



# Diamonds

## Summary of Key Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Diamond Production

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

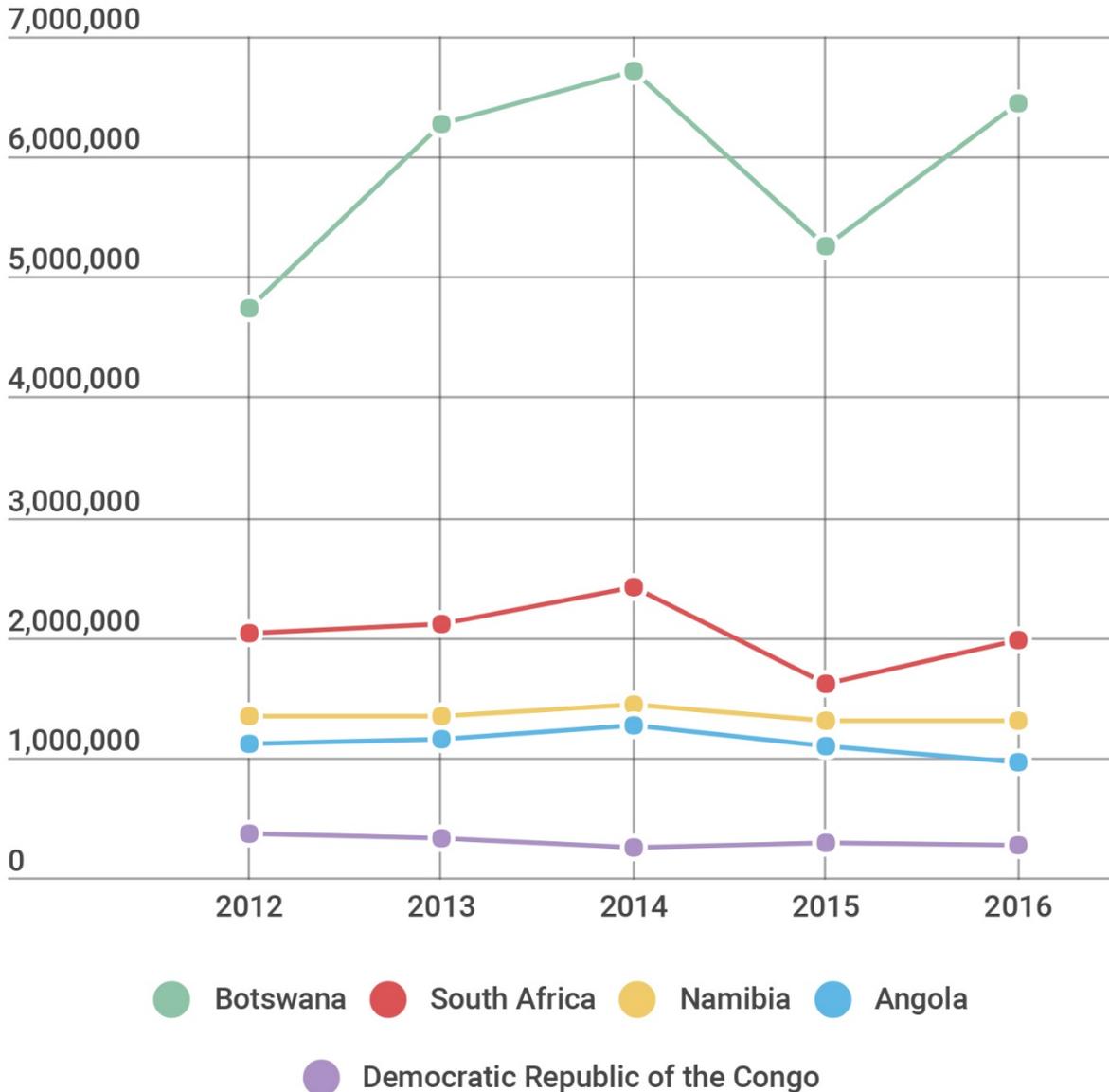
## Overview of Diamond Production in sub-Saharan Africa

