

Saturday, Solwezi (16<sup>th</sup> March, 2024)



### **99% OF NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE ON MINING CONCESSION, MUMENA UNHAPPY**

Chief Mumena of Kalumbila District, North Western Province, says 99% of North Western Province is now under licences for either mineral exploration or mining, describing the situation as disturbing.

Dr. Mumena said the 1% remaining is a small piece in Chavuma District which is a sensitive area because of landmines from ended Civil War in Angola.

The Traditional Leader said it is worrying that the province which is the source of Zambezi and Kafue Rivers can have its ecological integrity under threat of mining.

This came to light at a Traditional Leaders Caucus on Ending Forest Fires, organised by Centre for Environment Justice -CEJ- in Solwezi District, North Western Province.

"It is exciting that CEJ brought this important assignment to discuss environmental protection issues in North Western Province. North Western Province is the headwaters of Zambezi, Kabompo, Kafue, Mutanda, Lunga and many other big rivers with most of them flowing into the Zambezi River. North Western Province is the part of Zambia where we are having plenty of rainfall especially in Mwinilunga District. We need a special programme after making strong recommendations to Government on how best we are going to progress with this Province knowing it's special purpose in the ecosystem of this Country. If we continue as business forever, we only have ourselves to blame. Some of the drivers of deforestation is mining which is a necessary evil funding much of the Government coffers. If you look at North Western, 99% of all the land in the province is concessioned off. If you look at the Cadastre Map of Zambia, 99% is either an exploration licence or a mining licence. The only remaining part of the province is a small place in Chavuma District and the only reason why it was left out is because of the land mines that are there from the Angolan Civil War because it remains a sensitive area. If all these licences were allowed to be processed, can you imagine what disaster we are sitting on, it's a time bomb," he said.

Dr. Mumena said in as much as mining is a necessary evil, but it is irrational to mine the whole Province including where palaces are sitting.

"Yes, we know that it is also a revenue to Government as they give out licences but we must be rational. We must begin to rethink which side of the bread is buttered. The Cadastre Map of Zambia which can easily be downloaded shows that every part of North Western Province is on mining licence. Where all our palaces are sitting, there are mining licences. We need to call a spade a spade looking at the importance of the ecosystem. We already have three huge mines which have brought a lot of dewatering and many other things. It is not necessary that every area of the province must have a mining licence even if it is bringing revenue to Government because we already have three big mines. Even the licence itself is money, even Zambia Environmental Management Agency -ZEMA- makes money from all these things but what are we doing for a Province like ours which feeds the ecosystem of Zambia?" he asked.

Meanwhile, Centre for Environment Justice -CEJ- Executive Director Maggie Mwape said the issue of Ending Forest Fires is an important discussion of national interest.

Ms Mwape said CEJ was looking forward towards developing action-oriented interventions from the Traditional Leaders Caucus held in North Western Province and will hold similar dialogues in other Provinces.

Among the Chiefs in attendance was Senior Chief Sailunga, Chief Kakoma (Representative) as well as Chief Ntambu all from Mwinilunga District.

Others are Chief Lumpuma of Lufwanyama District, Chief Musaka, Chief Mulonga (Representative), Senior Chief Kalilele (Representative) and Chieftainess Chikola of Mushindamo District and Chief Kapijimpanga (Representative) of Solwezi District.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

.....  
Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ)

-----  
Plot 269, Off Twin Palm Road, Ibex Hill, Lusaka -Zambia  
Visit CEJ website: <https://cejzambia.org/> and Facebook: <https://facebook.com/cejzambia.org>  
Call: +260 954 713003 / +260 964 244255 / +260 973 389859  
Email: [info@cejzambia.org](mailto:info@cejzambia.org)