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Raising the Community Voice
in the extractive sector

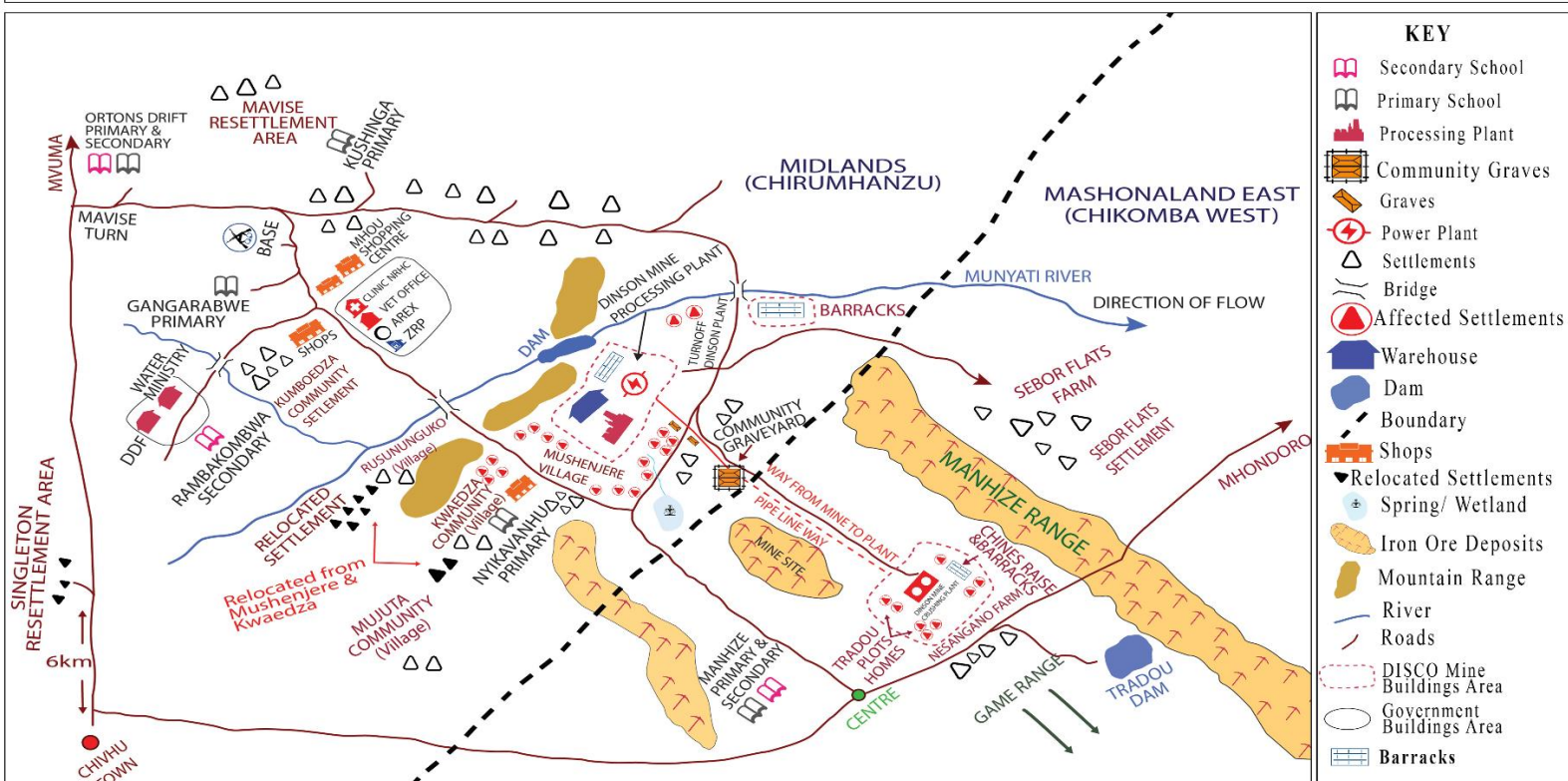
Press Release

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Hold DISCO accountable for human rights violations in Manhize



CRD Map on Manhize



DISCO is extracting iron ore in Manhize Range which falls under Mashonaland East whilst setting up a processing and a power plant in Mushenjere and Kwaedza villages of Nyikavanhu traditional land of ward 15 in Chirumanzi District of Midlands Province.