### Trade

The top diamond exporting countries in sub-Saharan Africa are Botswana, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, and Namibia.<sup>1</sup>



## Top Exporters of Diamonds (Value USD/Thousands)



However, these official export statistics are likely to understate production from countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic, where smuggling is rampant. For example, illicit diamonds are estimated to make up as much as 70 percent of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's production.<sup>2</sup> Diamonds originating from African countries represent about 55-65 percent of the global trade.<sup>3</sup>



The top importers of diamonds from African countries are Belgium, India, the United Arab Emirates, and Namibia.<sup>4</sup>

## Features of Production and Supply Chain

Diamonds are extracted from geologic features known as “kimberlite pipes” through hard-rock, open-pit, or alluvial mining. Some diamonds are found near the kimberlite pipe instead of inside it or have been washed into nearby rivers where they are extracted via alluvial mining. Although diamonds can be extracted via formal commercial mining, diamond mining does not necessarily require a high level of resource input, and can therefore be mined in unstable environments with little to no technology or infrastructure.<sup>5</sup>

In Central African Republic, almost all diamonds are thought to have originated in neighboring countries with more significant kimberlite but have washed out of the weak sandstone into the country. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has kimberlite deposits concentrated in the southwestern and northeastern provinces. Angola’s diamond fields are in the southeastern, central, and northeastern provinces.<sup>6</sup>

After mining, raw diamonds are purchased by middlemen and exported for processing in one of a few global diamond sorting and cutting centers. These include Tel Aviv, Israel; Antwerp, Belgium; and Surat, India. At these centers, diamonds from all locations are mixed together, making traceability difficult. Some producing countries, such as Zimbabwe, are also beginning to cut and polish their own diamonds. New York and London are major centers of diamond sales. The diamond industry is very centralized, with just a few major corporations like De Beers and ALROSA accounting for the majority of global production and trade.

After an increase of 2.9 percent in global diamond sales in 2014,<sup>7</sup> the market slumped, and revenues decreased by 24 percent in 2015. It began to recover in the first half of 2016, driven by growing middle classes in India and China, as well as steady U.S. demand.<sup>8</sup> Industrial uses of diamonds, such as cutting and drilling, account for 70 percent of all diamonds, generally those of lesser quality.<sup>9</sup>

Their small size and high value, combined with frequently illicit origins, make diamonds a commonly smuggled commodity. This is particularly true in the African context. After the United Nations and the Kimberly Process (which regulates the trade in rough diamonds in order to safeguard against conflict financing) embargoed diamonds from the Central African Republic in 2013, there was reportedly a significant increase of smuggling of these diamonds into neighboring Cameroon, which then allowed those diamonds to enter the legitimate diamond market.<sup>10</sup> In some cases, smuggled diamonds were exported with certificates falsely noting their origin as Cameroon. In other cases, diamonds passed illicitly through Cameroon to other African exporting countries. Analysis from Partnership Africa Canada notes that corruption and the lack of government capacity contribute to this illicit trade.<sup>11</sup>

