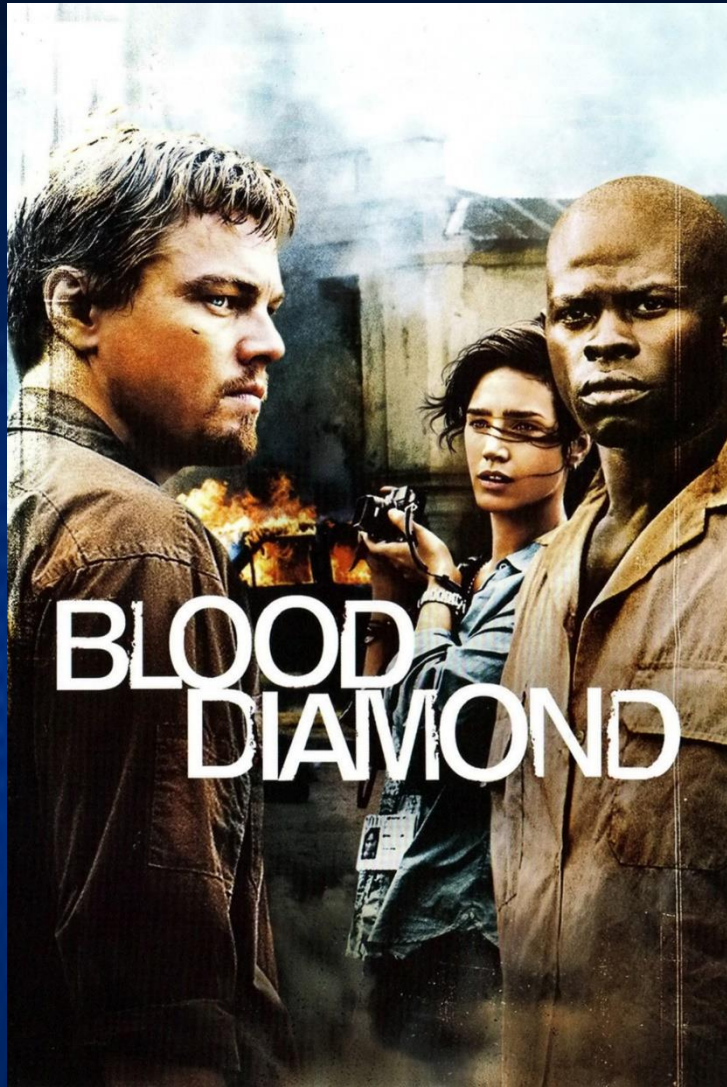


“Blood Diamond”



Real History

- The aftermath of Sierra Leone's Civil War

Themes

- Conflict diamonds, colonial influences
- War correspondents
- Child Soldiers, rehabilitation and reintegration processes
- Role of United Nations Peacekeeping Forces
- Mercenaries in lawless areas
- Territorial Conflict
- Displacement of peoples
- Civil wars
- Trafficking of smuggled items
- Ineffective government structure and bribery of officials
- Acquiring conflict diamonds
- Economics
- Kimberly Process Certification...did it work?

Critical matters

- Issues of morality/ethics

Real History of Sierra Leone Civil War

Sierra Leone endured a civil war from 1991 to 2002.

Main cause of the Sierra Leone Civil War:

A coup/revolt against a longstanding dictatorship. The war was fueled by wealth from diamonds located in the east of the country, where the Rebel United Front (RUF) was strongest.

50,000 – 70,000 casualties

2.5 million displaced internally or externally

Child soldiers played a key role in the Revolutionary United Front and a lesser role in government forces and various militias.

↳ UNICEF states that during this period 84,666 children were officially documented as missing.

The conflict seemed to come to an end with the signing of the Lome Accord in 1999, but fighting did not cease until after 2000.

The disarmament and demobilization commitments were met by January 2002.

