

Conflict Diamonds

The often-cited definition of conflict diamonds is the 15 year old United Nations definition of:

“Diamonds that originate from areas controlled by forces or factions opposed to legitimate and internationally recognized governments, and are used to fund military action in opposition to those governments, or in contravention of the decisions of the UN Security Council.”

The adoption (August 2003) of the Kimberley Process (www.kimberleyprocess.com) by the United Nations was a catalyst for the global diamond industry to pledge:

- Include a written guarantee on all invoices that the diamond goods were “Conflict Free”
- Adopt a code of conduct to prevent the buying or selling of conflict diamonds
- Train selling staff about government policies and regulations concerning conflict diamonds
- Keep records of all invoices and have them audited every year

The Kimberley process requires participating governments (74) to ensure that each shipment of rough diamonds be exported/imported in a secure container, accompanied by a uniquely numbered, government validated certificate stating that the diamonds are from a source free of conflict.

These efforts, while attempting to regulate the sale of conflict diamonds, do not prevent the integration of conflict diamonds into the markets. Diamonds are easily transported over national borders and sold. Conflict diamonds are still being sold today in the US and internationally as clean diamonds. Additionally, the narrow UN definition, as represented by the Kimberley Process, does nothing to address other human rights violations, state-sanctioned violence or environmental impacts.

Conflict Free Diamonds

Conflict free diamonds are guaranteed to originate from ethical and environmentally responsible sources. Conflict Free Diamonds are:

- High quality natural diamonds that come from ethical sources with minimal environmental impact and fair labor practices.
- Independently traced from their country and mine of origin with certification available.
- Require the origin to be free from violence, human rights abuses, child labor or environmental destruction

Almost all Conflict-Free Diamonds today originate from Canada (Diavik & Ekati Diamond mines as example) and are verifiable through an independent body, such as CanadaMark, The Canadian Diamond Code of Conduct, or the government of the Northwest Territories.