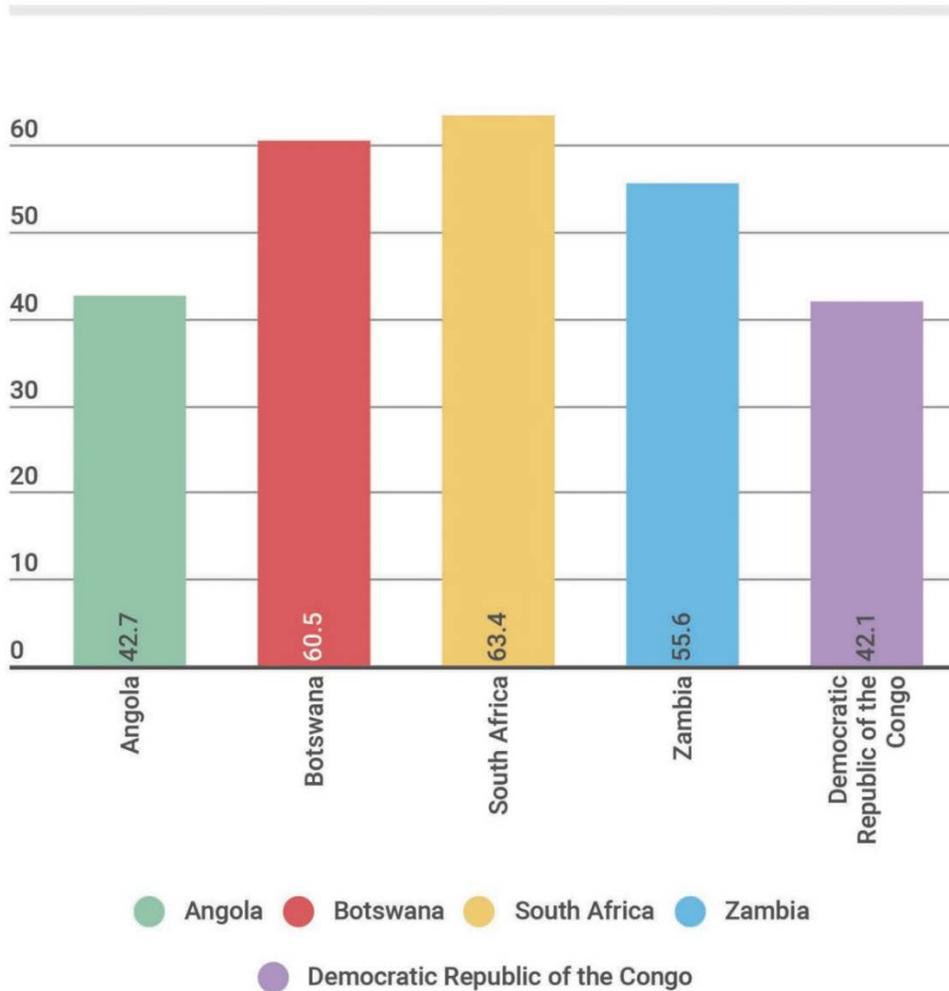




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Diamonds represent both an important source of potential income for countries and miners, while also posing risks that they will be used to fund corrupt government officials and criminal or armed groups. Diamond mining, especially in Africa, has long been associated with conflict, weak governance and the concept of a “resource curse” – a term referring to the situation where a country’s possession of a valuable natural resource endowment actually threatens to undermine its development and stability.

## Gini Coefficient Scores of Diamond Exporting Countries



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## Key Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Diamond Production

According to the U.S. Department of State's 2016 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, diamonds are produced with forced or forced child labor in Angola, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.<sup>14</sup>

### Undesirable and Hazardous Work

Artisanal diamond mining is hazardous for all workers and for children in particular. Workers are exposed to heavy minerals and chemicals; mudslides and floods; and collapsing pit walls. A number of fatal mine collapses have been reported in recent years, including in Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa. The physical nature of mining commonly leads to injuries such as hernias, as well as general exhaustion. Although much of the diamond mining sector in South Africa is formalized, illegal mining continues to present significant risks to miners. In 2009, 80 miners died after inhaling poisonous gas from a fire in an illegal mine. In 2012, 22 miners were killed by falling rocks<sup>15</sup> and in March 2016, at least 15 illegal diamond miners were killed in Zimbabwe when a mine shaft collapsed.<sup>16</sup> Workers deep underground in illegal mines for long periods of time can also face starvation.<sup>17</sup>

Though extremely hazardous, mining may offer livelihood opportunities that are lacking in countries with collapsed or struggling economies.

