

The Weekly

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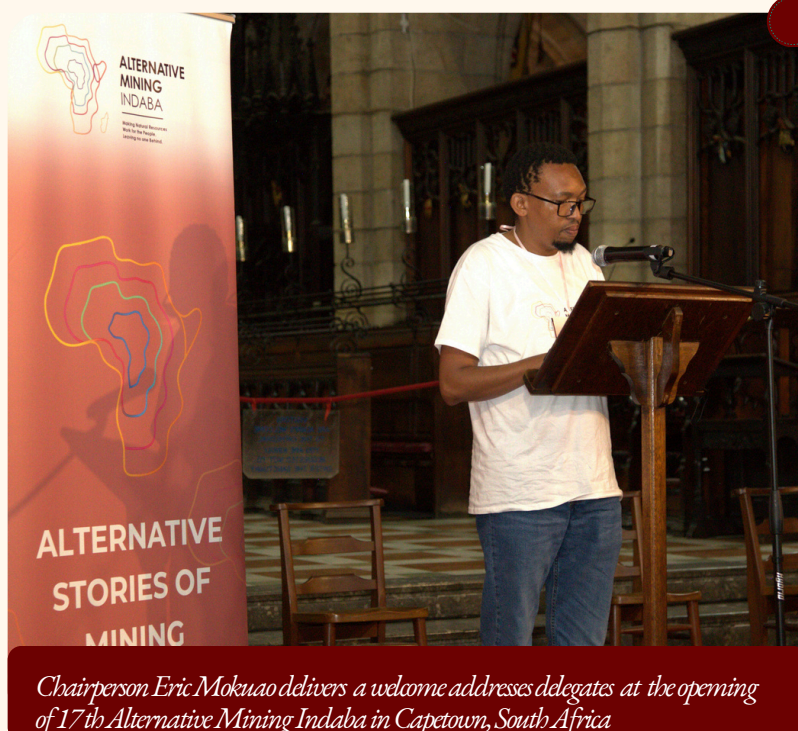
AMI SPECIAL EDITION

Mutapa's Unbundling: Reform or Rebranding?

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In principle, the move is sound. In practice, its success will depend less on structure than on governance.

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Chairperson Eric Mokuao delivers a welcome addresses delegates at the opening of 17th Alternative Mining Indaba in Capetown, South Africa

Confronting collusion in mining

During an Oxfam-hosted session on critical mineral corridors, Farai Maguwu, CNRG executive director, challenged elite capture in the extractive sector, warning that without confronting corporate-political collusion, the energy transition risks repeating a history of extraction without justice.

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Rejecting corporate capture

At the 17th Alternative Mining Indaba in Cape Town's historic "People's Cathedral," leaders issued an unapologetic call to reclaim the movement's radical roots, reject corporate capture, and decisively stand with mining-affected communities against exploitation and plunder.

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Solidary march against extractivism

Voices from the Community

Get a glimpse of unfiltered community voices from across Zimbabwe as people share their struggles, solutions, and experiences. In this edition, we feature Tariro Tshuma from Hwange as she shares her reflections from the Alternative Mining Indaba.

A Call to Break the Silence and Reclaim the Movement

At the 17th Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI), held at Cape Town's historic St George's Cathedral, the event opened with a powerful and unapologetic call to reclaim the movement's radical roots.

Addressing delegates from faith-based institutions, social movements, trade unions, and mining-affected communities, Eric Mokuoa, the AMI chairperson, invoked Nelson Mandela: "It always seems impossible until it's done."

The AMI runs concurrently with the official Investing in Africa Mining Indaba, which attracts hundreds of government and industry leaders discussing key developments and priorities for the mining sector across the continent.

AMI, on the other hand, brings together civil groups, activists, and experts proposing reforms to restructure the mining industry for the benefit of local communities.

