**SRC Motion on Conflict Free Campus**

This motion calls the Students’ Representative Council to support the Conflict Free Campus Initiative by calling on the University to make the reduction of the use of conflict minerals a priority in its investment and procurement policy.

**The SRC notes:**

That the University has declared its commitment to socially responsible investment through its Socially Responsible Investment Policy; and

That the University has acknowledged through its Environmental Purchasing Policy the need to take account of sustainable, ethical and social considerations in the purchase of goods; and

That in the Sustainable Development Policy it states that the University ‘is concerned about the effects of its decisions and actions on the quality of life, the economy and world poverty, as well as the environment and natural resources’ and that sustainable development be ‘integrated into all aspects of University planning and activities’; and

That the European Parliament and UK Parliamentary Select Committees have determined that armed groups bear responsibility for atrocities in the eastern Congo, a situation that is facilitated in part by the unregulated trade for minerals mined in areas of conflict;[[1]](#footnote-1) [[2]](#footnote-2) and

That on the 28th March 2014 the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was extended by the Security Council for another year in recognition of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the DRC as a result of the abuses of human rights and violations on international law by armed groups operating in the region[[3]](#footnote-3); and

That the International Rescue Committee has found more than 5.4 million civilians have been killed since 1998 and countless more remain at risk as a consequence of attacks conducted by armed groups in eastern Congo;[[4]](#footnote-4) and

That armed groups generate an estimated $144 million each year by trading in conflict minerals;[[5]](#footnote-5) and

That in the United States recent legislation signed into law (The Dodd Frank Act) requires that companies submit an annual report to the Securities and Exchange Commission disclosing whether their products contain gold, tin, tantalum, or tungsten from the Congo or nearby areas;[[6]](#footnote-6) and

That the European Commission has drafted European legislation on supply chain due diligence for tin, tungsten, and tantalum and their ores, as well as gold originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas[[7]](#footnote-7); and

That the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee has endorsed the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the International Council on Mining and Metals, and has invited the UK Government to evaluate whether similar legislation to the Dodd Frank Act be introduced in the UK to improve the social impact of mining in conflict areas[[8]](#footnote-8); and

***That the University has procured electronic goods from companies whose products are not certified ‘conflict-free’ and therefore conflict minerals can be found in such goods procured by the University.***

**The SRC believes**

That unregulated conflict mineral extraction violates human rights, as well as being one of the biggest contributors to the continuation of the conflict in the Congo.

That given the humanitarian cost of conflict mineral extraction the University should aim to reduce its use of conflict minerals.

That, although there are few certified ‘conflict-free’ products available on the market, some companies have been noted to have stronger records of due diligence and transparency on this issue than others.

That ethical procurement represents an important component of ethical investment, to which the University has committed itself.

That by taking part in the Conflict Free Campus Initiative, the University of Glasgow would be the biggest university in the UK and Europe to do so, and would be in the company of the 52 American and Canadian institutions of higher learning that have made ‘conflict free’ pledges.

That, given the draft legislation proposed by the European Commission to the European Parliament on the 5th March 2014, legislation enforcing transparency and accountability on this issue similar to that seen in the United States would appear to be forthcoming. As such, the University would be seizing the agenda by partaking in this initiative.

**Resolve:**

To call for the University to give priority to companies who implement due diligence when sourcing their minerals – tin, tungsten, tantalum, and gold – from the Democratic Republic of Congo, when considering vendors for future electronic product purchases

To call for the University to express and foster a strong commitment to purchasing products that have been certified as ‘conflict free’, upon considering the future procurement of electronic devices, once commercially available.

To call for the University to express a strong commitment to purchasing electronic products from companies that respect and promote human rights throughout the products’ lifecycle including the mineral extraction and trading phases.

To call for the University to issue formal letters of inquiry to contracted electronics suppliers on the status of company efforts to address mineral supply chain transparency and accountability.

Attempts to address these issues of transparency and accountability should pay heed to these guidelines, developed by the University of Pennsylvania Conflict-Free Campus Initiative, instructing companies to:

1. Strengthen company management systems (including establishing and distributing a supply chain policy);
2. Identify and assess risks in the supply chain;
3. Design and implement a strategy to respond to identified risks;
4. Ensure independent third-party audits of supply chain due diligence at identified points in the supply chain;
5. Disclose publicly supply chain due diligence and findings.

If these approaches fail to bring change in a reasonable amount of time, the University should give purchasing preference to compliant companies as well as consider not renewing contracts and divesting from non-compliant ones.

To mandate the Students’ Association to do all of the above in their sourcing of electronics.

**Proposed by Glasgow University Amnesty International**

Supported by:

Amnesty International UK

St. Andrews Coalition for a Conflict Free Campus

Enough Project

STAND

1. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2010-0350&language=EN [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmsctech/726/72607.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47454&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.rescue.org/special-reports/special-report-congo-y [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.jww.org/conflictareas/congo/overview/conflict-minerals [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://banking.senate.gov/public/\_files/070110\_Dodd\_Frank\_Wall\_Street\_Reform\_comprehensive\_summary\_Final.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2014/march/tradoc\_152227.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmsctech/726/72607.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-8)