

Group of 78 Luncheon Speaker Series

Ian Smillie

Blood on the Stone: Greed, Corruption and the War in the Global Diamond Trade

Date: Tuesday October 26, 2010

Time: 12:00 noon

Place: Courtyard Restaurant, 21 George St., Ottawa

Cost: \$30 for luncheon and presentation

\$5 for presentation only

(For presentation only, please plan to arrive by 12:45. Coffee and tea will be available.)

Reservations: group78@web.net or 613-230-0860 before Friday October 22, 2010

The group is required to pay for those who reserve but do not come. Therefore, individuals who do not cancel their reservations by 9:30 a.m. the day of the luncheon will be billed \$30.

Please note that the cost of events in our luncheon speaker series has increased to cover rising expenses.

Ian Smillie will discuss his new book, *Blood on the Stone: Greed, Corruption and War in the Global Diamond Trade*, and whether ravenous extractive industries can ever become good corporate citizens.

'Smillie is lying through his teeth,' said former warlord and Liberian President Charles Taylor at his war crimes trial in The Hague, where Ian Smillie was the first witness.

Africa's diamond wars took four million lives. They destroyed the lives of millions more and they crippled the economies of Angola, the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The biggest UN peacekeeping forces in the world – in Liberia, the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire – are the legacy of 'conflict' or 'blood diamonds'.

Blood on the Stone tells the story of how diamonds came to be so dangerous. It describes the history of the great diamond cartel and how it gradually lost control of the precious mineral, as country after country descended into anarchy and wars fuelled by diamonds. The book describes the diamond pipeline, from war-torn Africa to the glittering showrooms of Paris, London and New York. It describes the campaign that began in 1999 and which eventually forced the industry and more than 50 governments to create a global certification system known as the Kimberley Process, aimed at wringing blood diamonds out of the retail trade. It concludes with a sobering assessment of the certification system, which soon became hostage to political chicanery, mismanagement and vested interests.

For the past ten years, Ian Smillie's focus has been blood diamonds, the wars they fuelled and the effort to stop them. This has taken him from the jungles of West Africa to the backstreets of Antwerp and a war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

Ian Smillie has lived and worked in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Bangladesh. He was a founder of the Canadian NGO, Inter Pares, was Executive Director of CUSO and is a long-time foreign aid watcher and critic. He has worked at Tufts and Tulane Universities and as a development consultant with many Canadian, American and European organizations. He is the author of several other books, including *The Charity of Nations: Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World* (with Larry Minear, 2004), and *Freedom from Want: The Remarkable Success Story of BRAC* (2009). Ian Smillie served on a UN Security Council Expert Panel examining the relationship between diamonds and weapons in West Africa, and he helped develop the 55-government 'Kimberley Process,' a global certification system to halt the traffic in conflict diamonds. He currently chairs the Diamond Development Initiative. Ian Smillie was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2003.