



February 2007

CONTENTS

[Can we end the trade in Blood Diamonds once and for all?](#)

[Conflict diamond documentaries out now](#)

[Leonardo DiCaprio on conflict diamonds](#)

[Where do Turkmenistan's 'missing billions' go now?](#)

[Halting corruption on the ground through transparency](#)

[Forest activists murdered in Honduras](#)

Happy New Year and welcome to the first 2007 edition of the Global Witness newsletter. We believe that revenue from natural resources, such as oil, timber and minerals, can drive peaceful and sustainable development in the world's poorest countries, rather than leading to war, corruption and entrenched poverty. Carry on

reading to find out more about what Global Witness has been up to in the last six months.

Stamping out the trade in Blood Diamonds



Violence and confusion in Sierra Leone, from 'Blood Diamond' - be sure to catch the film and find out more about the natural resource-fuelled conflict .

Global Witness is supporting the film, *Blood Diamond*, which opened in Europe on 26th January. The film is set during the Sierra Leone civil war that took place from 1991 to 2002, throughout which the rebel RUF group traded 125 million dollars worth of 'blood' diamonds onto the international market in exchange for arms.

At the European Premier director Ed Zwick acknowledged Global Witness' contribution to bringing the issue of blood diamonds onto the international policy agenda. Early on in the film, a scene shows how a 1998 Global Witness report – [A Rough Trade](#) - stirred the international community into taking action to address how the diamond industry was supporting some of Africa's most prolific civil wars.

Global Witness acted as an informal consultant to Warner Brothers and the makers of *Blood Diamond* throughout the filming and we have worked with Amnesty International UK and USA around the film's launch to raise awareness amongst consumers of the still relevant issue of conflict diamonds. Despite a UN embargo and the Kimberley Process controls, diamonds mined in the rebel-held North of Côte d'Ivoire, in West Africa, for example, are currently reaching the international diamond market.

Despite the tragedies that blood diamonds have caused, neither governments nor the diamond industry are doing enough to stamp them out. Consumers have the power to effect industry-wide changes however, simply by demanding that their diamonds are clean. Global Witness and Amnesty International recommend that consumers ask jewellers about the origins of stones when buying

diamonds. [Download our consumer guide to buying a diamond here.](#)

[Read more about Global Witness' *Combating Conflict Diamonds Campaign*](#)

[Visit *Blood Diamond Action* to find out what you can do to stop diamonds funding conflict](#)

[Back to the top](#)

Conflict Diamond documentaries inform and inspire

Global Witness acted as official consultant for the Insight News Television documentary *Blood on the Stone*, which will be screened on CNN on March 2nd and 3rd. This documentary follows the path of a diamond from the ground to the store, exposing the realities of conflict diamonds and the devastating effect they have on people's lives. This documentary will also be available with the *Blood Diamond* DVD when it is released in late March.



Mining for diamonds in the DRC: find out more about conflict diamonds on CNN on March 2nd

The History Channel premiered the documentary *Blood Diamonds* in Europe recently. You can find out more, watch clips from this fascinating documentary, and even buy the DVD [here](#).

Thanks to the worldwide publicity around the release of *Blood Diamond*, Global Witness has had the opportunity to raise the issue of conflict diamonds throughout the print and news media. Through interviews and profiles in media as diverse as the Guardian newspaper, CNN, CBS Evening News, the BBC, Sky News, Black Entertainment Television, ITN and Al Jazeera, not only have we been able to highlight the continuing problem of conflict diamonds, but we have also brought to the attention of millions of people the urgent need to change the global systems that allow natural resource extraction to fuel conflict, impunity and human rights and environmental abuses.

The London Evening Standard newspaper has drawn attention to "how much courage and determination lay behind the campaign to try to clean up the world's diamond trade".

Watch Global Witness campaigner Alex Yearsley discuss conflict diamonds on BBC's Hard Talk [here](#)

[Back to the top](#)

Leonardo DiCaprio's thoughts on diamond industry claims that conflict diamonds are no longer a problem

In a recent interview with Ireland's 'Event Guide', Leonardo DiCaprio said: 'I've spoken to Global Witness, Amnesty International, all kinds of different organisations, about the issues, and there are controversial numbers when it comes to clarifying what percentage of the stones out there are conflict stones. And you hear one side of the story from them, and then you hear a different story again from the diamond industry... My sympathies tend towards non-profit organisations that don't have a vested financial interest in that product. That's where my vote goes.'



Leonardo DiCaprio in a scene from 'Blood Diamond': Global Witness gets his vote

DiCaprio acknowledged Global Witness' role in highlighting the role of conflict diamonds in conflicts around the world. In the UK Mirror newspaper he said: 'The film's the first step in a learning process about some very brutal issues. It's impartial non-profit groups like Amnesty and Global Witness that have details about the illicit diamond business and its impact on human rights, child soldiers, money laundering, terror and war.'

[Back to the top](#)

Support Global Witness and help change the way the world works

[donate now](#)

Find out more about Global Witness by reading The Guardian's profile [here](#)

What now for Turkmenistan's missing billions?

Following the death of Turkmenistan's President Niyazov last December, billions of dollars of the country's public funds held in accounts at Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt need to be kept safe until they can be used for the benefit of the citizens of the gas-rich country.

