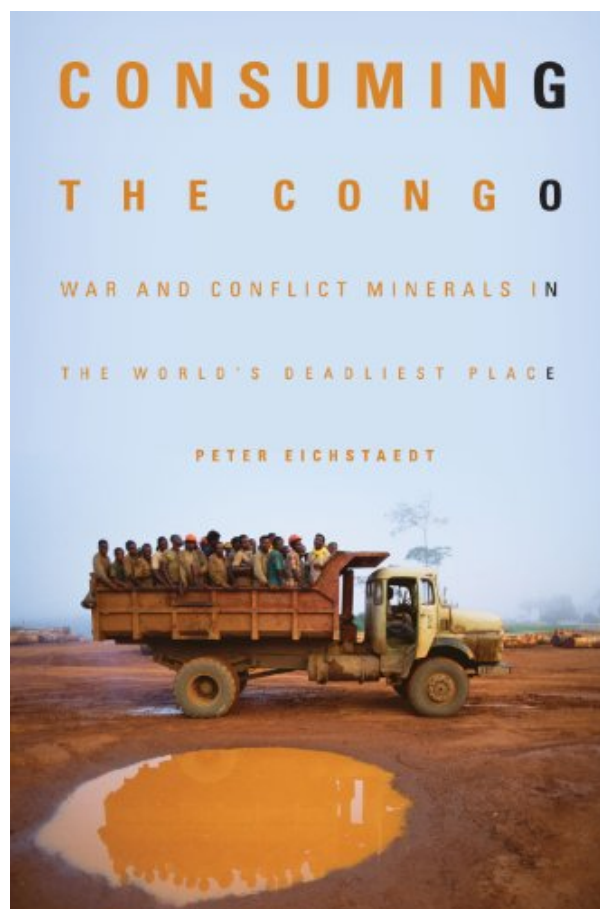


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CONFLICT MINERALS IN THE WORLD'S
DEADLIEST PLACE BY PETER
EICHSTAEDT**



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PETER EICHSTAEDT



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Review

"A powerful and long-overdue expose of greed and violence in the battle over Africa's mineral wealth. . . . A harrowing and important work that shows yet again that far-flung conflicts touch closer to home that we may imagine."—Greg Campbell, author of *Blood Diamonds: Tracing the Deadly Path of the World's Most Precious Stones*

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Every time you use a cell phone or log on to a computer, you could be contributing to the death toll in the bloodiest, most violent region in the world: the eastern Congo. Rich in “conflict minerals”—valuable resources mined in the midst of armed conflict and egregious human rights abuses—this remote and lawless land is home to deposits of gold and diamonds as well as coltan, tin, and tungsten, all critical to cell phones, computers, and other popular electronics.

In *Consuming the Congo*, veteran journalist and author Peter Eichstaedt goes into these killing fields to find what is behind the bloodshed, hearing the stories of those who live this nightmarish reality. He talks with survivors of villages decimated by war and miners slogging knee-deep in muck, desperately digging up the gold, tin, and coltan on which Western culture depends. While these men work with picks, shovels, and iron bars, marauding militias and renegade army units who control the mines roam the jungles, killing and raping with impunity, taking their profits, and leaving villagers to a life of grueling manual labor, brutality, and disease.

Some five million Congolese have died unnecessarily, the worst loss of human life since World War II, yet the pillaging and bloodletting continue at a frightening pace. *Consuming the Congo* not only explores the violence suffered by the Congolese but also examines how we, as part of the problem, can become part of the solution.

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Most helpful customer reviews

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

A Continuing Tragedy: the Eastern Congo

By Loves the View

The author, Peter Eichstaedt is a writer and editor who has worked and traveled in Africa. Here he writes of the eastern Congo, a region being destroyed by an entrenched war the scale of which exceeds any previous conflict by any measure.

The book's chapters are each like their own essay on the various topics such as mining, armies, individual locations, the effects of war on people, the rape epidemic, the minerals themselves, reform proposals and others. There are descriptions of mines, a buying cooperative, a refugee camp, a rape victim's clinic, a trip to Sudan and more.

Some of the story is told through interviews. A wide range of people are interviewed, such as villagers, miners, a Mai-Mai militia commander, a metals middleman (comptoir), women's rape counselors and a victim, refugees, a reform advocate and politicians. There are discussions of the wars' effects on the civilians (worn out), agriculture (disappearing with some exceptions) and wildlife (rapidly disappearing).

There are recurrent themes. The vast mineral wealth is not trickling down to the people. The government is too weak to protect the people and its own soldiers, because they are not paid, find ways to make a living off civilians. The fighting is over the wealth and who runs the mines, but ethnic hatred is a factor as there is a lot of senseless violence.

Reformers propose systems to identify "conflict minerals" will deter buyers. Critics of the system say that European buyers will shun these minerals, but others will not. Critics are also skeptical that those who tag these minerals will not be honest.

There are excellent photos and a good index. The last chapter offers mixed hope for measures that may stem the trade of "conflict metals".

10 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

the author got it all wrong!

By Cadet

The book starts with the Hema-Lendu conflict that was just a short time conflict instigated by Rwandan and Ugandan to give Congolese war an ethnical/tribal aspect.

The author talks about Sudanese conflict that has nothing in common with war/occupation of the D.R.Congo by his neighbors.

The author does his best to clean Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian armies as well as corporations involved in looting, killings and occupation taking place in the D.R.Congo.

I wonder who funded the author's trips to D.R.Congo and this book. I won't be surprised if I hear that it's one of corporations involved in the destruction of the D.R.Congo.

I am shocked by the way the author condemns activists and other advocacy groups who do their best to help end the occupation of the D.R.Congo by his neighbors as well as the looting of his minerals by these countries and foreign corporations.

I can't recommend this book to anyone because it misleads about the reality of the D.R.Congo.

8 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

The root causes of tensions in East Congo

By George Mason

Excellent review of the Hutu/Tutsi tensions imported to Rwanda and now the Eastern DRC as well as the political alignments that have created the current chaos in the DRC. Great laydown of the causes and players from Paul Kagame (not the rescuer you think he is) to Joseph Kony (read the "Wizard of the Nile"). Also shows just how the competition for resources can destabilize a weak state.

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