Gemstones other than Diamonds

Summary of Key Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Production of Gemstones

☑ Structural Supply Chain Features Contributing to Trafficking in Persons Vulnerability
  o Long, Complex, and/or Non-Transparent Supply Chains
☑ Undesirable and Hazardous Work
☑ Vulnerable Workforce
  o Child Labor
☑ Associated Contextual Factors Contributing to TIP Vulnerability
  o Association with Organized Crime/Armed Conflict
  o Association with Environmental Degradation

Overview of Gemstone Production in sub-Saharan Africa

Trade

The top exporters of gemstones other than diamonds from sub-Saharan Africa are Zambia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Madagascar.¹ The primary gemstones exported from sub-Saharan African countries are tanzanite, amethysts, tourmaline, garnet, and emeralds.
Top Exporters of Gemstones other than Diamonds
(Value USD/Thousands)

- Zambia
- Mozambique
- Tanzania
- Madagascar
- South Africa
The top importers of gemstones from Africa are India, Hong Kong, the United States, Thailand, and France.\(^4\)
Features of Production and Supply Chain

In general, accurate production and export data is difficult to come by, because an estimated 75 percent of gems worldwide are mined by small and medium-sized mining operations. The exporting process can obscure the source country of the stones. Brokers and intermediaries buy stones from miners and sell them to exporters who sell the stones again to be sorted and processed. Gemstones are then cut and polished. After polishing, gems are sold on the international market and are ultimately sold by retailers, often incorporated into jewelry. Stones change hands a number of times between mining and manufacturing, making traceability challenging and opening the door to exploitation of miners by intermediaries.

Key Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Gemstone Production

Undesirable and Hazardous Work

Workers, including children, frequently work in extremely hazardous conditions without supervision or safety gear. Children engaged in mining are vulnerable to suffering many health issues, including lung and respiratory system damage; headaches, hearing and vision problems from noise; joint and muscular disorders; exposure to toxic chemicals used to clean the gems; and injuries from falls in mine shafts, sharp tools, falling stones and mine collapse.

Much of the hazardous nature of gemstone mining comes from the fact that, due to their high value, gemstones are a draw for both legal and illegal miners. Even when large scale commercial mines are present, artisanal miners often operate illegally around the edges of the concession. Illegal mining inherently occurs outside of any oversight and may present risk for trafficking in persons and other labor abuses. Illegal mining and smuggling may be associated with criminal groups.

In Zambia, it is estimated that illegal mining accounts for 40 percent of emerald production. It has been reported that a commercial mine has hired Nepali security guards to patrol mines with dogs seeking workers who may be smuggling gems out of their operations. These Nepali guards, as migrant workers, could themselves be at risk of being trafficked, as Nepali security guards have been in other contexts.

A recent rush to mine sapphire deposits in Madagascar is nearly entirely illegal and without government oversight. A media report notes that a significant portion of Madagascar’s sapphires are smuggled to Sri Lanka.
Vulnerable Workforce

Child Labor

The U.S. Department of Labor’s 2016 *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor of Forced Labor* notes that sapphires are mined with child labor in Madagascar. Various gems are mined with child labor in Tanzania, and Zambia. Children are reportedly used in sapphire mining in Mozambique as their stature allows them to fit into small pits. Similarly, in Madagascar, children are used to see if sapphires are present in small holes, and they are particularly susceptible to injuries caused by falling shards and rocks, collapsing pits, and underground fires. Child labor is reportedly common in tanzanite mining in Tanzania, where children primarily work to earn a livelihood for themselves and/or their families.
Associated Contextual Factors Contributing to Trafficking in Persons Vulnerability

Association with Organized Crime/Armed Conflict

In Mozambique, miners work illegally around the edges of commercial ruby concessions. In some cases, this has led to violent clashes between these miners and both government and private security forces. At least 19 people have reportedly been killed by security forces since 2009. In 2016, Foreign Policy documented the presence of an organized criminal group known as “Nacatanas,” which is the Portuguese word for machete, acting as de facto security guards. The Nacatanas operate on the commercial concession and intimidate local artisanal miners with violence; community members reported that they operate with impunity. Miners reported that the guards seized money, cell phones, and other possessions and on occasion, perpetrated violence including shooting. The presence of intimidating security forces has also led to deaths when miners, fearing for their lives should they exit pits, have been crushed or buried alive in mining pits.

The rush atmosphere around the ruby sector in Mozambique has reportedly led to armed robberies and violence among speculators. Over 300 homes were burned down in the region around ruby mining concessions in Mozambique and local people were forced off their land.
Corruption Perception Index Scores of Countries that Export Gemstones other than Diamonds

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Green: Ethiopia
- Red: Madagascar
- Yellow: Mozambique
- Blue: Tanzania
- Purple: Zambia
Relative Levels of Violence by Non-state Actors in Countries that Export Gemstones other than Diamonds

- Ethiopia: 0.8
- Madagascar: 1.3
- Mozambique: 2
- Tanzania: 0.3
- Zambia: 0

Legend:
- Ethiopia
- Madagascar
- Mozambique
- Tanzania
- Zambia
Fragile State Index Scores of Countries that Export Gemstones other than Diamonds

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Association with Environmental Degradation

In Madagascar, recently discovered sapphire deposits have caused massive migration in the forest for informal mining operations. Thousands of acres of trees have been cut. As the population has increased rapidly, the cost for food staples has reportedly increased over 50 percent. Lack of sanitation led to a typhoid outbreak in the mining camps in 2016. The environmental consequences of the expanding mining, much of it illegal, could affect thousands of rare species of plants and animals.
Gini Coefficient Scores of Countries that Export Gemstones other than Diamonds

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</table>

Legend:
- Ethiopia
- Madagascar
- Mozambique
- Tanzania
- Zambia
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Endnotes
