

ANNUAL REPORT



2025

Amplifying Voices, Demanding Accountability, Transforming Resource Governance.

FOUNDED
2012

MANDATE
Community Rights &
Resource Justice

REACH
National, Regional &
International

Table Of Contents

- 1. Foreword from the Executive Director**
- 2. About CNRG**
- 3. The Operating Context**
- 4. Campaigns & Advocacy Highlights**
- 5. Research and Publications**
- 6. Community Engagement & Capacity Building**
- 7. International Engagement**
- 8. Impact Summary**
- 9. Looking Ahead: Priorities for 2026**
- 10. Partners & Acknowledgements**

Foreword from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Partners

The year 2025 was a defining one for the Centre for Natural Resource Governance. Across Zimbabwe's mining districts, from Penhalonga to Hwange, Marange to Magunje, and all across this resource rich land, communities continued to bear the full weight of extractive expansion, through displacement, contamination and violence. Across the country, we witnessed strikingly similar stories of environmental degradation, inadequate consultation, and limited benefit-sharing. These realities underscore the fundamental truth that continues to guide our work, which is that natural resources, if not governed equitably and transparently, can deepen inequality rather than alleviate it.

In 2025, CNRG intensified its efforts to shift this narrative.

We worked alongside communities to strengthen their capacity to claim their rights, demand accountability, and meaningfully participate in decision-making. Through our community-based programmes, we supported the emergence of local leaders particularly women and young people who are now at the forefront of advocating for fair and just natural resource governance.

We also deepened our engagement with the Right2SayNo campaign, affirming the simple but radical idea that communities have the right to say no to destructive extractivism. Through Right2SayNo, we are building solidarity across Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, and beyond, sharing tools, strengthening resistance, and insisting that a just transition cannot be built on the backs of dispossessed communities.

2025 was also a year of resistance, of community voices refusing to be silenced, and of meaningful victories. Hand in hand with communities, we led a sustained campaign that succeeded in halting mining operations at Christmas Pass, preserving the iconic mountain range on the outskirts of Mutare. We exposed human rights abuses at Chinese-linked operations in Magunje, Marange, and Manhize. We also raised global alarm at the Kimberley Process Civil Society Planning Meetings and in continental advocacy forums.



Our flagship publication, The Weekly, matured into a vital intelligence platform, tracking every dimension of Zimbabwe's extractive economy, amplifying community voices, and holding corporations and government to account.

The road ahead remains steep. Communal lands are being seized at an unprecedented scale. Climate change and environmental degradation are compounding the injustices faced by mining-affected communities. But we remain resolute, energised by the solidarity of communities, civil society partners, and international allies who share our conviction that Zimbabwe's mineral wealth must serve its people not to subjugate them.

This annual report documents our work, our campaigns, our partnerships, and our impact in 2025. It is dedicated to the communities who trusted us with their stories and to the courageous community leaders, activists, and partners who continue to stand at the forefront of the struggle for equitable, accountable, and people-centred natural resource governance in Zimbabwe.

In solidarity,

Farai Maguwu

Executive Director, Centre for Natural Resource Governance

About CNRG

Who We Are

The Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) is a Zimbabwean civil society organisation established in 2012 with a mandate to defend, protect, and support communities affected by extractive industries. Headquartered in Harare, CNRG operates nationally across Zimbabwe.

Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

We envision a country where all communities connected to natural resources prosper with fairness, respect, and dignity.

Mission

We equip local communities to defend, protect and advance equitable natural resource governance for the benefit of present and future generations.

Our Values

Adaptability:

We Commit to remain flexible and open to change, proactively adjusting our approaches as circumstances evolve.

Integrity:

We Commit to uphold honesty and ethical principles, consistently acting in a transparent and trustworthy manner.

Accountability:

We Commit to take ownership of our actions and decisions, welcome scrutiny, and learn from outcomes to foster continuous improvement.

Inclusivity:

We Commit to value and embrace diverse perspectives, ensuring all voices are heard and empowered to shape our shared vision.

Thought Leadership:

We Commit to pursue innovative ideas, share expertise, and inspire cutting-edge approaches that drive meaningful impact within the natural resource governance workstreams.

