

# TORTIYA, LOSING YOUR HEAD OVER DIAMONDS



Groupe de Recherche et de Plaidoyer  
sur les Industries Extractives



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005, the United Nations Security Council (Resolution 1572) imposed sanctions on rough diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire because of political and military strife in the country. These sanctions extended Côte d'Ivoire's exclusion from the Kimberley Process, which the national government had voluntarily accepted at the end of 2002 in order to limit the flow of money that was going primarily to rebels in the north.<sup>1</sup> Conservative estimates place the number of artisanal diamond miners in Côte d'Ivoire at 20,000, with an annual production of 300,000 carats<sup>2</sup> estimated to be worth \$23 million.<sup>3</sup> While this represents a relatively small portion of global diamond production (estimated at \$11 billion in 2006<sup>4</sup>), almost all of these diamonds continued to circulate outside of legitimate international channels at the end of 2014.

In recognition of Côte d'Ivoire's efforts to normalize the country's diamond industry, the United Nations Security Council lifted its embargo on April 29, 2014. Since then, Côte d'Ivoire has been working to strengthen the legal traceability of its diamond supply chain.

In the post-embargo context, the government has focused on the Séguéla region,<sup>5</sup> where two diamond purchasing offices have recently been authorized and the Société pour le Développement Minier de la Côte d'Ivoire (Society for Mining Development in Côte d'Ivoire; SODEMI) is monitoring the situation.<sup>6</sup> However, the country's second diamond-producing area in Tortiya, has been completely neglected and mining operations there are not subjected to any regulation. In January 2015, the government issued a decree granting a diamond-mining exploration licence to SODEMI for the departments of Niakaramadougou, Korhogo and Dikodougou in Tortiya, but there have been no changes to date.

Unnoticed by the national and international community, artisanal diamond mining in Tortiya is leading the city into social and environmental chaos that may be irreparable if nothing is done and impoverishing a people who, having no source of income other than diamonds, continue to exploit this resource through clandestine contraband networks.

The primary objective of this study was to shed light on the diamond-mining city of Tortiya through an analysis of the socioeconomic context of artisanal mining activities and of their impact on people's lives and the environment. The goal is to send a wakeup call to government authorities in Côte d'Ivoire about the need to enact policies enabling artisanal diamond miners in Tortiya to formalize every aspect of their operations. Such formalization would entail a wide range of actions, most importantly the registration of miners, mining concessions and official authorization for operations.

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<sup>1</sup> "Conflict diamonds and peace process in Cote d'Ivoire," Bonn International Centre for Conversion, BICC Focus, 2008, 1-7; [https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx\\_bicctools/focus\\_8\\_ivory\\_coast.pdf](https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/focus_8_ivory_coast.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Conflict diamonds and peace process in Cote d'Ivoire," Bonn International Centre for Conversion, BICC Focus, 2008, 1-7; [https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx\\_bicctools/focus\\_8\\_ivory\\_coast.pdf](https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/focus_8_ivory_coast.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> "Loupe Holes: Illicit Diamonds in the Kimberley Process," Partnership Africa Canada and Global Witness, 2008; [http://www.pacweb.org/Documents/diamonds\\_KP/Loupe\\_Holes\\_nov2008-eng.pdf](http://www.pacweb.org/Documents/diamonds_KP/Loupe_Holes_nov2008-eng.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> The SCPK Statistics website estimates the global production of diamonds in 2006 at more than \$11 billion [Available at: [http://mmsdl.mms.nrcan.gc.ca/kimberleystats/Global\\_Summary%20-%202006%20data.pdf](http://mmsdl.mms.nrcan.gc.ca/kimberleystats/Global_Summary%20-%202006%20data.pdf)].

<sup>5</sup> There are two major diamond-producing regions in Côte d'Ivoire: Séguéla and Tortiya.

