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| Forum: | The General Assembly |
| Issue: | Preventing the exploitation of human workforce in the extraction of precious stones in areas of conflict in Africa |
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| Position: | Deputy Chair |

Introduction

Up until the early 21st century many countries in Africa were affected by violent conflicts in civil wars and uprisings and despite these conflicts ending in some countries such as Angola or Sierra Leone, others still experience the unofficial mining of diamonds to fund rebel activities, many of these mines presenting inhumane working conditions for the workers, despite the efforts of the international community to end the violence and prevent the sales of these diamonds on the international market.

In the late 1990's increased awareness and concern of the role of so called blood diamonds in funding conflicts that were occurring in various African countries was brought about through the violent conflicts that were ensuing in Sierra Leone. Conflict diamonds are sold at high prices with low costs due to low-paid workforces and the profits thus made are used by various rebel groups to fund arms and their violent insurrection as a whole. The international community reacted with a zero tolerance policy towards such diamonds and other precious stones and worked together with the UN to bring forth the Kimberly Process Certification System as well as the System of warranties, aiming to reduce the amount of conflict diamonds that are sold.

It is necessary that in future and in current areas of conflict, the funding of wars and the exploitation of human workforce and the affiliated torture and monopolisation of power be prevented. Delegates should aim to resolve the issue of blood diamonds till finding outlets to be sold on the international market and thus fund further infringement of the human rights of workers as well as continue conflicts throughout Africa.

Definition of Key Terms

Blood/Conflict Diamonds

Diamonds used to fund violent conflicts in the area where they were mined, usually obtained through forced labour used Arial in size 11.

Exploitation

To make use of some one or something in an unfair manner for ones own benefit or advantage

Precious Stones

Any of specific rare minerals, such as diamonds, ruby, sapphire and opal, that have a high economic value due to their worth and rarity.

Key Issues

Funding of civil wars through conflict diamonds

The profit made by the sale of the diamonds on the international market allowed the rebel groups to fund arms and take power in the countries through the control of one of the major income sources.

Conflict diamonds still present in today's markets

Despite all the previous resolutions and sanctions that had been passed in the areas of conflict throughout Africa as well as rigorous certification systems that need to be passed in order for the diamonds to be able to be sold internationally, still today precious stones are found to be bought or trying to be sold, allowing the rebel groups be kept active and the conflicts to be continuing. It has been criticised that not all gemstones on the international market can be individually monitored, as well as that many countries act out of their own interests and against the interests of the international community to end the spread of conflict diamonds.

Impact on local trade

Many of the countries affected by civil wars that are funded through conflict diamonds are concerned that the regulations and suspicion imposed through sanctions and resolutions will impact their legitimate trade and thus having a negative impact on the positive development of the country.

Major Parties Involved

The Kimberly Process (KP)

A group consisting of governments, industry and civil society, who in a joint effort aim to reduce the flow of blood diamonds in the international market.

Partnership Africa Canada

A group aiming towards solutions for and strengthen the governance of natural resources.

Beneficiaries of Blood Diamonds:

Rebel groups

After the former colonies of Africa had gained independence various rebel groups have fought for the control of the countries, such as the RCD-Goma (Democratic Republic of Congo), UNITA (Angola) or the RUF(Sierra Leone). One must also consider who is backing these groups.

Corporations

Monopolies and multinational companies have been accused of abusing their power to reduce prices inside the country in order to encourage the smuggling of the diamonds as middlemen find it easier to trade . An example of such a corporation may be the ASCorp in Angola, which has been accused of misusing its power as a monopoly in the Angolan market.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

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| 15 September 1993 | UN Security Council adopts Resolution 864 and thus places first sanctions on trade in Angola |
| 5 July 2000 | Sanctions also imposed in Sierra Leone , banning trade of diamonds without the Certificate of Origin |
| 19 July 2000 | Kimberley Process introduced via a resolution made during the World Diamond Congress in Antwerp. |

31 July 2000

Beginning of a public hearing, about the issues regarding blood diamonds, attended by member states, regional governments, NGO's and experts from the diamond industry in order to create plans in hindering the proliferation of conflict diamonds, resulting in the formation of a Panel of Experts.

18 January 2002

Official end of the civil war in Sierra Leone, that had been going on since 1991, replacing the leader of the rebel group in the position of power by a democratically elected president and turning the once militant RUF into a political party.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

The Kimberley process was introduced in order to have a system that requires certain certifications and processes in order for diamonds to be able to be approved for sale internationally and was a joint effort of the global community where many NGOs, as well as the UN, have worked in joint effort. To strengthen the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, the World Federation of Diamond Bourses and the International Diamond Manufacturer Association have created the voluntary self-regulation of the diamond industry during the course of the World Diamond Council in 2002. As a result of these of the implementation of these schemes and the world-wide raised awareness of the problems associated with the proliferation of illicit conflict minerals a majority of sales in precious stones come from conflict free sources and are not used to further fund any other conflicts. However, despite the systems that need to be passed and the sanctions put upon countries where the exploitation of human workforces in forms such as forced labour, torture and child labourers known to occur still has not completely prevented the diamonds from reaching markets abroad and the exploitation from continuing. Documents have been known to be faked and systematic controls have been evaded on top of the exploitation and the extraction of the stones occurring in zones of armed conflict, increasing the difficulty for the monitoring of the production flow of the diamonds.

Possible Solutions

It is necessary recognize the links that exist between the further proliferation of conflict minerals, their role in funding conflicts and this eventually all leading to the exploitation of human workforce, as this is what the insurgencies are built upon. The labourers are forced to work in dangerous conditions that bring many health risks with them, families are separated and children used as soldiers to ensure the rebels a large armed force. As long as the conflicts continue so will the exploitation, thus in order to reduce the capital available to the armed groups may lead to a end in the conflicts and aid the population that is suffering from them. The countries themselves must be guided towards resolving disputes democratically and preferably without the aid of the international community, which does not wish to indirectly fund said imposed living conditions under which the local people may suffer. Since many of the problems can be traced back to a certain group of people within tat country it may be important to provide raise the awareness for the precious minerals industry to the origin countries of those that were obtained using an exploited workforce, without damaging the actual and legitimate trade that could benefit the country.

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