



COMMUNIQUE OF THE CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE COALITION MEETING ON DEFENDING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN MINING COMMUNITIES

12 SEPTEMBER 2025

On September 10, 2025, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (The Coalition) convened a virtual meeting titled "Exploring Strategies to Defend Fundamental Rights in Mining Communities: What Are the Available Avenues?"

This meeting came amid alarming reports of human rights violations happening in mining communities across Zimbabwe.

Participants highlighted various issues plaguing these communities, including severe environmental degradation due to mining activities, instances of forced displacements where local populations are uprooted from their homes without adequate justification or compensation, and the pervasive problems of water and air pollution caused by mining operations.

Furthermore, the reports included accounts of physical abuse and torture inflicted upon community members, raising serious concerns about the protection of fundamental rights in these areas.

The Coalition sought to create a platform for discussing solutions by mobilising progressive forces committed to safeguarding democratic principles and human rights. The spirit of the meeting aligned with the ongoing campaign (Tinoida Yekedero/Siyifuna injalo) to safeguard and defend the constitution of Zimbabwe from further erosion and mutilation.

Recognising the importance of grassroots involvement, the meeting emphasised the necessity of empowering local communities to engage actively in defending their rights and the constitutional provisions established to protect them.

Through this platform, the Coalition sought to foster a collaborative dialogue to identify effective strategies for advocating for the rights of individuals in mining communities, ensuring their voices are heard, and championing the cause of social justice and environmental sustainability. The meeting marked a significant step in strengthening collective efforts to uphold the rule of law and the protection of citizens' fundamental rights in Zimbabwe's resource-rich regions.



THE MEETING NOTED THE FOLLOWING

The challenges of forced displacements and loss of livelihoods are prevalent in mining communities across Zimbabwe. Weak enforcement of environmental laws leaves these communities vulnerable to the hazards associated with mining activities, leading to significant land degradation.

The regulations governing compensation for communities impacted by mining operations are often inadequate. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is frequently criticized for its flaws, such as the lack of consultation with affected communities and difficulties in accessing critical information.

Residents in mining areas also face serious health risks stemming from water and air pollution. Furthermore, cultural rights are violated due to displacements and the desecration of graves, which affects the identity and traditions of these communities.

Women and girls are particularly marginalized, often excluded from decision-making processes, and face increased violence as a result.

Moreover, workers' rights within mining companies are commonly violated, and individuals who advocate for their fundamental rights may be subject to harassment and victimization.

Compounding these challenges, local communities are often short-changed by mining companies that exploit their natural resources without adequately reinvesting in the affected areas. Instead of generating economic prosperity, mining operations often leave behind a legacy of destruction, environmental degradation, and ongoing poverty.

The violation of fundamental rights in mining communities is not limited to Zimbabwe; it spans across the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, reflecting a systemic issue that requires urgent attention and collective action to address.

GOING FORWARD

1. Capacity Building Initiatives: Investing in capacity building of communities is essential. This includes training paralegals and watchdog groups to document violations and engage effectively with civil society organizations and duty bearers.
2. Utilizing the Access to Information Act: The Coalition will mobilize grassroots communities to leverage on the Access to Information Act as a powerful tool for obtaining information about mining activities, thereby demanding greater transparency and accountability. Civil society organizations will play a crucial role in holding mining companies, Parliament, and other duty bearers accountable.
3. Empowerment in Environmental Monitoring: It is important to empower communities to monitor Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes and to collectively voice objections to mining activities that violate fundamental rights. Grassroots mobilization is essential in this regard. The Coalition will utilize its established constitutional hubs across the country to advocate for transparency, accountability, and the respect of fundamental rights within mining communities.
4. Public Interest Litigation: Engaging in public interest litigation is critical in safeguarding the rights of communities affected by mining activities.
5. Regional Cooperation for Human Rights: Mobilizing regional partners is important for the protection of human rights in mining communities throughout the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region.
6. Media Collaboration: Establishing synergies between the media and mining communities is vital for amplifying the voices of those affected. This collaboration helps to hold

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