Operating Context in 2025

- Zimbabwe's extractive sector in 2025 presented a stark paradox. Government projected economic growth of 6.6% largely from mining, while communities across the country experienced worsening displacement, environmental contamination, and rights violations.
- Although CNRG did not receive direct funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the agency's global closure in 2025 had significant indirect effects, as it triggered widespread operational contractions. This created a climate of uncertainty that affected the broader civil society ecosystem, diminishing the collective advocacy capacity on which CNRG often relies for coalition-based work.
- Key contextual challenges that shaped CNRG's work in 2025 included:

Issue	Description
Chinese Mining Dominance	Chinese-owned companies estimated to control about 90% of Zimbabwe's mining industry, extracting minerals worth \$2.79 billion with documented patterns of labour exploitation, community exclusion, and environmental harm.
Lithium Export Crisis	Up to 3,000 tonnes of unprocessed lithium ore left Zimbabwe daily, prompting CNRG campaigns for value addition and beneficiation to benefit the economy more directly.
Diamond Sector Abuses	Ongoing killings and torture of artisanal diamond miners by security personnel in Marange diamond fields, documented by CNRG and civil society partners.
Illicit Financial Flows	CNRG estimates approximately 3 tonnes of gold valued at USD 157 million lost monthly through illicit channels in the artisanal mining sector.
Climate & Environmental Crisis	Persistent wet spells, flooding in SADC region, coal seam fires in Hwange, and cyanide contamination in gold mining areas compounded community vulnerabilities.
Civic Space Constraints	CNRG staff faced threats from armed military personnel at mining sites, and greater regulatory pressures with the enactment of the PVO Amendment Act. Some communities also faced intimidation for speaking out against mining operations.

Campaigns & Advocacy Highlights

Christmas Pass Victory- Mutare

One of CNRG's most significant victories of 2025 was the successful campaign to halt mining activities at Christmas Pass. Through sustained advocacy and high-level engagement, CNRG helped ensure that a company operated by local businessmen and Chinese nationals was forced to cease operations at this ecologically significant site. While CNRG celebrated this victory, as a landmark win for community-led resistance we remained vigilant, watchful to ensure that illegal mining does not continue under the cover of darkness.



Hwange National Park – Mining Licence Opposition

In February 2025, CNRG formally submitted objections to the application by Sunny Ye Feng (Pvt) Ltd for a special mining licence in the Bumbusi Ruins area of Hwange National Park, as outlined in Exclusive Prospective Order No. 04 of 2021. CNRG argued that mining in one of Africa's premier wildlife sanctuaries would threaten ecological balance, tourism revenues, and community livelihoods. CNRG separately documented how mining operations at Zimberly Mine were causing elephants to flee blasting into surrounding communities and increasing human/wildlife conflict.

Magunje Mining Crisis Mashonaland West

In July 2025, CNRG called for urgent government intervention following documented human rights abuses, forced displacements, and environmental destruction linked to the Magunje cement and mining projects developed by Labenmon Investments in partnership with China-based West International Holding. The project, involving a USD 1 billion cement plant with a capacity of 900,000 tonnes per year and a 100MW captive power plant, was accompanied by allegations of:

- Forced displacement of villagers without compensation
- Pollution of Magunje Dam, a vital water source from effluent discharge
- Destruction of farmlands from fires ignited during land-clearing
- Workers operating under unsafe conditions, with wages below NEC agreed rates
- Threats against community members by army personnel
- Threats against CNRG staff at the Kemapondo village site



Campaigns & Advocacy Highlights

4. ZCDC Human Rights Violations – Marange Diamonds

In February 2025, CNRG co-signed a joint civil society statement exposing the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company's (ZCDC) use of killings and torture against artisanal diamond miners in Marange. Since 2015, ZCDC security guards have killed scores of artisanal miners. CNRG demanded an end to military-style brutality and called for demilitarisation of Chiadzwa.



Sino Africa Huijin Killing – Old Mutare

In April 2025, CNRG issued an emergency press statement following the killing of artisanal miner Alfred Dodzo by mine security at Sino Africa Huijin, Premier Estate, Old Mutare. The killing sparked community protests, bringing operations to a halt. CNRG called for accountability and an end to lethal force by private mine security.

Bikita Minerals Safety Crisis

CNRG condemned the deteriorating safety standards at Bikita Minerals which is Zimbabwe's largest lithium mine following the death of a dump truck driver, Farai Murimoga Mutsvange. This followed a blasting incident at the same mine. CNRG called for urgent regulatory intervention and equitable treatment of workers employed at the facility.



