Centre for Natural Resource Governance

The Weekly

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Dusk of Dust: Kamativi Mine Workers Allege Intimidation and Coercion to Conceal Deteriorating Labour and Safety Standards.

Mines & Minerals Bill Overview

Kamativi Mining Company: Workers Allege Intimidation and Coercion Ahead of IRMA Audit

Workers at Kamativi Mining Company have approached the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG), alleging that mine management subjected them to intimidation and coercion ahead of consultations conducted by assessors from the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) between 25 and 30 October.

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FEATURE: Women's Fight for Safety and Dignity in Mining

Mercy's harrowing journey through Marange's illicit diamond trade exposes how poverty, gender-based violence and exploitation are pushing vulnerable women into dangerous mining economies just to survive and provide for their families, writes Sally Nyakanyanga.

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Kamativi Mining Company: Workers Allege Intimidation and Coercion Ahead of IRMA Audit



By Farai Maguwu

Workers at Kamativi Mining Company have approached the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG), alleging that mine management subjected them to intimidation and coercion ahead of consultations conducted by assessors from the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) between 25 and 30 October.

Kamativi Mining Company has applied for accreditation under IRMA, an international assurance system that promotes responsible mining through independently assessed social, environmental and human rights standards.

According to accounts received by CNRG, on 22 October, approximately 100 workers from the mine's support department were assembled by management and allegedly instructed on what they should and should not disclose to the visiting IRMA consultants. Workers claim management emphasised three particular issues.

Alleged manipulation of workers' salaries and deductions: Workers were reportedly instructed to deny that their salaries were subject to deductions. However, they allege that the mine operates a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) system under which employees lose points for certain alleged performance shortcomings, resulting in corresponding salary deductions. Workers fear that denying this practice would conceal important aspects of their employment conditions.

Personal Protective Equipment and working conditions: Workers were allegedly instructed to tell IRMA consultants that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was replaced immediately whenever it became torn, damaged or lost. However, they claim that replacement of damaged equipment only took place on 22 October, shortly before the consultants' arrival, despite workers having previously continued using damaged protective equipment.

Workers further allege that they routinely work 12-hour shifts without adequate breaks under extremely hot conditions, with temperatures reportedly reaching 41°C. These claims raise concerns about occupational health and safety and the mine's compliance with applicable labour standards.

Workers' remuneration and relations with management

Workers further allege that management instructed them to portray themselves as satisfied with their salaries and describe their relationships with their Chinese counterparts as cordial. They contend that these instructions were intended to prevent assessors from hearing about their actual experiences and grievances.

These allegations have also been raised by the Zimbabwe Diamond and Allied Minerals Workers Union (ZDAMWU). Its general secretary, Justice Chinhema, accused KMC of failing to uphold decent working standards.

“Indeed intimidation is rampant at the mine. We also submitted our own concerns to the IRMA audit. They also pretended like they want to work with trade unions but deep down they are violating worker rights.

“We were represented during the audit and we countered with our own submissions on the low occupational health and safety standards at the mine,” said Chinhema.

IRMA responds

In response to concerns raised by CNRG, IRMA Lead Auditor Warrick Stewart confirmed that the assessment team interviewed workers and contractors representing different roles, employment categories, genders and age groups, including both unionised and non-unionised personnel. He said the interviews were conducted confidentially, making it impossible for IRMA to disclose what individual workers shared.

Stewart acknowledged the specific concerns raised by CNRG, including allegations that workers were briefed on what to disclose during the audit, exposed to dust without adequate PPE, and subjected to unfair deductions from their earnings.

“These matters fall within the scope of the IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining and will be followed up through our audit process,” he said.

Mining Law Must Protect Communities, Not Just Business Interests

The Mines and Minerals Bill, 2025, presents an opportunity to modernise Zimbabwe's mining legislation. But its provisions on land, compensation, licensing and community participation raise important questions about whose interests the proposed law ultimately protects.

By Staff Reporter

Zimbabwe's proposed Mines and Minerals Bill, gazetted on 25 June 2025, offers an opportunity to replace an outdated mining framework that has governed the sector for decades. Modernising mining legislation is necessary, the reform must not come at the expense of communities whose land, livelihoods and environments are affected by extraction.

