



global witness

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Zimbabwe's commitment to conflict diamonds scheme still in doubt, despite decision to suspend controversial auction

Global Witness today welcomed a decision by the Zimbabwean authorities to cancel a planned auction of diamonds from the Marange fields but warned that the country must take concrete steps to demonstrate their commitment to cleaning up the diamond sector or risk suspension from the Kimberley Process certification scheme.

The Zimbabwean secretary for mines, Thankful Musukutwa, said on Thursday afternoon that the government had stopped the auction of 300,000 carats of rough diamonds because it had not yet won approval from the Kimberley Process (KP) or national authorities.

If the sale had gone ahead, Zimbabwe would very likely have been in breach of an action plan agreed at the KP plenary in November last year. Zimbabwe has been the focus of significant attention following widespread reports of human rights abuses and non-compliance with the KP's minimum standards.

Annie Dunnebacke, diamond campaigner at Global Witness, said: "If rough diamonds from Marange had been exported from Zimbabwe without prior inspection by a Kimberley Process monitor, then Zimbabwe would have been in clear violation of the action plan they agreed to at the plenary session in November.

"We are pleased that the auction has been suspended but disappointed that the Zimbabwean authorities did not communicate their plans in advance to KP bodies. We are deeply concerned at Zimbabwe's complete lack of engagement with the Kimberley Process since last year's plenary session. Their silence jeopardises the success of the action plan and the viability of a clean future for the Zimbabwean diamond industry."

It is imperative that Zimbabwe works more closely with the Kimberley Process and demonstrates its willingness to implement meaningful reforms in the diamond sector. If it fails to do so, the Kimberley Process must be ready to take swift and decisive action to suspend Zimbabwe and protect the credibility of the scheme.

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