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## **Poverty stricken Marange Diamond Community continue to lose lives in Marange Diamond fields**

The community of Marange is anxious to know how much revenue will be channelled to the development of their poverty stricken community as ZCDC prepares to sell its stockpiled 1.4 million carats of diamonds. According to government sources Zimbabwe is expected to earn over 200 million from diamond sales which are being conducted after Botswana Government Diamond Valuers' (GDVs) comprehensive valuation of the stones. The much anticipated consolidation of diamond companies has so far failed to uplift human rights standards of Marange communities mainly because of lack of transparency and accountability. Policy inconsistency and opacity has made it difficult for ZCDC to attract strategic investors to boost its mining capacity. As a result, an insignificant number of locals in Marange have found employment at ZCDC.

Increased poverty and desperation has seen locals risking their lives to undertake illegal diamond digging in the porous diamond fields of Marange. Competition among ZCDC guards for control of illegal diamond panning syndicates has increased human rights abuse and violence in the Diamond Fields. Tafadzwa Mavhiza ID number 75 413419G 75 of Matipedza village in Matanda, Marange was shot and killed by ZCDC guards in portal B, formerly Marange Resources around 1am on 21 October 2017. His decomposing body was found 4 days later, on 25 October 2017 dumped in the washing plant tailings yard of ZCDC near Odzi River. Narrating the incident to CRD Lovemore Makarichi ID number 04- 007683-Z04 aged 53 explained that the guards who murdered Tafadzwa were angry when they found out that we had invaded the pit where their own panning syndicate were mining earlier on. Lovemore who managed to escape from the attack, highlighted that he could hear Tafadzwa pleading with one of the guards not to shoot him. Happymore Ngwena of Manu village in Marange ID number 75-1791876 -75 was trapped in a disused pit at former DMC mining area and died whilst panning for diamonds on 25 October 2017 around 12midnight. The lack of commitment by ZCDC in rehabilitating disused mining areas in Marange have seen both people and livestock falling victims. On Saturday afternoon about 51 panners invaded portal A of ZCDC. Several panners came out with bullet wounds, dog bites and fractured legs.

The Minister of Mines Chidhakwa, early this year, shot down The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Mines recommendation that government develop sustainable models for integrating artisanal and small scale miners into the diamond sector as a way of empowering and creating employment for surrounding communities.