

# GUNS, POWER AND POLITICS



community activist  
resource

Extractives  
and Violence  
against  
Women in  
Zimbabwe

# Background to Guns, Power and Politics

WoMin and its partners – Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) in Zimbabwe, Justiça Ambiental (JA) in Mozambique, and Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) in Sierra Leone – jointly undertook this feminist political economy research in 2018. The aim of the research is to inform national network formation, support women’s organising, trauma intervention and justice efforts by addressing the intersection of extractivism, militarisation, securitisation and violence against women.

When the research was commissioned, WoMin and its partners were clear that it would draw on formal academic analysis, research reports and reports written by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Interviews with key personnel working in NGOs or leading community organisations would be conducted, but there would be no primary fieldwork involving affected or potentially affected women. We adopted this position for a number of reasons:

- (a) Women who have endured violence perpetrated by private security and the military have rarely spoken about this experience and so there is deep unaddressed trauma; and
- (b) The terrain of work is extremely risky and there is need for careful process to enable women to think through risks and consequences to speaking out about the violence.

An extractive research process would likely cause further trauma and harm to the women we have elected to serve as an alliance. The researchers, bar one, respected this boundary.

The research was undertaken in Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Mozambique, and informs a conceptual synthesis paper which draws key conclusions from the research and builds critical concepts and ideas about the relationship between extractivism, securitisation, militarisation and violence against women. The research has been translated into a community activist resource tool for information and consciousness-raising in each of the three countries.



**This report draws on research commissioned by the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) and the WoMin African Alliance.**

# INTRODUCTION

When a community's land is taken by mining companies it often happens that the police, army and mine security enter the villages close to the mines. They take control of the villages saying NO to the mine, that they stop informal mining and that the company alone benefits from the mineral wealth. While the entire community is affected by these armed men, who are at times violent, women in communities affected by mining often experience sexualised violence including rape.

This study aims to uncover the violence against women in mining areas to (a) make this visible and create awareness; and (b) give information and analysis to help community activists challenge mining companies and improve the lives of communities affected by mining.

It is not easy for women to speak about these forms of violence. In addition to fearing the army, police and mine security, if they speak out, women also fear their own families and communities. They know from past experience that when a woman experiences sexual violence or if a woman is raped, people ask things like "What was she wearing?", "What was she doing at that place?", "Why was she out in the dark?", "Did she tempt him?". It is as if the woman who was raped is now blamed for being raped. Women also know from experience that women who are raped are seen as "spoilt goods", that often their husbands might reject them. These things never happen to a woman who gets shot. No one asks, "Did she ask for it?" or "Did she tempt the shooter?". **Because rape and sexual violence are treated differently from other forms of violence, it is difficult for women to talk about this violence, and to report it to the police.**

Yet, it is important that women's experiences of violence, including sexual violence and rape are uncovered and addressed. The silences around the forms of violence women experience need to be broken so that women may receive support to deal with the trauma that results from such violence; and so that women can decide on, and get, the justice they want.

This booklet tries to uncover some of the experiences of women in communities affected by mining in Zimbabwe, in the hope that this will increase awareness and encourage more women to speak out and look for ways to deal with the violence they face.

# OVERVIEW

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**Section 1** sets out a brief understanding of the economic and political systems that allow governments and big companies to use the law, the police and the army to safeguard the interests of the rich and powerful while creating hardship for the majority of people.

**Section 2** sets out reasons for women's and men's different experiences of the impacts of mining more broadly, and in relation to violence specifically.

**Section 3** looks at the experiences of mining-affected communities and informal miners in Zimbabwe. These include the rule of terror by police and army against miners, the community and women in the Marange diamond fields and the violent forced removals of families from Marange to Arda Transau. Marange is an example of what many communities have experienced across Zimbabwe when mining companies enter their lands.

**Section 4** looks at the experiences of women small-scale and artisanal (informal) miners.

**Section 5** looks at the way high-up political officials in Zimbabwe have been able to use mining wealth to enrich themselves and to fund the armed forces to control people in mining areas and to fight battles within the ruling party.

**A final section draws some conclusions.**



# 1. MINING COMPANIES, THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM AND VIOLENCE

Mining companies use people and natural resources to enrich themselves. They do not care that people are harmed, and that the land, animals, and plants are destroyed by mining. They do not care that mining (extraction, processing, exportation etc.) contributes to climate crisis. All they care about is making profits to enrich themselves.