Attempt reform the mining law has been a rather long journey. An earlier Bill was passed by Parliament in 2018 but never became law after the President declined to sign it. The process was revived, producing the Mines and Minerals Bill, 2025, gazetted on 25 June 2025 to replace a law dating back to 1961.

More than a year later, the Bill is still making its way through Parliament, with public hearings taking place across the country from 17 to 22 November 2026. Communities are finally being invited to speak, albeit on a rather tight schedule, about a law that will shape their lives for decades. For now, the Bill remains just that—a Bill.

One of the most significant provisions is Clause 52, which prohibits mining within 450 meters of homes, cultivated land and plots smaller than 100 hectares. It also provides for compensation through the Mining Industry Environmental Protection Fund (MIEPF) where people lose access to land because of mining. Although the distance restriction offers a measure of protection, routing compensation through a government fund raises concerns about delayed payments and potentially shielding mining companies from direct responsibility.

The law should make companies directly accountable for fair compensation before relocation, including replacement land and housing where necessary. Women must also receive compensation.

Land rights present another concern. Clause 39 allows landholders with recognised tenure documents to register up to 100 hectares as unavailable for prospecting and pegging. Rural District Councils can also apply, with occupiers' consent, to reserve communal and resettlement grazing land of up to 200 hectares. However, placing these decisions under Provincial Mining Directors risks creating conflicts with the Ministry responsible for Lands and gives mining authorities considerable discretion over competing land uses.



Unregulated Mining: A picture of Penhalonga where artisanal mining activities are driving environmental degradation.

The Bill also exposes communities to inadequate consultation. Under Clause 87, objections to Exploration Exclusive Licence applications must be lodged within 21 days following publication in the Government Gazette and a local newspaper. Yet many rural communities have limited access to these platforms. Other licences, including Exclusive Prospecting Licences and small-scale mining titles, also lack adequate community participation requirements. Notices should reach communities through ward offices, traditional leaders, local authorities, public meetings and community radio.
Clause 37(5), which imposes a 10-year restriction on landowners who refuse prospecting near their homesteads, is particularly concerning. Protecting one's home should not attract punitive consequences. Similarly, Clause 300's provisions on eviction require clearer safeguards for farmworkers, customary land users and artisanal miners.

The Bill's failure to clearly recognise artisanal miners also risks perpetuating informality, while its gender provisions leave equal representation on the Mining Affairs Board to ministerial discretion rather than establishing a binding requirement.

There is, moreover, a democratic deficit in the public consultation process. Giving communities and civil society only short notice to prepare for parliamentary hearings on legislation of this complexity undermines meaningful participation. Communities need time to understand the proposals, consult internally and develop informed submissions. Public hearings should not become box-ticking exercises. Parliament must provide adequate notice, accessible copies of the Bill and opportunities for communities in remote mining areas to be heard.

Zimbabwe needs mining legislation that balances investment with human rights, environmental protection and community sovereignty.

When Survival Costs Everything: Women's Fight for Safety and Dignity in Mining Communities

When Mercy's Nhando* husband left Mutare for South Africa in search of greener pastures, her life took a devastating turn. "That was the last time my husband was in my life," she says. Left to shoulder single parenthood alone, she initially traveled from Mutare to the Chiadzwa diamond fields with other women to hawk maheu, soft drinks, and buns. "I couldn't even afford to put food on the table with that money," she recalls.

Desperate for a viable income, peers convinced her to enter the illicit diamond trade, during the time when people were still allowed to enter into the diamond fields. This is a perilous path taken by hundreds of impoverished women across Manicaland and beyond who risk violent raids, sexual exploitation, and stigma just to feed their families.

At the time, operating under the cover of darkness, Mercy slept on bare sand in makeshift hideouts, constantly bracing for raids. "Inasmuch as it's a fight for sustenance, the burden is too big to bear.

Anything can happen at any time in this area," she says. At some point she had to spend a terrifying night holding up in a tree to evade armed soldiers and magweja (illegal artisanal miners), often returning to Mutare empty-handed after raiders looted her proceeds.

After the ordeal, she sustained severe insect bites that left her in agonising pain for weeks.

Beyond physical brutality, women in these illicit spaces face rampant sexual abuse and heightened exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs). According to UNAIDS, women aged 15 to 49 in Zimbabwe bear a disproportionate HIV burden at 11.6 percent—nearly double the 6.9 percent rate among men—while public health research shows active mining zones amplify local transmission risks through transient labour and transactional sex.

