The Modern Plagues of Conflict Minerals:

A Passover Supplement

We take a moment to consider the ten plagues that enabled our freedom. Yet, at the same time, we remove drops of wine from our glasses to symbolically show that the sufferings of the Egyptians are a part of our narrative. So today, we take an additional ten drops out of our glasses to show how others are suffering today so that we may have the electronic devices that run our lives. Today in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo the same mineral resources used in our electronics are helping to finance multiple armed groups, many of whom use mass rape as a deliberate strategy to intimidate and control local populations. Through the practices of murder, sexual assault, and coercion, the groups are able to secure control of mines, trading routes, and other strategic areas. Thus with each drop we take out we recognize these ten modern plagues that people experience as a result of the mining of conflict minders , we raise our voices together:

Systematic Violence Against Women	אונס
Unsanitary living conditions	בריאותיים-אי חיים תנאי
Separation from Family	ממשפחה הפרדה
Destruction of homes	בתים הריסת
Abduction	חטיפה
Use as a Child Soldier	בילדים השתמשות
Unsafe Work Conditions	כחיילים
Little to No pay	מסוכנים עבודה תנאי
Murder	משכורת בלי עבודה
Silence of the World Community	רצח
	העולם קהילת שתיקת

Background: We are taught in Leviticus that "You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor." (Leviticus 19:16) For more than a century, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been plagued by regional conflict and a deadly scramble for its vast natural resources. In eastern Congo today, these mineral resources are financing multiple armed groups, many of whom use mass rape as a deliberate strategy to intimidate and control local populations. Through these practices of murder, rape, and coercion the groups are able to secure control of mines, trading routes, and other strategic areas.

Armed groups earn hundreds of millions of dollars per year by trading four main minerals: the ores that produce tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold. This money enables them to purchase large numbers of weapons and continue their campaign of brutal violence against civilians, with some of the worst abuses occurring in mining areas. The majority of these minerals eventually wind up in electronic devices such as cell phones, portable music players, and computers. Given the lack of a transparent minerals supply chain, American consumers have no way to ensure that their purchases are not financing armed groups that regularly commit atrocities, including mass rape.

What Needs To Be Done: The first step to ending the horrific violence in Congo is the creation of a certification process for the valuable minerals fueling the crisis. This process will involve companies that rely on the minerals for their products commitment to get their materials elsewhere and government involvement from countries including the U.S., Canada and others.

5 Things You Can Do:

1. Educate yourself: Visit the RAC Issue Page for materials, background, programs, and additional resources.
2. Take Action: Write your member of congress and help spread the word.
3. Educate others through a program at your synagogue or in your community. Sample programs are available at the Social Action Program Bank or contact Marc Friend at mfriend@rac.org.
4. Male your Campus/Synagogue/Community Conflict Free by checking out the resource guide at Raise Hope for Congo.
5. Urge companies to go Conflict Free at Raise Hope for Congo.