Mining companies are allowed to destroy people and the earth because this is the way of the capitalist economic system, which Zimbabwe and most of the world follow. This cruel, unjust, and unequal system allows a few people to own most of the wealth of a country and the world, while the majority of the earth's people struggle to make ends meet.

Capitalism is an **extractivist** system, meaning that it allows large companies or politically connected people to capture and sell the natural resources of a country that is, the mineral and plant wealth, the timber, fish and other raw materials that local people depend on for their survival. While the heads of companies and the politically connected get rich from selling these natural resources, usually to other countries, the people whose lives depend on farming and fishing are left to starve.

The laws in a capitalist system protect the interests of large companies and the politically connected more than they protect the communities whose land and other resources are grabbed for mining. When the law does at times include the rights of people in the country it is often difficult for people to make sure these laws are implemented and actually work in their best interests.

In addition to laws, the capitalist system uses violence to prevent the majority from rising up to question or change the system. This violence includes processes of militarisation and securitisation in mining areas. **Militarisation** happens when the army enters mining areas and controls communities living within or close to mines. **Securitisation** occurs when armed men, usually from private security companies, enter a mining area to control communities directly, or indirectly, impacted by the mining operations.

Local men and women face violence when the army, police and private security forces enter their lands, and women often face sexual violence. While much has been written about the violence experienced by communities in mining areas, little has been written on women's particular experiences of violence in mining areas.

An illustration of four women with dark skin and light-colored hair, rendered in a stylized, flat-shaded manner. They are arranged in a circle, each with a speech bubble pointing to them. The background is black. The women are wearing simple, light-colored tops. The speech bubbles contain text in white, sans-serif font.

“Why do they say I asked for it?”

“Why do they ask if I tempted him?”

“Why do they ask what I was wearing?”

“Why do they ask what I was doing there?”

## 2. WOMEN'S AND MEN'S DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES

In most societies women's experiences are different from men's experiences. This is because of social rules about the work women and men should do, the resources allocated to women and men, and the power men are allowed to have over women.

In societies across the world, women have an unfair burden of work. They are expected to perform household duties, take care of men, the children and the sick, and to make sure families are fed and clothed. Men in most societies across the world believe women are there to provide all of these services, including sex, to them.

In many societies, women cannot own or have access to the things men can, for example:

- *women cannot own land in many traditional systems*
- *girls' access to education is at times limited*
- *instead of schooling, girls face child marriages in some societies*
- *women may not be able to access certain jobs because they are not allowed to travel outside of their villages.*

In most societies men have power over women. In the family, men usually make decisions and women have to ask a father's or husband's permission for all and everything, including permission to visit a friend or a family member. In the community, men make decisions and are seen to be the leaders. Women are often not supported as leaders in their communities. At the national level, in parliaments and government departments, men are usually the ones in leadership.

These ideas and practices are known as a system called **patriarchy**. This system sees women as inferior to men, sees women as the property of men, and permits violence against women, including sexual violence, as a way of controlling and keeping women 'in their place'. Women experience violence, including sexualised violence, from men in their homes, in their communities, and at the hands of police, army and security guards.

When levels of violence are high in a community or country, the levels of sexual violence and rape increase. So too, in times of war and increased militarisation and securitisation, as we see in mining areas, levels of sexual violence and rape will increase.

To keep their  
control over  
the diamond  
mining areas,  
government fenced  
in the villagers of  
Marange.





# 3. MARANGE - AN EXAMPLE OF A RULE OF TERROR BY THE POLICE AND ARMY

When diamonds were discovered in 2006 in the Chiadzwa-Mukwada area of the Marange District in Manicaland, Zimbabwe, the local people hoped their lives would improve. But, their hopes were not met. Instead of benefitting from the diamonds, the community was terrorised by the police and military. Their land was grabbed, many lost their livelihoods, and some were forced to move to a resettlement area. This is the story of the people in Marange.

Life was not easy in Marange around 2005. Like Zimbabweans across the country, the people of Marange experienced the effects of high unemployment and food shortages.

Many people had settled in the 30 villages of Marange, roughly 100 kms from Mutare, in the 1950s and 1960s. The older people kept livestock as small-scale farmers, but farming was not easy because of erratic rainfall patterns experienced in the district. Most villagers relied on money sent home by younger family members who were working in other rural areas and towns.

