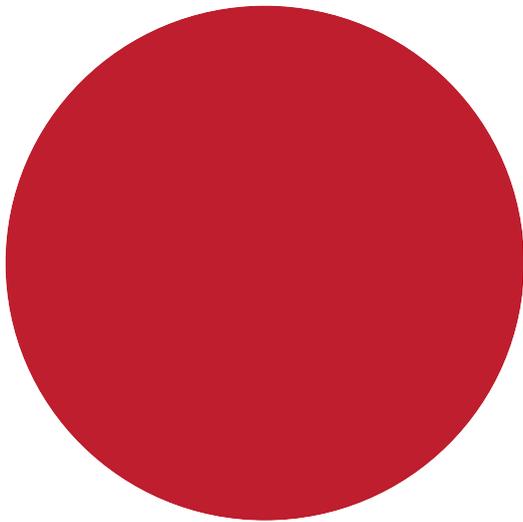
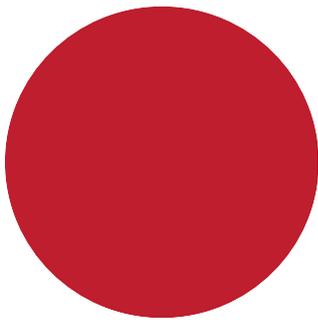


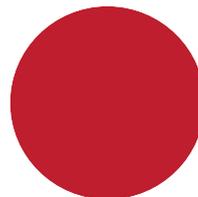
# FORGOTTEN WARS



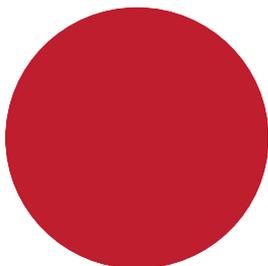
**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**  
(1964 - PRESENT)  
**5.4 MILLION DEAD**



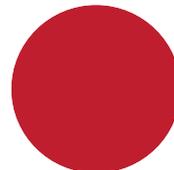
**SUDAN**  
(1983 - 2005)  
**2 MILLION DEAD**



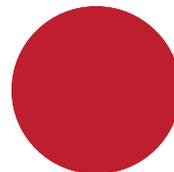
**RWANDA**  
(1994)  
**800,000 - 1 MILLION DEAD**



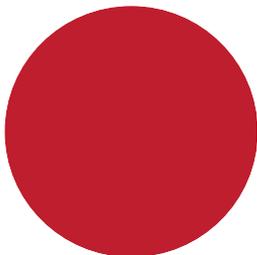
**CAMBODIA**  
(1975 - 1979)  
**1.4 MILLION DEAD**



**ANGOLA**  
(1975 - 2002)  
**AT LEAST 600,000 DEAD**



**IRAQ**  
(2002 - PRESENT)  
**600,000 DEAD**



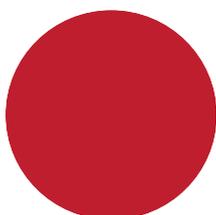
**AFGHANISTAN**  
(1978 - PRESENT)  
**1.3 - 2 MILLION DEAD**



**SOMALIA**  
(1991 - PRESENT)  
**300,000 - 400,000 DEAD**



**BURUNDI**  
(1993 - 2009)  
**300,000 DEAD**



**MOZAMBIQUE**  
(1977 - 1992)  
**900,000 DEAD**



**ISRAEL/PALESTINE**  
(1973 - 2009)  
**40,000 DEAD**

# CELLPHONES, LAPTOPS, RAPE AND MINERALS – A SINISTER CONGOLESE REALITY

Our growing demand for electronic products, such as cell phones and laptops, has been linked directly to widespread and systematic sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – a location of one of the deadliest global conflicts since World War II. There are few other conflicts in the world where the link between our insatiable consumer appetites (what has been dubbed ‘our gadget greed’) and mass human suffering is so direct and immediate.

This reality is not part of an elaborate conspiracy or cover up - most electronic companies and those of us that buy their products genuinely do not appreciate the complex chain of events that ties widespread sexual violence in the the DRC with the minerals that power our cell phones, laptops, MP3 players, video games and digital cameras.