### Induced Indebtedness

According to some reports, trafficking in Angola's diamond sector can be a result of bonded labor in which "sponsors" pay for a miner's expenses and are reimbursed through a portion of the mined diamonds.<sup>18</sup> In Sierra Leone, miners, mostly young men, enter into bonded labor whereby they receive tools and housing but no compensation for their work.<sup>19</sup>

The phenomenon of middlemen or collectors is common in artisanal mining in a number of countries. The informal nature of the sector leads to a setup in which miners are paid far less than the diamonds' worth by middlemen. Miners may be unaware of the actual worth of the diamond, or they are in debt to the collectors and have no choice but to sell to them. In Central African Republic, for example, there are 80,000-100,000 artisanal miners, a mere five percent of whom are formally registered as miners with the government. Middlemen, who are sometimes even government officials, therefore play a large role in the diamond supply chain, potentially leading miners into cycles of debt that make them more vulnerable to forced labor.<sup>20</sup>



## Vulnerable Workforce

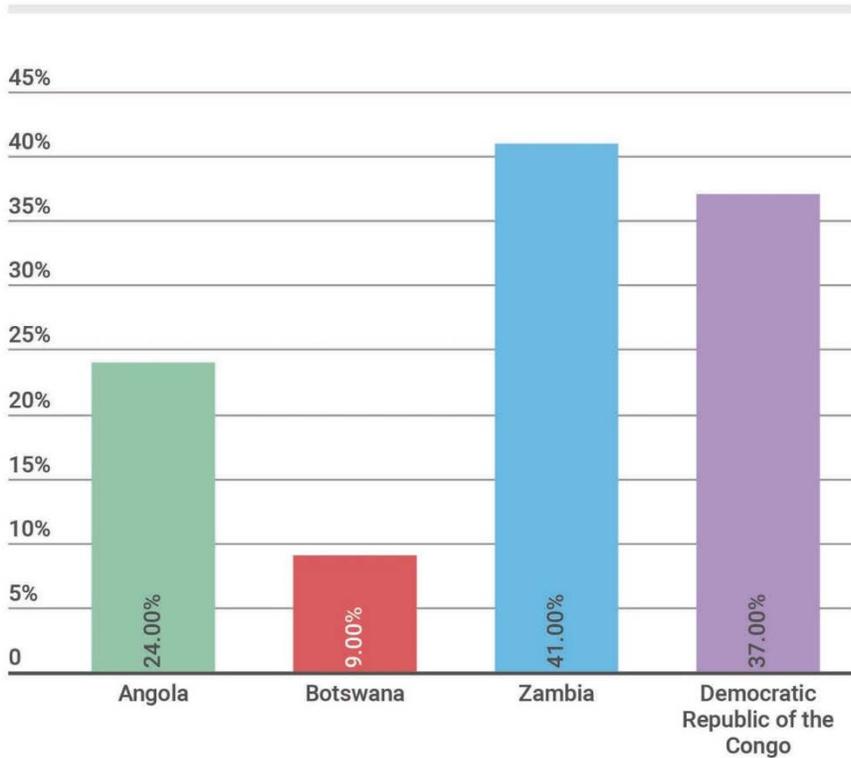
### Child Labor

The U.S. Department of Labor’s 2016 *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor and Forced Labor* reports that diamonds are produced with child labor in Angola, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.<sup>21</sup>

### Migrant Labor

Both labor and sex trafficking of adults and children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo reportedly occurs in alluvial diamond mining in Angola. The Angolan military has pursued a policy of ejecting Congolese migrants and in 2012, Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented significant abuses of these migrants at the hands of security forces.<sup>22</sup> Specifically, HRW reported rape, physical torture, and denial of any due process.<sup>23</sup> In South Africa, migrants from Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique have been noted working in illegal mining operations, some of which are controlled by local criminal groups.<sup>24</sup>

### Percentage of Children Engaged in Child Labor in Diamond Exporting Countries



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## Associated Contextual Factors Contributing to Trafficking in Persons Vulnerability

### Association with Sex Trafficking

Mining camps around pits reportedly have high rates of HIV/AIDS as well as a significant presence of commercial sex work, due to the transitory nature of the workforce and isolated nature of worksites.<sup>26</sup> The U.S. State Department reported in 2016 that Congolese migrants, some of them children, were victims of sex trafficking around mining camps in Angola.<sup>27</sup> In Sierra Leone, the U.S. Department of State notes that victims are recruited to mining centers for forced labor and sexual exploitation.<sup>28</sup>