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Aerial view of DISCO processing plant and Mushenjere village. Durawall construction by DISCO enclosing farming and grazing land from their local inhabitants

CRD raises concern over accelerated mining developments by Dinson Iron and Steel Mining Company(DISCO) in Manhize communities without undertaking due diligence processes to secure livelihoods of host farming communities. By capturing and destroying agricultural land of traditional communities in Manhize without their consent and secured alternative livelihoods,DISCO has been creating conditions for forced relocations in violation of international human rights law. DISCO is a Chinese mining company that was awarded an open ended lease by government on 23 June 2023 to mine iron ore and set up a US\$1.5 billion steel plant on 12 270 hectares of land in Manhize farming communities of Mashonaland East and Midlands Provinces. Prior to the award, DISCO had already started extracting iron ore in Tradou Farm in 2022 whilst setting its iron ore processing plant in Mushenjere and Kwaedza villages. During this period, DISCO fast tracked relocation of 6 families to Singleton farm near Chivhu without memorandum of agreement on issues of compensation and secured livelihoods on relocated land. Another 14 families were moved from Mushenjere and Kwaedza villages to a paddock area reserved for animal grazing at Rusununguko farm between November and December 2022 without due process. Villagers of Rusununguko farm formerly known as (Elmin) that were interviewed by CRD expressed anger for losing grazing land for their cattle to new settlers. In a similar fashion, two more families were moved from Mushenjere village to the margins of Kwaedza and Mujuta villages in the first week of August 2023. Victims of forced relocations interviewed by CRD in Tradou and Singleton farms pointed out that DISCO rushed to build substandard houses for them in Singleton and pegged them at US\$20 000 for each plot holder. They added that DISCO denied them compensation for improvements on their land and disturbance allowances. According to these sources, DISCO argued that the costs it incurred in constructing new houses for them surpassed evaluations costs prepared by government on improvements they made on land they occupied at Tradou farm. Evaluation figures gleaned by CRD indicate amounts ranging from US\$ 700 to US\$13000 for the affected families. Efforts by affected families to remain on Tradou farm until they had been compensated didn't hold after their District Administrator(DA) threatened that government was not going to guarantee them of alternative land when Chinese start mining on their occupied land at Tradou, said sources at Singleton. One distressed woman at Singleton told CRD that she was hurt when she discovered that the Chinese had uprooted her orchard trees at Tradou and replanted them at their barracks. These 6 families have since taken their grievances with DISCO to the court of law. There were no evaluations and compensation made for 14 families moved to Rusunguko and 2 families moved to Mujuta boundary. Meanwhile relocated families in Rusununguko and Singleton are confronted with lack of clean water, untilled land, cracking floors and walls of poorly constructed houses by DISCO among other issues. Numerous complaints made to DISCO by the victims have fallen on deaf ears.



Substandard houses constructed by DISCO at Rusununguko farm where 14 families were relocated by DISCO.

Information established from traditional leaders indicate that the settling of DISCO mining developments in Mushenjere and Kwaedza villages was a classic case of deception. According to these sources, Chinese informed villagers upon their arrival in 2021 that their mining operations were going to be conducted underground hence villagers were to continue with their farming activities undisturbed. These Chinese also promised to uplift their community through undertaking local enterprise developments sources claimed. However, in no time, villagers were shocked to see Chinese equipment opening roads and destroying their land contrary to what they had promised. Since 2021, 101 families from Mushenjere village have since lost farming and grazing land to accelerated DISCO mining developments. They have continued to watch in horror the destruction of their land by DISCO who are setting up of water pipelines, power plant and other infrastructure. Others are losing land to waste dumping by Chinese infrastructural developments. The clearing of their land by Chinese is also destroying orchards and graveyards of their departed loved ones.