When diamonds were discovered in Marange, people started flocking to the area. Among these were some of the hundreds of thousands of poor people who had been left homeless and without incomes in 2005 when government's Operation Murambatsvina (Move the Rubbish), officially known as Operation Restore Order, outlawed informal housing and informal trading in cities across the country. More than 2.4 million people were indirectly affected. According to the UN Special Envoy tasked with assessing the impact of the exercise, 'Operation Restore Order, while purporting to target illegal dwellings and structures and to clamp down on alleged illicit activities, was carried out in an indiscriminate and unjustified manner, with indifference to human suffering, and, in repeated cases, with disregard to several provisions of national and international legal frameworks'.

By December 2006 there were 25 000 people mining informally in Marange, that is without government permits. Economic hardship had also led people to undertake artisanal mining in other parts of Zimbabwe. By the end of 2006 police had arrested and seized gems and minerals from 22 500 artisanal miners across the country, with 9 000 of these being in Marange.

After these actions, mining continued informally, controlled by syndicates or groups

### 3. MARANGE - AN EXAMPLE OF A RULE OF TERROR BY THE POLICE AND ARMY

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run by policemen. By 2008, there were around 500 syndicates involved in mining. Artisanal miners bribed police or joined these groups. Each syndicate was usually made up of around 30 miners controlled by two to five policemen. The miners paid the policemen, and one policeman could control many syndicates. The police in control of the syndicates decided who was allowed to mine, and who bought and sold the diamonds. Diamonds were sold to unregistered local and foreign dealers in Mutare, Harare, Manica in Mozambique, and many other cities and towns in the region. Those doing the actual mining lived lives of great hardship and risk while the police, security, officials and traders took their profits.

While men paid bribes to the police in cash, women at times paid police officers with sex. Some women told Human Rights Watch that they were able to work the diamond fields by agreeing to have sex with policemen. One miner told Human Rights Watch that his team was able to dig for diamonds by getting the three women on their team to have sex with the six policemen on guard. While the policemen were being kept busy by the women, the men in the team went to dig for diamonds.

While the policemen benefitted from their control of syndicates, government tried to drive the miners out of the diamond fields in raids that looked like a war. Between November 2006 and October 2008 police killed, tortured, beat, harassed, and set their dogs on miners in a number of raids.

On 27 October 2008 government declared war on the miners and villagers of Marange. More than 800 soldiers shot at miners on the ground. From above, soldiers in helicopters fired live ammunition and tear gas into the diamond fields and surrounding villages. The operation, named Operation Hakudzokwi (You shall not return) lasted three weeks, and more than 200 artisanal miners and diamond dealers were gunned down. Thousands of artisanal miners were tortured. Soldiers raped hundreds of women and at times soldiers forced male artisanal miners to rape women.

The Zimbabwean government had sent in the army, air force and Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) agents from the Office of the President to take over the diamond fields in this operation. Government had realised that the diamond wealth in Marange was much bigger than they had imagined, and they wanted to make sure that the military and its connections would be the ones to benefit from this wealth.

### Life in the villages

It was not only the artisanal miners who were controlled by police. The lives of villagers were also controlled by the police and this continues to this day.

To keep their control over the diamond mining areas, government fenced in the villagers of Marange. Police and soldiers are a daily presence in the lives of villagers. They control people within the fence and at checkpoints when they travel to Mutare. Police search people for diamonds at 11 checkpoints on the road between Mutare and Marange. They let people pass through only after they have paid a bribe.

Three women told Human Rights Watch how a male police constable forced them to strip naked at the checkpoint between Mutare and Chiadzwa. After they stripped, a police constable inserted his gloved finger in their private parts, claiming to be looking for hidden diamonds.

Other women told how some police officers in Chiadzwa in 2008 would amuse themselves by fighting over women and gambling on them. The “prize” for the policeman who won was that he got to rape the women for the night.

A woman told of policemen setting their dogs on her and three other women because they were suspected of assisting artisanal miners. The women were ordered to kneel and take off their blouses. The woman said “.... .... **they both set their dogs on us. We all suffered dog bites on our breasts. .... the police told us that the dogs only eat human breast meat and let us go.**”

A 43-year-old woman told Human Rights Watch about her experience of being detained and beaten by soldiers who accused her of assisting illegal diamond miners in Betera village in February 2009.

