

Kimberley Process on conflict diamonds is failing, says Impact

A founding member has withdrawn from the Kimberley Process (KP), [claiming that the conflict diamond certification scheme has lost its legitimacy](#).



Photo: Better Diamond Initiative

[Impact](#) says the internal controls used by governments do not provide the evidence of traceability and due diligenceneeded to ensure a clean, conflict-free, and legal diamond supply chain. “Consumers have been given a false confidence about where their diamonds come from. This stops now,” says Joanne Lebert, Impact’s executive director.

The organisation had called for major reforms to bring legitimacy back to the scheme after civil society boycotted the 2016 KP chair—the United Arab Emirates—due to lax trading practices that have allowed conflict diamonds to enter the legitimate supply chain.

Expanded definition

These reforms called for an expanded conflict diamond definition - as the current version limits the description to diamonds used by rebel groups to finance their activities to overthrow governments, and remains silent on abuses perpetrated by governments themselves or private security firms.

The proposed reforms also aimed to reinforce internal controls at national and regional levels to strengthen traceability and minimise illicit trade. Many cases have highlighted the weaknesses of internal controls, and Impact's research in 2016 demonstrated how—despite an embargo—Central African Republic's diamonds were entering the legitimate supply chain through Cameroon.

After extensive evaluation, the KP did not make enough progress on any of the reforms.

Lost its effectiveness

"We have come to the conclusion that the Kimberley Process has lost its will to be an effective mechanism for responsible diamond governance," says Lebert.

Impact will continue working with the Kimberley Process members who genuinely seek to end the trade of conflict and illicit diamonds, through traceability and due diligence, whether through the KP or other initiatives.

The organisation will collaborate with civil society members in diamond producing countries. In particular, Impact will work in continued solidarity with KP civil society coalition members on the effective implementation of internal controls for diamonds and other conflict-prone minerals, as well as support countries to implement measures to end illicit trade.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>