Centre for Natural Resource Governance

The Weekly

A Weekly Newsletter by CNRG | Issue 42 | 27 November 2026



16 Days of Activism Against GBV : UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Ensure justice, Protect survivors, End impunity #OrangeIt

COP 31 Reflections: Page 5-6

Redcliff devastated through destructive mining activities

In this article, Tendai Ruben Mbofana questions the silence surrounding large-scale mining near Cactus Poort Dam in Redcliff, where blasting has cracked homes, raised dust and threatened a vital water source.

He argues that the operations run without public notices, community consultation or any visible accountability from the local authority and state regulators, while residents see no benefit from the gold revenue in their roads, water, lighting or refuse collection.

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Zim Moves to Clean Up Solar Market

The government is moving to clean up the industry, Under sweeping new regulations, solar installers will be required to obtain licences from the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA), while suppliers and traders will face tighter scrutiny over the quality of the products they sell.

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When Abandoned Mines Become Death Traps: Africa Must Confront Its Own Mining Legacy

By Donald Nyarota

The death of a 12-year-old boy in South Africa has reopened an uncomfortable conversation about mining negligence. Zimbabwe has its own painful history of children dying in abandoned mining pits and communities living with coal seam fires, exposing the human cost of weak rehabilitation and regulatory enforcement.

The death of a 12-year-old boy who fell into an unsecured mine shaft in Carolusberg, South Africa, on 23 November 2026, is a tragedy that resonates far beyond the country's borders. It is a grim reminder that mining's dangers do not disappear when companies stop extracting minerals. For communities living alongside mining operations, the consequences of extraction can persist for generations.

In a statement issued on 25 November, the Bench Marks Foundation condemned what it described as state and corporate negligence, arguing that the tragedy was not simply an accident. “When a child falls into an open shaft in Carolusberg, or drowns in an unfenced tailings dam in Nyakalong, Allanridge or Reiger Park, or perishes in contaminated open coal pits in Mpumalanga, it is not merely an ‘accident’,” the organisation said. “It is the predictable outcome of systemic corporate abandonment and a failure of regulatory oversight.”

Zimbabwe has its own devastating parallels. In January 2025, nine-year-old Tendai Hove and her 11-year-old cousin, Leeroy Makungwe, drowned in an abandoned chrome mining pit in Ngwaro Village, Zvishavane.

The water-filled excavation had reportedly raised concerns among villagers because of the danger it posed to children and livestock. Their deaths exposed the consequences of leaving mining excavations unsecured in communities where children routinely navigate landscapes transformed by mineral extraction.

In Mutoko, communities affected by black granite mining have also raised concerns about uncovered excavations and child fatalities. In Marange, a 13-year-old child died in 2015 after becoming trapped in a gully abandoned by Anjin Investments. These incidents point to a recurring problem: communities inherit dangerous landscapes while accountability remains elusive.



Beneath abandoned shafts & burning coal seams, Hwange's legacy is turning children's playgrounds into danger zones. The cost of extraction is written on land, but it is the children who bear the scars.

The danger in Zimbabwe extends beyond abandoned mining pits. In Hwange, underground coal seam fires have created another deadly legacy of extraction. These fires can smoulder beneath the earth for extended periods, releasing smoke and pollutants while making the ground unstable. Burning underground coal deposits can create dangerous surface conditions, including areas where unsuspecting residents risk severe burns. Children and other vulnerable community members face particular risks in settlements located near affected mining areas.

The Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) has been documenting these dangers and amplifying the experiences of affected communities. Its report, Effects of Coal Seam Fires and Other Environmental Hazards on Children in Hwange, highlights the physical and psychological consequences of mining-related environmental hazards for children, including serious injuries, permanent disabilities and trauma. Through community engagement, research and advocacy, CNRG has challenged mining companies and public authorities to address the risks, investigate incidents and ensure that affected families receive appropriate support.

