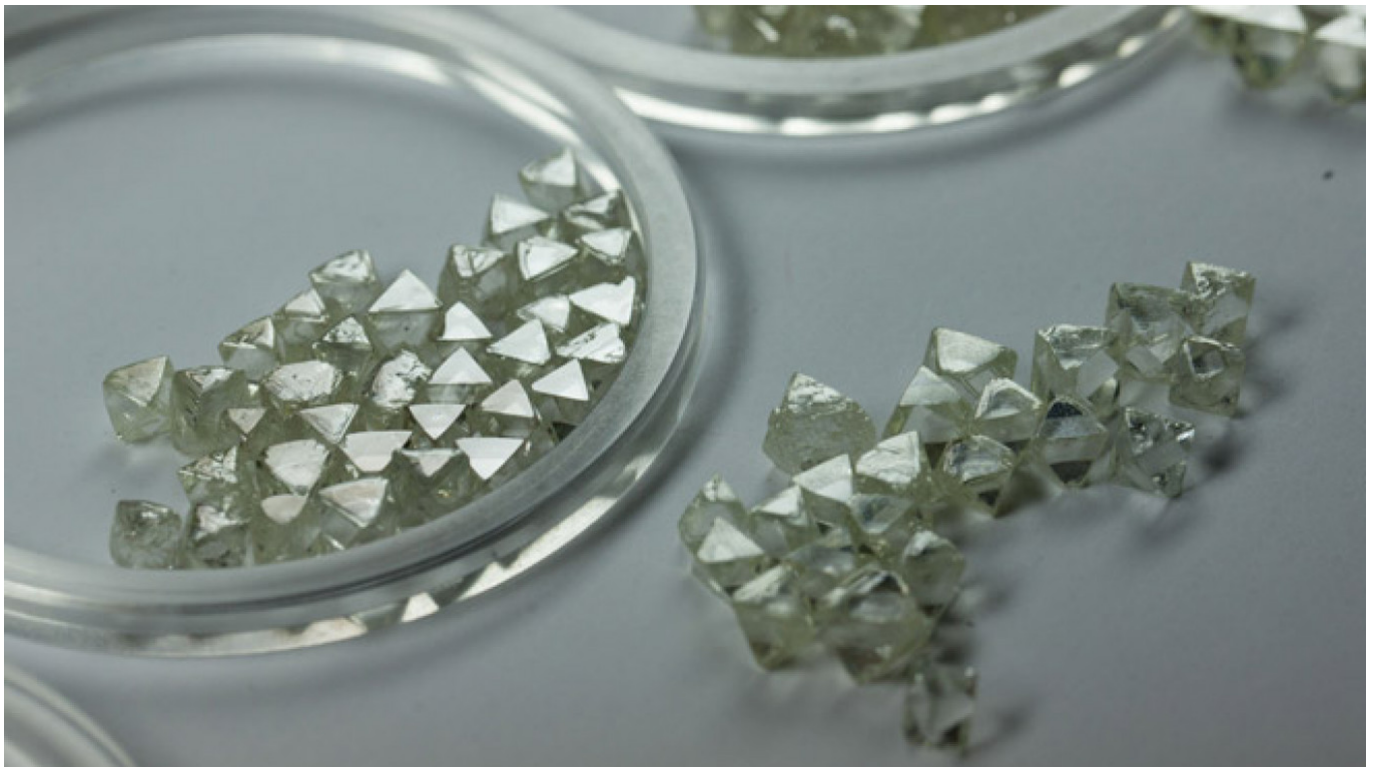


Russia Prospecting for Diamonds in Zimbabwe

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Diamonds are mined in the south of the country by private company River Ranch, in central Zimbabwe by Rio Tinto and in the eastern Marange area, which caused controversy when 20,000 illegal miners were evicted by soldiers and police in 2008.

HARARE — Diamond mining company Alrosa is partnering a Zimbabwe-Russia joint venture company to prospect for diamonds in the southern African country, Russia's trade and industry minister said Monday.

Russia's major investment in Zimbabwe is a joint-venture diamond and gold mining company in eastern Zimbabwe, DTZ-OZGEO, and Moscow is also planning a joint platinum mining operation outside the capital Harare.

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Denis Manturov said Alrosa and DTZ-OZGEO would prospect for diamonds throughout Zimbabwe. The Russian firm also wants to help Zimbabwe with sorting and evaluating its diamonds.

"I would like to point out that Alrosa has come up with a proposal to the Zimbabwean side to extend expert assistance to Zimbabwe in the field of organizing the system of sorting, valuation and marketing of its diamonds," Manturov said.

Shunned by Western countries over charges of vote fraud and human rights, President Robert Mugabe has reached out to Beijing and now to Moscow for badly needed investment in a country where only two in 10 employable people hold formal jobs.

Russia, like China, has strong political ties with Zimbabwe, which began when Moscow helped train independence fighters. In 2008 Russia vetoed a Security Council resolution by Western countries to impose sanctions on Zimbabwe.

Russia is now the target of sanctions by the United States and European Union.

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