

Avoiding Human Rights Abuses in the Artisanal Mining Sector



What is the problem?

Artisanal and Small-scale Mining (ASM) in central Africa has, for years, been an arena in which human rights abuses have been perpetuated against the men, women and children who survive through the hard labor of extracting, transporting, processing and trading of minerals. The Dodd Frank Act and the OECD's Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains seek to remove such abuses from the sector and, to achieve this, iTSCi seeks to ensure that mines are free from the presence of armed groups and that human rights are respected.

What can be done?

Increasing capacity of multi-stakeholder committees – One of the key ways in which iTSCi assures that minerals in the system are conflict free and not connected to human rights abuses is through an incident reporting process, supported by multi-stakeholder committees at territorial and provincial level in the DRC, and at national level in Rwanda and Burundi. These committees meet regularly to review the security and human rights status of the mining sector in their area and to work to resolve incidents of abuse that arise. The committees receive constant support and regular training, however, intense skills and capacity support would significantly increase their ability to operate.



Whistle blowing – The iTSCi system supports an independent whistle-blower to complement and extend its existing incident reporting and investigation process. This is in line with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) inclusion of whistle-blowing as a key intervention to address conflict minerals. The whistle-blowing mechanism includes an anonymous telephone hot-line which can be used to report concerns and observations on any abuses in the mines.

Addressing SGBV – Reporting, investigation, and prosecution of perpetrators of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), as well as physical and psycho-social support to victims of such abuse, is a highly sensitive and specialized field. While the current iTSCi committees exist to address human rights abuses, specialist partners are needed to provide a more robust and effective intervention against SGBV in mining areas.

Intensive human rights awareness for public security forces in mining areas – The comprehensive and active participation of the public security forces in ensuring security and preventing human rights abuses in the mining sector is fundamental to creating a conflict-free minerals trade. This includes prevention of abuse by the security forces themselves, both physical abuse and corrupt behavior. The police and army are included in the stakeholder committees however, given their particularly key role, warrant extra support and training to uphold human rights. A dedicated program for these services, including introduction and dissemination of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR), would significantly reduce risks of abuse with the system.

Avoiding and Responding to Human Rights Abuses

- Incident reporting includes any reports of sexual violence but more specialist activity is recommended.
- iTSCi works with Save Act Mine (SAM) in the Kivus for whistleblowing and hopes this can be extended.
- Apple supported training for staff from multiple territories on incident management and response.
- VPSHR info sheet for iTSCi members has been produced.

What will your support do?

US\$20,000 will pay for local sign-writers to produce signage in three key mining centres about human rights and penalties for abuse and violence in the mining sector.

US\$30,000 will pay for printing of leaflets and posters about human rights in mining in local languages for distribution.

US\$60,000 will fund an intensive training workshop for stakeholders in one province to improve systems for reporting and resolving incidents of abuse.

To contribute to the iTSCi Programme's ongoing field work infrastructure, contributors should also budget for an additional US\$7,500 per year for iTSCi membership.

US\$150,000 will pay for a multi-province whistle-blowing system by an independent party for one year.

US\$150,000 will fund dedicated human rights training for public security forces in one province.

US\$800,000 will pay for an SGBV program in mining areas in one province for one year to include victim support, judicial pursuit of perpetrators, and advocacy.

For More Information

Karen Hayes

Senior Director, Mines to Markets
Pact

khayes@pactworld.org
+44 (0)7968 198 213

Manager, Sustainability and Regulatory Affairs
ITRI

kay.nimmo@itri.co.uk
+44 (0)1727 871 312

Pact is an international, nonprofit organization with forty years of experience. Our vision is a world where those who are poor and marginalized exercise their voice, build their own solutions, and take ownership over their future.