## RAPE AS A TOOL OF WAR AND PROFIT

The ongoing wars in the DRC have led to the incredibly wide and diverse violence against civilians by a range of armed groups. The general use of violence against communities includes forced labour, torture, recruitment of child soldiers, extortion and killings by armed groups to oppress and control civilians. In particular, sexual violence has become an extensive tool of war and control for armed groups in the DRC, which has the highest rate of violence against women and girls in the world. A variety of reports indicate that hundreds of thousands of girls and women have been raped or sexually assaulted, making the DRC the most dangerous place in the world to be female.

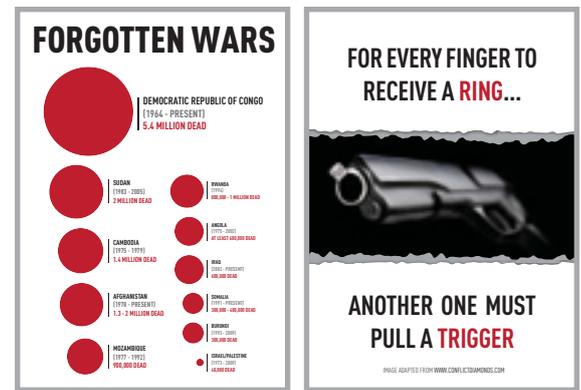
Given the scale of the violence, there are only estimates of the real numbers of women and girls affected, since many choose not to report the crime given the stigma associated with sexual violence and rape and the low probability that the perpetrators will ever be brought to justice. Competing militia groups rape in order to drive local communities out of contested areas with mineral resources or as a means of controlling or subjugating those living in the areas they control. Men know that they could be tortured or killed if they don't comply with militia demands, and the women live in constant fear of being raped – most often gang raped and/or brutally violated. Women from communities that are being displaced are sometimes so traumatized by the sexual violence that they will probably never return to their home areas. These crimes destroy families, decimate communities and lethally spread HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Dr. Denis Mukwege of Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, in a 2008 interview with The New York Times said:

*“The ordinary sense of family and community is lost after a man has been forced to watch his wife being raped, or parents are forced to watch the rape of their daughters, or children see their mothers raped. Neighbors are witnesses to this. Many flee. Families are dislocated. Social relationships are lost. There is no more social network, village network. Not only the victims have been destroyed; the whole village is destroyed.”*

## CONFLICT MINERALS

Sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo is most often fuelled by militias and armies warring over what have become known as ‘conflict minerals’ – the ores that produce tin, tungsten and tantalum – the ‘3 Ts’ –



as well as gold. Armed groups from the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda finance themselves through the illicit conflict mineral trade and fight over the control of mines and taxation points inside the DRC.

But the story does not end there. Internal and international business interests move these conflict minerals from Central Africa around the world to countries in East Asia, where they are processed into valuable metals and then onward into a wide range of electronics products. Consumers in the United States, Europe and Asia are the ultimate end-users of these conflict minerals, as we inadvertently fuel the war through our purchases of these electronic products.

The principal conflict minerals are:

- **Tin** (produced from cassiterite) which is used inside your cell phone and all electronic products as a solder on circuit boards. The biggest use of tin worldwide is in electronic products. Congolese armed groups earn approximately US\$85 million per year from the trade in tin
- **Tantalum** (produced from Coltan is used to store electricity in capacitors in iPods, digital cameras and cell phones. Some 65% to 80% of the world's tantalum is used in electronic products. Congolese armed groups earn an estimated US\$8 million per year from the trade in tantalum
- **Tungsten** (produced from wolframite) is used to make your cell phone or Blackberry vibrate. Tungsten is a growing source of income for armed groups in the DRC, with armed groups currently earning approximately US\$2 million annually
- **Gold** – used in jewellery and as a component in electronics is extremely valuable and easy to smuggle. Congolese armed groups are earning between US\$44 million to US\$88 million per year from gold

The link between the worst violence against women and the purchase of electronic products containing conflict minerals from the DRC is direct and undeniable. But it can be stopped by a combination of focused consumer pressure and enlightened government action. If women and girls are to be protected and empowered in the DRC, one of the most important priorities is to end the deadly trade in conflict minerals.