Campaigns & Advocacy Highlights

Elephant Culling – Save Valley

In April 2025, CNRG strongly opposed Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority's (ZimParks) decision to authorise the killing of 50 elephants in Save Valley, describing culling as a cruel and outdated response to ecological challenges. CNRG called for humane, science-based wildlife management alternatives.



World Environment Day Statement

On World Environment Day 2025, CNRG issued a major call for urgent action against Zimbabwe's deepening environmental crisis, highlighting the country's escalating pollution and ecological damage from unregulated mining including widespread deforestation, toxic water contamination, and the use of harmful chemicals without adequate environmental safeguards.

Lithium Value Addition Campaign

CNRG sustained its campaign against the mass export of unprocessed lithium, with research indicating up to 3,000 tonnes of ore leaving Zimbabwe daily. CNRG also raised alarm over allegations of lithium smuggling across porous borders into South Africa and Mozambique, pointing to deepening concerns about corruption and illicit mineral and financial flows. The statement noted that Chinese investors' near-monopoly in Zimbabwe's lithium sector – with major operations at Bikita Minerals, Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe, Max Mind Mining (Sabi Star Mine), Zulu Lithium Mine, Kamativi, Gwanda, and Sandawana Mine – had entrenched a pattern of extraction without adequate governance, labour protections, or community benefit.

Chinese Labour Practices and Firearms Controversy

In January 2025, CNRG expressed deep concern over the escalating use of firearms by Chinese nationals in Zimbabwe to settle labour disputes, following a disturbing video showing a violent altercation between a Zimbabwean employee, Kholwani Dube, and Chinese nationals. CNRG called on government to enforce labour laws without compromise.

Research and Publications

The Weekly Newsletter

Centre for Natural Resource Governance

The Weekly



In 2025, CNRG established and grew The Weekly, a flagship newsletter providing in-depth analysis of Zimbabwe's extractive sector, community voices, policy updates, and investigative reports. Published regularly and distributed to a growing national and international readership, The Weekly became a critical resource for civil society, media, government, and donors tracking natural resource governance in Zimbabwe.

Key themes covered across 2025 editions included:

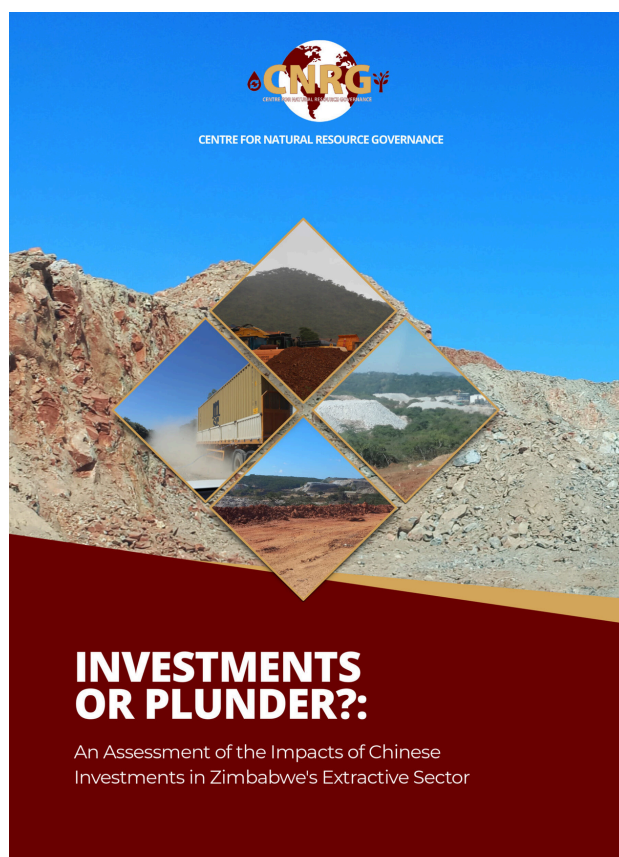
- Illicit financial flows in the artisanal gold sector – estimated at 3 tonnes valued at USD 157 million lost monthly
- Chinese investment impacts – environmental, social, and economic analysis
- Fiscal reforms in the mining sector and their implications for communities
- Kimberley Process reform and diamond governance
- Climate change and its intersection with extractive industries in Southern Africa
- Community voices from Penhalonga, Hwange, Marange, Bikita, and Magunje

Report: Investments or Plunder?

"INVESTMENTS OR PLUNDER?": An Assessment of the Impacts of Chinese Investments in Zimbabwe's Extractive Sector

This landmark CNRG report documented Chinese-linked mining operations controlling an estimated 90% of Zimbabwe's mining industry. The report exposed labour conditions characterised by short-term contracts, poor job security, low wages, and unsafe working environments.