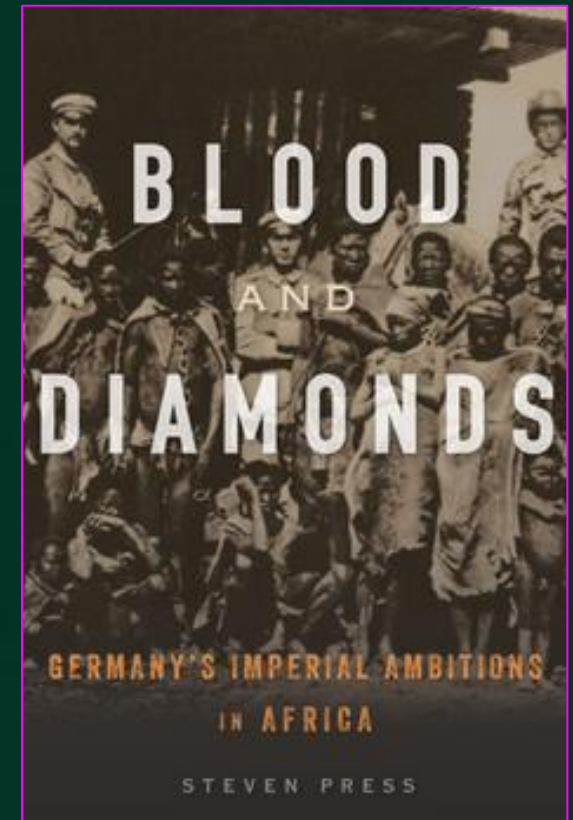
➤ Conflict diamonds

↳ Colonial origins of conflict diamonds

↳ *“Blood and Diamonds”, 2021 by Steven Press: 1884 to 1918, the German colonial government and its representatives perpetrated genocide against the indigenous (in Namibia) Nama and Herero peoples while scouring the region for diamonds. Germany’s ambition reshaped the global diamond market and continues to do so today*

The British had come into the diamond market ahead of the Germans and had constructed a false narrative about diamond scarcity, thus creating more demand. Stepping into this British-dominated market was a strategic move for Germany.

The Germans made strategic alliances with the diamond cutters of Antwerp and took advantage of the consumer appetites of Americans, who embraced mass-marketed diamond engagement rings. “By 1908, the United States accounted for 75 percent of world diamond demand, followed distantly by Britain, Germany and France,” Press writes. “Americans became consumers of ‘blood’ or ‘conflict’ diamonds, well before such concepts existed.” Press found that after the extraction of rough diamonds in Namibia, the price of an average diamond increased by 20 times. Such inflation started in Berlin, where a consortium of bankers slapped major markups on diamonds in exchange for the easy work of forwarding them to Antwerp for cutting. In Antwerp, cut diamonds doubled in price and were shipped out to the United States. After dealing with importers, American jewelers finally sold diamonds to consumers after another price increase of 50 percent.”



➤ **War correspondent** (Journalists in war zones)

Often considered the most dangerous form of journalism

↳ **Challenges reporting war**...how communicate out? How guarantee your safety?

↳ **Risks**

↳ Male and female reporters are tasked with the very same job.

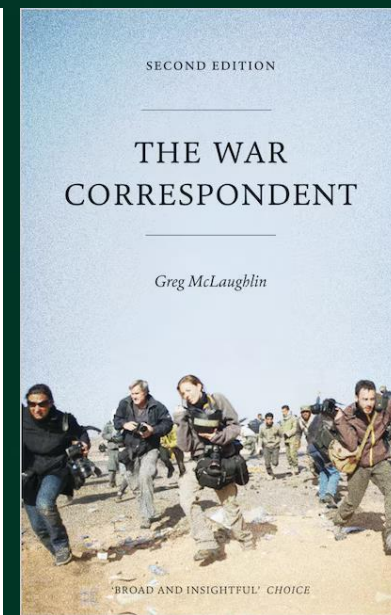
“They embedded themselves with guerrillas, endured shellfire, travelled for days in the same clothes – and listened to those desperate voices that need listening to. Male or female alike: skin would get caked with dirt, while the air around swirled with the fog of body odor, panic and death. Fear was a great equalizer.”

↳ **Women journalists**

↳ **Being female also bears certain risks** (sexual assault, harassment, paternalistic hierarchy)

➤ It used to be that Journalists – if identified as such – would be protected only as long as they did not take a direct part in the hostilities.

↳ This is no longer a guarantee of protection





Daniel Pearl, 1963 – 2002

Reporting for the Wall Street Journal, he went to Pakistan to report on Richard Reid (the shoe bomber) and connections to al-Qaeda. He was abducted (he was told it was an interview) and decapitated in Pakistan. Body found cut in ten pieces, video released later.



