

To: UAHC Congregations

From: Rabbi Dan Polish, Director of Commission on Social Action
Rabbi Marc Israel, Director of Congregational Relations, Religious Action Center

Date: February 2001

RE: Conflict Diamonds

“When someone goes in to buy a diamond for the finger of a loved one, they should feel confident a child in Sierra Leone, Angola, or the Congo has not lost an arm or hand for it to be there.” -- British Foreign Office, Minister for Africa, Peter Hain

Walk in to any retailer in the next few days, and you are sure to be bombarded with advertising and marketing devoted to Valentine’s Day. Promoted as a secular holiday celebrating love and relationships, retailers market their wares, urging us to share our love with a romantic gift. The diamond industry is a prime example of this phenomena, as they put forth a major push for Valentine’s Day. According to diamond advertisements, there is no better way to express love than to give a large, sparkling diamond. It is timely, therefore, that we bring to your attention the issue of conflict diamonds.

Diamonds are of inherent beauty; but today, trade in diamonds by African insurgent groups presents an ugly threat to that continent’s security and is forcing all of us to rethink the economies of war. Conflict diamonds – diamonds that are mined by militant groups to purchase weapons and equipment – are fueling instability in Angola and Sierra Leone and escalating the fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This trade undermines human rights as the groups profiting perpetuate atrocities and slaughter tens of thousands of innocent people. Illegal diamonds pay for the weapons that mutilate innocent men, women, and children. The diamond-funded rebel groups have ravaged these countries and their people for too long.

The rebel movements in Sierra Leone and Angola have managed to export diamonds from areas under their control, using the profits to obtain weapons and sustain their wars. These diamonds have been “laundered” through such countries as Liberia, Togo, Congo (DRC), and Burkina Faso. They then reach the major cutting and export centers – Antwerp, Tel Aviv, Bombay, London and New York – with few questions asked.

According to both State Department and independent sources, smuggled and illicit conflict diamonds may amount to as much as ten to fifteen percent of the \$50 billion worth of diamond jewelry sold internationally every year. The U.S. consumes 65% of the diamond market.

The grave problems of conflict diamonds can be solved. Leading diamond producing countries, led by South Africa, have developed an international system for creating a forgery-proof system for packaging and tracking rough diamonds. But in order to be

effective, every country in the world, including the U.S., must pass legislation banning the importation of diamonds that are outside the “clean stream” that will be created by this process. Thus, by shutting down the market for these conflict diamonds, these rebel groups will lose the financial backing necessary to fund their reign of terror.

In the U.S., we expect legislation banning Conflict Diamonds to be introduced early in the 107th Congress (February 2001) and we will be pushing to pass this bill by July 4, 2001. The import prohibition would take effect one year after enactment, giving the diamond industry and diamond-exporting countries ample time to put the controls in place. In Canada, we hope Parliament will introduce similar legislation to ensure that the diamond companies in Northwest Canada will abide by an international certification regime.

This is an issue that hits particularly close at home for the Jewish community. Jews, historically and still today, have been at the forefront of the diamond industry and are involved on every level from mining to retailing. This makes it even more important that we be at the forefront of putting an end to the human rights abuses caused by conflict diamonds.

These conflict diamonds will continue to find their way into jewelry stores across the United States until an international certification system is functional and is supported by critical countries. Only with such a system can your jeweler guarantee that the symbol of love you are buying is not coming at the expense of massive human rights violations.

Enclosed in this packet you will find several tools to help your congregation get involved and spread the word about conflict diamonds, raising the issue within your congregations and communities. In it, you will find:

- Background material on conflict diamonds, prepared by the Religious Action Center;
- 1-page (back-to-back) hand-out “Did Someone Die For Your Diamond” and “How Can We Help Ban The Sale Of Conflict Diamonds?” to photocopy and distribute.
- Sources for Sermons, Study Material, and Reflection;
- Temple Bulletin Article: Shabbat Without Diamonds
- Petitions and postcards to send to diamond industry executives urging their support of international certification.

