

Forum: Human Rights Council I

Issue: Strengthening the Kimberly Process in Africa

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Introduction

Blood or conflict diamonds are used in many African countries to fuel wars. Diamonds are considered very precious and so there is always high demand. Warlords, insurgencies, and opposition parties generally utilize this fact to get money. Many countries, such as Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, and Zimbabwe, among others, are rich in diamonds. The people of these countries are often forced to mine for diamonds, which are then sold.

The United Nations has been actively involved in stopping this process, since 1998, when they passed the first resolution in which conflict diamonds were first mentioned. The most famous part of the UN involvement in stopping the sale of blood diamonds is through the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS).

Definition of Key Terms

Conflict diamond

“Diamonds originating from areas controlled by forces opposed to legitimate and internationally recognized governments, and are used to fund military action in opposition to those governments, or in contravention of the decisions of the United Nations Security Council.” Called conflict diamonds because the sale of them fuels conflict.

Kimberly Process

A process developed by the United Nations resolution 55/56 to certify the origin of diamonds to prevent the sale of diamonds to fund armed conflict.

General Overview

Why are blood diamonds mined?

Diamonds are mined through the use of unpaid or slave labor to finance warlord or terrorist operations. Arms and other military purchases are made with the money made from selling the conflict diamonds. Diamonds are relatively easy to transport, and are extremely valuable and so are a convenient currency in some, mainly African, countries.

Angola

Angola has a large problem with conflict diamonds. In 1998, the UN placed sanctions on the country, banning all diamond exports. The World Diamond Council reported in 2004 that Angola now produced far fewer conflict diamonds.

The ban was put in place because one of the parties involved in the Angolan civil wars was using blood diamonds to finance operations, although this violated the Bicesse Accords. This treaty stated for the two main warring parties to make peace and form a multi-party democracy. This treaty was rejected by the UNITA, the party that uses blood diamonds to buy arms.

Liberia

In 2000, the president of Liberia was accused of helping rebels in Sierra Leone in exchange for payment in blood diamonds. In 2001, the UN placed sanctions on all diamonds from Liberia. The former president is currently on trial at The Hague.

The Republic of Congo

The Republic of Congo did not have an official diamond industry, but the UN put sanctions on all diamonds from the country. This is because there were significant amounts of diamonds being exported, but it was unclear where the diamonds originated.

The United States of America

The US is the largest consumer of diamonds, and both President Clinton and President Bush signed executive orders to help curb the trade in blood diamonds. President Clinton issued Executive Order 13194 in January 2001 to stop diamond imports from Sierra Leone. President Bush issued Executive Order 13213 in May of 2001 to stop the import of diamonds from Liberia. In July 2003, President Bush started the Clean Diamond Trade Act (CDTA), which rules that all American diamond buyers must buy only certified diamonds.

The Kimberly Process Certification Scheme

The KPCS aims for all African diamonds to be registered and certified. The goal is for all diamonds to have a certificate with them so that the origins of the diamond can be traced all the way back to their place of origin. However, the resolutions are passed in the General Assembly and so cannot 'demand' countries to comply. There are now 74 participating countries.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1998	UN imposed sanctions on Angolan diamonds
May 2000	UN meeting in Kimberly, South Africa
January 2001	KPCS started by the World Diamond Council
December 2000	UN General Assembly passes resolution on conflict diamonds
2004	Republic of the Congo expelled from KPCS as the origins of their diamonds could not be verified
2007	Republic of Congo reaccepted into the KPCS

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UN has been involved with this issue since 1998. Sanctions have been imposed on many African countries such as Angola to try and stifle the demand for conflict diamonds. These bans have been largely successful.

- Role of Diamonds in Fuelling Conflict, 1 December 2000 (**A/RES/55/56**)

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