*“They beat us using fresh tree branches. They stole USD 200, a radio, and a 50 kg bag of maize meal and kitchen utensils. They ordered me and my 14-year-old niece to their base at Betera primary school to clean their tents and cook for them. They only released us around 10am the following day.*”

Villagers told Human Rights Watch that police assaulted and arrested local

### 3. MARANGE - AN EXAMPLE OF A RULE OF TERROR BY THE POLICE AND ARMY

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community members in villages around the diamond fields, holding them in police camps for between four and seven days before taking them to Mutare where they were detained before appearing in court. On one occasion a 10-year-old child was reported as detained.

Soldiers continue to this day to search the villagers and rob them of cash, food, blankets, mobile phones, cars and furniture. Soldiers search houses without warrants and force local women and children to cook and slaughter livestock for them. Girls and women in Marange are at risk of sexual and physical violence by security guards, the police and soldiers who confront them on their way to school or when they walk to fetch water or attend to their fields.

Cattle herders accused of trespassing on diamond company land are detained and tortured by company security guards, police or soldiers.

The rivers and streams are polluted by mining companies. Cattle, the villagers' main source of wealth, have died after drinking this polluted water. Despite laws like the Environmental Management Act of 2002 (EMA) no action has been taken against companies for pollution and the damage done to the land, plant and animal life.

Inside the fence, villagers are isolated in a prison-like situation. Relatives or friends who want to visit Marange have to get clearance letters from the police in Mutare. It is not easy to get these letters and so this creates great difficulty for people outside of Marange to visit their family and friends. Marange residents who own vehicles have to get vehicle permits which they have to renew monthly in Mutare, costing them more than \$450 a year. If caught driving without a permit they are beaten and accused of being illegal diamond dealers.

#### **Forced relocations to Arda Transau**

In 2009 the army forced 1300 families to leave their homes in Marange to clear land for diamond mining. These families were moved to Arda Transau, a government farm about 60 km from Marange.

Marange villagers resisted relocation for months before government sent in the army and forced them into trucks at gunpoint while their homes were destroyed by bulldozers.

Government argued that moving these families was in the 'national interest' because diamonds were key to the economic recovery of the country. They placed Marange communal lands under the Protected Places and Areas Act (PPA). This allowed the mining companies to occupy protected areas and ignore other laws which lay down that people affected by mining should be consulted and compensated fairly and with their agreement.

The Mines and Minerals Act (MMA) (1961) allows communal land to be used for mining. It gives more weight to the rights of mining companies wanting to mine, than it does to community members who depend on the land for food and livelihood.

Government moved these families using the Communal Lands Act (1982) which allows the state to evict people from communal lands, punishes resistance to eviction by a fine or a one-year imprisonment or both, while protecting the holder of a mining title from eviction. There was no valuation of villagers' properties before they were destroyed, and government refuses to compensate the families, claiming that these families did not own the land since the Communal Land Act gave them use rights to communal land.

People in Arda Transau face continued hardship and violence. The women interviewed for this report spoke of violence by the army and the mining companies who forced them to leave their villages. Many women were not willing to speak and those who did speak to the researcher feared what would happen to them if it was known they had spoken of these things.

The women said the families had not been consulted and were not given even basic information about government's plans to move them. The families were forced to leave their homes at gunpoint and were threatened if they put up a fight or spoke out against these violations.

### 3. MARANGE - AN EXAMPLE OF A RULE OF TERROR BY THE POLICE AND ARMY

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One woman said:

*“We were kidnapped and moved here in 2010. The mining companies came in 2006 and...counted us and told us about diamonds. At villages X and Y, they came and started evaluating buildings, chickens and children etc. They were making preparations for our removal, together with villages A and B, to Arda Transau. We were not even aware of what they were planning prior to our removal. They came in June 2010 and told [the headman that] 12 homesteads had to be moved. Where to? We did not know and were not told.*

A second woman said:

*A senior military officer told me that I had to move to Arda Transau. He pointed a gun at me in the meeting. After that we were told to go to the school, to get onto the bus and go to see the houses that we were moving into. On the 11th, we were shown the houses ... The following days, between the 12th and the 14th, we were moved there. We had no chance to take anything. We left our mapfunde (finger millet), groundnuts and other crops in the fields. We were given 50 kg of mealie meal, 2 kg of sugar, 2 litres of cooking oil, candles and 2 to 4 green bars of soap. Can you imagine? How was that going to help anybody? We were told not to say bad things about the government as it will get us into trouble. We were instructed to say we were happy and well, that we had been given food and electricity, all of which we were made to sign for.*