It is a people's movement towards bringing accountability, transparency, and fostering participation by ordinary people in mining and extractives. It is a unique faith-based solidarity platform that brings together grassroots, community-based organisations, civil society, and other actors from across the African continent and beyond.

Meeting in what is known as the "People's Cathedral," a site of resistance against apartheid, the Chair described the venue as symbolic of AMI's renewed direction. The shift away from five-star hotels was intentional.

The gathering, under the theme "Alternative mining stories," was framed as "a long-awaited dream... a long-standing call made by many communities who sought deep connections with the struggles against injustices, corporate impunity, but could not find it in the confines of executive lodges."

Yet the celebratory tone was tempered by sobering reflections on global and internal realities. The delegates warned that the world is marked by "great power competition," the re-emergence of "fascism and brute colonialism," and intensifying geopolitical struggles over resources. Within this context, AMI itself faces sustainability challenges.

"The culture of limping from one AMI to the next cannot define this movement. It has to die, or the end is near." To rebuild resilience, a second inclusive General Assembly will be convened in May in Johannesburg.



March for justice- AMI participants protest against extractivism

Mokuoa insisted that AMI must choose its path decisively: "The AMI should not shy away from taking a side... to stand with the community, defend the community and reject plunder and exploitative extractives."

Fr. Dr. Charles Kitima delivered to AMI a sobering message from Tanzania that justice and peace are inseparable from faith. Despite facing threats and violence, the Church remains a "prophetic witness" against the systematic violation of human rights and the exploitation of natural resources. "We are here to serve the whole human person spiritually, socially, and economically."

Central to the address was a sharp critique of corporate co-option. Delegates also warned of a "powerful lobby of multinational corporations" infiltrating civil society and even the church, promoting deregulation and narrative control. Recalling last year's remarks, the Chair described the extractive sector as "the real master of illusions... a deceptive machinery... specialising in standards, audits, principles, certification and even conferencing... to control the narrative."

So-called "dialogues" promoted by investor groups and certain religious leaders were questioned. "We must break our silence!!" Mokuoa declared, challenging efforts that humanise mining corporations while excluding displaced families, persecuted activists, injured workers, and communities living in toxic landscapes.

Invoking Paulo Freire, the speech concluded with a call for transformative dialogue rooted in lived experience: "A dialogue is thus an existential necessity... It has to start from the bottom."

Seventeen years on, AMI stands at a crossroads, choosing, in Mokuoa's words, "the one less travelled by."



Mining must serve the public good, not private greed

By Staff Reporter

At the close of every Alternative Mining Indaba, a declaration is made to governments and corporates. It is part sermon, part manifesto, and part policy brief. This year's edition, adopted in Cape Town from February 9th to 11th under the theme "Alternative Stories of Mining – United in Solidarity with the Mining-Affected Communities across the Continent," was more sweeping than most. It framed Africa's extractive industries not merely as an economic question but as a moral reckoning.

Since its inception, the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) has styled itself as a counterweight to the official Mining Indaba held in parallel, a gathering where executives court investors and governments tout opportunity. The AMI, by contrast, casts mining as a site of struggle. In its 2026 preamble, participants, community representatives, civil-society groups, faith leaders, traditional authorities, and researchers insisted that "mining must serve the public good, not private greed." Communities, they said, had "reclaimed narrative power, shaping discourse with lived experience and dignity."

The declaration situates itself within a broader continental pushback. It recalls a December 2025 conference in Luanda on human rights and transparency in extractives, as well as national "ZAMIs" in Zambia and Zimbabwe and a Malawi AMI. Together, these forums argue that dispossession is not an artefact of colonial history but a "continuous lived reality" in which land, memory, and dignity remain vulnerable.

The grievances listed are familiar but forcefully expressed. Extractivism, the declaration notes, perpetuates political, environmental, and social injustice. Communities continue to lose land, homes, and livelihoods.