Lara Logan, 1971 – (living)

Beaten and assaulted by a mob while reporting in Cairo. Worked for CBS News, most recently worked for Fox News.

“You are signing yourself up for a lifetime of PTSD if you actively pursue those kinds of near-death experiences.”

Clarissa Ward

Worked for CNN and CBS. Covered war in Baghdad Iraq in 2005, and also reported from the front lines in Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan, and the Russian incursions in Ukraine and Georgia.

"It's a very strange feeling because it's utterly unemotional," said Ward, who was embedded with the U.S. army when multiple suicide bombers attacked her compound. "I had always thought that when you are in a real situation where you think you might die, that you'd be sort of crying or thinking that you want your parents, or your loved ones."

Instead, she remembers going into "an almost zombie frame of mind, where you're just trying to get your run bag and get into the panic room." "There is a little voice that was going over and over in the back of my head: 'Why am I here? What am I doing here? I don't belong here, I could die here,'" she said. "You realize that it's not a game, that it's not exciting and glamorous, that it's real, it's hell, it's war."

Ward said the incident in Baghdad was a "wake-up call" to make sure she was taking risks "for the right reasons," while "doing everything you can to mitigate them." "I understood that while I would keep going to dangerous places, I would go out of my way to avoid being in real front-line combat situations," she said. But she said she's seen other journalists become addicted to life on the front lines.

"The moment that you become addicted to it is the moment when you know you've survived." "There's this thrill of excitement: 'Oh, my gosh, we survived, we're alive, what a great story we have to tell – let's stay up really late and keep telling the story over and over again until it suddenly is no longer real.'" You are signing yourself up for a lifetime of PTSD if you actively pursue those kinds of near-death experiences."

Ward said she's seen extremely disturbing things in conflict zones, but the impact is not immediate. "I would see a child die, I would be shocked by it, but not necessarily really processing it in that moment," she said. "I would leave the war zone, go home, feel completely detached from my life, completely detached from the people who I love, my friends and my family."

That impact on reporters' mental health is "still a taboo amongst people who do this kind of work," she said. There needs to be more open and frank discussion to "get rid of this stigma attached to struggling with covering these types of stories," she said. "You need to be proactive about looking after yourself, looking after your mental health, checking in with yourself constantly to see where you're at."



Clarissa Ward

War Correspondents



Iryna Rybakova (Ukrainian military press officer) and Ruslan Smieshchuk (journalist for Ukraine tv) outside a Russian-occupied city in eastern Ukraine
A dozen journalists were killed in first six months.



Terrell Jermaine Starr
University of Illinois graduate, he covered the war in the Ukraine.



Child Soldiers

↳ Child soldiers can take on many roles, including active fighting, acting as spies or lookouts, or acting in support roles, such as medic, porter, cook, or agricultural laborer. While some child soldiers are abducted and forced to serve, others choose to serve, because these groups will provide food, shelter, and a sense of security.



Child Soldiers

Revised October 2013 by John Cornet

The Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008 (CPSA) is meant to bar the United States from providing military assistance to countries who have "governmental armed forces or government-supported armed groups, including paramilitaries, militias, or civil defense forces, that recruit and use child soldiers."

A national security interest waiver was built into the law, however, giving the President the authority to override the law should he deem it necessary to do so. That's precisely what the Obama Administration did in October 2013, issuing blanket waivers to three countries known to use child soldiers: Yemen, Chad, and South Sudan. Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo received partial waivers as well. This year, the State Department issued a list of ten countries that had been found to be using child soldiers: Burma (Myanmar), the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Of those, seven were due to receive military aid from the United States, an action which the CPSA barred.

Key facts and statistics about child soldiers

- There are an estimated 250,000 child soldiers in the world today.
- It is estimated that 40% of all child soldiers are girls. They are often used as 'wives' (i.e. sex slaves) of the male combatants.
- Many rebel groups use child soldiers to fight the government, but some governments also use child soldiers in armed conflict.
- Not all children take part in active combat. Some are also used as porters, cooks and spies.
- As part of their recruitment and indoctrination, children are sometimes forced to kill or maim a family member - thus breaking the bonds with their community and making it difficult for them to return home.

In Chad child soldier use by armed forces and non-state armed groups has been extensive. From 2006, large numbers of children were recruited into the Chadian army to fight against armed opposition groups. The latter also recruited girls and boys extensively and used them to fight in hostilities. In addition, during the Chad-Sudan proxy war (2005-2010), the Chadian government supported Sudanese armed groups recruiting children on its territory.