### Association with Environmental Degradation

Diamond mining leads to degraded and polluted ecosystems in surrounding areas. The Environmental Justice Atlas notes that mining can lead to desertification and deforestation, crop reduction, loss of biodiversity, and other environmental hazards.<sup>29</sup> In countries such as Angola and Sierra Leone, land that is cleared for open pit mines becomes vulnerable to soil erosion, and in turn, flooding.<sup>30</sup> Around the Marange mines in Zimbabwe, numerous rivers downstream from the mines have been found to contain bacterial, chemical, and heavy-metal pollution. Cattle have died and villagers have gotten sick after drinking the water.<sup>31</sup> A toxic chemical compound called ferro-silicon has been found in these rivers. It contains chromium and nickel, both carcinogenic metals, as well as iron, which can be poisonous in large quantities.<sup>32</sup>

### Association with Organized Crime/Armed Conflict

In Angola, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, diamonds have been linked with the funding of violent and protracted civil wars, inspiring the phrase “blood diamonds.” Diamonds have been particularly central to fueling and motivating the ongoing crisis in Central African Republic, where human rights groups have documented that diamonds have funded the two primary parties of the armed conflict. Armed groups have been able to profit from diamond mining, even during embargos, by stockpiling diamonds and smuggling them out of their origin countries.<sup>33</sup> The U.N. noted in May 2017 that violence was significantly on the rise in diamond rich areas.<sup>34</sup> Reuters, citing aid workers, reported that the uptick in violence was at least partially due to armed groups struggling for control of diamond mines.<sup>35</sup> In May 2017, 115 bodies were found in a diamond mining town after militia attacks.<sup>36</sup>

In June 2009, HRW reported that Zimbabwe’s army used forced and child labor to mine diamonds in eastern Zimbabwe, specifically in the Marange fields.<sup>37</sup> Citizens that did not cooperate with the operation were allegedly beaten and tortured. There is evidence of an army-led massacre of 200 local miners in 2008.<sup>38</sup> A local Zimbabwean NGO, the Centre for Research and Development, has documented