The tone darkens further under the heading "Deeply Concerned". Open-pit mines, it says, have triggered forced evictions with inadequate compensation. Relocation processes echo apartheid-era removals: smaller plots, fractured communities, weakened food systems.

Graves are disturbed, ancestral sites disrupted, and "intangible losses erased", producing what the declaration calls "spiritual rupture and historical erasure". Biodiversity declines: women and youth are excluded from decision-making. Land dispossession remains a recurring injustice.

What distinguishes this year's text is its fusion of policy technocracy and theological cadence. "Transparency is a spiritual discipline," it tells African governments. They are urged to enforce disclosure of contracts, revenues, and beneficial ownership; to build open-data systems and public dashboards; to strengthen grievance redress and community benefit-sharing mechanisms; and to cooperate across borders against tax abuse and illicit financial flows.

Mining revenues, it argues, must finance diversification and a just energy transition, not entrench dependence. The declaration also calls for stricter separation between public officials and private mining interests, robust enforcement of mine-closure plans, and adherence to labour standards, especially for young people in mining regions. Just energy transition policies, it warns, must not become a "rush for critical minerals that replicates extractivism".

Mutapa's Unbundling: Reform or Rebranding?

By Staff Reporter



The true test lies in whether this reform of the Mutapa Investment Fund entrenches professional governance or simply repackages old habits in new corporate wrappers. Reform should not be merely cosmetic but transformative.

Zimbabwe's decision to dissolve Kuvimba Mining House and reorganise Mutapa Investment Fund's mining assets into five commodity-specific entities is being hailed as overdue modernisation. In principle, the move is sound.

In practice, its success will depend less on structure than on governance.

The logic behind unbundling is orthodox and was anticipated by critics of the initial setup of the investment fund. Diversified conglomerates often trade at a discount because markets struggle to value disparate assets under one roof.

Gold does not behave like lithium; platinum is not coal. Commodity fluctuations and volatility do not help matters.

Specialisation sharpens management focus, aligns capital to commodity cycles, and simplifies partnerships. Global mining majors have spent years streamlining portfolios around core minerals. Zimbabwe's sovereign wealth fund, steward of billions in mineral assets, could hardly justify ignoring this lesson.

Separating gold, base metals, platinum group metals, energy minerals, and frontier assets should, in theory, improve operational clarity. A dedicated gold entity can optimise hedging and production strategy. A platinum arm can focus on the long-gestation Darwendale project without competing for attention with cash-generating mines.

Lithium and other battery minerals, subject to volatile technology and policy shifts, demand nimble and technically attuned leadership.

Yet structure alone does not create value. State mining ventures across Africa have rarely failed because of organisational charts. They faltered due to opaque ownership, politicised capital allocation, and weak accountability.

If the dissolution of Kuvimba merely rearranges assets without strengthening transparency, the reform will prove cosmetic.

The central question is whether Mutapa's new verticals will operate with genuine autonomy, publish clear accounts, and resist elite capture. Investors may welcome cleaner counterparties, but they will also demand clarity on asset transfers, liabilities, and decision-making authority.

Zimbabwe's mineral wealth is too important to be managed as a political instrument. Involvement of politically exposed persons in the investment vehicle does not inspire confidence. While unbundling is a necessary step toward commercial discipline. It is not sufficient.

The true test lies in whether this reform entrenches professional governance or simply repackages old habits in new corporate wrappers.

Confronting Political Corporate Collusion in Critical Mineral Corridors

By Donald Nyarota

At the Alternative Mining Indaba in Cape Town, a critical conversation unfolded during an Oxfam-hosted session examining what it truly takes to secure critical mineral corridors.

Drawing lessons from Southern Africa's Lobito Corridor to Peru's mining corridors, speakers interrogated the governance systems, human rights safeguards, and fiscal frameworks required to build resilient and just mineral supply chains.

But beyond infrastructure and investment models, the discussion took a sharp political turn.