As always, the Religious Action Center is at your disposal to help with information on conflict diamonds. Please contact Legislative Assistant Danielle Hirsch at (202) 387-2800 ext. 33 or dhirsch@rac.org.

MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties
From: Danielle Hirsch, Legislative Assistant at the RAC
Date: February 2001
Re: Conflict Diamonds

“It was the atrocities in Sierra Leone that moved the nongovernmental community to say out loud what the industry knows well: Diamonds have no intrinsic value, and they are not rare. If the public learns to associate them with hacked-off limbs and the rape of children, the notion of diamonds as a symbol of love could evaporate forever.”

– Holly Burkhalter, Advocacy Director for the Physicians for Human Rights

BACKGROUND

In Sierra Leone over a million people have been left homeless by almost ten years of rebel fighting. Since losing political power in February 1998, members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have been engaged in a war of terror against civilians in Sierra Leone. The AFRC/RUF rebel alliance is committing widespread and egregious atrocities against unarmed civilians with no recognizable political objective beyond regaining power.

As the violence in Sierra Leone persists, grave abuses continue to take place.¹ Thousands of people have been massacred, raped and had their limbs severed. Men, women and children, probably numbering in the thousands, have been abducted by the AFRC/RUF for use as combatants, forced laborers, or sexual slaves. Women are actively targeted through sexual violence, including rape and sexual slavery. Children are targets of killings and violence and are forcibly recruited as soldiers. The photographs of sad-eyed babies whose hands were hacked off by a vicious rebel force have shocked the world’s conscience. Perhaps as shocking, however, is the fact that the money used to fund Sierra Leone’s insurgents and their armament come from their sale of one of the world’s most precious commodities – diamonds.

WHY DO DIAMONDS MATTER?

Human rights, religious, and humanitarian groups are deeply concerned about the role that diamonds have played in fermenting conflict and human rights abuses in Africa.² The control of Sierra Leone’s diamonds by the RUF has turned a band of thugs into a formidable fighting force that is destroying an entire country. Diamonds have similarly enriched UNITA, Angola’s rebel group. The importation of diamonds from Sierra Leone and Angola continues to enrich rebel groups that commit gross abuses against unarmed people.

¹ Ian Smillie, Lansana Gberie and Ralph Hazelton, “Sierra Leone: Diamonds and War”, pg. 1.

² To be clear: if diamond revenues were not being used to purchase weapons that are used against the unarmed population, there would be no concern about the RUF’s control of Sierra Leone’s diamonds. It is the link between diamonds, weapons and abuses that is of concern, not diamonds in and of themselves.

Diamond smuggling has permitted the RUF in Sierra Leone and UNITA in Angola to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on weapons and equipment, and sustain wars that have brought much suffering to the people of Africa. The human cost of wars fueled by diamonds has been extraordinarily high: in Sierra Leone 75,000 have been killed since 1991; in Angola 500,000 have died during the return to civil war in the past decade.³

According to a recent U.S. State Department report, smuggled and illicit conflict diamonds may amount to as much as ten to fifteen percent of the \$50 billion of diamond jewelry sold internationally every year. American consumers – who buy 65% of diamond jewelry sold internationally – unwittingly subsidize violence in Sierra Leone and Angola through their diamond purchases. Thus, American purchases of diamonds provide substantial resources to insurgent forces that mine and/or steal rough stones, providing enormous profits to the diamond industry that exports, cuts and sells these conflict diamonds.

