

Smoothing out the rough diamonds

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Easier access to information and better communication tools has empowered consumers and allows them to make informed and perhaps more socially responsible purchasing decisions. At the same time, corporate responsibility and sustainability are gaining momentum. One might imagine that such positive moves in the world of commerce are universal. However, the diamond industry remains opaque.

Writing in the *International Journal of Sustainable Society*, Meike Schulte and Cody Morris Paris of Middlesex University Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, suggest that the Kimberley Process was set up to allow the rough diamond trade to be monitored and to impede the flow of conflict, or blood, diamonds. Such products hewn from areas of conflict and where [human rights abuses](#), child labor, and slavery are manifest should not be on the market in a socially responsible world.

The team reports that one in five diamonds in terms of volume and one in ten diamonds in terms of value may have been produced under conditions that cannot be regarded as sustainable or ethical. Human rights abuses in the industry are thus incredibly common across several African nations where diamonds are mined with Angola having the worst record for conflict diamonds where the ethics of human rights are taken into account.

The team suggests that [human rights violations](#) are systematic and systemic in the rough diamond industry. Global rough diamond production amounts to around 150 million carats each year with a market value of around 16 billion US dollars. It is time, some of these vast revenues were turned to improving the lives of those working in the mines and to extracting child slaves from the often-horrendous working conditions they face. The team adds that related industries—gold, tin, tungsten, and tantalum—have similar ethical problems that must also be addressed.

More information: Meike Schulte et al. Blood diamonds: an analysis of the state of affairs and the effectiveness of the Kimberley Process, *International Journal of Sustainable Society* (2020). [DOI: 10.1504/IJSSOC.2020.105017](#)

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