Farai Maguwu, Executive Director of the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG), raised a hard-hitting question that cut to the core of the extractive sector's governance crisis: How do we deal with political elites who are themselves deeply embedded in, and benefiting from, the very extractive projects they are supposed to regulate?

Maguwu warned that in many mineral-rich countries, extractive investments do not simply arrive as economic projects; they arrive with political protection. "When these investments come into communities," he noted, "it often feels like a declaration of war."

He further highlighted the troubling blurring of lines between public office and private profit.

Companies are frequently backed by security forces, intelligence actors, local administrators, and sometimes even traditional leaders.

In such contexts, communities seeking accountability find themselves confronting not just corporations, but a powerful alliance of political and economic interests.

Ministers and senior officials tasked with safeguarding public resources are, in some cases, silent shareholders or beneficiaries of mining ventures. This conflict of interest, he argued, explains why governments often react defensively when communities organize to demand transparency and justice.



AMI Participants march against the suppression of community voice

"The line between private corporations and our governments is now blurred. So you have minister during the day, but during the night he is a CEO of the mining company."

Citing experiences such as the Marange diamond fields in Zimbabwe, Maguwu underscored how elite capture can undermine community rights, fiscal transparency, and democratic accountability. Where political actors are financially entangled in extractive operations, regulatory oversight weakens, and human rights protections erode.

Responding to these concerns, Nqobile Xaba, program manager at Open Society Foundations, addressed the structural challenge of collusion between corporates and politicians. She emphasized that securing critical mineral corridors requires more than logistics and trade facilitation; it demands robust transparency mechanisms, strong civil society oversight, enforceable human rights standards, and fiscal regimes that prevent illicit financial flows.

"Communities themselves need to understand their rights first and foremost, what they can use to bargain as well as organizing themselves without the traditional leaders, without government." She added, "It also comes down to how, as civic society, we can better train our communities on the redress mechanisms available."

The session ultimately made one point unmistakably clear: securing critical mineral supply chains for the global energy transition cannot come at the expense of democracy and community rights.

Without confronting elite capture and corporate-political collusion head-on, the promise of "critical minerals for development" risks becoming another chapter in the long history of extraction without justice.

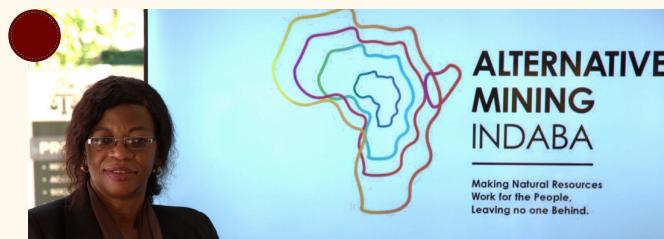
Rewriting the Mining Story: Communities at the Centre

The Alternative Mining Indaba (9–11 February 2026) was a reminder that the dominant narrative of mining, growth, jobs, investment, remains dangerously incomplete. Under the theme “Alternative Stories to Mining”, the gathering insisted that we confront the realities behind glossy investor brochures.

The keynote, “The real story behind mining investments, dispossession in mineral endowed communities”, laid bare the contradiction: communities rich in minerals are too often stripped of land, dignity, and futures.

Civil society organisations, exhibiting on the 10th, offered a counterweight. Their advocacy, research, and grassroots support work demonstrated that resistance is not abstract—it is lived daily by those who refuse to be erased by extractivism. These exhibits were not just displays; they were acts of defiance against the idea that mining is inevitable.

Side events pushed the conversation further. In “Critical For Communities? Stories of critical impacts, resistance and alternatives”, participants shared testimonies of harm but also of resilience.



Author: Catherine Chimanda, CNRG senior programs officer at AMI

Communities are not passive recipients of mining’s fallout; they are architects of alternatives—imagining economies rooted in justice, sustainability, and self-determination.