THE DIAMOND INDUSTRY AND CONFLICT DIAMONDS

Leading companies within the diamond industries assure the world that they do not deal in conflict diamonds. Yet, sales of such diamonds mined in rebel-controlled territories in Angola, the Congo, and Sierra Leone continue to the present day. Last July, a meeting of the major diamond companies was held at the World Diamond Congress in Antwerp to discuss how best to ensure that all diamonds they sell can be confidently labeled as “conflict-free.” De Beers, one of the largest companies, called on the World Diamond Congress to introduce a standard documentation process for all importing countries that would require a true statement of origin of all stones, rather than simply a declaration of provenance.⁴ If adopted, this would curb the laundry of diamonds from Sierra Leone through such countries as Liberia, Togo, Zimbabwe, Congo-Kinshasa, Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso, where they are currently mined and then being admitted to major cutting and export centers with few questions asked. De Beers has already implemented these measures to halt the flow of conflict diamonds, guaranteeing that all diamonds it sells are conflict-free and it has developed internal rules to control the flow of conflict diamonds.

Other important players in the diamond industry have very recently announced a number of positive steps, including the threat by De Beers, the Diamond High Council, the Israeli Diamond Exchange, and India to ban any member who knowingly trades in diamonds obtained from rebel movements in Africa. De Beers, which controls upwards of sixty percent of the world diamond industry, asserted in March that all of its stones were conflict-free. But such declarations, while welcome, are largely symbolic unless the diamond industry as a whole, in collaboration with diamond mining, cutting, exporting, and importing countries, establishes a system that can force the trade in conflict stones out of business, or greatly reduce its profits. Such a system will require a comprehensive, global system of transparency for establishing origin, legitimate export and import centers, customs and excise regimen in importing countries, and international inspection of diamond packets.

³ Holly Burkhalter, “*Deadly Diamonds: Gems Sold in the United States Pay for Atrocities in West Africa*”, Legal Times, pg. 74.

⁴ “*De Beers calls for firm diamond industry action on ‘conflict diamonds’*”, De Beers Press Release, June 14, 2000.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

During the 106th Congress, Representative Tony Hall introduced the Consumer Access to a Responsible Accounting of Trade Act of 2000 (“CARAT Act”) that contained provisions to address the problem of conflict diamonds. It calls for “birth certificates” for finished diamonds entering the U.S. within two years, but waives that provision if the industry makes good on its commitments at Antwerp in a timely way. There would be a two-year phase in period, which should allow the industry (which had promised that rough controls could be in place within six months) ample time to put its own house in order. Maintaining the threat of certificates of origin on finished diamonds, the Hall legislation would keep the pressure on both industry and diamond producing, finishing, exporting, and importing countries to move forward with the rough diamond controls process. It also would provide a valuable nudge to the industry to more quickly develop means of sourcing cut and finished diamonds - technology that is currently still in the developmental stages. The CARAT Act was not passed during the 106th Congress, but the legislation had 25 co-sponsors. Rep. Hall will re-introduce the legislation early in the 107th Congress.

JEWES AND THE DIAMOND INDUSTRY

This is an issue that hits particularly close at home for the Jewish community. Jews, historically and still today, have been at the forefront of the diamond industry and are involved on every level from mining to retailing. Whether the diamond dealer is from Antwerp or Bombay, or has his offices at the Israel Diamond Exchange in Ramat Gan, just outside Tel Aviv, the global protocol is the same: Diamond deals are closed with a handclasp and the Yiddish phrase “*mazel und brocha*” (meaning luck and blessing). That’s not surprising, considering that Jews have dominated the diamond trade for centuries, and that Israel today is one of the industry’s three major centers. This makes it even more important that we be at the forefront of putting an end to the human rights abuses caused by conflict diamonds.

The diamond industry in America “has been Jewish since the city of New York’s birth.” (Jerusalem Report, April 20, 1995) The first Jewish jewelers were Sephardim who came with the Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam. In the 1920s, the diamond district was in Lower Manhattan; later it moved to 47th Street in Midtown. After World War II, Jews from Antwerp and Amsterdam settled in New York and set up business cutting and trading; there was an influx of Hungarian ultra-Orthodox Jews in 1956. More recently immigrants from Israel and the former Soviet Union have moved in.

