

2. CONFLICT MINERALS (PHOTOGRAPHS 3 - 7)

Look at the photographs and try to describe them. What can you see? What is the place like? What are its characteristics? What are the people you can see in the photos doing? Did you know that there is a direct link between these mines and us? That link is our mobile phones. Everyone knows that milk comes from cows, but where do mobile phones come from? What materials are they made from? Where do those materials come from?

You are looking at the mine and miners of Rubaya, where coltan is found underground. Coltan is a black, opaque mineral, formed of columbite and tantalite in various proportions. It is a very rare material in nature and it has gone from being of very little interest to being essential in our daily lives, as it is a vital component of technological devices. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the world's most important areas for mining, especially in the eastern region. It is where 80% of the world's reserves of coltan are found, and without this mineral, the new technology revolution in general and the mobile device revolution in particular would not have been possible. Right now, you probably all have a little piece of Congo in your pocket or bag.



2. CONFLICT MINERALS (PHOTOGRAPHS 3 - 7)

In addition to coltan (for tantalum), there are three other minerals that perform key functions: gold, tungsten and tin. Together, they are known as the **3T+G** because of their initials. These minerals are scarce and carry a high price. They are often called “conflict minerals” or, more crudely, “blood minerals”, because they are closely linked to conflicts, abuse and violations of human rights.

Tantalum is used mainly to make electronic capacitors. Tantalum capacitors have a clear advantage over aluminium ones: they can store much more energy, even when they are smaller in size. This is why they are so important in manufacturing small devices such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets.

Tin, meanwhile, is used to produce alloys with other metals to protect them from corrosion. For example, it is used to cover steel in the manufacture of tinplate. This is used for soft soldering (to join very small parts together) in mobile devices, computers, cars and, generally, in electronic printed circuits and transistors.

Tungsten or **wolfram** is mainly used for perforation and cutting tools because it is a very hard, dense mineral. It is of strategic importance, partly due to its



2. CONFLICT MINERALS (PHOTOGRAPHS 3 - 7)

scarcity and partly due to its numerous applications. It is mainly used in the manufacture of the following products: incandescent lamps, electrical resistors, steel alloys, alloys for cutting tools, car spark plugs and ballpoint pens. It is also widely used in the weapons industry. In summary, tungsten is what makes mobile phones vibrate, tin is used to solder circuits and tantalum stores electricity. Finally, **gold** is used to cover cables.

The way that coltan is exploited in the Congo leads to the violation of human dignity. These are the words of Caddy Adzuba, a women's rights activist from DRC. You can see her full statement in the following video:

a Project of:



ALBOAN

Jesultek bultzatutako Fundazioa
ONG promovida por los Jesuitas

To:



**CONFLICT
FREE
TECHNOLOGY**

Help:



**DONOSTIA
SAN SEBASTIÁN**