The perpetrators and orchestrators of this violence do so primarily in a mad scramble for natural resources. There is little rule of law in the DRC war zone and there are no strong mechanisms to monitor the international supply chain for these conflict minerals. Without accountability for their debilitating crimes against women and action to create a transparent supply chain for the mineral trade, war criminals will continue to commit horrendous atrocities and reap large profits with impunity.

Some companies have policies on minerals acquired from the DRC. Motorola, Apple, Hewlett Packard, Nokia and Research in Motion Ltd., all claim that they ban suppliers from selling them Congolese ore containing tantalum. But most of these policies only refer to tantalum and neglect other conflict minerals. Moreover, these are merely written assurances that do not provide proof of where the minerals actually come from; their sourcing is not verified by any independent source.

These are just some of the reasons why the Enough Project was founded in 2007 by a group of interested and concerned activists in the United States. Enough is one project of the Center for American Progress to end genocide and crimes against humanity and focuses on the situation in Sudan, Chad, eastern Congo, northern Uganda and Somalia.

Enough offers interested individuals and groups advice and suggestions as to how they can become involved and on how they can work for positive change in support of women and their communities in countries such the DRC.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The Enough Project has investigated the relationship between consumer electronics and conflict minerals in some detail: John Prendergast's article '[Can You Hear Congo Now?](#)' makes for riveting (and shocking) reading. The Enough Project's website also hosts a [strategy paper](#) analysing Congo's conflict minerals, as well as an [activist brief](#) on topic (for those with a shorter attention span!).

[http://www.enoughproject.org/files/publications/congo\\_activism.pdf](http://www.enoughproject.org/files/publications/congo_activism.pdf)

<http://www.enoughproject.org/files/publications/Congo-Minerals-042409.pdf>

<http://www.enoughproject.org/publications/comprehensive-approach-conflict-minerals>

Enough runs a separate campaign on the issue of conflict minerals, called Raise Hope for Congo. You can visit the [campaign's website here](#).

[http://www.raisehopeforcongo.org/casualties\\_conflict\\_minerals](http://www.raisehopeforcongo.org/casualties_conflict_minerals)

# FORGOTTEN WARS

The Oxford English dictionary defines news as ‘newly received or noteworthy information about recent events’. But who decides which events are noteworthy, and which are not? Who makes the news?

There are over 1,422 daily newspapers in the USA alone; the UK, with a population of ‘just’ 60 million, has over 15 daily national papers. Countless 24-hour news networks, each competing with each other for valuable ratings and advertising revenue, flood our TV screens. Current affairs magazines sprout up on a monthly basis. With such a kaleidoscope of media outlets available, one would assume that readers and viewers were guaranteed an objective portrait of the world’s conflicts, right? Wrong.

We rely on our news outlets – our newspaper of habit, the local evening news bulletin, even a current affairs magazine in the dentist’s waiting room – to paint us a picture of the wider world we live in. The more an event is reported on, the greater it appears in our imagination and, by extension, our worldview. But our worldview is not only shaped by what we are told – what about we are *not* told?

Below is a list of the 15 deadliest conflicts the world has seen since 1975. A handful are well-known (Iraq, Rwanda, the Balkans), a few others will prompt a glimmer or recognition (East Timor, Cambodia, Chechnya) but the vast majority of these conflicts will elicit blank faces from many westerners. Most of the news we read and see seems to be about war, but as the information below shows, somewhere along the line the world’s deadliest wars slipped beneath the mass media’s radar.

All casualty numbers are estimations, since accurate death tolls are unavailable.

## 1. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (1996-PRESENT)

### 5.4 MILLION DEAD

Although technically two wars (with a brief 15 month hiatus in May 1997), the two wars that plagued the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) left over 5 million people dead, making this conflict the deadliest worldwide since World War II. The war began in November 1996 with the overthrow of Mobutu Sese Seko by rebel forces led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila. Some 200,000 were killed in this first brief war. Following a turbulent 15-month peace, Rwanda and Uganda both attacked the DRC in August 1998.

