

Thursday, Sinazongwe (28<sup>th</sup> March, 2024)



**HOST MINING COMMUNITY CALLS FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.... Seeks to be relocated to safer ground/place**

Communities living at Nkandabbwe, Sinazeze area in Sinazongwe District, Southern Province, around Collum Coal Mine are worried about their safety as visible cracks have formed in their villages.

Richard Mangunje of Siamajele Area said at least four villages are affected namely Siamajele, Siabunyangu, Chiyabi and Chamukwapulo where houses shake due to underground mining activities.

Douglas Mudenda of Mazyamuna Village said members of the community are willing to relocate if fairly compensated.

Mr. Mudenda said the mine should look for alternative land for displaced communities and put social amenities like schools, clinic, water and dip tanks.

He said it is saddening that Government is championing injustice by putting K7000 as compensation for displaced communities.

Lazarus Siabulowa who is also Chiyabi Village Headman, said in May 2023, land also caved in affecting 6 houses but later the problem affected 54 houses.

The Headman said the mine agreed to compensate but could not pay more because Government committed a smaller amount.

Arnold Maiya, Vice Headman Siabunyangu, said it is worrying that Government, the mine and communities have never sat down together to dialogue.

Friday Manje, Headman Shikonkomani, said his village is outside the mine but the only access road to Nkandabbwe falls in a mine prohibited area.

The Headman said the closed road is important to access health care facilities, schools, market, among others.

Meanwhile, Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Executive Director Maggie Mwape said the issue of community and land conflict around Nkandabbwe Area has been going on since 2018 to date.

Ms Mwape said CEJ's major concern has been that there is no lasting solution to the problem resulting in the surface caving in while communities are still occupying the land in the area.

She said over 600 households are still living in the Collum Coal Mine area adding that CEJ is worried about their safety.

"Mining comes with positive and negative impacts of which we can now see red flags which makes it risky for people to continue living here. Our appeal, following a discussion with the community is that communities are willing to relocate from the unsafe zone if adequately compensated. The community wants alternative land to continue with their daily lives. Their dip tanks and the dam for irrigation falls in the mining area thereby affecting their irrigation and livestock business. We have also observed displacements three times with minimal or no compensation," she said.

Ms Mwape said Government should also sensitize stakeholders/communities on the valuation formula which at times arrives at low compensation rates and where possible, consider to amend the law.

"If people are adequately compensated, they can find alternative land to continue with their lives," she said.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

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