A third woman said:

*We are muzzled and not allowed to talk about our situations. We are forced to say that we get food and school fees for our children, uniforms and other things, even if all this is not true. In fact, one man [named] was mobilised and instructed to tell lies to the Kimberley Certification Process people so that the mining companies could be granted certificates to operate even though they are abusing us. We were promised compensation after the diamonds were mined and sold, but we have never received a cent!*

The resettled families were able to live off the land while they were in Marange, but at Arda Transau the land is dry and of poor quality, and the land allocated to each family is too small. It has been difficult to grow food for survival. Many of the men left Arda Transau to look for jobs in other parts of the country. Women, who have to care for and feed families, have difficulties sourcing water, firewood, food, electricity and schooling for the children in Arda Transau. Families cannot afford to pay for basic needs such as water and electricity which were free in Marange. Families were provided with smaller, flimsy homes in Arda Transau whereas their houses that were demolished were much larger and made of stronger material, often brick. As three women told the researcher:

*We left our village where we had wells, but here it's dry and there is no water. The soldiers who are mine partners with the Chinese don't want us to chop trees for firewood, but we have no fuel.*

*We left our good houses and were put into these flimsy structures. We had water at our old homes and here there is no water for us to do gardening and other projects. We were betrayed and now we are silenced, with no security of tenure, no electricity, water or income generation opportunities. Our plight is a terrible one and we wish to return to our homes where they took us from.*

*I lost my brick house with two rooms and a kitchen and... was pushed into a tiny house with my co-wife, husband and children. I was told that the houses belong to the government.... We have no security of tenure, no water, no electricity or other amenities. There is no firewood and these houses are chipping away...*

In order to survive women began to collect grass and firewood from neighbouring villages to sell. If caught cutting grass or firewood the women are punished by the heads of the neighbouring villages. There are fears that some women have been sexually abused.

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# 4. THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL MINING

This section explores the experiences of women who work as miners in artisanal and small-scale mining. These miners are not employed by the big mining companies. They work on their own, in groups or may be employed by another miner..

Artisanal mining is at a small scale and involves no machines while small-scale mining uses machines. Areas like Esigodini in Matabeleland South are known for artisanal or small-scale mining and the miners are known as 'makorokoza'.

Many artisanal and small-scale miners are people who were not able to make a living from farming, and they began to move into mining especially after the year 2000 when people in the country faced high levels of poverty and unemployment. Artisanal and small-scale miners, typically men at first, mined during the agricultural off season.

By 2008, small-scale gold mining had grown, with most of the makorokoza working informally and illegally. Much of the gold was traded illegally and smuggled out of the country.

By 2017, artisanal and small-scale gold mining produced about 50% of formal gold output and was supporting the livelihoods of almost 2 million people.

Despite this growth and the importance of artisanal mining to many millions of people, it remains unlawful in Zimbabwe. At times, government supports artisanal miners and at other times government takes action against them for illegal activity. In 2013, government said they would not take legal action against artisanal and small-scale miners and has since lowered costs and requirements for the granting of permits.

## Small-scale mining

It is not easy for women to enter small-scale mining, because of the long and costly processes of getting licences, permits, leases and exclusive prospecting orders. Very few women own or are registered as owners of mines. The few women who do own mines face many challenges.

Mrs Date (not her real name) spoke to the researcher of this study about her difficulties with obtaining a licence for small-scale mining. After being laid off from her job in 2012, Mrs Date decided to use her severance money to start small-scale

## 4. THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL MINING

gold mining. However, she gave up when she was asked for bribes and sexual favours in return for the necessary permits.

*At every stage, people want to be bribed or to have a sexual relationship with you to help you get permits and papers. Ah! The corruption and the extortion! Ndakazvitadza! [I could not manage it!] You go to a different place to do this and that! It is a system designed to frustrate people and make sure that those in mining do not have competition.*

Women, who have managed to get into small-scale mining, face risks especially if they are young, single and do not have political connections. Mrs Dee (also not her real name), a small-scale miner who took over her husband's mine after he died, was harassed by war veterans three months after her husband's death. The war veterans wanted to take over her mine. An official from the ministry of mines told Mrs Dee to "share" her mine with the war veterans and she was forced to "agree".

