

Donald S. Mooers (1932 – 1 Oct 2004)

The Law Offices of Donald Mooers, LLC

The firm is headed by Donald Mooers, an attorney who has been a member of the Maryland Bar since 1987 and the Bar of the District of Columbia since 2000. He is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and is frequently seen and heard on television and radio stations throughout the Washington, DC area discussing current immigration law and policy issues.

Attorney Mooers' career in the State Department, the Clinton Administration and the private sector included work in 92 countries around the world. He also served on the staff of a Member of the U.S. Congress. As such, Mooers combines a deep understanding of immigration and nationality law with a working knowledge of global affairs and U.S. government operations.

Mr. Mooers received his Juris Doctorate degree from the George Washington University Law School, and his Bachelor's degree from Duke University. He was a Fulbright Scholar in Mauritius, and studied at Oxford University. Mr. Mooers served two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sierra Leone. He currently hosts the weekly television program Global Montgomery.

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Holiday Diamond Sales Enrich Terrorist Network

By Donald Mooers and Etta Toure

Washington -- Years before the mass killings at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida network were responsible for the death and maiming of tens of thousands of helpless children and civilians in the West African nation of Sierra Leone.

Last year, several U.S.-based groups supported in part by Baltimore schoolchildren, brought six Sierra Leonean child amputee victims to the United States for treatment, artificial limbs and a visit to Congress. Their innocence had been robbed by vicious rebels who calmly hacked off the arms and legs to terrorize the adults of their diamond-rich villages and towns.

Earlier this month, journalists confirmed al-Qaida's direct link to Sierra Leone's diamonds. The country's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and other bin Laden proxies in the area masterminded and oversaw the deliberate amputations for control of the diamonds.

These diamonds threaten America. The pipeline continues to flow from the mines of Sierra Leone to the diamond markets of Europe and then to jewelry stores in the United States. Americans buy an estimated 65 percent of the world's diamonds and 75 percent of diamond jewelry is bought during the forthcoming holiday season. Americans buy an estimated 65 percent of the world's diamonds and 75 percent of diamond jewelry is bought during the forthcoming season. Americans no longer remain complacent about diamonds mined in Sierra Leone.

By purchasing diamond jewelry, Americans may be directly helping bin Laden and Al-Qaida finance their war on terrorism against us. Conflict, or "blood," diamonds take on a whole new meaning because the proceeds from their sale finance the purchase of bullets and bombs. The war in Sierra Leone has destroyed what remained of the country's educational, health and judicial systems. Decades of corruption and inattention had already weakened the country's infrastructure when the war over diamonds began in 1990.

We recommend a three-part program to address the flow of diamonds from Sierra Leone to bin Laden and al-Qaida:

- American consumers should stop buying diamonds until a system of reliable certification can be put into place that guarantees their source of origin.

- The United States should, as a component of NATO's Article V powers governing the alliance's response to the attack on the United States, mobilize NATO troops to monitor Sierra Leone's diamond mining activities.

- As the military situation in Sierra Leone stabilizes, the United States and the international community should commit the resources necessary to assist the country to create institutions promoting a civil society, including the judiciary, education, health and social services systems.

The United States is long overdue in getting serious about cutting off the financial pipeline of the people who want us dead.

We must end the terrorists' supply of easy money by getting them out of Sierra Leone.

Until decisive action is taken on conflict diamonds, Americans pondering the purchase of a diamond ring this holiday season need to know that their decision could be the difference between bin Laden and al-Qaida outfitting another terrorist aiming to kill us.

Donald Mooers, a former State Department senior adviser and former Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone, practices immigration law in Washington. Etta Toure, born in Sierra Leone, is a volunteer project director for Friends of Sierra Leone.