

PRESS STATEMENT



HARARE: 12 February, 2026

CNRG Demands Immediate Halt to Illegal Mining in Tsvingwe Residential Area

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) calls upon the Government of Zimbabwe, particularly the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, to immediately halt all mining operations in the Tsvingwe residential area, Mutasa District, Manicaland Province.

CNRG is deeply concerned by the commencement of open-cast mining activities on a hill that hosts critical water storage infrastructure supplying the Tsvingwe community. This hill accommodates water tanks that are central to the community's water supply system, and any disturbance to this infrastructure poses a direct and serious threat to the right to safe and reliable water for thousands of residents.

Tsvingwe is a formally established residential area administered by the Mutasa Rural District Council, and it is home to thousands of people. Many residents have made significant financial investments in acquiring residential stands and developing homes in the area. The sudden introduction of mining activities within this settlement has therefore generated widespread anxiety and resistance from the affected community.

Despite strong objections and protests from residents, mining operations have reportedly continued unabated. Community members assert that no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was conducted or publicly disclosed before the commencement of mining, in clear violation of Zimbabwe's environmental management laws and principles of public consultation and participation. The absence of an EIA raises serious questions about regulatory oversight, transparency, and accountability on the part of both the mining operator and relevant state authorities.

CNRG notes with grave concern that the ongoing mining activities threaten the structural integrity of the water reservoirs, thereby exposing residents to the risk of water shortages, contamination, and infrastructure collapse. Such outcomes would have devastating consequences for public health, livelihoods, and community wellbeing.

Furthermore, CNRG emphasizes that these mining activities are illegal under Zimbabwean law. Section 31C of the Mines and Minerals Act explicitly provides that no person shall be entitled to exercise any rights under a prospecting licence or special grant to carry out prospecting operations within the surveyed limits of any city, town, township, or village, or within a fifty-metre belt outside such limits. The mining operations in Tsvingwe are taking place at the centre of a residential settlement, making them a clear contravention of this provision.

The chosen method of extraction, open-cast mining, poses additional and severe risks to the community. Open-cast mining is associated with excessive dust pollution, which can lead to respiratory illnesses, particularly among children, the elderly, and persons with pre-existing health conditions. It also destabilizes land formations, increasing the risk of landslides, mudslides, and soil erosion, especially during the rainy season. These hazards place residents, homes, and essential infrastructure in immediate danger.

In light of the above, CNRG calls for the Government of Zimbabwe to urgently suspend all mining operations in Tsvingwe, institute an independent investigation into how mining was authorized in a residential area, and ensure full compliance with environmental, local government, and mining laws. The safety, health, and constitutional rights of the Tsvingwe community must take precedence over extractive activities.

CNRG further urges authorities to hold all responsible parties accountable, restore any environmental damage already caused, and guarantee meaningful community consultation in any decisions that affect people's land, water, and livelihoods.

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