Islamist rebels recruit child soldiers from Mali schools.

In Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2001, murders, rapes, torture and thousands of amputations were committed by the Small Boys unit of the Revolutionary United Front.

In the Central African Republic, children were part of state-allied armed groups.

Democratic Republic of Congo has one of the highest rates of child soldiers.

In Burundi, children aged 10-16 were conscripted by the military

Children engaged in war are as young as 7 and are forced into conflict due to poverty, sold by their parents, kidnapped or tricked into joining.

In Uganda, the Lords Resistance Army has abducted over 30,000 boys and girls as soldiers. Girls are often forced to be sex slaves, and both genders are used as human shields.

The Zimbabwe government sponsors Youth militias, with members as young as 10

In Sudan in 2004, there were an estimated 17,000 children in government forces, allied militias and opposition groups. This continues, in spite of a widely publicized demobilization program.

In Somalia, over 200,000 children have been recruited by the country's militias against their will.

In Eritrea, children were used in armed opposition groups against the government, and were supported by foreign states

In the Occupied Territories, Palestinian youth have been used as spies to gather intelligence, and have engaged in suicide bombings against Israeli civilians

Over 9,000 children under age 13 serve in the Nepal forces

Up to 80,000 children are involved in the Naxalite insurgency. Countering this, India uses children as spies and messengers.

Terrorist group Hezbollah trains children for military service

How do child soldiers get recruited?

- Some are abducted from their homes and forced to become soldiers (a tactic notoriously used by the Lords Resistance Army in eastern Africa.)
- A village may be forced to provide a certain number of children as soldiers in exchange for staying safe from attack.
- Some children are volunteered by their parents due to extreme poverty and hunger at home.
- In some rare cases children volunteer to join the fight because of ideological reasons or to avenge the death of their family.

Child Soldiers

↳ Rehabilitation and reintegration

- ❖ Often the first step is to **reunite the former child soldier with their family and provide adequate monetary and institutional support**. Access to education is one of the most requested forms of support in post-conflict environments, but is often unavailable for economic reasons. Some studies have shown that community-led reintegration is more beneficial than Western-driven trauma healing in dealing with the psychological challenges of reintegration. (*cultural relevance*)
- ❖ There is often a stigma that children who belonged to armed groups are immoral, untrustworthy, or dangerous and therefore many individuals are **rejected by community members, making reintegration difficult**. Reintegration efforts can become challenging when a child has committed war crimes, as in these cases stigma and resentment within the community can be exacerbated.
- ❖ **Female child soldiers commonly face additional barriers** to successful reintegration. Girls report significantly higher rates of rape and sexual abuse during a conflict and are, therefore, confronted with unique, gender-specific challenges. They often face stronger stigmatization on their return to the community since they are often considered tainted by physical relationships that occurred outside of marriage. They are often ostracized upon return, ridiculed, verbally and physically attacked and prohibited from marrying.
- ❖ There are other areas of reintegration that warrant special consideration: Child soldiers under the influence of **drugs** or who have **contracted sexually transmitted diseases** require additional programming specific to their unique needs.

➤ Post war (specific to Sierra Leone, and child soldiers)

- ↳ The rehabilitation and reintegration process focused primarily on community-based solutions. The main goal was to reunite children with their families.
- ↳ To this end several Interim Care Centers (ICCs) were established and administered by child protection NGOs. These ICCs sought to serve as temporary stops for children while their families were identified. 98% of demobilized children were reunited with one or both parents, older siblings or extended family. ICCs kept children for no longer than six weeks before returning them to family or foster care.
- ↳ ICCs began the process of rehabilitating former child soldiers into society. They separated them from the command structures that dominated much of their lives re-accustomed them to domestic life. This included performing chores, living to a normal schedule, receiving an education, and playing with other children.
- ↳ Notably, the ICCs were not focused on providing formal, western psychotherapy sessions and less than 100 children received therapy.
- ↳ Reintegration centered on easing former child soldiers back into their communities. Parents and family members were often eager to welcome back children who had been child soldiers. To help them, various NGOs provided local family classes on how to deal with children who had been traumatized by the war.