According to the Jerusalem Report, Israel has the biggest slice of American purchases, at \$1.9 billion or 39 percent last year; America is also Israel’s best customer. Other major sources of imports to the U.S. are India, with 26 percent, and Belgium, which accounted for 25 percent of American cut-stone imports in 1994. In an attempt to control the problem of conflict diamonds, the Israeli government has adopted a new controls system prohibiting diamond importation from Sierra Leone. In June 1999, the Israel Diamond Exchange decided to revoke the membership of any merchant knowingly trading in illicit stones – a move which would automatically ban the offender from all of the world’s 23 recognized diamond exchanges. Additionally, it is illegal to import rough diamonds from

countries that are major sources of conflict diamonds without an official export certificate from the country's government.

This move is an important start to stopping the sale of conflict diamonds. There are still flaws in the Israeli system; for example, all a dealer needs to do to circumvent the system is to say that the diamonds that he/she is carrying are from somewhere else. What is needed is a system that verifies that each and every diamond has been legally purchased from any country, not just the conflict-diamond sources. This system is not yet in place in any country, including the United States, the Belgium, the United Kingdom or Israel. Israeli sources say such stringent procedures may be desirable, but it is not realistic to expect them to be instituted anytime soon. Right now, the Canadian police are working on a system to check the chemical fingerprints of stones to determine their origin.

THE REFORM MOVEMENT AND AFRICA

The Reform Movement has had a long tradition of speaking out on human rights around the world. Most recently, in 1999, the UAHC adopted new policy on Africa (attached) furthering the Reform Movement's commitment to meet the pressing needs of African civil society. The resolution expresses our support for humanitarian assistance in times of crisis, commitment to international human rights, increased economic development, and poverty eradication.

In 1979, the UAHC passed an anti-apartheid resolution which commended the leaders of the non-violent struggle against apartheid in South Africa, urged the United States to refrain from political and military support for the government of South Africa, and pressured businesses in South Africa to practice policies of fair pay and desegregated facilities. In recent years, both the UAHC and the CCAR have spoken against the atrocities in Rwanda and Zaire, mobilizing the Reform Jewish movement to pressure the United States to support humanitarian missions and relief work.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1999 UAHC Resolution, "Commitment to Africa"
- Statement of Muctar Jalloah

Resolutions Adopted by the UAHC

65th General Assembly

December 1999

Orlando, Florida

COMMITMENT TO AFRICA

BACKGROUND

In the Talmud, it is written that all people are descendants from a single person so that no person can say, "My ancestor is greater than yours" (*Sanhedrin 37a*). "God created us all from the four corners of the earth — yellow clay, and white sand, black loam, and red soil. Therefore, the earth can declare to no race or color of humankind that it does not belong here, that this soil is not their rightful home" (*Yalkut Shimoni 1:1*). As Jews, we worship a universal God, a God concerned with the suffering of all people and with injustice everywhere.

As Jews, living in the shadow of the near annihilation of our people, we know too well the danger, the horror, of global indifference. Too often, people turn their backs on those in danger or in need. Today, this is the case in many parts of Africa. In order to ensure that "never again" is not just a slogan, but rather a firm, moral commitment on our part not to stand by in the face of unspeakable hatred and violence, or unmitigated poverty, we must get involved. The world is appalled by the recent events in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Sudan. The nations of the world, especially our own, have a responsibility to fight oppression and poverty throughout the world.

The Reform Movement has long recognized the importance of cooperative and integrated economic relations among nations to improve conditions in foreign countries undergoing crises. We are living in a time when one-quarter of the world's population lives in poverty, 1.2 billion have no reliable access to safe drinking water, and 2 billion live without electricity. According to a USAID report, 31,000 children die every day in the developing world from low birthweight and other pregnancy-related complications, and 63% of all people infected with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. In recognition of those who are in dire need of basic resources — food, clean water, medicine and adequate health care — world leaders must take responsibility to assist those Africans in need to achieve the benefits of prosperity, peace and security that people in developed countries enjoy.

THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves to:

1. Emphasize the need for greater attention to the African continent;
2. Encourage and advocate for humanitarian assistance to and appropriate intervention in African countries during times of crisis in;
3. Call upon the Secretary General of the United Nations, the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Canada, and all world leaders to condemn acts of

violence against innocent populations, such as those perpetrated against the people of Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Sudan;

4. Reaffirm our commitment to basic international human rights, including, but-not limited to- political organization, free assembly, free speech, health care, family planning and reproductive freedom, education, a healthy environment, women's rights and labor rights, and the elimination of hunger and poverty;
5. Advocate for a variety of increased economic development initiatives for African countries, including trade priorities, debt relief where appropriate, microenterprises, training and business programs (including those for women), which serve as catalysts for sustained growth and equitable development while protecting the environment;
6. Advocate expansion of government funds for African development, including the U.S. Development Fund for Africa, to meet the pressing needs of civil society, such as measures to prevent the dissemination of HIV, develop treatments for AIDS, and eliminate hunger; and
7. Reaffirm our dedication to combat global poverty by recognizing the priority of policies that focus on poor countries.

STATEMENT OF MUCTAR JALLOAH*
Amputee Victim from Sierra Leone
September 26, 2000

Africa Subcommittee of the International Relations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Thank you for inviting my friends and me to speak to you this morning. We have traveled a long way from Sierra Leone thanks to the generosity of Americans from all over the U.S., and especially from Baltimore, Maryland and Staten Island and Brooklyn, New York. This afternoon we leave for New York to begin several months of medical treatment, fittings, and training with artificial limbs.

Today, I ask you not to dwell on the horrible injuries that I have suffered personally, I will be glad, if you wish to describe the terrible ordeal and torture that I went through, I lost my right hand and my right ear when a rebel chopped them off with a machete.

No, I want instead to direct your attention to my young colleagues who traveled with me from the Murry Town Amputee Camp in our capital city of Freetown. Unlike me, they have suffered much even before they could begin really formalizing their dreams for a bright future. The two youngest with us are only four years old. And these three girls here are only eight, nine, and ten years old.

Since I read and write in English I sometimes see articles in foreign newspapers or magazines stating that the war in Sierra Leone must be a tribal war, or maybe a religious war. Religion and tribal affiliation have nothing to do with why we are now without our limbs.

If it were a tribal war, you would not see in front of you representatives of our country's major ethnic groups, including Temne and Mende. Those amputated by the rebels include every ethnic group in Sierra Leone.

If it were a religious war, you would not have both Christians and Muslims sitting here in front of you. Christians and Muslims have suffered equally at the hands of rebel forces.

The war is not tribal, and it is not religious. It is simply largely a war over control of diamonds. Little pieces of rock that people around the world like to wear on their fingers and hang from their ears.

As you can see, because of these rocks, I no longer have an ear or five of my fingers.

And the victims you see in front of you are examples of what has happened when the people and democratically elected government of Sierra Leone did not allow the rebels to keep control of the entire country.

Twenty thousand men, women, and children have suffered the same excruciating pain and suffering as the eight of us sitting before you.

Imagine the kind of person who would do this to Memunatu or Mohammed. What in the world did they do to anyone? Or Bintu, Damba, or Fatu here? Or any of the rest of us? How can human beings do this to other human beings? And how can humanity allow this to continue to go on?

At home in Freetown, our hopes rise and fall with the news of announcements from the United States, Europe, or the UN. However, while Congressional committees and the parliaments of the world discuss and debate the issue of Sierra Leone, the suffering continues to spread. Children like those before you – Memunatu and Mohammed and Bintu and Damba – these are the victims of inaction and delay.

I am here to ask for your help in bringing the killing and maiming to an end.

I am here to ask for you to do everything in your power to protect the youngest and most innocent of God's creation from this terrible manifestation of man's worst greed.

For if you allow this new form of systematic and widespread terrorism to be tolerated in Sierra Leone, it can happen again in some other country in the future.

