact on these human tragedies by supporting fair trade, living wages, and environmental justice. These organizations also strongly support the cessation of conflict mineral and blood diamond trade, and work to prevent the creation of child soldiers. More importantly, when mindful consumers like you choose to support ethical businesses like Hearts that have peace and conflict-resolution as core values, you ensure that your consumer dollars are funneled in a responsible way.

While it is clear that the fast consumption, industrial society can certainly have a negative impact on war and conflict, there are also many businesses and corporations doing great work to help prevent conflict and bring peace to war torn regions. Of course, the most basic ways industry can be a force of peace is to help eliminate the factors that contribute to violence, such as poverty, discrimination, corruption, and environmental injustice.

- **Ethical business practices and stakeholder engagement:** Having a corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy that dictates a company's ethical business practices is an important methods used by corporations for ensuring their impact on local individuals and communities is positive and does not contribute to conflict. At the core of any CSR policy should be sound stakeholder engagement, meaning consultation with community members should always be conducted in order to ensure the buy-in and support from those who will be most affected by the corporate activities. Through stakeholder engagement, businesses

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should be able to identify potential sources of conflict and work to avoid them. Better yet, it may help to pinpoint potential ways the business can help foster peace where conflict currently exists.

- **Innovative processes:** Many companies are looking for ways to either produce their goods (such as electronics) without conflict minerals, or to create their own sources. These innovative processes allow industry to produce the same goods but without funding conflict.
- **Fair trade cooperatives:** Most fair trade certification systems require that products sold under their label be free of conflict and slavery, and that they build into communities by alleviating poverty, discrimination, and subjugation. Cooperatives empower communities to support themselves and create sustainable, healthy environments where conflict and war are less likely to thrive.
- **Funds and awareness raising:** Some businesses have created product lines that raise awareness about issues like child soldiers and landmines. [Falling Whistles](#), for instance, sells beautiful whistles fashioned after those carried by child soldiers who are too small to carry guns, with funds going to rehabilitating former child soldiers. [peaceBOMB](#) is another company that helps farmer-artisans create beautiful jewelry pieces using melted down bomb remnants, with the funds going to clearing bombs from the land.
- **Environmental restoration:** Since many wars arise as a result of conflicts related to who can control limited or highly valuable resources, one of the ways corporations can influence the cause of peace is to help restore and enhance the natural environments in which they work. Re-forestry projects, water retention landscaping, wildlife reintroduction, and biodiversity enhancement are all ways a company can go above and beyond to leave communities with more than they had originally.
- **Support legislative initiatives:** Businesses usually have a powerful voice in government matters, and when there's a chance to support laws and regulations that seek justice and peace, companies should do their best to support them. One example is the US Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act which was signed into law in July of 2010. Section 1502 of the act requires that American companies that use the 3Ts in their products must ensure they have not been mined from the Congo. However, not all manufacturers do a thorough job of requesting information from their suppliers as this is time consuming and sometimes costly, so research and consumer diligence is required.

Consumers send signals to businesses of all shapes and sizes by the types of products they purchase, and therefore also have an influence on conflict and war. That's what we call purchasing power here at Hearts. Choosing companies that act with the best interests of humans and environment in mind helps reinforce a people-centered, conscious consumption model, that works for peace instead of supporting war.

MINDFUL LIVING TIPS FOR USING YOUR PURCHASING POWER FOR
PEACE

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1. **Choose products free of conflict minerals:** Whether you're eco shopping for an engagement ring, or looking for a new mobile device, look for products that are made without conflict minerals.
2. **Make your electronics last:** Computers, laptops, cell phones, mp3 players, and other mobile devices all have the potential to contain conflict minerals. Every time you purchase a new one, you may be sending money to fund conflict and war in regions such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. So don't be so quick to swap out your old devices. Instead, stick with the one you have, upgrade it if possible with new hardware, and make it last as long as possible. Then be sure to recycle it responsibly when you're done.
3. **Choose fair trade:** Look for reputable fair trade logos whenever you purchase things like coffee, tea, fruit, clothing, and jewelry. These organizations are working to bring peace to some of the most war-torn regions in the world by supporting producers with fair prices and community building resources.
4. **Get involved in anti-war campaigns:** Educate yourself about current conflicts and wars around the world through organizations such as [Amnesty International](#) and find out how you can get involved to support the cause of peace.
5. **Give your company a peace makeover:** Whether you own your own business or work for someone else, there are things you can do to ensure that it supports the peace process rather than reinforcing violence. The UN Global Compact has [Guidance Material for Responsible Businesses](#) that includes plenty of information on working in conflict-affected and high-risk regions throughout the world. Use these and other organizations to steer your company to a more peace-loving future.

ⁱ *Global Health Action: War and Conflict*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 26, 2012, from Southern African Regional Poverty Network: http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0002137/7-Global_Health_Action_05-06.pdf

ⁱⁱ *Chapter 2: What does the United Nations do to Promote Peace and Security?* (n.d.). Retrieved April 26, 2012, from United Nations: <http://www.un.org/geninfo/ir/index.asp?id=120>

ⁱⁱⁱ *Matter of Scale - Threats to Security*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 27, 2012, from WorldWatch Institute: <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/740>

^{iv} Belasco, A. (2011, March 29). *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*. Retrieved April 27, 2012, from Congressional Research Service: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf>

^v Heidelberg Institute on International Conflict Research. (2009, December). *Conflict Barometer 2009*. Retrieved April 27, 2012, from Human Security Report Project: <http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/showRecord.php?RecordId=31683>

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