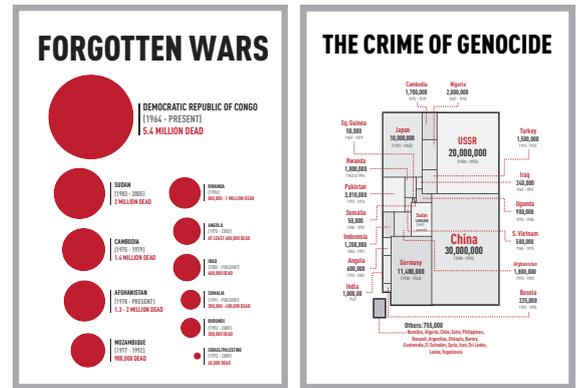
The ensuing conflict quickly spiralled out of control, involved 8 African countries and 25 armed rebel groups, and was the largest war in African history. Besides the massive death toll, over 3.4 million people were displaced. Although the war was declared over in 2003, skirmishes continue to this day.

It is thought that the majority of casualties occurred due to starvation, illness and other indirect effects of the conflict, rather than battle itself. In 2004, a year after the official ceasefire, over 45,000 people were still dying every month due to the indirect impacts.

## 2. SUDAN (1983-2005)

### 2 MILLION DEAD

This conflict – the Sudanese civil war – is not to be confused with the ongoing crisis in Darfur, which has taken



a further 500,000 lives. This war was essentially a spill-over from the first civil war (which began in 1955 and ended in 1972), and which was in turn a result of poor colonial administration by the British. Up to 1946, Britain ran what is modern-day Sudan as two separate provinces: an Arabic northern province similar to Egypt, and an African southern province more akin to Kenya. Trade between the two provinces was discouraged.

In 1946 the British integrated the two, and following decolonisation Khartoum-based northerners got most power. Civil war broke out and lasted till 1972, but resentment lingered. In 1983 the President announced that Sudan was to become a Muslim Arab state governed by Shari'a law, to the chagrin of the non-Muslim southern Sudanese. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was formed, and civil war broke out once again. Some 200,000 women and children were taken into slavery by raiding North Sudanese militia forces throughout the war, and 500,000 south Sudanese fled Sudan to neighbouring countries.

The war was ended with the 2005 Nairobi Peace Agreement. According to the agreement, south Sudan became autonomous for six years, at the end of which a referendum is to be held; oil field income is to be shared equally between both North and South; Islamic Shari'a law would be kept in the North, while in the South the elected assembly would decide. The Darfur conflict in western Sudan had its origins in this war.

### 3. CAMBODIA (1975–1979)

#### 1.4 MILLION DEAD

The Khmer Rouge party, led by Pol Pot, came to power in 1975. Strongly ideological, the Khmer Rouge followed agrarian Maoist Communist ideals, and believed that communism and urbanisation were incompatible. Once they assumed power, the methodical genocide began. Literally overnight, entire towns and cities were emptied, as people were ordered to move to the countryside and work in labour camps. Anyone caught wearing glasses or reading a book was considered an intellectual and shot; ethnic Vietnamese, Chinese or Thais, Buddhist monks, and members of the former government were also tortured and executed. By the time the Khmer Rouge was finally toppled in 1979 by Vietnamese forces, they had killed an estimated 1.4 million people (although some believe that up to 2 million perished). Subsequent excavations revealed thousands of mass graves all across Cambodia.

### 4. MOZAMBIQUE (1977-1992)

#### 900,000 DEAD

Mozambique's civil war began just two years following its independence from Portuguese colonial rule. The war was waged between the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), which assumed power upon independence, and the Mozambique Resistance Movement (RENAMO). Neighbouring Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and apartheid South Africa both became involved in the civil war, financing and arming RENAMO in the hope of toppling the FRELIMO government, which allowed rebel forces fighting the Rhodesian and South African governments to base themselves in Mozambique. RENAMO's well-financed war machine drove Mozambique to economic ruin and ended up displacing over 5 million Mozambicans and killing close to a million. RENAMO forces deliberately targeted civilians, burning them alive, choking them to death and shooting entire villages at random. In the early 1990s, with the Cold War over and apartheid about to crumble, RENAMO found itself penniless, and a peace was negotiated with the presence of UN peacekeepers. Mozambique became a multi-party democracy, and the last UN peacekeeping force left Mozambique in 1995.

