



PRESS RELEASE

The Tantalum-Niobium International Study Center (T.I.C.), the industry organisation representing producers, processors and consumers of tantalum and niobium around the world, deplores the reported activities of illegal miners in the Kahuzi-Biega National Park and the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It was agreed at the T.I.C. Executive Committee meeting in Brussels on April 3rd 2001 that the organisation would take a stand regarding the use and production of coltan mined in these World Heritage Sites.

Tantalum and niobium are not new discoveries. They have been used in electronics and other applications since the early 1900's. If you drive a car, use a cell phone or exchange e-mail on the internet, you have probably been using tantalum for the past 20 years, on a steadily increasing basis. Many issues have recently surfaced about coltan coming from Central Africa and it is important to know that:

1. Less than 15% of the world's tantalum supply comes from Africa
2. The T.I.C. will cooperate with other concerned organisations such as The World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to preserve these World Heritage Sites in the DRC.

Specifically the T.I.C. will

- Inform all its 66 member companies around the world of the issues surrounding the illegal activities and their consequences
- Fully support efforts by the relevant authorities to enforce an immediate removal of miners from within the boundaries of the National Parks
- Encourage major processors to obtain their tantalum and niobium raw materials from lawful sources in other parts of the world as well as Africa, and refrain from purchasing materials from regions where either the environment or wildlife is threatened.

Tantalum and niobium are important metals with numerous applications in both high tech and other industries. As the industry organisation, the T.I.C. deplores these unlawful and immoral activities.

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