Since I am not a politician, my goal is not to engage in politics. My interest is in helping the children of my country have a chance to live normal, healthy lives. This is a right that has been brutally taken away from those you see in front of you today.

We will need help in rebuilding these as well since all of our schools and hospitals have been damaged or destroyed. But the rebuilding process cannot begin in earnest until we can begin living without fear.

Again, I thank you for the chance to come to Congress to plead the case of Sierra Leone's amputees. May God bless you and show you the way to help us.

**Muctar Jalloh, age 27, was caught by the rebels in Kono in April 1998. He was targeted because he was a student and seen as an enemy of rebel forces trying to gain control of Sierra Leone's mineral resources. Using a machete, AFRC/RUF rebels cut off his right arm above the wrist and his right ear. Mr. Jalloh currently lives at the Murry Town amputee camp in Freetown, and is a leader of the amputees group.*

DID SOMEONE DIE FOR YOUR DIAMOND?

What is a conflict diamond?

Conflict Diamonds are diamonds under the control of rebel groups that allow those groups to purchase arms. In Sierra Leone, the decade-long conflict launched by the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has been financed by the sale of conflict diamonds. Insurgents have mutilated thousands of children, women, and men by amputating their arms or hands, and have raped, killed, and displaced tens of thousands of others. Diamonds have played a similar role in funding war and atrocities against unarmed people in Angola. As of fall 2000, the rebels still continued to control the diamond mines.

Where do conflict diamonds come from?

In addition to Sierra Leone, conflict diamonds come from Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Who benefits from the sale of conflict diamonds?

The diamonds are mined in the rebel-controlled areas and smuggled predominantly through Liberia and also through Burkina Faso. It is estimated that the rebels make about \$200 million a year trading in illicit diamonds. These funds have been used to purchase small arms and supplies, which is in direct violation of a United Nations arms embargo.

What has the international community done to eradicate conflict diamonds?

The UN has banned the international sale of diamonds from rebel-controlled Angola and from Sierra Leone, but that has not stopped unscrupulous elements within the industry from continuing to buy diamonds from conflict areas to this day. Leading diamond producing countries, led by South Africa, have developed an international system for creating a forgery-proof system for packaging and tracking rough diamonds that will go a long way in ending international trade in conflict diamonds. But every country in the world, including the U.S., must pass legislation banning the importation of diamonds that are outside the "clean stream" that will be created by this process.

Who do conflict diamonds hurt?

Accurate figures are difficult to come by in Sierra Leone as the rebels control most of the countryside, making access nearly impossible. However, the January 1999 assault on Freetown, the Sierra Leonean capital, resulted in the deaths of 2,000 civilians and the amputations of the limbs of over 500 people. Currently, two-thirds of the country's roughly 4 million person population have been displaced and left homeless.

HOW CAN WE HELP BAN THE SALE OF CONFLICT DIAMONDS?

It is vitally important that American jewelry retailers signal their support for the international system of controls, and for U.S. import legislation that promotes it. It is important to target large, national retailers of jewelry in the U.S whose support for the international system and for congressional legislation that supports it is crucial for its success.

As a Consumer you can:

Visit your local diamond jeweler or retailers; ask them if they know about conflict diamonds and provide them with information. Ask if they are willing to help by appealing to the U.S. diamond industry to vigorously and quickly lobby Congress to pass the legislation banning conflict diamonds from the United States.

Contact your members of Congress urging their support and leadership on legislation banning Conflict Diamonds.

Organize a Day without Diamonds at your temple in solidarity with the women, children and men who have lost their lives or their limbs or have been tortured because of Conflict Diamonds.

Hold educational leafletting events in front of diamond retailers (especially large, national retailers) urging consumers to get your member of Congress to support the Conflict Diamond legislation.

Send materials and information to your local newspapers urging them to cover the issue of conflict diamonds.

Post and distribute flyers explaining the issue of Conflict Diamonds.

As a Diamond Retailer you can:

Publicly support legislation in Congress designed to prohibit the sale of diamonds that lack the internationally required certification.