CNRG's work in Hwange demonstrates why communities must be more than passive recipients of mining-related risks. Community-led environmental monitoring and documentation are essential in exposing hazards that might otherwise remain invisible or ignored.

COP 31 :The World's Climate Ambitions Go Up in Smoke

By Staff Reporter

The COP31 climate summit in Antalya, Turkey, ended in failure on 21 November, after more than two weeks of tortuous negotiations produced no agreement on an overarching deal. The sticking point was also the most important: whether the world should commit to moving away from fossil fuels driving climate change.

The talks, which lurched into an extended weekend of negotiations, became the longest COP conference on record. Their collapse marks the most significant breakdown in the UN climate process since the ill-fated Copenhagen summit of 2009. For a gathering designed to demonstrate collective resolve, the result was an embarrassing display of political paralysis.

António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, expressed that he was "deeply disappointed that COP31 has ended without consensus on an overarching outcome".

"But this setback does not change the facts," he said. "There may be no consensus in the negotiating room. There is no ambiguity in the science."

His criticism was directed squarely at the fossil-fuel industry and its political allies. Guterres accused "powerful fossil fuel interests" of taking "a page from Big Tobacco's playbook: distorting the science, delaying policy, blocking action, and piling up huge profits while people everywhere pay the price".

He also challenged wealthy nations to honour their climate-finance commitments, insisting that promises must translate into money reaching those most exposed to climate shocks. Guterres called on richer countries to "make good on their commitment" to ensure climate finance "reaches those who most need it".

"Put dates and dollars behind that pledge now," he said. "Lives depend on it."

The reaction from civil society and environmental organisations was equally scathing. Ani Dasgupta, president and CEO of the World Resources Institute, described the outcome as "hollow" and "a failure of political leadership".

"At a time when the science could not be clearer, it is indefensible that countries could not agree on even mentioningfossil fuels, the primary driver of climate change," he added.

Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, WWF's global climate and energy lead, accused governments of having "failed in their responsibilities".



"Too many once again shied away from the toughest decisions, including how to turn their commitment to transition away from fossil fuels into real action," he added.

Mohamed Adow of Power Shift Africa was more blunt, calling COP31 the "worst ever COP" and warning that it "needs to be a wake-up call for the world".

"Rich nations and polluting governments cannot keep arriving empty-handed," he said, referring to the absence of concrete financial commitments from wealthier countries.

The diplomatic impasse is particularly difficult to defend given the increasingly alarming scientific evidence. A recent United Nations assessment confirms that the world is on course to overshoot the 1.5°C warming threshold agreed under the Paris Agreement. Under current policies, global temperatures could rise by as much as 2.8°C above pre-industrial levels. With warming already approaching 1.4°C, the consequences are no longer distant projections. Deadly European heatwaves and catastrophic flooding in Nepal offer a glimpse of a more dangerous climate future.

COP31 has exposed a familiar but increasingly untenable contradiction. Countries most vulnerable to climate change are demanding urgent action, while fossil-fuel-dependent and oil-rich nations continue to resist commitments that threaten established economic interests. The result is a negotiating process in which those with the greatest historical responsibility and financial capacity to act can often afford to delay, while those least responsible pay the highest price.

The summit's failure is not simply a diplomatic embarrassment. It is a reminder that the climate crisis is increasingly being held hostage by the politics of fossil fuels, competing economic interests and the reluctance of powerful governments to act. The world does not lack scientific evidence, policy proposals or declarations of intent. What it lacks is the political courage to turn them into action.

In Antalya, governments once again demonstrated that reaching agreement on the existence of a crisis is considerably easier than agreeing to confront its causes.



Zimbabwe Moves to Clean Up Solar Market

By Staff Reporter

For millions of Zimbabwean households, solar power is no longer a luxury. It is what keeps the lights on, food refrigerated and small businesses operating when the national grid fails. But the growing dependence on solar energy has brought another problem into homes and businesses: the risk of paying hard-earned money for equipment that does not deliver what it promises.