Workers' testimonies detailed discrimination, sexual harassment, and corruption. The report traced annual FDI from China rising from under USD 50 million (2008-2010) to over USD 460 million in 2011, with recent annual mineral extractions valued at USD 2.79 billion (2023). The report called for urgent regulatory reform.



Research and Publications

Whats App News Channel

The launch of a dedicated WhatsApp News Channel allowed CNRG to disseminate timely, accessible information directly to communities in mining-affected areas, bypassing traditional media and increasing accessibility.

Penhalonga Documentary

CNRG produced and launched a documentary exposing environmental crimes in gold mining in Penhalonga, Zimbabwe. Launched via an X Spaces event, the documentary gave voice to communities experiencing the hidden costs of mining on human health and the environment. The documentary was co-produced with Magamba Network and distributed through digital platforms.



Illicit Financial Flows Research

CNRG published research estimating that illicit financial flows in Zimbabwe's artisanal mining sector account for leakages of approximately 3 tonnes of gold monthly, valued at roughly USD 157 million representing a massive haemorrhage of national wealth. The research traced how IFFs had spread from alluvial deposits to large-scale disused mines.

Community Engagement & Capacity Building



A core pillar of CNRG's work in 2025 was empowering communities with knowledge, tools, and confidence to assert their rights and resist destructive mining. Key activities included:

Extractives Summer School

In 2025, CNRG convened the Extractives Summer School, a two-day intensive training that brought together young people from mining communities in Hwange, Bikita, and Mutare. The training focused on practical knowledge transfer on advocacy, leadership, and communication. Young people reported increased confidence to engage with authorities and raise community issues. They also formed strong connections across the three districts, with plans to collaborate on regional initiatives in future.



People's COP30

CNRG also convened the People's COP30 in October 2025, bringing together mining-affected families, women leaders, youth activists, and civil society organizations. The initiative was conceived as a response to the exclusion of grassroots voices from formal climate policy spaces and a Declaration of Demands was formally submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, and the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development.



Community Engagement & Capacity Building



Digital Activism and Communications

CNRG trained community members in digital activism and AI-supported communication, equipping them with skills to amplify their voices through various digital platforms.



Hwange Environmental Law Workshop

CNRG hosted the Nengasha Community in Hwange District for a Capacity Building Workshop on Environmental Laws. The community, adjacent to Hwange National Park and facing the combined pressures of human-wildlife conflict and mining-related displacement, was equipped with practical knowledge on environmental regulations, enabling active participation in governance processes.



Manicaland Multistakeholder Conference

CNRG partnered with PACDEF in Mutare for the Manicaland Multistakeholder Conference on Mining, bringing together stakeholders from a region rich in gold, gemstones, and other minerals to discuss mineral resource governance and the rights of artisanal and small-scale miners.

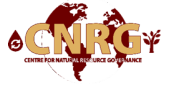


Climate Change as a Security Concern Conference

CNRG organised a conference in Harare examining climate change as a security issue, exploring the intersectionality of climate change and extractive industries, and contextualising the new vulnerabilities created by climate change for mining-affected communities.



Community Engagement & Capacity Building



Right2SayNo Campaign

Across 2025, CNRG intensified the Right2SayNo campaign. The campaign reached communities in Penhalonga, Hwange, Marange, and beyond, generating significant public debate and media coverage.



Women in Natural Resource Governance

CNRG celebrated the contributions of women leaders in natural resource governance, hosting events in Hwange with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Hwange District Development Coordinator's Office, and local community-based organisations. A significant partnership with the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) documented the impacts of mining on women's livelihoods, focusing on GBV in extractive contexts. CNRG also participated in the National Gender Forum, convened by the ZGC mission to mark its 10th anniversary. The forum provided a vital platform to reflect on the progress made in advancing gender equality, while confronting the persistent barriers that women and marginalized groups continue to face.



International Engagement

Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition

CNRG actively participated in Kimberley Process (KP) Civil Society Coalition activities throughout 2025 and into 2026, including the Annual Planning Meeting in Freetown, Sierra Leone, held under the theme 'Sustainability for Greater Impact.' CNRG contributed to discussions on:

- Reforming the KP's definition of 'conflict diamonds' to address modern governance failures
- The inability of KP certification alone to prevent conflict diamonds from entering global markets
- Situating diamond governance within broader mineral resource governance debates
- Building civil society independence and capacity in constrained civic spaces

Post-COP Reflection Meeting

CNRG participated in a Post-COP reflection meeting hosted by the Southern Africa Trust in South Africa, contributing perspectives on climate finance, the Loss and Damage Fund, and the intersection of fossil fuel extraction and climate justice. CNRG expressed concern that the Belém Communiqué failed to commit to a fossil fuel phase-out.

