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## **Statement from the People's Dialogue's exchange visit to Zimbabwe and detentions**

8-12 November 2017

The People's Dialogue (PD) is relieved to report that all 22 of its delegates who were detained and charged with trespassing are safely on their way home.

This morning 13<sup>th</sup> November, all the foreign members of the PD had left Zimbabwe. A British citizen who was a friend to Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) staff (our host and partner in Zimbabwe) remains in custody and is expected to be released and deported later today. She was held allegedly for a visa violation.

The People's Dialogue delegation consisted of representatives from South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Brazil.

This delegation was in Zimbabwe as part of an exchange visit (solidarity mission) to explore and understand the situation of artisanal mining and participate in the commemoration of the 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Marange Diamond massacre, outside Mutare.

We remain concerned about the situation of our Zimbabwean partners who daily face the kind of repression and harassment that was experienced during this exchange visit. We are also worried about the implications of all the international attention that the arrest of PD delegation raised might have as this might lead to further retribution against our Zimbabwe partners.

In the context of sharp and intense conflicts over mining, the objective of the exchange visit was to understand the role of artisanal mining and whether it offers any alternative to the looting of the multinational mining companies in our countries. Furthermore, the exchange visit was also exploring and sharing ideas of how artisanal mining was organised and what its role could be in resource nationalism. We selected Zimbabwe because over 1 million people are involved in artisanal mining.

Of course our exchange visit was severely disrupted by the high-handed intervention of the Zimbabwean Government and police.

As the PD we will be organising an urgent meeting to assess the next steps and consider how we raise the resources needed to reimburse the local organisations and activists that supported us and paid for fines and the additional cost incurred related to the fact that we had to speedily get the delegates of the country safely.

The PD wishes to thank the many organisations and individuals that took up the cause of our arrested comrades. Importantly, we thank the teams of colleagues from Centre for Natural Resource Governance, the Counselling Service Unit, Passmore Nyakureba the lawyer for the team, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, CIDSE, DKA, [AMECEA secretariat](#), [TNC Campaign](#), the Brazilian Embassy and Vatican Apostolic Nunciature in Harare; Bishop Mons. Paul Horam; Brazilian Bishops Conference; Order of Friars Minor, Justice, Peace and Integrity of the Creation of the Franciscans; Franciscans International; Br. Amaral Bernardo and Custos of the OFM Santa Clara Custody in Mozambique.

Conclusion:

The situation in Zimbabwe remains extremely tense, we remain concerned about the well-being and safety of our Zimbabwean partner Centre for Natural Resource Governance who fearlessly resist the looting and dispossession of poor people by the extractive sector.

People's Dialogue Secretariat  
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South Africa.