The government is now moving to clean up the industry.

Under sweeping new regulations, solar installers will be required to obtain licences from the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA), while suppliers and traders will face tighter scrutiny over the quality of the products they sell. The regulator will also have the power to order the destruction of substandard solar equipment, with the costs charged to the responsible trader.

The measures are contained in Statutory Instrument 187 of 2026, the Energy Regulatory (Solar Products and Installation) Regulations, 2026, published on November 20. They were issued by the Minister of Energy and Power Development in consultation with ZERA and will take effect six months after publication.

The regulations cover the entire solar supply chain, including importers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, engineers, contractors and installers.

For consumers, the stakes are considerable. A household investing its savings in solar panels, batteries and inverters is buying more than equipment; it is buying the promise of electricity, security and some protection from the country's persistent power shortages. When products fail or installations are poorly executed, that investment can quickly become another financial burden.

The new rules could offer an important layer of consumer protection by making it harder for unqualified installers and suppliers of substandard equipment to operate without scrutiny. They also place greater responsibility on businesses to ensure that the products entering the market meet acceptable standards.

But regulation alone will not guarantee affordable and reliable solar energy. Its success will depend on how effectively ZERA enforces the rules, whether consumers can easily verify licensed installers and whether compliance costs are prevented from being passed disproportionately on to ordinary households.

For families and small businesses increasingly turning to the sun because the national grid cannot consistently meet their needs, the real test will be simple: whether these regulations make solar energy safer, more dependable and worthy of the money people invest in it.

Beyond the Glitter: Exploring Gender-Based Violence in the Natural Resource Governance Sector



As Zimbabwe joins the global community in commemorating the 2026 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), under the theme "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Ensure Justice, Protect Survivors, End Impunity," it is imperative to shine a spotlight on a sector where gender-based violence remains largely under-recognised.

We celebrate the gains achieved towards ending GBV and must underscore how natural resource governance is an important contributor to Zimbabwe's economy and provision of livelihoods for many. However, beneath this economic promise lies a gendered reality characterised by unequal power relations, economic exclusion and various forms of violence against women.

Women working in artisanal and small-scale mining, as well as those living in mining communities, face multiple vulnerabilities that extend beyond conventional understandings of GBV.

Research on gender and extractives in Zimbabwe highlights how women are disproportionately exposed to exploitation, sexual harassment, GBV and unsafe working environments. The intersection of economic vulnerability, limited livelihood alternatives and unequal bargaining power further increases women's exposure to exploitation, including sexual exploitation and trafficking.

The impacts extend beyond mining sites. Mining-related land displacement, loss of access to productive land, water contamination and environmental degradation disproportionately affect women, who often carry the responsibility of providing food, water and care for their families.
Women and children consequently bear a disproportionate burden of the social and environmental costs of extraction.

Key Asks:
The 2026 campaign theme challenges us to move beyond awareness towards justice, survivor protection and accountability which means ensuring that GBV prevention and response mechanisms are accessible to women, women miners and affected communities.

Thus;

- Mining companies must be held accountable for safe workplaces, gender-responsive employment practices, effective grievance mechanisms and protection against sexual exploitation and harassment.
- Government must strengthen women's land and property rights, enforce existing labour and gender equality legislation, and ensure that women participate meaningfully in mining governance and community benefit negotiations.
- Civil society organisations must also strengthen women's collective agency, leadership and capacity to demand accountability.

Ultimately, ending GBV in Zimbabwe requires confronting violence wherever it occurs, including within the economic sectors driving national development. Our minerals must not come at the expense of women's dignity, safety and rights. Justice for women in extractive communities must be part of the broader struggle to end GBV.