<sup>6</sup> The Société d'État pour le Développement Minier de la Côte d'Ivoire (SODEMI) was created in 1962. Since 1997, it has operated as a private company with autonomy granted under the provisions of Bill 97-519 enacted on September 4, 1997. SODEMI holds exploration licences for the Séguéla region. The Côte d'Ivoire government has mandated SODEMI to provide support for the social development of populations in the diamond-producing region in an effort to stem rural migration. Starting in 1984, SODEMI began organizing villagers living on land covered by its license into cooperative associations (groupements à vocation coopérative or GVC). At the request of these cooperatives, SODEMI is currently ceding licensed land plots in the Séguéla region to artisanal diamond miners.

The specific goal of the study was to collect and analyse relevant information that could provide a concrete understanding of the specific conditions facing artisanal diamond miners in Tortiya. The social and environmental impact of conditions unique to Tortiya are presented in Chapters III and IV. A review of the domestic diamond market in Tortiya (Chapter V) and its ramifications, may point the way to possible solutions and push government authorities in Côte d'Ivoire to develop more effective strategies for applying both the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and recommendations from the Washington Declaration.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### **To the government of Côte d'Ivoire:**

- Respect commitments made by effectively implementing the recommendations of the Washington Declaration. Particular attention should be made for the need to formalize and register artisanal miners overall, and in Tortiya specifically.
- Establish a mining brigade as required by legislation in order to put an end to illegal mining activities in Tortiya.
- Order a social and environmental assessment of the Tortiya region to better understand the scope of the problem so that appropriate solutions can be found to establish a more secure and peaceful environment for the population.
- In close collaboration with civil society representatives and communities in Tortiya, promote the development and funding of first, a social and environmental remediation plan and second, a community development plan.
- Officially and publicly denounce violations of children's rights in the artisanal diamond mining sector, and ensure legal and regulatory provisions concerning mandatory schooling for all children aged 6 to 16 be applied in Tortiya.
- Continue to raise awareness in local communities and take concrete action to extend the standardization of the production chain and diamond commercialization to Tortiya.
- Provide the local mining administration in Tortiya with the necessary technical and logistical support, as well as an increase in staff, to ensure a stronger presence and effectiveness to detect and identify infractions of mining laws.
- Demonstrate a commitment to ensuring implementation of the minimum requirements of the Kimberley Process through a more proactive local administration in Tortiya.
- Support the development of the artisanal and small-scale mining sector, and ensure the development of national expertise through the establishment of a clear Policy Declaration (DP) for the sector, with formalization and local development among the stipulated priorities.

### **To the Society for Mining Development in Côte d'Ivoire (SODEMI):**

- Complying with the January 2015 decree that granted a diamond-mining exploration license for Niakaramadougou, Korhogo and Dikodougou, accelerate the process to establish and maintain a presence in Tortiya.
- Create a framework for cooperation and dialogue with local communities in Tortiya. It has been repeatedly proven that mining exploration projects have a sustainable impact when local populations effectively participate in decision-making.
- Encourage direct support for local artisanal miners so that they have access to credits.
- Provide technical and commercial support to local communities in Tortiya still interested in the diamond sector in order to encourage the creation of small, semi-mechanized businesses, as this would improve work conditions, make operations more viable and create economic benefits for the local community.
- Provide technical training (on semi-modern methods and techniques for artisanal mining, the availability of appropriate equipment), and support for local artisanal miners in managing a cooperative compliant with the new regulations.
- Ensure that legal and regulatory provisions concerning environmental protection and rehabilitation are applied in the Tortiya region.

### **To civil society organizations:**

- Raise awareness about the rights of women and children, the *Mining Code*, and the *Mining Regulation* so that the most marginalized members of society (miners) understand the law.
- Engage with local mining communities to raise awareness about the risks children face and the communities as a whole, when children engage in artisanal diamond mining.
- Strengthen the ability to implement the Kimberly Process certification and an internal control system so that full responsibility can be assumed to monitor the diamond sector and inform public opinion.

**Read the report online: <http://bit.ly/1SRXbv9>**