Violating and destroying of graveyards is against section 16 of the constitution of Zimbabwe on cultural rights. Desecration of graves is also criminalised under sections 110 and 111 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Chapter 9:23

[Watch video of Mr Nzombe from Manhize village telling his story on this link](#)

CRD observed a long winding durawall that DISCO is erecting to enclose farming and grazing land for 101 families in Mushenjere village which have become part of their mining lease. 138 families from Kwaedza village are also facing a similar predicament as DISCO has already set pegs in their village. These villagers mainly originated from poor and densely populated communal areas of Rukovere, Mahusvu, Msasa, Unyetu villages of Chikomba District in Mashonaland East. In 1984 they were allocated land on purchased farms by government under the “minda mirefu” land reform programme that was initiated by government soon after independence in 1980. Information gathered from these farmers indicated that they produced high yields ranging from 4 to 10 tonnes of maize per annum because the soil is fertile. The agony of losing their fertile land they had worked on for 40 years have taken a toll on mental health of the elderly population in Mushenjere and Kwaedza villages. Nobert Mhike attribute the loss of her 68 year old mother in February 2023 to trauma of watching her investments on land and property being destroyed by DISCO mining developments at plot number 21 in Kwaedza village. Nobert and his mother were forced to relocate to unfertile land in Rusununguko farm without compensation for their loss in December 2023. According to Nobert, the exhumation process of his father and reburial at the behest of DISCO was too demeaning for his family and that could have further strained her mother’s mental health. She woke up dead on 19 February 2023.



Anna Munyoro and Timothy Mhuru of Mushenjere village are some of the elderly inhabitants traumatised by loss of their land to accelerated DISCO mining developments at Manhize after living on the land for 40 years. Mr Mhuru explained that DISCO use divide and rule tactics each time it is confronted by desperate villagers demanding food allowances. The capture of agricultural land by DISCO mining operations have reduced local inhabitants to near destitution.

On 13 October 2013 officials from the Ministry of lands visited Mushenjere village to undertake evaluations for 21 land permit holders that are set for relocations. These families have no clue of where government intend to resettle them. As the rain season begins, these families have no land to grow crops and feed their families. Some have already sold their cattle after losing land to accelerated DISCO mining developments. Following evaluations on their properties the community has asked for a stakeholder meeting with relevant government bodies and DISCO to express their demands for legally binding MOUs that address their right to independent evaluation on improvements on their land and compensation. Also top on their list are that DISCO pay them disturbance allowances for 3 years of production loss on their farms. They are also proposing that relocation bound families receive mining royalties from DISCO mining operations to compensate them for their long contribution to the development of ward 15 such as the building of schools, clinic and bridge in Nyikavanhu. The community is also demanding that DISCO uphold their cultural values by respecting their graveyards and stopping exhumation of remains of their loved ones. The community is also edging DISCO and government to desist from forcing people to relocate to new areas without compensation and secured livelihoods among other issues.

The community was however shocked when DISCO Public Relations Manager Mr Joseph Shoko flanked by 3 Chinese mining officials and an interpreter stormed Mr Ernest Tapfumaneyi Nzombe's homestead on Monday 6 November 2023 demanding that his family relocate to Mujuta. Mr Tapfumaneyi, an 84 year old widower flatly rejected Mr Shoko's proposal before alerting other members of the village. The community was further perplexed to realise that Mr Shoko had refused that he had visited Mr Nzombe's homestead when asked by a local journalist. It is against this background that CRD is calling for government to balance business and human rights in DISCO mining operations in Manhize as outlined in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. CRD therefore calls for government to halt accelerated mining induced relocations by DISCO that are violating human rights. Government has a responsibility to halt DISCO's fast tracked relocations and mining developments on people's agricultural land that are violating human rights. CRD is also calling upon parliament to investigate DISCO's mining impacts in Manhize to ensure that communities adversely affected by their operations are adequately compensated and protected. CRD would like to remind government of its obligation to come out with a compensation and relocation legal framework that embrace international best practices on Internally Displaced Persons and the rights of traditional communities in exploitation of natural resources.

In the absence of a guiding policy on relocations, CRD is calling for government to ensure that:

- Community consultation and approval through Free Prior and Informed Consent
- Inclusive, independent, and consultative assessments
- Relocation with prompt, fair and adequate compensation
- Protect mining communities from abusive practices of the mining companies

Relocation destination preparedness. Displacement plans must be fully implemented and in a proper manner. Mining companies must bear the costs of displacement and must not transfer costs onto the displaced people. The place of relocation must have adequate facilities and services for the people.

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Envisioning human rights standards that enshrine inclusion, equality and sustainable development.