Yet instead of support, these women face harsh judgment at home. "Society itself mocks us and believes we are prostitutes, because they have the impression that a sane woman cannot go and do what I do," Mercy says. Worse still, erratic earnings meant her children repeatedly dropped out of school when fees fell behind. "As scary and dangerous as it is, circumstances bring us here," she says. "Even though I was doing it for my kids, I still regret having to put them through that."

Local advocates warn this cycle of poverty is ensnaring the next generation. Billian Matambo (46), chairperson of the Marange Women's Alliance (MWA)—which links local women to STI and HIV treatment—says young girls are acutely vulnerable. "It's just not a safe space for women, and it's worse for young girls," Matambo says. "In this impoverished environment, girls as young as 12 or 14 are exposed and lured into sex for money, leading to a high prevalence of teenage pregnancy."

Official data underscores this crisis. Figures presented to Parliament by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education show 49,555 learners dropped out of school nationwide in 2024, with

Manicaland Province—home to Mutare and Marange—recording the second-highest toll at 6,889 dropouts. Meanwhile, the 2023–24 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) reveals that 23.2 percent of girls aged 15 to 19 have begun childbearing, rising to 29.9 percent in rural areas and 36.9 percent among the poorest households.

Addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in mining communities requires dismantling entrenched social norms alongside strengthening state protection. Catherine Chimanda, Senior Programmes Officer at the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG), notes that while CNRG trains local women as community paralegals, deep-rooted cultural and religious practices still trap many in hostile environments. "It is difficult to say whether GBV is increasing or getting worse, but in many of the areas where we have worked, we are beginning to see improvements in terms of women reporting cases and seeking justice," Chimanda says.

"If only the institutions responsible for protecting women would go down to the grassroots and share information on GBV, sexual and reproductive health rights, and clear referral pathways covering justice, medical, and psychosocial support—alongside enforcing existing laws—we could start to see visible change," she adds.

For Mercy, enduring the diamond fields remains a test of sheer resilience. "To think of how I survived—only God knows," she reflects, urging women in mining areas to unite, learn their rights, and protect one another's dignity.

This article first appeared in Newsday and is republished with permission from the authoru, Sally Nyakanyanga a freelance journalist.

Community Water Monitoring Goes Digital in Zvishavane



The Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) has launched a digital water-monitoring system, developed by Vault-ITS, to strengthen community efforts to document and monitor mining-related pollution affecting rivers and dams in Zvishavane.

The system, known as Community Water, comprises two integrated platforms: an Android mobile application used by Water Watch Teams in the field, and a web-based management platform where CNRG reviewers verify, analyse and manage submitted data.

CNRG established five Community Water Watch Teams to oversee seven critical water sources: Ngezi River, Save River, Runde River, Mabhema Dam, Sabi Dam, Muchingwe River and Palawani Dam. The teams employed community mapping and basic monitoring instruments to record water access difficulties, pollution occurrences and service deficiencies.

Phase II of Environmental Justice for Her, supported by Heinrich Boll Stiftung (HBS), responds by giving the WWTs portable testing equipment and a digital application. Members will learn to collect samples safely, run portable tests, and record, geo-tag and submit results and photos through the app, including offline, so that the data is credible and traceable.

Monitoring is conducted at designated sampling points strategically located upstream, at, and downstream of mining activities to help communities document and compare conditions at different locations.

At each sampling point, the application guides monitors through a step-by-step water-quality screening process using 16-in-1 reagent test strips.

The app captures test results, GPS coordinates, photographs of the test strips and surrounding environment, and observations of visible pollution indicators such as discoloured water, foam, dead fish and tailings overflows. It also uses image analysis to independently interpret photographs of the test strips, providing an additional cross-check against readings recorded by monitors.

Designed for field conditions, the application works offline, allowing monitoring to continue in areas with limited connectivity, with data synchronised once an internet connection becomes available. Water Watch Teams can also use their phones to report pollution incidents as they occur.

On the management side, CNRG reviewers verify submitted monitoring results before they are accepted for official use. The web platform provides mapped visualisation of sampling locations and results, monitoring schedules, incident tracking, referral management and reporting tools, enabling CNRG to consolidate evidence and identify emerging environmental concerns.

