

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2002

Det Norske Shortings Nobel Komite  
(Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament)  
Drammensveien 19  
0255 Oslo 2  
NORWAY

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are writing to respectfully recommend Global Witness and Partnership Africa Canada for the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize for their work to sever the funding link between diamonds and war.

From the time these small organizations brought this issue to the world's attention, their work has shone. The vision of their leaders and staff has inspired the leaders of governments and industry who are capable of ending this trade, and their tireless work has transformed the international community's response to this problem. Partnership Africa Canada and Global Witness have been instrumental in provoking the change that all involved now believe can help safeguard peace; can bring relief to the 70 million people who live in countries torn by wars over diamonds and prevent others from suffering a similar fate; and can protect the countries that depend on the legitimate trade in diamonds and the hundreds of thousands of workers it employs.

Global Witness, an organization which works in areas where natural resources and environmentally destructive trade are funding conflict or human rights violations, has deployed creative advocacy on behalf of the victims of conflict diamonds and doggedly pursued humane policies to force the diamond industry and government leaders to address this problem. It was one of the instigators of the Kimberley Process and continues to be a driving force in this international negotiation.

Partnership Africa Canada, a coalition of Canadian and African non-governmental organizations working together on issues of human rights, human security and sustainable development, brought world attention to the issue of conflict diamonds in Sierra Leone and since has broadened its work to include southern Africa and the Congo. It has helped to guide work supported by scores of NGOs toward an effective international agreement that will implement the necessary system of controls on the trade in rough diamonds, and served as the unified voice of civil society at international meetings of the Kimberley Process.

Global Witness first exposed the problem of conflict diamonds in late 1998. As the author of a current history of the diamond trade, Matthew Hart, wrote in Diamond: A Journey to the Heart of an Obsession,

"The diamond wars were the secret of the diamond trade until, quite suddenly, they were not. It seemed to happen in an instant, as if a curtain had been ripped aside and there was

the diamond business, spattered with blood, sorting through the goods. Its accuser was a little-known group called Global Witness.”

Global Witness’s first report, “A Rough Trade: The Role of Companies and Governments in the Angolan Conflict,” galvanized humanitarians’ concerns into a forceful response by governments, industry, and the human rights community.

That soon was followed by Partnership Africa Canada’s, “The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds and Human Security,” which exposed the link between diamonds and atrocities in West Africa. In his book, *Fire*, war correspondent and noted author Sebastian Junger described the central role diamonds played in fueling Sierra Leone’s horrific war:

“This has all come to light in the West in just the past few months, beginning with a report about RUF diamond mining by a nonprofit group called Partnership Africa Canada.”

These and subsequent reports by both organizations have contributed important information on sanctions-busting, theft and other illicit transactions, often obtained at great personal risk to their researchers and those who have assisted them. Their work has withstood close scrutiny by independent experts and interested parties alike. Taken as a whole, it constitutes compelling, credible, and damning evidence of how some of the most vicious attacks in human history are being financed – and how the trade in conflict diamonds itself has become the cause of terrible brutality. Since these organizations began to expose the economic underpinnings of the diamond wars, the academic community and others have become involved, and a wide array of studies is beginning to examine the broader links between trade and human security. For example, the World Bank has created an entire department devoted to this issue, with diamonds as its first case study.

Global Witness came to the problem of conflict diamonds after successfully tackling the role of natural resources in funding conflict in Cambodia. In 1995, its undercover investigations and subsequent campaigning led to the Khmer Rouge’s main income source, illegal timber, being denied to them; this in turn contributed significantly to the demise of the Khmer Rouge within the following twelve months.

Partnership Africa Canada also built its work on conflict diamonds upon a successful record of development and advocacy. Starting in 1986 as a mechanism for funding development projects in Africa, the organization had refocused by the mid-1990s to areas in Africa with prolonged internal conflict – mainly the Great Lakes countries and Northern Somalia – giving a voice to Africans working directly on issues of human security, reconciliation and justice.

We have worked on the conflict diamonds issue with a broad range of non-governmental organizations, with leaders of the diamond and jewelry industries, with journalists committed to focusing public attention on this blood trade, and with other Members of the United States Congress. We also have followed closely the work of some 35 other nations involved in devising and implementing a system of controls on the international trade in rough diamonds. We are convinced that the goal of ending the scourge of conflict diamonds is achievable primarily because of the lengths to which Partnership Africa Canada and Global Witness have gone. They epitomize the commitment, creativity and diligence that should be the hallmark of leadership – whether of non-profit advocacy groups, companies, or nations.

Global Witness and Partnership Africa Canada were not merely the first on the scene; the work they have done remains unmatched. By endeavoring to sever combatants' ability to fund war, Partnership Africa Canada and Global Witness have helped to bring financial pressure to bear against the wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while strengthening future prospects for peace throughout Africa.

They have succeeded in part because they have avoided polarizing campaign tactics that could have alienated the diamond industry and key governments, whose support is critical to a solution. They understood that, despite the shocking difference between the advertised image of diamonds and the often harsh reality of the trade, a boycott could result in a backlash against a product whose legitimate trade is the backbone of many economies.

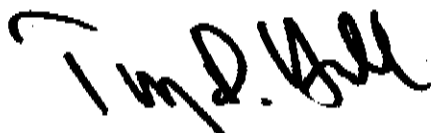
Through their heroic work, Partnership Africa Canada and Global Witness have done more than any other private organization, government, or individual to end the scourge of conflict diamonds. They have promoted understanding and fraternity among nations and others who have much to lose if efforts to resolve this problem fail. Through their unflagging persistence, they have helped government, business and civil-society leaders with markedly different interests to devise a unified response to this illegal trade.


Most notably, Global Witness and Partnership Africa Canada have rejected easy answers that, for true champions of peace, are fleeting and empty. This work is far from complete but, were it not for their dedication to it, this issue might never have touched public consciousness, or sparked responsible and effective action by policymakers.

The Committee's presentation of the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize to Partnership Africa Canada and Global Witness would be a fitting and generous reward of both organizations' vision and hard work. It would offer hope to countless others who might do well to look to these organizations as model champions of peace. And it would underscore to the world the urgent need to take the profits out of war.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination. It would be an honor to provide you with additional information, or to answer any questions you may have.

Very truly yours,

  
Tony P. Hall  
Member of Congress

  
Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator

  
Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress