

European Union extends targeted measures against Zimbabwe

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The European Union (EU) has stepped up pressure on Robert Mugabe by adding individuals and firms in Zimbabwe to its targeted measures list and calling for an inquiry into the diamond industry in the country.

27 individuals and 36 companies were added to the list, all of whom are suspected of having links to human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. For the first time the list includes companies registered in the EU, these companies are 'shell companies' suspected of being used to launder money out of Zimbabwe. The targeted measures were first introduced by the EU in 2003 and the list now comprises 203 individuals that cannot travel to the EU and will have their assets there are frozen. The assets of the 40 companies on the sanctions list will also be frozen.

EU Foreign Minister commented, "The (EU) Council condemns the regime for its ongoing failure to address the most basic economic and social needs of its people...The situation in Zimbabwe has deteriorated in a manner that stands in stark contrast to the duties and responsibilities of governments...the victims of this misrule are the Zimbabwean people."

The Ministers also urged the Kimberly Process, an international certification scheme which ensures that diamonds do not fund conflict, to investigate Zimbabwe's diamonds trade. They expressed concerns that trade in illicit diamonds is providing financial support to the Mugabe regime and called for Zimbabwe to be suspended from the Kimberly process if allegations were proven.