The Climate Crisis Cannot Wait for Political Compromise

I (left) leave Antalya with a mixture of disappointment, frustration and renewed determination. COP31 has once again exposed the widening gap between political promises and the urgent climate action demanded by science, justice and the lived realities of millions of vulnerable people.

Following the Santa Marta Conference in Colombia, where governments, scientists, Indigenous Peoples, social movements and frontline communities united around the urgent need to move beyond fossil fuels, there was hope that the international community was finally gathering the courage to confront the root causes of the climate crisis. Unfortunately, COP31 fell short of that ambition.

The failure to deliver a clear, equitable roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels represents a serious setback. Instead of confronting the continued expansion of coal, oil and gas, negotiations increasingly risked shifting attention towards technological distractions such as carbon capture. The absence of explicit reference to fossil fuels in the cover decision is particularly troubling. Three years after COP28 in Dubai recognised the need to transition away from fossil fuels, we appear to be moving backwards.

Our message remains clear: the transition away from fossil fuels must be FAST, FAIR AND FUNDED. Developing countries cannot be expected to abandon fossil fuel dependency without affordable alternatives, adequate financing, technology transfer and support to protect workers and affected communities.

Climate finance was another major disappointment. Wealthy nations continue making ambitious announcements while resisting concrete financial commitments commensurate with their historical responsibility. The removal of numerical commitments and references to debt from finance discussions reflects a worrying reluctance to confront the structural inequalities underpinning the climate crisis. Across Africa and Asia, countries are spending more on debt servicing than on protecting communities from climate disasters.

Adaptation finance, which is a matter of survival for developing countries, received inadequate attention. The Adaptation Fund attracted barely US$50 million against an annual target of US$300 million. The deletion of the proposed US$120 billion figure and the postponement of the tripling of adaptation finance further undermine confidence in international solidarity. Similarly, the US$342 million allocated towards responding to loss and damage falls dramatically short of the US$2.8 billion demanded. These figures expose the enormous gap between climate impacts and the support reaching affected communities.

For Africa, climate justice cannot remain a negotiating slogan. It must translate into resources that reach farmers, women, young people, rural communities and local institutions.

The way forward for developing countries must therefore be strategic and deliberate. First, African countries must strengthen their collective negotiating positions and speak with one voice, defending the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Second, governments must demand predictable, additional and grant-based climate finance, rather than loans that deepen indebtedness. Third, investment in decentralised renewable energy, agroecology, climate-resilient infrastructure, early warning systems and locally led adaptation must become national development priorities. Fourth, civil society and frontline communities must have meaningful influence in shaping national climate policies and monitoring climate finance delivery.

We must also strengthen South-South cooperation, technology sharing and regional climate financing initiatives to reduce dependence on an international system that repeatedly fails to deliver. One lesson from Antalya is increasingly clear: we cannot continue relying exclusively on a negotiation process where political deadlocks repeatedly stand in the way of urgent climate action. International negotiations must be complemented by stronger domestic accountability, regional solidarity and people-powered movements.

I leave Antalya disappointed by the political compromises, but not defeated. The people on the frontlines of climate change cannot afford another decade of broken promises.

Africa does not need sympathy, charity or another collection of empty declarations. Africa needs climate justice, adaptation finance, technology transfer and a Just Transition that is FAIR, FAST AND FUNDED. The climate crisis cannot wait. Neither can we.

Wellington Madumira, a climate justice advocate serves National Coordinator of the Climate Action Network Zimbabwe (CANZIM), championing climate action, environmental protection, climate finance, just energy transitions, sustainable agriculture and community resilience.

When Abandoned Mines Become Death Traps: Africa Must Confront Its Own Mining Legacy



CNRG's broader natural resource governance work reinforces the importance of community participation, access to environmental information and corporate accountability. Mining-affected residents should have the power to report violations and demand action without having to wait for another tragedy.