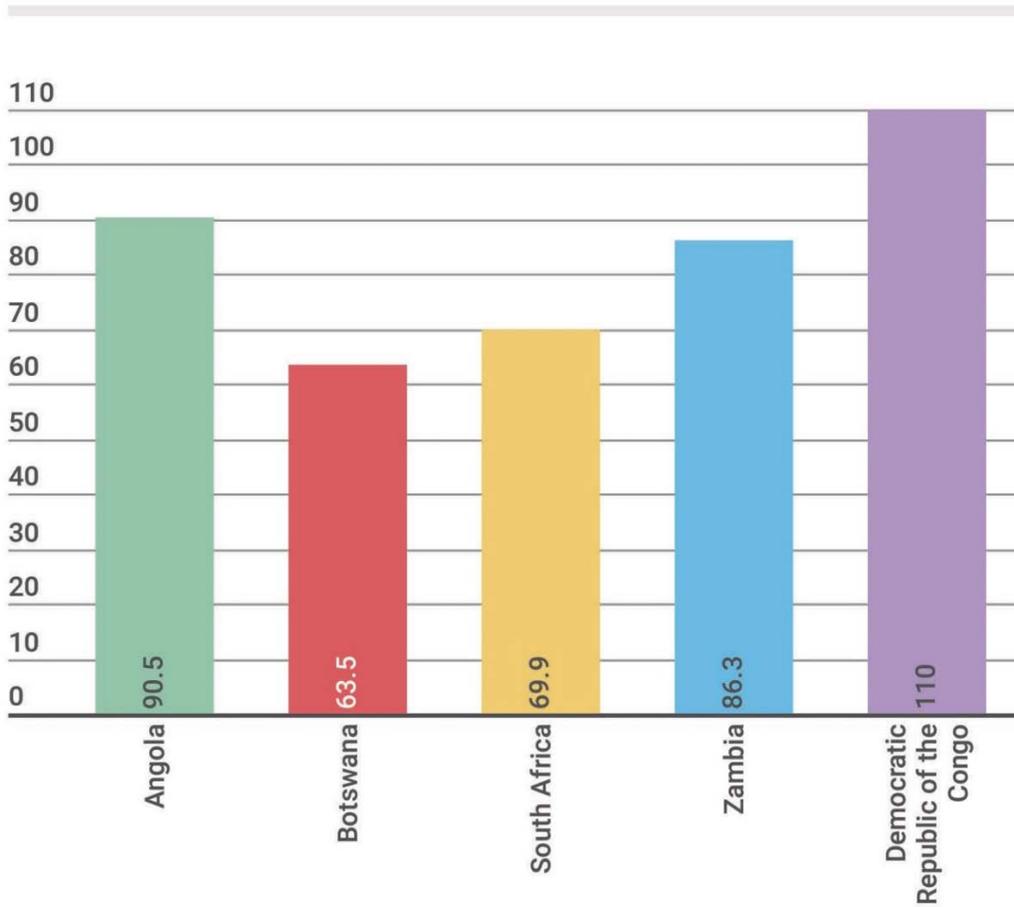


regular abuses against illegal miners and local residents since mining operations were nationalized in early 2016.<sup>39</sup> Local residents have reported that police have infringed on their freedom of movement, with door-to-door searches for illegal diamond miners creating a climate of intimidation.<sup>40</sup>

Armed groups have employed children in a number of these and other conflicts, most notably as combatants. In the Central African Republic, UNICEF has reported that nearly 10,000 child soldiers have been recruited since 2013,<sup>41</sup> with the UN General Assembly Security Council Secretary General noting in 2015 that children are being used by armed groups as informants, cooks, messengers, and for purposes of sexual exploitation. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there was a marked increase of violations against children, with 2,549 confirmed by the U.N. in 2015.<sup>42</sup>