The Indaba’s greatest achievement was reframing mining as a moral and political question, not merely an economic one. It challenged us to ask: whose prosperity counts, and at what cost? If the old story of mining is extraction and dispossession, the new story must be about dignity, agency, and futures beyond the pit.

The challenge now is whether policymakers, investors, and the public will listen. The Alternative Mining Indaba has shown that alternative stories exist. The question is whether we have the courage to make them the dominant narrative.

Mining must serve the public good, not private greed

Financiers and investors, increasingly influential through environmental, social, and governance (ESG) frameworks, are told to align capital with “people-centred, sustainable economic models”. ESG reporting, the declaration suggests, must close gaps in community participation.

Perhaps most striking are the commitments made by the signatories themselves. Civil-society groups pledge to amplify voices, document “ancestral erasure” and establish post-AMI processes to monitor implementation. Faith-based actors promise a “prophetic role”, mobilising congregations, integrating mining justice into theology and promoting ethical investment.

Mining-affected communities commit to building cross-border solidarity, asserting rights to land and heritage, exploring community ownership models, and encouraging artisanal miners to reinvest in sustainable livelihoods such as agriculture and aquaculture.

The declaration closes with scripture, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it” (Psalm 24:1), and a sweeping claim: that dispossession remains a continuous condition across Africa and that justice demands re-centring community memory and dignity in mining governance.

Yet the AMI’s significance lies less in immediate policy shifts than in narrative contestation. As Africa becomes ever more central to the global energy transition, the struggle over who defines mining’s purpose intensifies. Is it chiefly a vehicle for foreign exchange and fiscal revenue? Or must it be reimagined as a platform for dignity, restitution and shared prosperity?

In Cape Town, the answer was unequivocal. Mining, the declaration insists, must finance public goods, protect heritage and safeguard the environment for generations to come. Whether that vision can withstand the pressures of geopolitics and profit remains uncertain. But the movement behind it is unlikely to fall silent.



Delegates discussion: Engagements on the sidelines of the AMI

Community Voices: My experience at the AMI

I am truly grateful for the experience I gained at AMI 2026. Travelling all the way from Zimbabwe to represent my community was an honour and a priceless opportunity. It was powerful to connect with fellow human rights defenders and activists from across the continent, each carrying stories of struggle, resistance, and hope from their own communities.

One of the most significant moments was when Mr. Mandla, the Secretary of AMI, presented the declaration outlining the resolutions and demands directed at governments, faith leaders, and civil society organisations. The message was clear: transforming the extractive sector requires collective effort.

We must work together to define what sustainable mining truly means, to insist on genuine corporate social responsibility, and to ensure that environmental protection, human dignity, and community wellbeing are never sacrificed in the name of profit.

Participating in the march was another memorable experience. Being escorted peacefully by the police throughout the procession reflected a space where democratic expression was respected. It was a reminder that raising our voices for justice should never be criminalised.

I was also privileged to share the story of Hwange town, standing alongside participants from other mining-affected regions. Listening to a woman from Mpumalanga Province speak about air and water pollution, lack of transparency, weak accountability, and the exploitation of women seeking to secure or keep their jobs was deeply moving. Her testimony echoed the realities we face back home. It is painful to recognise that communities across borders are enduring similar injustices linked to mining.

Yet in that shared pain, there was also strength. The resilience of these communities, their determination to continue organising and demanding justice, strengthened my own resolve. AMI 2026 was more than a gathering; it was a reaffirmation that our struggles are connected and that unity is our greatest power in pushing for a more just and accountable extractive sector.

Tariro Tshuma is a community member from Hwange who participated in AMI under the ENABLE project, which seeks enhanced democratic participation of vulnerable communities, local civil society organizations, and community-based organizations in natural resource governance.



The author (in white) shares a stage with a fellow community members during a side session jointly organised by CNRG, Coalition for Human Rights in Development, Fossil Free South Africa and Project 90, during the AMI.

