



PRESS RELEASE
(for immediate release – 31 May 2010)

**Launch of online portal on
“Business, Conflict & Peace”**

Today at the United Nations in Geneva, the non-profit Business & Human Rights Resource Centre is launching the first global information hub on “Business, Conflict & Peace”, available here:

www.business-humanrights.org/ConflictPeacePortal

Chris Avery, Director of the Resource Centre, said: *“We are giving this subject priority because it is in conflict zones where abuses are most severe, where the risk of complicity is greatest, and where victims are the most vulnerable. We created this portal to bring together in one place all the best information about how companies are impacting human rights (positively or negatively) in conflict and post-conflict zones – and to provide guidance on how to avoid abuses”.*

Mauricio Lazala, Resource Centre Senior Researcher, emphasised that this portal potentially covers all companies in all sectors:

“As one would expect, the portal contains the latest news and reports about private military and security firms in Afghanistan and Iraq, extractive firms in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and jewellery firms sourcing from Burma.

But nearly every major company is either operating in a conflict zone itself, or its supply chain extends to zones of conflict. For example, the portal also covers car and mobile phone companies sourcing “conflict minerals” from DRC, biofuel firms displacing communities in Colombia, airline carriers engaged in illegal arms trade, oil firms accused of exacerbating conflict in Nigeria, and companies in Colombia, Nepal and Sri Lanka contributing to peacebuilding initiatives.”

The portal’s content comes from many sources: NGOs and humanitarian organizations, International Committee of the Red Cross, governments, journalists, academics, and companies themselves. The portal has a news section, updated round the clock.

The portal’s aim is to give practical assistance to:

- **NGOs:** by highlighting their concerns & initiatives; providing information to help their research and campaigning
- **companies:** by providing guidance tools; examples of good and bad practice
- **governments:** information to help them protect against abuses by business; examples of government initiatives
- **media:** information about under-the-radar cases and issues they may want to investigate
- **investors and consumers:** information to guide their decisions

The portal explains key initiatives in this field, such as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, the conflict zone initiative recently launched by United Nations Special Representative on business & human rights John Ruggie, the Montreux Document on Private Military and Security Companies, the Kimberley Process, and Red Flags.

The portal has special sections on particular issues, such as killings, torture, complicity, peacebuilding, gender. It also profiles human rights lawsuits brought against companies operating in conflict zones.

The Resource Centre welcomes suggestions for additions to the portal at any time.

The portal is made possible by a grant from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

This press release is also available in [Spanish](#) and in [French](#).

This new portal complements four existing portals on the Resource Centre website:

- [Getting Started](#)
- [United Nations Special Representative on business & human rights](#)
- [Corporate Legal Accountability](#)
- [Tools & Guidance](#)

The portals and the entire Resource Centre website are engineered by [Jamkit](#), specialists in web solutions for the not-for-profit sector. Jamkit is part of the [Blue Fountain Systems](#) group of companies.

The [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#) tracks the human rights impacts (positive & negative) of 5000 companies in over 180 countries. The site is updated hourly and receives 1.5 million hits per month.

Mary Robinson chairs its 80-member International Advisory Network. Its 20 Academic Partners include leading institutes in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America.

For further information about the Resource Centre, see the "[About us](#)" section of the website.

If you have questions about the portals please contact:

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See the Resource Centre website for [contact details](#) of additional team members based in India, Senegal, South Africa, UK, Ukraine, USA

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