- ↪ The local community, on the other hand, was less accepting of these children and often attacked aid workers for being associated with child soldiers. This did not apply to children who were part of the pro-government Civil Defense Force, which was widely seen as helpful by local communities.
- ↪ Wider social acceptance is shown in studies to have been crucial in easing trauma for child soldiers. To this end, communities were educated as to the traumas experienced by child soldiers as well as given help to organize traditional cleansing ceremonies. Additionally, children who were branded with symbols of the groups who abducted them were given plastic surgery to remove scars or tattoos. Further, schools received additional funding in order to incentivize the intake of former child soldiers.
- ↪ 92% of the participants in UNICEF's formal DDR program were males. Former female child soldiers were often not included out of personal shame or due to not being combatants. Many female children were used for sex or married in bush weddings. These marriages tended to keep females isolated and their husbands would often not allow them to engage in rehabilitation programs.



➤ Role of United Nations Peacekeeping Forces

↳ Peacekeeping/monitoring programs

↳ Programs that aim to rehabilitate and reintegrate child soldiers, such as those sponsored by UNICEF, often emphasize three components (takes 3-5 years to be successfully implemented):

1. family reunification/community network,

2. psychological support, and

↳ Psychological support means getting the youth to reject their identity as a child soldier

3. education/economic opportunity



↳ Refugee camps

↳ Nearly 400,000 Sierra Leoneans were refugees in 2000.

↳ Many tens of thousands more are internally displaced

↳ Tribal rivalry's multiple within the camps

↳ UN protects the camps from outside, but does not police inside



Refugee Camps



↳ The 3rd largest refugee camp in the world is in Kakuma, Kenya

This refugee camp was established in 1992. It currently (2022) has a population of 284,550, the majority of whom fled Somalia and South Sudan.

↳ Point of comparison: Eugene OR is 174,000, Salem OR is 177,000, Medford OR is 87,000

Although it was a planned camp, conditions over the past two decades have deteriorated. Malnutrition and infectious disease are common health problems in the camp, in part due to how overcrowded it is. Administered by the UN



Kenya
This is
actually
three camps
which
merged into
one...the 2nd
largest in the
world

320,000+
refugees



Bangladesh

Largest in the world...33 smaller camps surround this one, and collectively they number over 931,000
Since 2017, nearly 1.2 million Rohingya Muslims – a stateless ethnic group residing in Myanmar – had to leave their homes due to being targeted. Many came to the camp in neighboring Bangladesh.

Homes are in landslide-prone areas. Monsoon season!
Many are living on just 27 cents/day





Bangladesh



Bangladesh

c.2024, there are over 120 million people globally who have been forced to relocate due to persecution, violence, war or human rights abuse. They include