Africa Mining Vision Alignment

CNRG's policy positions in 2025 were consistently aligned with continental frameworks, particularly the Africa Mining Vision (AU, 2009), which calls for mineral resources to drive industrialisation, local value chains, and broad-based development rather than enclave extraction. CNRG engaged with World Bank analyses linking beneficiation and local linkages to sustainable and inclusive growth.

Business & Human Rights

CNRG's work on the Magunje mining crisis and Chinese labour practices was featured by the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, amplifying CNRG's documentation of abuses to international audiences and positioning Zimbabwe's extractive sector within global conversations on corporate accountability.



2025 Impact Summary

Area of Impact	Key Outcome
Advocacy Victory	Christmas Pass mining operations halted through sustained campaigning
Press Releases Issued	Multiple statements on Hwange, Magunje, Marange, Bikita, Penhalonga
Research Reports	'Investments or Plunder?' report on Chinese mining impacts released
Community Workshops	Capacity building in Hwange, Manicaland, and mining districts
Documentary Production	Penhalonga gold mining environmental crimes documentary launched
International Engagement	KP Civil Society Coalition, Post-COP, Southern Africa Trust meetings
Media Presence	Featured in Africa Defence Forum, Business & Human Rights, AllAfrica
The Weekly Newsletter	Multiple editions published tracking national extractive sector
Right2SayNo Campaign	Scaled nationally across major mining districts
Staff Development	New Senior Programmes Officer recruited; planning retreat held and capacity session for key staff held in Maldives

Looking Ahead: Priorities for 2026

Building on 2025's work, CNRG has charted an ambitious agenda for 2026, guided by lessons from the field and emerging threats:

- **Right2SayNo Campaign Intensification** – Scale the campaign to reach more communities, particularly those facing imminent displacement from mining expansion on communal lands.
- **Expanded Social Media and Digital Activism** – Strengthen our online presence and digital advocacy by growing and engaging our social media audiences, amplifying youth voices, and leveraging innovative digital storytelling and cross-border collaboration to drive awareness, mobilise communities, and influence policy on natural resource governance
- **Kimberley Process Engagement** – Sustain civil society pressure for reform of the KP and contribute to global debate on conflict mineral certification.
- **Lithium Governance** – Monitor implementation of the announced ban on lithium concentrate exports, and advocate for equitable community benefit-sharing in the lithium value chain.
- **Climate Justice Advocacy** – Advance calls for operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund and decentralised climate finance for communities.
- **Continental and Global Alliances** – Strengthen partnerships with the Southern Africa Trust, Global Initiative, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, and other organisations.



Partners & Acknowledgements

CNRG's work in 2025 was made possible through the support, solidarity, and collaboration of many partners and allies. We express our gratitude (in no order of importance) to:

Funding Partners

- Amplify Change
- Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World)
- Norwegian Peoples Aid
- European Union
- Southern Africa Trust
- Heinrich Böll Stiftung
- Nowergian Peoples' Aid

Local and International Allies

- Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition – for providing global platforms for diamond governance advocacy.
- Business & Human Rights Resource Centre – for amplifying CNRG's documentation of abuses internationally.
- Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime
- Africa Climate Justice Network
- Magamba Network
- PACDEF – for partnership on the Manicaland Multistakeholder Conference on Mining.
- Zimbabwe Diamond and Allied Minerals Workers Union
- Publish What You Pay- for partnership on transparency and accountability in the mining sector
- People's Dialogue- South to South organisation working on social justice Africa and Latin America
- Tackling Climate Change and Energy Transition in Zimbabwe (TACCET)

Community partners, CBO's and brave individuals in Penhalonga, Hwange, Marange, Magunje, Bikita, and across Zimbabwe, whose courage and trust make this work possible.

- Zivai Community Empowerment Trust
- Hwange Youth Empowerment Initiative
- Nduji Jose Trust
- Masvingo Centre for Research and Development
- Marange Women's Allaince
- Bikita Institute of Land and Development
- Zimbabwe Diamond Workers Union

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