Developed entirely using free and open-source technologies, Community Water provides communities with a structured, traceable and evidence-based mechanism for documenting water pollution. By transforming field observations into verified digital records, the system strengthens the ability of communities to present credible evidence, engage duty bearers and support accountability processes around the protection of water resources.

Zimbabwe's Mining Budget: A Bigger Slice of the Pie, But Who Gets to Eat?



The 2027 National Budget makes an important attempt to connect mineral extraction with domestic industrialisation. But local procurement targets and tighter export taxes would mean little if the wealth generated beneath Zimbabwean soil continues to bypass the communities living above it.

By Donald Nyarota

We already know that Zimbabwe's mining sector has a familiar economic paradox. It is an enclave economy: a country richly endowed with gold, platinum, diamonds, lithium and chrome, where communities hosting these resources often remain among the least developed. Mining generates foreign currency, attracts investment and contributes significantly to export earnings. But the relationship between mineral wealth and broad-based prosperity remains stubbornly weak.

Now to the 2027 National Budget, presented by Finance Minister Professor Mthuli Ncube on 19 November under the theme Accelerating Economic Transformation and Building Resilience to Climate and Global Shocks. It appears our dear Professor acknowledges some of these contradictions.

Its proposals on local procurement, mineral beneficiation, export taxation and mining administration suggest a government increasingly conscious that exporting minerals is not, by itself, an industrialisation strategy. Or at least a government bowing to increasing pressure to liberalise the mining sector, under a chokehold of foreign control.

The question, however, is whether these measures will fundamentally change the distribution of mining's economic benefits or simply make mineral extraction more efficient and fiscally rewarding for the state. Big questions deserving prompt responses.

On paper, it is a sensible intervention. Zimbabwe's mining industry imports substantial quantities of machinery, chemicals, engineering components and other consumables. A greater domestic share of this expenditure could stimulate manufacturing, build technical capacity and create opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises.

But 15% should be understood as a starting point, not an industrialization destination.

There is also a significant qualification: local procurement is mandatory where domestic capacity exists. This raises questions about who determines capacity, how local manufacturers qualify and how compliance will be monitored. Without transparent reporting, the requirement risks becoming another well-intentioned policy whose implementation is difficult to measure.

It is a policy move, populist in nature and riddled with implementation challenges.

Government must also guard against local procurement becoming a narrow arrangement benefiting politically connected suppliers or established companies. Local content should build a competitive domestic industrial base, not simply relocate supply contracts to locally registered intermediaries importing the same products.

The proposed framework, expected by 31 March 2027, will therefore be as important as the policy announcement itself.

The budget's continued commitment to restricting exports of unprocessed minerals is another important development. Zimbabwe has progressively tightened restrictions on raw mineral exports, with the objective of encouraging domestic processing and retaining more value within the economy...

Read the full analysis at www.cnrgzim.org and explore why Zimbabwe needs a holistic approach to industrialisation, promoting an inclusive mining value chain and ensuring benefits of mineral wealth translate into broader economic development.

Calls for Inclusive and Accountable Natural Resource Governance at Mines and Minerals Bill Hearing

Zivai Community Empowerment Trust (ZICET) has called for a more inclusive, transparent and community-centred mining governance framework during the public hearing on the Mines and Minerals Bill, 2025, held at Redwing Mine in Penhalonga.

The organisation used the parliamentary consultation platform to amplify the concerns and recommendations of mining-affected communities, particularly women, young people, artisanal and small-scale miners and other groups whose livelihoods are directly affected by mining activities. ZICET emphasised that Zimbabwe's mining legislation should go beyond regulating mineral extraction and create a framework that protects community rights, promotes local participation, supports responsible mining and ensures that the country's mineral wealth contributes meaningfully to sustainable development.

Among the key issues raised was the need to distinguish clearly between artisanal miners and registered small-scale miners. A key argument was that these groups operate under different circumstances and have varying levels of technical and financial capacity. The Bill should therefore provide accessible and differentiated formalisation pathways that enable artisanal miners to enter the formal economy without being subjected to regulatory requirements they cannot realistically meet.

The organisation also called for a review of mining licence fees and administrative charges, noting that excessive costs can discourage formalisation and push miners further into informality. ZICET proposed the introduction of compliance incentives, including discounts on licence renewal fees for miners who consistently renew their licences within the prescribed timeframes. Such measures would reward responsible conduct while encouraging a culture of voluntary compliance.

