



sowing the seeds of human rights peace and sustainable development

Porous Marange diamond fields a death trap to local communities

In order to curb illegal diamond digging in Marange the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) recommended that the Ministry of Mines identify and licence small scale diamond miners. Compliance with KPCS minimum standards also required that government and mining companies set up adequate security infrastructure in the diamond fields. These measures were in the KP Joint Work Plan on Marange that was adopted by government in Swakopmund, Namibia in 2009. In its report to Parliament in June 2013 the Chindori Chininga led Portfolio Committee on Mines expressed disappointment at the lack of progress in implementing the KPCS requirement on promoting small scale diamond mining in Marange. The committee observed that empowering the local community by involving them in small scale diamond mining was critical because the area of Marange has very low rainfall patterns hence there is not much agriculture taking place there. The Portfolio Committee of Mines report on diamond consolidation presented to parliament on 6 April 2017 also highlighted the need for government to accommodate locals in diamond mining. The Committee demanded that Ministry of Mines copy best practices especially from countries in West Africa and develop a policy before end of December 2017 to integrate small scale diamond miners who are operating illegally in Marange. Minister of mines Walter Chidhakwa spoke against the idea during a question and answer session in parliament this year.

However, the operations of ZCDC in Marange has remained unsustainable. From its inception in 2016 ZCDC has been rocked by issues of poor corporate governance, illicit financial outflows and capacity challenges. The mining entity which is also operating without an EIA certificate has not made significant efforts towards rehabilitation and securing the diamond fields. Traditional leaders in the diamond wards of 29 and 30 told CRD that they have made appeals to ZCDC to fence their mining areas but to no avail. Due to lack of employment and increased poverty members of the local community have joined illegal diamond panning activities in these unsecured mining areas with sometimes fatal consequences. On 18 July 2017 an unemployed Wonder Ngorima aged 30 from Manzwi village in Marange was shot and killed by ZCDC

security guards. He was among 200 illegal diamond panners that besieged portal A of ZCDC diamond mining. According to police investigations the group made spirited advances towards the main plant diamond sorting room before they were stopped by security guards who opened fire on them.

On 21/08.2017 Never Marange ID 75 379068 T75 of Nzvenga village in Marange, Collin Mazikani ID 75-421439z75 of Mazikani village in Marange, Mushood Musora ID 75 208805S75 and Patrick Mafelasiweni of area 3 and 13 in Dangamvura in Mutare drowned in unprotected mine dams running away from the menacing ZCDC security guards. On 31 -08-2017 Takudzwa chizeya of Rambai village in Marange and Allowed Mahwahwa of Kangai village, Chief Nyashanu were trapped and died in a mining pit in portal Q of ZCDC diamond mining field. Nomatter Kusena ID number 75-432410 Z 75 aged 25 years from Kusena Village in Marange is one the latest victims of illegal diamond mining activities. He received life threatening injuries on 23 September 2017 from debris coming from illegal blasting of rocks in an open pit at portal D of ZCDC mining concession in Kusena area of Marange. Nomatter was part of a group of 6 panners undertaking illegal diamond mining operations in the pit. He is in critical condition at Mutambara hospital in Chimanimani.

According to members of the local community, these mining areas including Anjin portal C (Chirasika and Chipundo) Jinan (portal E) DMC (portal Q) Gye Nyame (portal F) and Mbada (portal A) are not adequately secured. At the same time security operatives in these mining areas are merely interested in taking bribes from panning syndicates rather than protecting human life. The Government justification for consolidating diamond mining was to effect accountability and transparency. However, this has not been the case so far with ZCDC diamond mining operations. Efforts by locals to fight exclusionary mining practices through illegal diamond digging has been a major source of conflict and human rights abuse in Marange.