

JEWELRY

Tiffany & Co. leads luxury jewelers making strides toward ethical sourcing: Human Rights Watch

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For more than 25 years, Tiffany has been committed to conducting business responsibly, sustaining the natural environment and positively impacting communities. Image credit: Tiffany & Co.

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

New York-based Tiffany & Co. received a "strong" ranking in a new report from Human Rights Watch on responsible sourcing in the jewelry industry, while fellow luxury jewelers Bulgari and Cartier were scored as "moderate."

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In its 2020 report, **Human Rights Watch** assesses how jewelers' existing certification schemes lack rigor and transparency, determining that more needs to be done to assure consumers that the jewelry they buy is sourced responsibly. Now more than ever, due to the increased risk of abuse, jewelry companies should conduct human rights due diligence to ensure that they do not cause or contribute to rights abuses in their supply chains.

Opaque supply chains

Jewelry companies have shown progress in setting industry standards through individual policies for sourcing, however many still fall short of meeting international ethical norms.

As a follow up to its 2018 "The Hidden Cost of Jewelry" report, Human Rights Watch scrutinizes and ranks 15 major jewelry companies for their efforts to prevent and address human rights abuses in their gold and diamond supply chains between 2018 and 2020. It also assesses the role of broader industry initiatives, including certification standards.

Based on the policy and practice information provided by companies as well as publicly available information, Human Rights Watch was able to assess companies' human rights due diligence over the last two years.

Jewelry Companies on Responsible Sourcing: 2020 Ranking	
EXCELLENT Fulfills all of the criteria for responsible sourcing	
STRONG Has taken significant steps toward responsible sourcing	TIFFANY & CO. PANDORA
MODERATE Has taken some important steps toward responsible sourcing	BVLGARI Cartier SIGNET
FAIR Has taken a few steps toward responsible sourcing	BOODLES Chopard HARRY WINSTON
WEAK Has taken very few steps toward responsible sourcing	周大福 CHOW TAI FOOK CHRIS TANIISHQ
VERY WEAK Shows no evidence of steps toward responsible sourcing	
NO RANKING Provides no information regarding responsible sourcing	KALYAN MIKIMOTO ROLEX tbz

Jewelry companies on responsible sourcing 2020 ranking. Image credit: Human Rights Watch

Tiffany & Co., which will soon join the LVMH family, scored higher than the luxury group's Bulgari and Chopard. Swiss watchmaker Rolex did not receive a ranking due to a lack of available information.

Moving forward, all jewelry companies must implement strong human rights safeguards otherwise, they risk contributing to human rights abuses.

According to Human Rights Watch, companies should implement robust supply chain policies that are incorporated into contract with suppliers and are available to the public, establish chain of custody over gold and diamonds by documenting business transactions along the full supply chain back to the mine of origin, assess and respond to human rights risks throughout supply chains and check their own conduct and that of their suppliers throughout third-party audits.



An artisanal miner climbs out of a gold mine with a bag of rocks broken off from inside the mining pit at the unlicensed mining site of Nsuaem Top in Ghana. Image credit: Human Rights Watch

Additionally, companies should publicly report at regular intervals on their human rights due diligence, publish the names of their gold and diamond suppliers and source from responsible, rights-respecting artisanal and small-scale mines while supporting initiatives seeking to improve human rights conditions in artisanal mines.

In October, Tiffany & Co. chief sustainability officer Anisa Kamadoli Costa received the 2020 award for Ethical Leadership in Responsible Practice in Jewelry presented by Initiatives in Art and Culture ([see story](#)).