

Press Release

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Declare Redwing Mine a Disaster Mining Zone



The Centre for Research and Development (CRD) urgently calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to declare Redwing mine a disaster mining zone.

CRD has been made aware that the Rezende shaft the deepest shaft at Redwing holding millions of cubic metres of water has developed an expanding crack. This is due to miners under Betterbrands company actively mining the structural pillars that support the shaft. These are the same unsafe practices that caused ground collapse last year in the Tsapauta section of Redwing mine. During the EIA consultations in 2021, a Redwing mine expert publicly warned that the Rezende area was depleted and that the only remaining minerals were within the pillars holding up the ground. Betterbrands has ignored that scientific guidance. Experts have warned that collapse of the Rezende Shaft could trigger a catastrophic landslide, ground failure, and flash flooding, potentially wiping out nearby communities. On

Monday, nine miners died at Redwing mine. Eight in a pit beneath a house and one in another adjacent area, following a mud-rush and ground collapse. Over 200 lives are suspected to have been lost since hazardous mining began in 2021. With more than 10,000 miners now working in unsafe pits, deaths occur almost daily. The area faces imminent ground collapse, severe environmental destruction, and further loss of life. CRD demands an immediate halt to mining operations, issuance of EMA stop-orders, stabilization of critical shafts, full environmental rehabilitation, and accountability for all responsible actors to prevent further disaster.

Concealment of Information and Growing Threats

Investigations by CRD reveal that beneficiaries of mining pits in the Rezende Shaft area include political elites, state security officers, and government officials. They are using their power to defy professional warnings and prioritise private profit over the safety of workers and residents. Miners have reported being threatened into concealing mining-related deaths, as these powerful sponsors want to avoid closure of operations if fatalities become public. Desperate youths are being exploited, silenced, and exposed to violence. CRD understands that the Ministry of Mines visited the cracked site on 10 November 2024, yet mining continues. There is no public alert system to warn residents of the danger, and recent deaths have not been publicly acknowledged. This concealment of life-threatening conditions is unacceptable and a violation of the public's right to safety and information.

Illicit Financial Outflows

CRD estimates that in 2024 Penhalonga was losing approximately US\$158 million annually through leakages and illicit financial flows. Mineral outflows have since accelerated, likely doubling these losses.

Disregard of the Rule of law

Betterbrands and politically connected actors continue resist a Supreme Court ruling cancelling prior corporate rescue arrangements. Moreso, the Ministry of Mines recently allowed Betterbrands to continue operating under a tributary arrangement contradicting its own eviction order against Betterbrands made in 2024.

CRD Demands Immediate Action

1. Declare Redwing a disaster mining zone to enable emergency inspections, ground stabilisation, and protection of surrounding communities.
2. The Ministry of Mines must publicly disclose the Rezende shaft risk report and permanently stop mining in the affected area.

3. EMA must issue compulsory stop-orders on unsafe mining practices.
4. The Government must hold political elites and miners accountable for loss of lives and enabling hazardous operations at Redwing Mine.
5. After proper due diligence, government must restore underground mining, enforce the Supreme Court ruling, and ensure safety, environmental protection, and the right to life.
6. Rehabilitation of Mutare River and surrounding areas must begin immediately to prevent ongoing contamination, flooding, and destruction of ecosystems.

CRD calls on the Government of Zimbabwe, to treat Redwing mine as an urgent national crisis. Every day of delay increases the risk of further deaths, structural collapse, and irreversible community devastation. Immediate action is required to save lives and prevent a major mining disaster.

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