Communities Reflect and Build Solidarity at AMI 2026 Side Event

On 11 February 2026, civil society organisations gathered at the Heinrich Böll Foundation offices in Cape Town for a powerful side event titled “Critical for Communities? Stories of Critical Mineral Impacts, Resistance and Alternatives.” Held alongside the Alternative Mining Indaba, the session created space for community reflection on the lived realities of extractive projects.

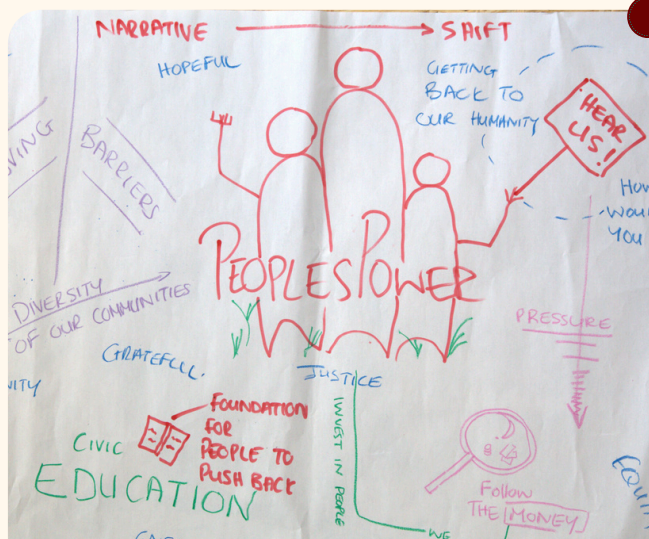
Organised by a coalition including ACG20, the Coalition for Human Rights in Development, CNRG, and climate justice partners, the event centred community voices from Buhera (lithium), Ulanga (graphite), and Hwange (coal). Through storytelling, dialogue and creative visual expression, participants mapped the impacts of mining, shared resistance strategies, and imagined community-led alternatives.

The session fostered solidarity across regions, highlighting shared challenges such as environmental harm, weak accountability and social disruption. By combining storytelling with art and collective discussion, the gathering strengthened networks of resistance and reaffirmed the need for people-centred approaches to critical minerals and development.

Importantly, the visual materials and testimonies generated during the session are expected to feed into broader AMI outcomes and advocacy efforts. Partners committed to amplifying these stories beyond the event, using social media and joint platforms to ensure that community perspectives shape the ongoing debate on critical minerals, energy transition, and development justice.



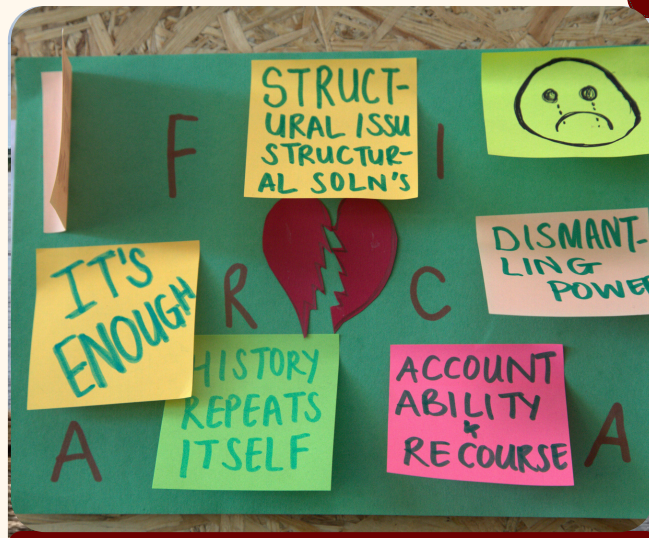
Artistic expression of community experiences with mining



Narratives of hope visualised emphasising people's power



Visual solidarity: A mural of artistic expression on strategies of resistance



Structural issues, structural solutions communities demanded