Women in the small-scale mining sector are also abused by male miners. Mrs Gee (not her real name) told the researcher that a male miner suggested that they form a partnership. Mrs Gee agreed. She paid the fees to renew her mining licence and other costs related to the claim, but her male partner failed to pay his share of these costs. Mrs Gee worked the mine over five years and when she saw good returns, the partner claimed his share. Mrs Gee fought him in court and won.

These are some of the difficulties women face in small-scale mining.

### Artisanal Mining

Entering artisanal mining is not as complicated as entering small-scale mining. At times landowners whose land has minerals might allow artisanal miners to mine the land. Other times artisanal miners work old or abandoned mines where there is still some gold.

More women are active in the artisanal mining sector in Zimbabwe than in the small-scale mining sector, because it is easier to enter and because of the lower operational costs. In addition, artisanal mining can be undertaken with assistance from children and other relatives in the family and can be combined more easily with

women's household responsibilities.

But women artisanal miners are not free from problems. The main concern is that women are controlled by the men who are in charge. These male artisanal miners decide the work women may do, and they only allow women to work sites with the lowest mineral deposits.

Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA) found that male artisanal miners in urban areas keep women out of mining sites with high concentrations of gold whether this involves digging in deep pits or surface mining. Once the men have finished mining these mineral rich areas, they move to other land with higher gold concentrations, and leave the depleted sites for women to mine.

Research by the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) in 2015 showed that many of the women artisanal miners who had been given rights to mine gold by former first lady Grace Mugabe at Kitsiyatota in Bindura, moved out other women who were already working in these areas. The women who were moved out of artisanal mining told CNRG that they were forced, by economic circumstance, to supply water and cook food for male miners, whilst others became commercial sex workers at the site.

Women are at times kept out of artisanal mining because of false societal and cultural beliefs. In 2015, when CNRG started a project to help 52 artisanal miners form syndicates and get mining claims, they found that the men did not want women in their groups. The men said women were weak and unfit for underground work. This was definitely not the case, since CNRG saw some women working harder and spending more hours at the mine site than the men.

Male artisanal miners believe that women are 'polluted' and make gold 'disappear' because they menstruate. These beliefs lead men to keep women out of artisanal mining.

Men's attitudes to women artisanal miners were made clear to the researcher for this report when she came across an artisanal mining group of ten men and two women collecting ore from a river that they had diverted to pass through their camp. The researcher found that men were in control of this group and were paid more than

## 4. THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL MINING

the women. The women were accepted in the group only because they were related to influential male members. One of the men leading this group said:

*We don't like to work with women because we might not know them well enough to trust them. As men, we build relationships of trust over food, cigarettes and other activities whereas with women it's harder to have such relationships without causing conflict, especially if the women have relationships with men who are not in the group. This type of work is suitable for men because it is hard and taxing. A miner needs to shovel soil for up to 10 hours every day...*

This group also commented on problems they faced with the police, and with security personnel who they have to bribe in order to continue mining. These problems linked to securitisation and militarisation of mining areas are problems confronted by artisanal miners across Zimbabwe. The men leading the group told the researcher:

*The Support Unit [an anti-riot armed police unit] is the biggest extortionist and they used to be nasty to us. We decided to share the spoils from our mining with them so that we can continue mining. We bribe them for a dollar per head every Monday and Friday. The mining company guards tried to frighten us off this riverbed, but we negotiated with the farm owner on whose land this river passes. We pay him something too, so that he allows us to mine on this river. Other members of law enforcement such as the police extort money from other gold panners, but they leave us alone now that they know we pay the Support Unit for the right to mine here.*

The researcher spoke to Mrs X, a woman artisanal miner in Marange. Mrs X told the researcher of extortion and abuse by security guards. Artisanal miners in Marange are made to pay up to \$10 per head to enter the fields. The charge is not fixed and the guards on duty ask for whatever they want on a particular day.

Mrs X related one incident of abuse which took place when she went out in a party of 14 artisanal miners to get ore. The others in her party managed to run away from the guards but Mrs X was caught and bitten by their dogs. Mrs X noted

that experiences such as this make women unwilling to take the risks that go with artisanal mining.

