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PRESS RELEASE**

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**New PAC report on Zimbabwe diamond-related violence:
DIAMONDS AND CLUBS: The Militarized Control of Diamonds and Power in Zimbabwe**

Download report here:

http://www.pacweb.org/Documents/diamonds_KP/Zimbabwe-Diamonds_and_clubs-eng-June2010.pdf

See also new Global Witness report, **Return of the Blood Diamond** at www.globalwitness.org

PAC CONDEMNS VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE'S DIAMOND FIELDS

PAC calls for the release from detention of human rights activist, Farai Maguwu, and the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Kimberley Process

A new PAC report about Zimbabwe's contested diamond fields is about many things: smuggling and frontier hucksterism; a scramble fuelled by raw economic desperation and unfathomable greed; and heart-wrenching cases of government-sponsored repression and human rights violations. It's a story about political intrigue, ambition and a complete disregard for decency or the rule of law. It is also a story of how the Kimberley Process - the international initiative created to ensure that the trade in diamonds does not fund violence and civil war - has lost its way.

Zimbabwe is not the only country failing to meet some or all of the basic requirements asked of diamond producing nations by the Kimberley Process (KP). But Zimbabwe sets itself apart from the others because of the government's brazen defiance of universally agreed principles of humanity and good governance expected of adherents to the KP. As such Zimbabwe poses a serious crisis of credibility for the KP, whose impotence in the face of thuggery and illegality in Zimbabwe underscores a worrisome inability or unwillingness to enforce either the letter, or the spirit, of its founding mandate.

There have been glimpses recently of a new strategy by Zimbabwe in advance of the June 2010 KP Intersessional Meeting in Tel-Aviv, where Zimbabwe's compliance with the KP's minimum requirements will again be reviewed. For months both Zimbabwe government officials and representatives of two new exploration companies (Mbada and Canadile) have gone through the motions of presenting themselves as legitimate partners in their efforts to mine diamonds in the Marange region. In May, Mines Minister Obert Mpofu pretended for once to recognize the authority of the KP by issuing an export ban on all Zimbabwean diamonds until the KP gives its blessing.

"It is, of course, a deception and a charade," explains Alan Martin, Research Director at Partnership Africa Canada. "It's calculated to confuse and soften the criticism of some KP members as they congregate in Tel-Aviv in June. The Zanu-PF leadership has no intention of voluntarily changing its tune. Zimbabwe should be excluded from the KP."

On the eve of the publication of PAC's report, the crisis in Zimbabwe's diamond fields deepened. The special KP Monitor sent to assess Zimbabwe's compliance with the KP has produced a report extremely favourable to the Zimbabwe authorities, a report which is effectively a whitewash. At the same time, Farai Maguwu, the leading Zimbabwean human rights activist monitoring the abuses in the diamond fields perpetrated by Zimbabwe army and police units, has been arrested following a meeting with the KP Monitor.

"This is the latest in a series of attempts by the Zimbabwean authorities to intimidate human rights activists, and stop them from investigating and publicising ongoing abuses in the Marange diamond fields," said Bernard Taylor, Executive Director of Partnership Africa Canada. "Such harassment is wholly unacceptable and must stop. Farai Maguwu must be freed unconditionally".

The PAC report, *Diamonds and Clubs: The Militarized Control of Diamonds and Power in Zimbabwe*, makes a series of recommendations to deal with the crisis in Zimbabwe and in the KP. Recommendations include suspending Zimbabwe from the KP and creating a new, broader definition of 'conflict diamonds'.

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Partnership Africa Canada been involved in efforts to halt the trade in conflict diamonds since 1999. Other reports on conflict diamonds can be found at www.pacweb.org