On the governance of strategic minerals, ZICET called for greater transparency and broader stakeholder participation in decisions concerning the designation of minerals as strategic. While Clause 6 of the Bill provides for the Minister to designate strategic minerals after consultation with the Mining Affairs Board and with the approval of the President, ZICET argued that decisions with far-reaching implications for access to mineral resources, investment and community livelihoods should also be informed by affected communities, local authorities, geological experts, civil society organisations and representatives of artisanal and small-scale miners.

The organisation further called for clear criteria for designating strategic minerals, public disclosure of the reasons informing such decisions and stronger parliamentary oversight.Recognising the importance of decentralised mining governance, ZICET advocated for the establishment of Provincial Advisory Boards in every mining province. It proposed that Clause 329(1), which currently provides that the Minister *may* establish provincial advisory boards, should use the word *shall* to make their establishment mandatory. These structures should provide meaningful representation for women, young people, mining communities and small-scale miners, ensuring that local experiences inform decisions made at national level.

Environmental protection and the rights of communities were also central to the contributions made. The organisation stressed that mining legislation must protect agricultural land, water sources and community livelihoods while ensuring that environmental obligations are effectively monitored and enforced. Communities hosting mining operations should not bear disproportionate environmental and social costs while remaining excluded from decisions about the resources extracted from their areas.

ZICET's participation reflects its commitment, through the Inclusive Community Action for Accountable Mining Project, running under the ENABLE project implemented by the Center for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) in collaboration with Bread for the World and co funded by the European Union (EU). The project aims to strengthen the participation of women and young people in natural resource governance. Through community engagement, rights awareness and advocacy, the initiative seeks to ensure that people living in mining-affected areas are not merely recipients of mining-related effects but active participants in decisions concerning their natural resources.

The organisation maintained that meaningful public participation must extend beyond consultation meetings. Community concerns and recommendations should be reflected in the final legislation, with clear mechanisms for representation, access to information, accountability and redress.As Parliament considers the submissions received during the public hearings, ZICET calls for the Mines and Minerals Bill, 2025 to establish a mining governance framework that balances investment and mineral production with environmental sustainability, social justice and the rights of local communities.

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IRMA also requested further context regarding video evidence submitted alongside the complaints, including when it was recorded and the specific area or activity it captured. The organisation further expressed concern about possible retaliation against workers who raise grievances, asking CNRG whether the substance of the allegations and video could be shared with KMC during follow-up investigations, with identifying details removed.

CNRG's concerns and demands

CNRG welcomes IRMA's acknowledgement of the concerns and its commitment to follow them up. However, the allegations underscore the importance of ensuring that independent assurance processes are not undermined by management interference or intimidation.

The credibility of responsible-mining certification rests on independent verification, meaningful stakeholder engagement and the ability of workers to speak freely without fear of victimisation.

CNRG calls on IRMA to thoroughly investigate the allegations, independently examine the mine's remuneration and KPI systems, assess occupational health and safety conditions, and establish effective safeguards against retaliation. It must also ensure that workers can submit evidence and grievances confidentially, without management interference.

Responsible mining cannot be established through certification exercises that overlook the lived experiences of workers. Independent assurance must go beyond corporate policies and management representations to establish whether labour rights, human rights and occupational health and safety standards are respected in practice.

A mine cannot credibly claim to uphold responsible mining standards while workers are allegedly being intimidated into concealing the very conditions that an independent assessment is intended to examine.

Poetry Corner



By Mukasiri Sibanda

A shield When Yields Fail

The national purse meant to
Carter for all has cratered
The majority is not a priority
Growth cursed like a cancer
A pincer movement

Taxes
Sharpened axes to cut down
Low incomes
While the public spend
On what the poor depends on
Is suspended

Growth cursed like a cancer
A pincer movement

Ripples of triple mining growith
A bounced bank cheque for the poor
Scarce stapple food
When yields fail
A shield must be given

Mukasiri Sibanda is developmental practitioner leading chartered governance and accountancy. Strategist. Spoken word artist. He brings dialogic creativity into policy engagement - mining, tax, debt, investment, trade and environment - transforming how we influence, learn and lead.