Contact Jewelers of America, Inc. and express your support for the international certification program as well as your expectation that Jewelers of America Inc. will continue to provide sustained leadership to the international community in implementing the certification program.

Contact your members of Congress urging their support and leadership on legislation banning Conflict Diamonds.

Offer your store as a venue for your elected officials to give a speech on this issue.

TEMPLE BULLETIN ARTICLE: Shabbat Without Diamonds

Note: We suggest that you designate a Friday evening in February to be Shabbat Without Diamonds. We would hope that in conjunction with this date, you use the pulpit to educate about the issues surrounding conflict diamonds. Here is a sample bulletin for the temple newsletter.

While stores and advertisements are sending a clear message that February is the perfect time to buy diamonds, we here at _____(name of temple) are gravely concerned about the human rights effects of the diamond industry.

Some of the world's most beautiful gems are helping fund violent and brutal rebel insurgencies across Africa, most notably in Sierra Leone where the Revolutionary United Front pays for their weapons by selling illicit diamonds onto the world market. They are best known for their trademark crime: cutting off the limbs and body parts of innocent men, women, children and babies. The rebel group has ravaged Sierra Leone and its people for too long.

Here in the U.S., we expect legislation banning Conflict Diamonds to be introduced early in the 107th Congress (February 2001) and want this bill passed by July 4, 2001. In an effort to learn more about the issue, and express our concern for the human rights violations, the synagogue is sponsoring *Shabbat Without Diamonds* on _____(date).

By leaving our diamonds at home, we can make an important symbolic statement in support of an end to conflict diamonds. It is a way that each of us can declare that we are not prepared to adorn ourselves with jewels that come stained with the blood of children. Please come—preferably without your diamonds—to learn more about the issue and what you can do to protect these men, women, children and babies who are losing life and limb for stones.

The Honorable Colin Powell
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear General Powell,

We, the undersigned, urge the Bush administration to take action to help end the extraordinary suffering of the people of Sierra Leone.

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels have conducted a decade-long campaign of brutal terror in Sierra Leone. They have mutilated thousands of children, women, and men by amputating arms, hands, and legs. They have raped and killed tens of thousands. They have burned down villages and towns, and abducted children to serve as soldiers or sex slaves. Their reign of terror has resulted in the displacement of over one million people. With illicit diamonds and the complicity of outsiders fueling their movement, the RUF is now extending its brutal terror campaign into neighboring Guinea.

We ask the Bush administration to make Sierra Leone a high priority and do the following:

1. Support the "Clean Diamonds Act" and other efforts to end the arms for diamonds trade.
2. Exert intense diplomatic pressure on nations such as Liberia to end their support of the RUF.
3. Increase the level of security and humanitarian aid for Sierra Leone.

SIGNATURE

CITY, STATE and ZIP

1. _____
2. _____
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9. _____
10. _____

*Send by March 15, 2001 c/o Rep. Tony Hall, 1432 Longworth House OB, Washington, DC 20515
Please copy and circulate. Sierra Leone Emergency Network – SLEN1@hotmail.com*

CONFLICT DIAMONDS PROGRAM RESPONSE FORM

Name: _____

Congregation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

_____ **Yes, my congregation incorporated Conflict Diamonds into a service or temple activity**

Size of Congregation _____

Please indicate which of the following apply to your congregation's program:

_____ **We held a "Shabbat Without Diamonds."**

_____ **The rabbi delivered a sermon on the topic. (Please attach)**

_____ **We placed an article in our bulletin on the topic. (Please attach)**

_____ **We circulated the petition and postcards to members of our congregation.**

_____ **We had great ideas of our own to incorporate along with the material the Religious Action Center sent out! Please describe:**

_____ **No, we did not incorporate Conflict Diamonds into a service or temple activity.**

Please explain why not: _____

Other comments or suggestions: _____

Please Return this form to: Rabbi Marc Israel
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Fax: (202) 667-9070 E-mail: misrael@uahc.org