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## **Global Witness rejects claim that Zimbabwe diamonds are clean**

State-sponsored violence and human rights abuses are still taking place in the diamond fields of eastern Zimbabwe, in contrast to claims made in a leaked report from the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme monitor, said campaign group Global Witness today.

Global Witness has serious concerns about the credibility of the report, which recommends that Zimbabwe be allowed to resume diamond exports from the controversial Marange area.

The Kimberley Process (KP) was set up in 2003 to eradicate the trade in blood diamonds. Last year, KP officials visited Zimbabwe and confirmed reports of killings carried out by state security agents as well as diamond smuggling rackets run by the military.

A supervised export mechanism for diamonds from Marange was put in place in November 2009, as part of a work plan agreed between KP and Zimbabwe to address the country's non-compliance with the scheme's standards. The report by the South African KP monitor, Abbey Chikane, says that Zimbabwe has now met the KP's minimum requirements.

"We are extremely concerned by the monitor's report, which directly contradicts information recently obtained by researchers and observers on the ground", said Elly Harrowell of Global Witness. "There is no sign that state-sponsored brutality in the diamond fields has stopped or that the widespread smuggling of diamonds from Marange into neighbouring countries has been curbed. Lifting the ban on Marange exports would mean letting blood diamonds onto international markets."

The report follows the arrest by Zimbabwean police on 3 June 2010 of Farai Maguwu, head of the Marange-based Centre for Research and Development (CRD), after a meeting with the KP monitor. CRD has regularly provided information about ongoing abuses in Marange to the Kimberley Process. The fate of Maguwu, who was forced to turn himself in to police after his office and home were raided and members of his family arrested, raises concerns about the way in which the monitor went about his work in Zimbabwe.

"Human rights organisations in Zimbabwe are regularly harassed by the authorities. Chikane had been warned of the risks involved in meeting Maguwu while accompanied by Zimbabwean government minders and intelligence agents, yet he neglected to take the necessary precautions. This raises serious doubts about his suitability for the role of KP monitor," said Harrowell.

Chikane's luggage was also broken into by the intelligence forces and key documents stolen, one of which was later published in the state-owned Herald newspaper.

"The monitoring arrangement for Marange should be suspended immediately and no exports permitted until the Zimbabwean government can give credible assurances that people providing information to the Kimberley Process will not be persecuted, and that the scheme's monitor will not be spied on by security agents," said Harrowell. "Zimbabwean authorities must stop all violence in the diamond fields and ensure that members of the military are not illegally involved in exploitation or marketing of diamonds. This is a non-negotiable condition for any resumption of trade."

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Global Witness investigates and campaigns to prevent natural resource-related conflict and corruption and associated environmental and human rights abuses