

Meet Mr Marange

Chief of the Marange Clan in Zimbabwe.



On Sunday March 11th I had the privilege of meeting one of the 22 Chiefs of the Marange diamond district in Zimbabwe.

Mr Godfrey Marange came to my attention after contacting, out of curiosity, The Zimbabwean Diamond Trust, a company promoting Zimbabwean diamonds and local beneficiation.

Mr Godfrey Marange is one of the 22 Tribal Chiefs that guide the 98 Headmen which govern appoximally 300.000 Marange's. He's also a Mambo, meaning that he circulates the different families, mediates in conflicts and has a final say.

Besides that he's also a diplomated ingenieur in mining and engineering from a German University and holds a degree in accounting.

He had the pleasure of studying at a University in Germany under grants given in the 80's by the Zimbabwean government.

As it turns out he was in Germany on this day, assisting a South African delegation of municipality leaders and ANC officials who where seeking assistance for their project of building an ecological village in Boputoswana South Africa.

Mr Marange's main drive however is to make Marange diamonds beneficial for the community he grew up in and for the land he, his parents and his ancestors have been living on for the last 1000 or so years.

When the diamonds in Marange were discovered, the land - their land as Mr Marange puts it - was actually flooded with fortune seekers and treasure hunters from all over. Meaning people from neighbouring countries, India, Russia but also the USA. Well prepared people with suitcases filled with money and armed to the teeth where running the local people over. It was then that the Marange Chiefs asked for assistance from the Government who, with a lot of force, cleared the area. Cleared that is, not confiscated. The land, up and until today is still property of the Marange Clan, claims Mr Marange. And so are the 800 billion worth of diamonds in it.

The clearing of the area however gave rise to vast criticism from the West, who had never been in favour of President Mugabe. This due to the fact that during his struggle for independence he had been backed up by the Chinese. Stories that "Marange diamonds where the next blood diamonds" surfaced.

The fact that the BBC aired a report about alleged torture camps in Marange that were probably even worse than Abu Graib or Guantanamo Bay raised the eyebrows of many.

Thus had started and continued the "KP dance" and the call for vaster and more stringent regulatory measures.

Although free from megalomaniac spurs or minority rule, Mr Marange is now faced with policy makers, human rights groups, and certification schemes.

A short history

His ancestors actually still enjoyed the freedom of living under the rule of their own tribe.

That changed when Mr Cecil Rhodes (founder of De Beers) claimed the land, currently known as Zaire and Zimbabwe, and called it his own. Literally.

From then on the region covering close to 400.000 square km (or 10x The Netherlands) was known as [Rhodesia](#).

Luckily the British government adopted a policy of *no independence before majority rule*, dictating that colonies with a substantial population of white settlers would not receive independence except under conditions of majority rule.

The Rhodesian Front (RF) government (representing the less than 1% of white settlers), led by Ian Smith, opposed the policy and declared independence from the British Crown. The year was 1965.

[Robert Mugabe](#), the emerging leader of the black nationalist opposing Ian Smit spent the next 10 years in jail as a political prisoner.

After his release in 1974 he moved to Mozambique from where ['the bush wars'](#) where initiated, fueled by the same philosophy as Che Chevara held in South America. In the 80's, at the end of the war, Mugabe emerged as a hero in the minds of many Africans and was the first democratic elected president in Africa.

After he came into power a redistribution of land program became effective, returning the lands of those who could not prove ownership to the black majority.

Neither of those have ever even so much as consulted him on the matter but nevertheless dictate the future of his people and his land.

Just on March 9th the Associated Press released a [story](#) by KP Civil Society claiming "Zimbabwe activists not swayed by government diamond tour" in which Farai Maguwu states that he was "not given the opportunity" to talk to villagers so as to ascertain the extend of rights violations. It must be pleasing to hear for Mr Maguwu that we can provide email and telephone nr of the village Chief who is more than willing to share his vision and mission.

Vision and Mission

Mr Godfrey Marange and the Marange Clan have (since 2009) registered a company and recently a European Trust.

They have developed a business plan that integrates safe and ecological mining with local beneficiation, in which they already have the necessary experience.

Mr Marange welcomes transparency initiatives but like us believes this should be initiated from the bottom up and not be imposed top down.

As a matter of fact, he would be very pleased to market Marange diamonds as such.

Hence, they are looking for business partners and investors that are willing and able to look at the essentials and past political agenda's.

This is the land of his people through tribal heritage and their story deserves to be heard.

Lets build awareness and assist the local people of the Marange Clan by giving them a voice.

Lets make him famous.

Watch his statement and upcoming full interview on our youtube channel www.youtube.com/jeweltreefoundation

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By Jeweltree Foundation - Mike Angenent

notes:

We are happy to inform the reader that we managed to get an invitation (Thanks Vivien and Greg!) for Mr Marange in the next BJA/NAG* meeting in London regarding current and pending regulatory measures for the diamond industry and potential treats.

Mr Marange kindly invited us to pay a visit to the area and we intend to follow up on his invitation to further verify his claims and start beneficiation.

*British Jewellery Association / National Association of Goldsmiths representing 1900 members and 2500 physical outlets in the UK.

www.jeweltreefoundation.org