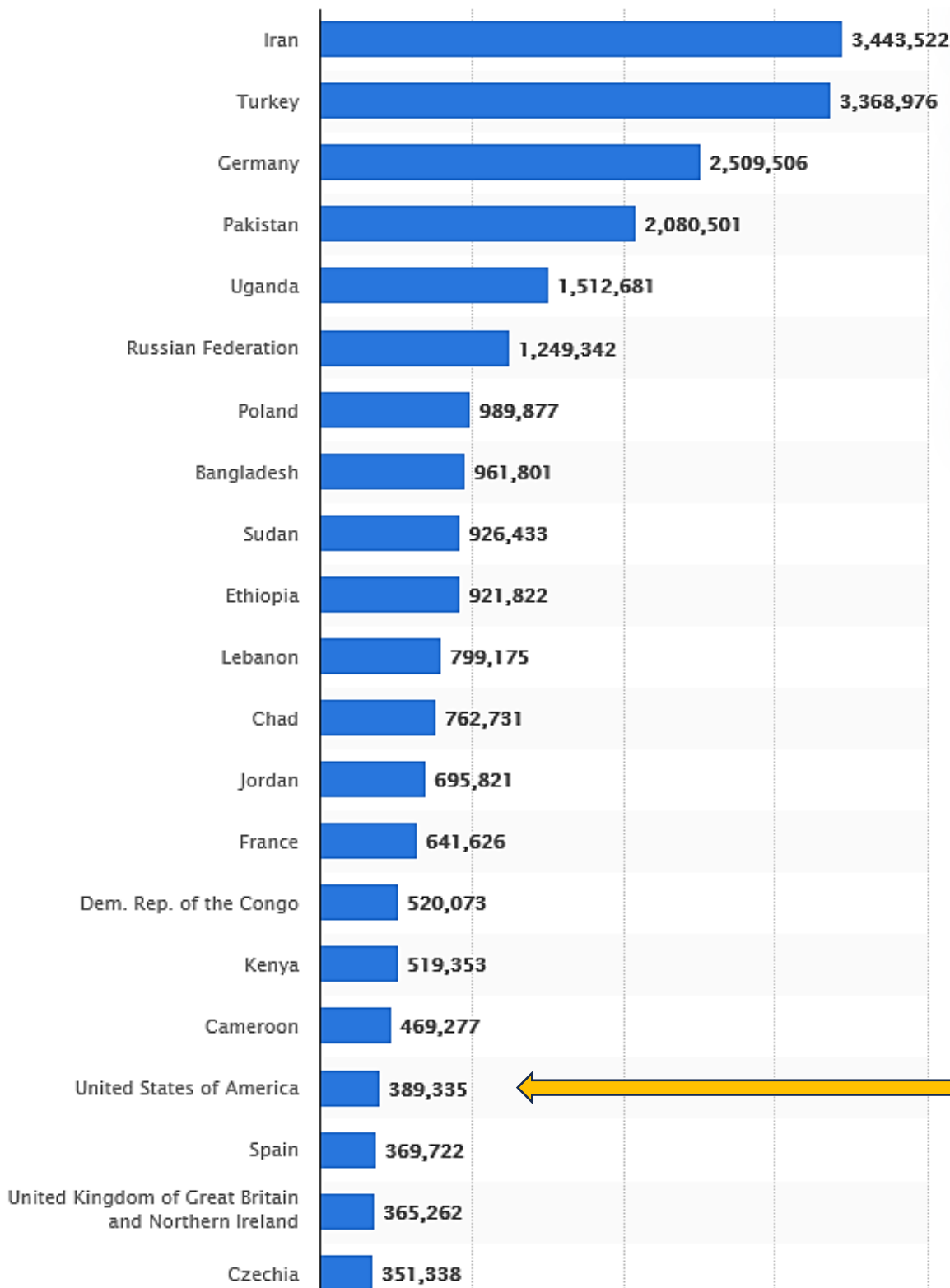
- 43.3 million refugees

- 63.3 million internally displaced people

- 6.9 million asylum seekers

- 5.8 million individuals requiring international protection

Rankings of the largest refugee-hosting countries (as of 2023)



US ranked nr.18

*2023 poll: 24% US should accept more refugees
31% current acceptance rate is right
30% US should accept fewer refugees*

➤ Mercenaries in lawless areas

Mercenaries are banned by the United Nations and Geneva Conventions

- ↳ More African countries are turning to foreign security companies to protect leaders or deploy them in conflict zones
- ↳ The private security industry has a long history on the African continent.
"This state of affairs is fostered by **two factors: the weakness of government institutions in some countries and the continent's wealth of mineral resources.**"
- ↳ Some mercenaries make \$500 to \$1,500 per day. Interrogators are rumored to make up to \$14,000 per week. The salary ranges from \$89,000 to \$250,000 per year
 - ↳ Blackwater is considered a US-based mercenary group
 - ↳ Name change:
"Blackwater" (1996) → "Constellis" → "Xe Services" (2009) → "Academi" (2011)
Notorious for massacre in Baghdad, where 17 Iraqi civilians killed and 20 injured.
 - ↳ **1989 UN Mercenary Convention banned the use of mercenaries. The US and UK did not sign the treaty.**
- ↳ US Law: **No US law currently restricts or prohibits US persons from serving in a foreign mercenary force. They just cannot act as mercenaries or be recruited while still in the US.**
 - ↳ Only the US government is restricted from hiring mercenaries under what is known as the Anti-Pinkerton Act of 1893

Proliferation of Landmines

Revised November 2011 by John Cornet

In France's Ardennes region, unexploded ordnance continue to force evacuations.

1 million mines are scattered throughout Ukrainian soil, most of which date to World War II

Southern Lebanon littered with 1% undetonated cluster bombs per inhabitant in the region.

On the Bangladesh-Burma border, mines were laid to prevent cross border movement, preventing not just armed ethnic opposition groups from crossing the border, but also refugees while impeding cross border economic activities

Bosnia Herzegovina has 3 million mines on former front line combat areas. Every month, 30-55 are killed, 80% of whom are civilian.