The problem extends beyond individual companies or abandoned operations. Zimbabwe's mining sector continues to grapple with unsafe artisanal mining, mine collapses, environmental degradation and pollution of water sources. In places such as Penhalonga, recurring accidents in dangerous underground workings demonstrate the human consequences of inadequate safety enforcement. Meanwhile, communities in mining districts continue to contend with damaged agricultural land, unstable excavations and environmental liabilities that undermine their livelihoods.

As the Bench Marks Foundation rightly observes, telling parents to keep children away from dangerous mining sites is not a policy. Responsibility rests with mining companies that profit from mineral extraction and government institutions mandated to regulate the sector. Zimbabwe's Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, the Environmental Management Agency and local authorities must strengthen inspections, identify hazardous sites, enforce rehabilitation obligations and ensure that communities can hold responsible parties accountable.

The response must include comprehensive audits of abandoned and high-risk mining sites, mandatory fencing and rehabilitation, transparent public registers of hazardous locations and penalties for companies that disregard their closure obligations. Communities must also be meaningfully involved in monitoring environmental compliance.

Africa's mineral wealth should finance development, not leave behind death traps. The global race for critical minerals and increased investment in extractive industries must not become an excuse for sacrificing the safety and dignity of mining-affected communities.

South Africa's abandoned shafts and Zimbabwe's coal seam fires represent different manifestations of the same governance failure: communities are left carrying the human cost of mining long after the industry's promises of development have been made

Breaking the Silence: Marange Communities Speak Out on GBV

In Marange and Betera, community members are challenging cultural norms that keep gender-based violence (GBV) hidden, and are calling for child protection services that reach families where they live.

At a Marange Women's Alliance community workshop held at Daure, Ward 28, on 17 November 2026, Sister Sibanda of St Andrews Mission Hospital explained that most women suffer GBV in silence, trying to safeguard and follow the demands of culture. When they seek medical attention, they hide that their injuries were caused by a family member, a husband or a brother.

The reason is a cultural expectation: "Nyaya dzemumba hadzibude kunze, zvinoputsa musha", meaning what happens in the house must stay in the house, for the dignity of the family.

The message was clear: this must stop. Silence does not protect the family; it protects the perpetrator. Culture should protect women, not silence them, and a real family is not broken by truth but by violence. Women were urged to speak out and seek help rather than suffer in silence.

A day later, at a community meeting in Betera on 18 November 2026, also hosted by the Marange Women's Alliance, a father called on the CCW to extend its services into the villages. He recommended that children be referred directly by their parents for counselling, rather than relying solely on group sessions at schools, because children may open up more readily in a familiar community setting.

His contribution is a reminder that child protection must be accessible, responsive and sensitive to different needs. Some children need group awareness sessions, while others need a safe, confidential space to speak freely. As communities continue the fight against GBV, the voices of parents help identify gaps in service delivery. Every child deserves someone who will listen, a safe space to speak, and support when they need it.

The workshops were sub-granted by CNRG under its ENABLE project, with Bread for The World co-funded by the EU.

Poetry Corner



A home is a woman

l am the one who holds this home .A farmer ,a mother, a keeper of the house, I was born here ,l will grow old here , A child who does not cry dies in the crable -so today l cry out ,l speak

Lithium came. Shining bright
We rejoice and said development has arrived.The fish that is said to be sweet hides a thorn ,Our water is gone ,it is polluted . Dust fills our homes ,our children cough, Our houses shake walls crack,Our fields are taken ,we have lost our farming .

What is covered rots quickly -the truth is now out.The land is our mother protect it .A Pearson is a Pearson though people respect the people.Govern with honestly do not govern in darkness. Darkness cannot be covered by a hand let the truth come out .

If you polluted clean it lf you eat wash the plate do not leave dirt that kills our chy.

We are not fighting the mine .We want a fire that warms us.not one that burns us. We want clean water clean air safe houses filds we can farm .lf a woman cries the whole home cries .l have come from far .l will not go back.Buhera wants peace , Buhera wants justice