In April last year Global Witness published *[It's a Gas](#)*, which revealed that a multi-billion dollar reserve fund of oil, gas and cotton revenues is held at Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, under the sole control of Niyazov. Global Witness believes that, given the opaque system of Turkmen public finances, no withdrawals or transfers should be allowed from the account until an internationally-recognised government has assumed power and some credible transparency measures have been put in place.

Global Witness is calling on Deutsche Bank to keep these reserves safe until they can be used for the benefit of all Turkmens. As a member of both the UN Global Compact and the Wolfsberg Group of Banks, Deutsche Bank has committed itself to working to prevent corruption and money-laundering. This is an opportunity for the bank to put these words into action.

[Read 'It's A Gas' in full](#)

Read [here](#) about Global Witness' campaign to make the global financial architecture more transparent, just and accountable

[Back to the top](#)

Growing acceptance of principles of transparency, but more needs to be done to stop corruption on the ground

As a founding member of the [Publish What You Pay](#) coalition, Global Witness has led calls for the public disclosure of payments made to national governments by oil, mining and gas companies, so that the citizens of resource rich nations can hold their governments to account over how such revenues are spent. Our efforts led directly to the creation of the UK government's Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, or EITI, in 2003. More than twenty resource-rich countries are signed up to EITI, an indicator of the growing recognition that the transparent management of revenues is key to successful development in poor countries.



A slum in Monrovia, capital of Liberia: EITI principles will help Liberia use its natural resource revenues to re-build after years of war

Tim A. Hetherington / Panos Pictures

In November last year Global Witness campaigners attended the EITI plenary conference, where we saw how far the process has come in the last three years, but also the further steps that need to be taken if EITI is to be a truly effective mechanism against corruption. In the three years since

EITI's launch, Global Witness, through our seat on the EITI's international advisory group, has worked to strengthen and improve the initiative. We successfully advocated for a clear set of minimum criteria for participating companies and governments, and a validation process to measure countries' progress in implementing these criteria.

In Liberia, Global Witness worked with local activists to persuade the new democratically elected government to sign up to EITI. As a country that depends heavily on natural resource extraction for its income, it is vital for the reconstruction of the country after so many years of conflict that Liberia commits to the transparent and equitable use of its resource wealth.

There are signs that the principles of EITI are starting to become an accepted way of working. The IFC and the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development have started to promote revenue transparency through the conditions they place on their support for investments in the extractive industries, much still needs to be done to make EITI work on the ground. So far only two EITI participant countries - Nigeria and Azerbaijan - have actually produced audited and reconciled reports outlining their revenues from natural resource extraction contracts. More support needs to be given to participating countries so that they can implement the EITI and crucially, civil society must be able to participate freely and actively in monitoring their government's moves towards

Congo) then the international community should speak out in their defence, as EITI's credibility rests on the free participation of civil society, and without this it will fail.

At Global Witness we will continue to push throughout 2007 for EITI to be strengthened and for the principles of transparency and accountability to become the normal way of working in the extractive industry.

[Find out more](#) about Global Witness' work to push for revenue transparency throughout the world

[Find out more](#) about the Publish What You Pay coalition

Read about Global Witness' work to ensure transparency in Liberia [here](#)

[Back to the top](#)

Forest activists killed in Honduras

In December last year Heraldo Zúñiga and Roger Ivan Murillo Cartagena, forest activists, were shot dead in Honduras, allegedly by state police. The two men were local leaders in the Environmental Movement of Olancho (MAO), a grassroots organization that fights illegal and unsustainable logging by commercial timber companies in their community forests. Their killers were allegedly acting under the influence of the country's powerful timber interests. Up to 50% of timber in Honduras is illegally harvested, contributing to unbridled deforestation and depriving the Honduran people of state revenues that could be spent on much-needed poverty reduction schemes. During 2005 and 2006 Global Witness, with the Honduran Commission for Human Rights (CONADEH), implemented and advised on Independent Forest Monitoring in Honduras, which brought to light the staggering scale of deforestation and illegal logging in the country. These terrible murders shine a spotlight on the forest sector of Honduras, and the grave mismanagement from which it suffers.



The pine forests of Olancho, Honduras, which activists are trying to save from illegal logging

Zúñiga and Cartagena are among eight environmental activists killed since 1995 in Honduras, five of them in the department of Olancho. Although MAO's guiding force, Father Andrés Tamayo, has brought international attention to his cause (including a prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2005), he and his fellow leaders continue to be subject to regular death threats and intimidation.

When President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales took office in Honduras one year ago, he promised to crack down on the illegal logging these activists were fighting. Global Witness, with ten other concerned environmental groups, have written to the President, urging him to give the case the attention and due process it requires to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice, and that environmental activists can raise their voices against environmental and human rights abuses without fear for their lives.

Read the full letter to the Honduran President [here](#)

Find out more about Global Witness' work in Independent Forest Monitoring in Honduras [here](#)

[Back to the top](#)

[Forward this newsletter to a friend](#)

If you have any comments about this newsletter or would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact us on fundraising@globalwitness.org

For reports, briefings and press releases visit www.globalwitness.org.

If you would like to make a donation to Global Witness, [click here](#)

To unsubscribe or change your details [click here](#)