



PRESS STATEMENT

CNRG CONDEMNS DETERIORATING SAFETY STANDARDS AND RISING INEQUALITY AT BIKITA MINERALS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Harare, 22 August 2025

The Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) strongly condemns the shocking deterioration of safety standards at Bikita Minerals, Zimbabwe's largest lithium mine, following the death of a dump truck driver, Farai Murimoga Mutsvange in the early hours of today. This comes hot on the heels of a blasting incident that took place at the mine on Friday, 15 August, that left three primary school children injured

In today's incident, Farai Murimoga Mutsvange was walking to load his truck when he was struck by another dump truck. Eyewitnesses say there was a lot of dust in the area, which prevented Farai from noticing the oncoming truck that crashed into him. He died instantly.

In the August 15 incident, three children, all related to mine workers, were struck by flying debris during blasting operations at Ledingham Hill, where spodumene extraction is taking place. The incident reveals a profound disregard for basic safety protocols and community welfare.

This tragedy follows a string of painful events tied to Bikita Minerals. On 23 October 2023, Nelson Musendekwa was struck and killed by a machine he was operating at Bikita Minerals. In 2024, mine worker Ensolomn Chambara lost his leg in a workplace accident. Another worker, Alliston Chivasa, lost his wife when the mine allegedly refused to release an ambulance to transport her to Harare for urgent medical attention. Now, their children are among the victims of Friday's blast.

These stories are not isolated accidents. They reflect systemic neglect, corporate impunity, and the prioritisation of profit over people's lives. Zimbabwe has very good work safety regulations, which are no longer being enforced.

Statistics also indicate this stark reality, showing that the current rate of accidents and fatalities in the mining sector is untenable. The mining sector recorded 59 fatal accidents between January and May 2025, compared to 58 during the same period in 2024, with the incidents resulting in 70 fatalities.

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Zimbabwe's lithium boom, hailed as a pathway to national prosperity, is instead leaving behind a trail of human carnage. While lithium extracted from Bikita powers electric vehicles and renewable energy technologies abroad, workers in the sector earn slave wages whilst working under dangerous conditions. Children are now also paying the price of reckless operations, while their families, who contribute to the mine's wealth, remain trapped in poverty and insecurity.

CNRG calls for:

- Immediate suspension of unsafe blasting operations until strict safety guarantees are in place.
- An independent investigation into safety practices, workplace accidents, and the mine's handling of medical emergencies.
- Stronger enforcement of mining and labour laws to protect workers, their families, and surrounding communities.

End of Statement

For more information, please contact :

 +263 786 913 423

 info@cnergzim.org

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