## Fragile State Index Scores of Diamond Exporting

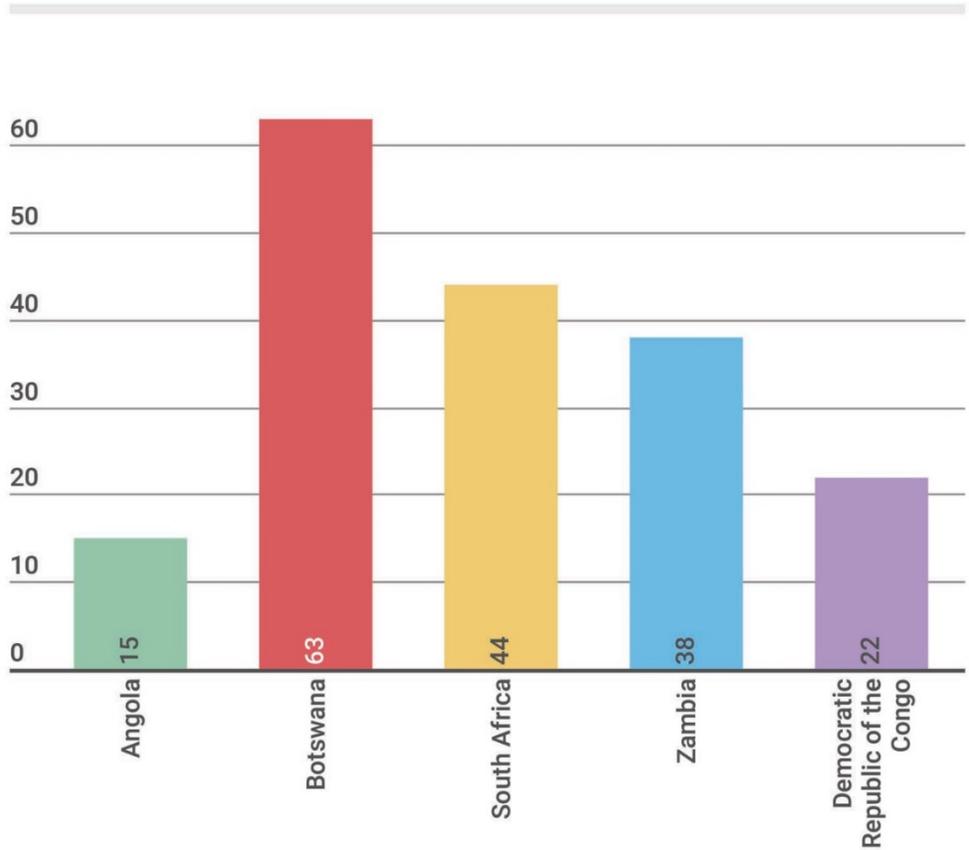
### Countries



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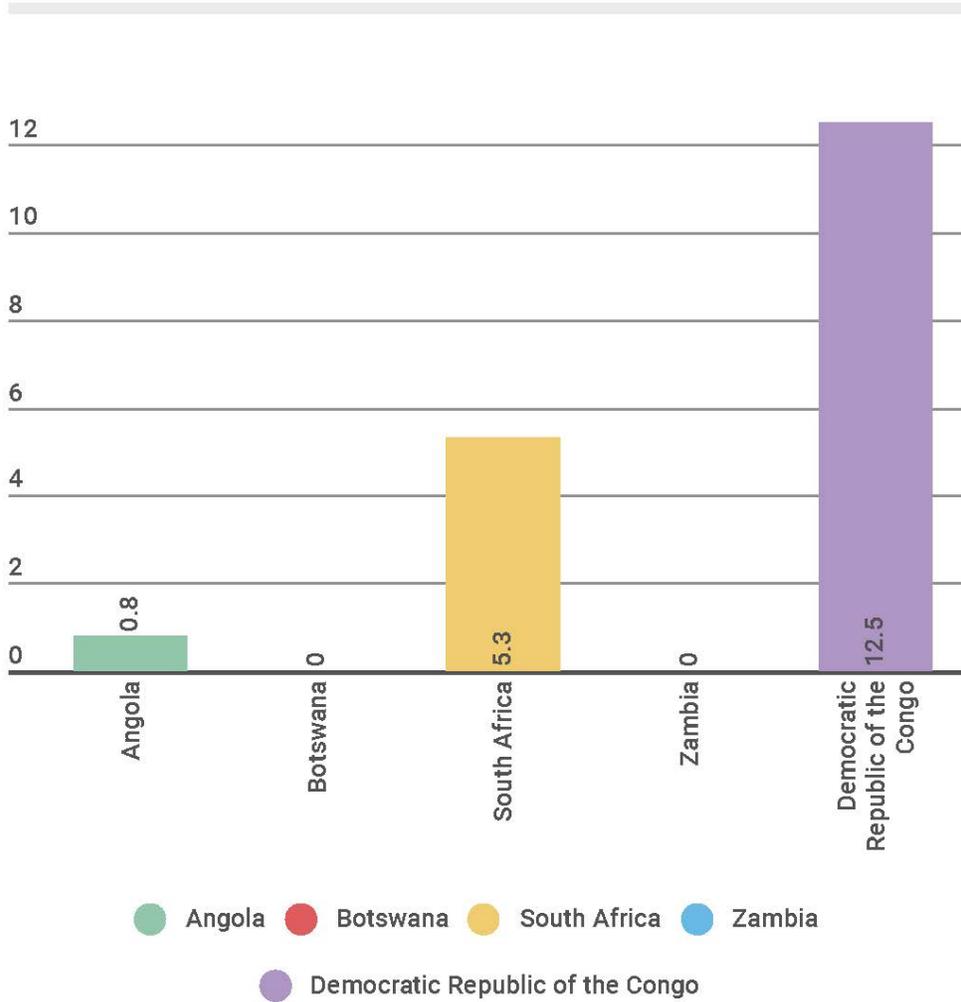
### Corruption Perception Index Score in Diamond Exporting Countries



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### Violence by Non-state Actors in Diamond Exporting Countries



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## Endnotes

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