On the island of Cyprus, there are 77 mine fields.

22 million mines and unexploded ordnance are in northwest Egypt, a legacy of the Nazi occupation.

Flooding can relocate mines hundreds of miles away from their origin, including across national boundaries. If the re-deposited mine is covered deeply in soil, even mine detectors can't locate them.

Since 1995, children have made up over half of the 50,000-100,000 mine victims in Rwanda

Angola has between 10-20 million mines loose in the country, equal to 1-2 per resident!

Major international treaty:

Convention on the Prohibition on the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines (aka "Ottawa Treaty"), 1997

Three major types of mines:

- ⇒ Anti-personnel land mines
 - ⇒ Anti-tank mines
 - ⇒ Cluster munitions/bombs
- Most areas affected have no public awareness program

The top 13 landmine-producing countries in the world:

Burma, China, Cuba, India, Iran, North Korea, South Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam.

Mozambique has 3 million mines in random places.

Iraq has over 10 million mines

16 million mines in Iran, mostly in the west and southwest

97% of Kuwait was mined in 1991. Today, over 5 million mines are thought to remain.

Egyptian placed mines – 23 million of them – are mostly concentrated in the Sinai Peninsula (the border with Israel)

Somalia has 1 million mines. The Central and southern parts of the country are most contaminated by unexploded ordnance.

Impact of Landmines

- Reduces land available for agricultural production, livestock grazing and future population growth. Threatens wild animal populations.
- Increases transportation costs and medical needs (rehabilitation; due to injuries)
- Loss of human life and disability of all ages
- Lack of security for communities
- Presents obstacles to repatriation of peoples and reintegration of land

Thousands of mines are in the demilitarized zone separating North from South Korea.

In Laos, it is estimated that 30% of the 5 million cluster bombs dropped during Vietnam conflict did not detonate. 288 million cluster munitions and about 75 million unexploded bombs remained when the war ended.

Myanmar/Burma: government and 13 rebel group use mines. The military forces civilians to be minesweepers; 15% of mine victims were within a half mile of their home village.

8-10 million mines litter Cambodia. 40,000 citizens have suffered amputations since 1979. No military groups use them anymore, but some civilians will use mines to protect their property (this happens in Russia too).

In Afghanistan, over 10 million mines are planted indiscriminately all over the country. This includes in agricultural fields, grazing areas, irrigation canals, residential areas, roads and both rural and urban footpaths. 10-12 people are killed daily.

- Territorial conflict and ethnic rivalry
- Displacement of peoples
- Trafficking of smuggled items
 - ↳ Diamonds, guns, humans
- Ineffective government structure and bribery of officials
- Acquiring conflict diamonds
 - ↳ Human rights abuses, beatings torture, murder, slavery / forced labor
 - ↳ Habitat destruction
- Economics
 - ↳ Supply and demand
 - ↳ How are corporations controlling the price of the diamonds on the global market?
- Kimberley Process Certification Scheme
 - sought to certify the origin of rough diamonds in order to curb the trade in conflict diamonds; the certification scheme has since been mostly abandoned as ineffective by 2011.
 - Conflict diamonds are illegal in the US (if they can be identified)

Conflict or “blood” diamonds are illegally traded to fund conflict in war-torn areas, particularly in central and western Africa. It is illegal to buy, sell and trade conflict diamonds.

FILM QUESTIONS

- What human rights issues are illustrated in the film?
- What tactics is the RUF using to turn youth into child soldiers? How does this contrast to the rehabilitation village?
- For each character in the film, diamonds represent a different idea or symbol. Captain Poison, for example, sees the pink diamond as his ticket to a better life. What do diamonds represent to each of the characters?
- When Danny talks to Benjamin, the school teacher, Benjamin says that he wants to believe all people are basically good, but his experience tells him otherwise. Danny replies that people are just people. What do you think he means by this statement?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- In what ways is violence sources from conflict diamonds an extension of colonial history?
- To what extent (if at all) does the West bear responsibility for the conflict in Africa over conflict diamonds?
- Are diamond rings unethical?
- Consider the natural resources in the land. How might this current source-of-conflict be re-purposed and utilized as an asset to the country to rebuild? What is necessary to move toward this potential?