

The Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition
PRESS RELEASE
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Campaigners call for urgent action on Zimbabwe blood diamonds and wider reform of the Kimberley Process to prevent abuse

Kimberley Process (KP) members must act on the overwhelming evidence of Zimbabwe's failure to comply with the minimum requirements of the rough diamond certification scheme, said civil society groups today, ahead of the KP's annual meeting in Namibia.

The Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition, whose members include [Global Witness](#), [Partnership Africa Canada](#), and [Green Advocates \(Liberia\)](#), warned that failure to make a decision about Zimbabwe's status is compromising scheme's credibility and undermining chances for the successful eradication of the trade in conflict diamonds.

Since the discovery in 2006 of significant alluvial diamond deposits in Marange, eastern Zimbabwe, controls over the diamond sector have been nonexistent and communities in and around the diamond fields have borne the brunt of a series of brutal measures to restore state control over the area. The authorities have failed to stop the military from carrying out abuses and profiting from the illicit trade in diamonds, effectively condoning - and perhaps even encouraging - the looting and attendant violence against civilians.

"What is going on in Zimbabwe is against both the spirit and the law of the Kimberley Process. At the meeting next week, member governments must agree to suspend Zimbabwe from importing and exporting rough diamonds," said Annie Dunnebacke from Global Witness. "But suspension alone will not address the challenges in Marange: KP members must also engage closely with Zimbabwe to ensure that promises of reform become a reality."

"Zimbabwe must urgently implement recommendations made by the Kimberley Process Review Mission that visited the country last June," said Susanne Emond from Partnership Africa Canada. "The authorities must demilitarise the Marange diamond fields, establish robust internal controls, and hold to account those responsible for human rights abuses carried out in the area."

The lack of decisive action on Zimbabwe has also served to distract governments from other cases that require urgent KP attention. A UN expert report on Côte d'Ivoire published this week found an increase in diamond exploitation in the north of the country, an area still under the military control of the Forces Nouvelles rebel group.

Ivorian conflict diamonds continue to be exported in spite of UN sanctions and are laundered into the legitimate KP trade through neighbouring states and international trading centres - including both member and non-member countries. As the Forces Nouvelles continue to profit from this illegal trade, the UN reports that elements within the group are re-arming.

Alfred Brownell of Green Advocates said: "Governments' inadequate response to these cases has emphasised the urgent need for reform of the Kimberley Process. At present, timely action is consistently hampered by inefficient and obstructive procedure - this needs to change if the scheme is to fulfil its potential and its mandate."

Campaigners highlight a number of areas where reform is vital:

- Governments should introduce explicit provisions that bind KP members to ensure basic human rights in their diamond sectors;
- The consensus based decision-making process must be reformed in order to allow swift action and to avoid deadlocks;
- The KP needs an independent statistical analysis, monitoring and research capacity that sets a high standard of evaluation, avoids conflicts of interest and ensures follow-up;
- The KP's commitment to diamonds for development must translate into concrete action, particularly in artisanal producing countries.

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Notes:

1. The Kimberley Process is a rough diamond certification scheme, established in 2003. It brings together Governments, industry and civil society, and aims to eradicate the trade in conflict diamonds. Member states are required to pass national legislation and set up an import/export control system. Over 75 of the world's diamond producing, trading and manufacturing countries participate in the scheme.
2. The Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition includes Green Advocates (Liberia), CECIDE (Guinea), COOPERGADI and COOPERGAC (Brazil), CLONG (Republic of Congo), CENADEP and CAERN (Democratic Republic of Congo), GRPIE (Côte d'Ivoire), the Network Movement for Justice and Development (Sierra Leone), Centre for Research and Development (Zimbabwe), Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) and Global Witness (GW).
3. For further details on report of UN Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, please see http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/Ci_poe_ENG.shtml.