### 5. AFGHANISTAN (1978-PRESENT)

#### 1.3 MILLION - 2 MILLION DEAD

Forget Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan has been at war for the past 30 years. Over that period

it has seen Soviet communist troops, Islamic rebels and western NATO forces take their turn at ravaging this once-peaceful central Asian nation. In 1978, following a series of uprisings by CIA-funded mujahedeen (Islamic warriors) across the country, the Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan. The ensuing war lasted until 1989, killing over 1 million Afghans, disabling 1.2 million and maiming a further 3 million.

The civil war continued following the Soviet withdrawal, and in 1996 the Taliban (a Sunni Islamist, fundamentalist religious and political movement) conquered Kabul, Afghanistan's capital. Rival forces, most notably the Northern Alliance, continued to fight, and the war raged on. By the turn of the century, however, the Taliban controlled 95% of Afghanistan, and the Northern Alliance was on the verge of collapse. The US-led War on Terror which followed the 9/11 attacks, however, has reignited the conflict. Afghanistan continues to be a nation at war, with little end in sight.

## 6. RWANDA (1994)

### 800,000 TO 1 MILLION DEAD

Between April and July 1994, over 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred by Hutus. The genocide lasted approximately 100 days, but the killing occurred at a rate faster than that of the Holocaust. Up to 500,000 women and girls were raped.

The genocide began following the death of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana in a plane crash, although hatred and resentment towards the Tutsis had festered for many years prior to the genocide and dated back to Belgian colonial rule. Rumour quickly spread that the Tutsi were responsible for the crash. The Interahamwe (a Hutu militia), encouraged by the government, began mass killings of Tutsis. Radio broadcasts by Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines incited the killing even further, calling Tutsis 'cockroaches' and goading Hutus to go on killing because 'the graves are not yet full'.

Despite repeated pleas for help, the international community, most notably the United Nations, failed to help. The genocide ended when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Paul Kagame, entered Rwanda from neighbouring Uganda and defeated the Hutu government. Over 2 million Rwandans, mainly Hutu perpetrators of the genocide, fled the country for Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire.

## 7. ANGOLA (1975-2002)

### AT LEAST 600,000 DEAD

The Angolan civil war began soon after the war for independence from Portugal of 1975. It was fought by two rival factions, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) although as the war dragged on splinter groups emerged.

Angola was an unfortunate victim of Cold War superpower rivalries. The communist MPLA was financed and armed by the Soviet Union, while UNITA received the backing of the USA and neighbouring South Africa. Both the USA and Soviet Union considered Angola to be a lynchpin in their domino theory of world politics (domino theory speculated that if one country became communist/capitalist, then neighbouring countries would 'fall' in quick succession, like dominoes).

As a result, the civil war was fuelled by sponsorships and large cash donations from both Cold War superpowers. The MPLA received \$1 billion in aid from the Soviet Union in 1986 alone; at the same time, UNITA leaders were meeting at the White House with Ronald Reagan and arranging for weapons shipments to be delivered to UNITA fighters in Angola.

The war ended when Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's leader, was murdered by the Angolan military in 2002. Shortly

after his death a ceasefire was put into place and elections called. The war had a devastating effect on Angola. It left over 4 million people displaced, 80% of the population with no basic medical care and 60% with no source of clean water. Both UNITA and the MPLA used child soldiers extensively throughout the war.

## 8. IRAQ (2002-PRESENT)

### 600,000 DEAD

Iraq and its ongoing troubles receive a great deal of press, so there is no need to go into any great detail regarding the conflict. Suffice it to say that the war began in 2002 when a coalition of countries, led by the USA and UK, invaded Iraq in a pre-emptive war, ostensibly in the suspicion that Iraq was manufacturing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). No WMDs have ever been found in Iraq, and although conventional hostilities were over very quickly, the conflict soon escalated as guerrilla warfare tactics, including suicide bombings, became the norm.

