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## **World Diamond Council welcomes dropping of charges against Zimbabwe human rights activist**

NEW YORK, USA: October 22, 2010 – The World Diamond Council has welcomed the decision of a court in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare on Thursday, October 21, to dismiss charges against Farai Maguwu, the local human rights activist, who earlier had been accused of providing false information prejudicial to the state in connection with the Marange diamond fields.

“This is excellent news,” said Eli Izhakoff, President of the World Diamond Council. “The case against Mr. Maguwu had cast a shadow over negotiations between the Zimbabwe government and the Kimberley Process for more than half a year. We sincerely hope that this matter has been resolved once and for all, and that Mr. Maguwu will be able to continue with his life after a very difficult period of time. I am confident that this will contribute positively to the atmosphere at the Kimberley Process Plenary Meeting in Jerusalem at the beginning of November. ”

Mr. Maguwu’s arrest in June and the subsequent decision to bring charges against him had raised a storm of protest in the diamond industry, and threatened to derail talks between the Zimbabwe government and the Kimberley Process over exports from Marange region. His release from prison was announced just before the start of the World Diamond Council Annual Meeting in July, during which a decision was reached to allow monitored exports from the Marange diamond fields.

During the WDC Annual Meeting in July, Mr. Izhakoff publically called on Johanne Tomana, the Zimbabwe Attorney General, who attended the meeting in St. Petersburg, to drop the charges against Mr. Maguwu. In the months followed, leading up to the decision of the court in Harare on Thursday, the WDC continued to lobby the Zimbabwe authority to have all charges dismissed.