*One of the men ordered the dog to catch me. The dog bit me on the stomach while my hands were tied. I was using my hands to try to stop the dog from biting me. The dog continued to bite me till I went quiet. Its teeth were sunk into my flesh and it would not let me go... They then mocked me asking me to fill in forms indicating whether I desired to be a guard, a house-girl or a prostitute. They berated me, telling me 'You people create problems for us. We kill and bury people. Your ancestors are strong, and you should be grateful.' I was scared that I would be killed and buried.*



The control over diamond wealth was linked to the internal ZANU PF military power struggles that led to the military coup against former President Mugabe.

# 5. CAPTURE OF MINERAL WEALTH BY OFFICIALS AND THE MILITARY

Marange is an example of how officials high-up in government have been able to take control over Zimbabwe's mineral wealth for their personal gain and to fund repression by government armed forces.

After 2008 government took over diamond exploitation following the violent onslaught of Operation Hakudzokwi on the informal miners in Marange. Through the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act 2008 (Indigenisation Act) government took 51% ownership of the big companies, most of them foreign owned, with many owned by Chinese and Indian companies.

The Indigenisation Act aimed to make sure that indigenous Zimbabweans owned the majority of shares of large companies operating in Zimbabwe that is, those companies with a share capital above US\$500 000. Through this Act, senior party and military/security officials and the Zimbabwean army and Central Intelligence Organisation gained huge wealth by receiving shares in Marange's diamond mining companies.

The Global Witness 2017 report 'An Inside Job' uncovered links between diamond wealth, senior officials and the military. These included:

- Links between diamond wealth and the Zimbabwe military, and that money from diamonds secretly funded police and army violence on Zimbabwe's people, especially during elections.
- The control over diamond wealth was linked to the internal ZANU PF military power struggles that led to the military coup against former President Mugabe. The military had taken action against the former President because in setting up the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company he had sidelined the military in favour of his wife and her political supporters.
- Robert Mhlanga, a retired member of Zimbabwe's security forces, ruling party ally, and alleged former presidential pilot owned a 25% stake in Mbada Diamonds, the largest company in Marange.

The capture of wealth took place across all forms of mining, not just diamond mining. For example, Bikita Minerals, which produces lithium-bearing petalite and spodumene, claimed in 2012 that former Cabinet Minister Dzikamai Mavhaire had

## 5. CAPTURE OF MINERAL WEALTH BY OFFICIALS AND THE MILITARY

a 21% shareholding in the company. In 2017 Richard Zvinvashe, son of the late retired Army General Vitalis Zvinvashe, approached the courts claiming his father held a 15% stake in the firm. Both Mavhaire and Zvinvashe were appointed to the Bikita Minerals Board in 2004 to safeguard the company's interests.

It was people high-up in government, the well-connected and the military who benefitted from mining and from laws such as the Indigenisation Act, and not artisanal miners or ordinary Zimbabweans.



# CONCLUSIONS

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The militarisation of mining in Zimbabwe took place at a time when there were huge power struggles within the Zanu PF ruling party. Powerful party members were able to increase their political and military influence by capturing the country's mineral wealth. This took place in the context of Robert Mugabe's self-preservation and power-retention strategy which promoted corruption as a way of appeasing his officials and the military so that they could fight for the regime to stay in power.

For the majority of Zimbabweans and for those communities living close to the mining areas, mining has brought added hardships and increased violence in a situation of already high levels of poverty and unemployment.

The lives, livelihoods and well-being of women and their communities are made worse by violent land and resource grabs, increased pollution and deepening militarisation. The militarisation of the diamond sector brought with it high levels of sexualised violence against women and girls.

While much has been written about the different forms of violence experienced by communities affected by mining, there continues to be a silence around how this violence affects women.

This study opens an important conversation about women's experience of sexualised violence in Zimbabwe's mining sector, and about how the violence of an extractivist capitalist economic system includes sexualised violence in relation to women.

The silences around these forms of violence need to be broken so that women may receive support to deal with the trauma that results from such violence, and so that women can decide on and get the justice they want and deserve.

This research lays the ground for work already well underway in Zimbabwe to support women's organising and trauma relief, and to document further experiences so that women who have suffered violence resulting from mining may obtain redress.

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In societies across the world, women have an unfair burden of work. They are expected to perform household duties, take care of men, the children and the sick, and to make sure families are fed and clothed.