Controversy has arisen over the calculated number of war deaths in Iraq. A number of different sources have wildly differing figures, as was discussed [here](#), ranging from roughly 90,000 to well over 1 million. We have selected 600,000 as an estimate: in October 2006 a study by the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* estimated that 650,000 people had been killed by the conflict. Although the study was (and still is) controversial, it is one of the few to have been peer-reviewed. 3 years have passed since the study was carried out. Judging by the continued violence in Iraq, an estimate of 600,000 seems, if anything, a conservative one.

## 9. SOMALIA (1991-PRESENT)

### 300,000 TO 400,000 DEAD

The Somali civil war began in 1991 following the overthrow of Siad Barre, Somalia's president. Insurrections by Barre's supporters sought to return him to the presidency, and as the war escalated battle lines grew increasingly murky as the country descended into anarchy.

As the war progressed, splinter groups began to appear, each with its own interests to defend and staked territory. Between 1998 and 2006 Somalia was, for all intents and purposes, a failed state: various regions declared autonomy from Somalia, with Somaliland going as far as declaring complete independence from Somalia.

Although technically a civil war, in 2006 the United Nations believed that as many as 11 countries were fuelling the Somali war – with eight countries supplying the Islamist factions with weapons, and three other states backing the internationally-recognised (but toothless) Somali government. Somalia essentially became a battleground in which third countries could wage their proxy wars, while over 300,000 Somalis were killed and over 3 million in need of food aid.

## 10. BURUNDI (1993-2009)

### 300,000 DEAD

This is one of the least-known conflicts on this list. Burundi's civil war was fought over the long-standing divisions between Hutu and Tutsi tribes – the same divisions that caused the Rwandan genocide (see no. 6) in 1994.

Ethnic divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi (which had been brewing for a long time) hit breaking point in 1993. Following a number of government reforms, Hutu peasants killed hundreds of Tutsi leaders and their families in northern Burundi; in retaliation, the army killed thousands of Hutu. When Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi's first ever Hutu president, was assassinated just 3 months into his presidency, the violence quickly escalated. The conflict was brutal and verged on the genocidal. In 2002 the United Nations published a report

in which the 1993 massacre of Tutsi by Hutus constituted genocide. The report also concluded that in 1972 the Tutsi government had made a “systematic effort to exterminate all educated Hutus”.

A peace agreement between the two main warring factions was signed in 2000. By 2006 all the rebel groups had agreed to a ceasefire and signed the peace agreement, and in April 2009 the last rebel group officially announced that it was forgoing violence and entering politics. By then, over 300,000 people had been killed, and over half a million people had lost their homes.

## 11. CHECHNYA – OVER 200,000 DEAD

## 12. EAST TIMOR – 200,000 DEAD

## 13. LIBERIA – 200,000 DEAD

## 14. SIERRA LEONE – 150,000 DEAD

## 15. BALKANS – 140,000 DEAD

## ISRAEL-PALESTINE

What about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? It is hard to emerge with an accurate death toll figure, but since the 1973 Yom Kippur war less than 40,000 Israelis and Palestinians have been killed as a result of ongoing conflict – seven and a half times fewer deaths than in Burundi, and over 30 times fewer deaths than Afghanistan. And yet a cursory glance at many newspapers would give you the completely opposite impression: the conflict is given much more prominence than other, far deadlier wars. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is certainly worthy of our attention: the question is - why are other conflicts so easily overlooked, despite their enormous casualties? Is a dead child in Mozambique worth less than one in Israel or Palestine?

---

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**Conflicts in Africa** – Many of the forgotten wars cited in the above background information occurred in Africa, and this link to an article published on [globalissues.org](http://globalissues.org) not only explores some of these conflicts in further detail, but also touches upon why these wars are ignored.

<http://www.globalissues.org/issue/83/conflicts-in-africa>

**Stealth Conflicts** – An interesting blog run by a man called Virgil Hawkins. Besides comparing the death toll of a number of forgotten wars to more popular conflicts, Mr Hawkins also maps out media coverage of conflicts and blogs on ignored conflict situations across the world.

<http://stealthconflicts.wordpress.com/>