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WOMEN FACTIONS



No Social License

Porgera United Human Rights Organizations Joint Statement

May 5, 2020

We represent Porgera grassroots organizations that have fought for human rights and environmental justice for Porgerans for over 15 years.

This statement represents the indigenous landowners and residents of Porgera whose voices are rarely heard, but whose lives have been very seriously degraded by the irresponsible operations of the Porgera Joint Venture gold mine.

As Barrick Gold and the Chinese government, on behalf of its corporate national Zijin Mining, threaten our Prime Minister as though they have some kind of right to the gold under our feet, and as our own 24 landowner agents argue amongst themselves about how to get the best financial deal out of the mine, we raise our voices on behalf of too many Porgerans who have suffered human rights abuses and very serious environmental impacts because of 30 years of reckless mining led by Canada's Placer Dome and now Barrick Gold.

We raise our voices on behalf of the many men and boys who have been shot to death and beaten to within an inch of their lives in acts of excess use of force by the mine's private and police security and who have no access to justice;

We raise our voices on behalf of the hundreds of women and girls who have been raped, gang raped and beaten by the mine's private and police security and have no access to justice;

We raise our voices on behalf of the victims of nearly yearly house burnings by the mine's private and police security who have no access to justice;

We raise our voices on behalf of all the other recent victims of this mine, such as the victims of chemical spills, victims of being run over by mine equipment, and victims who were swept away by sudden volume increases in tailings disposal;

We raise our voices on behalf of the victims of the dangerous mine waste flows all around our villages as waste rock and tailings are dumped into the environment uncontained, causing the land under our villages to be unstable, causing our children to drown as they try to cross the waste, causing us to have no land for our crops, causing us to live unhealthy lives, including birth defects and cancers, relying on the gold left in the mine's waste for our livelihoods,;

We raise our voices on behalf of the environment around us that has been so severely degraded it can no longer feed us, provide us with clean drinking water, provide us with materials to build our houses, provide us with joy and the rituals of our youth.

We don't believe in any of the promises Barrick Gold is making now as it tries to secure access to the gold in our mountains. All promises that have been made by Barrick and by Placer Dome going back to the first agreement of 1989 have been broken or manipulated. Our much needed medical clinic was closed arbitrarily for years only to open again as Barrick's lease expiration date drew near; development funds promised to our leaders get cut off whenever Barrick wants to punish them; our lives are not better, they are much worse than before the mine arrived.

We denounce that we were not relocated when the mining started and have been forced to live in industrial squalor and unsafe conditions for decades;

We denounce that Barrick dismissed for years our public alarm about rapes by the mine's security guards and then created a flawed mechanism¹ to process claims by only 119 rape victims, which did not provide them fair remedy and closed early leaving many women without any remedy;

We denounce that even though Barrick's own consultants BSR² found a backlog of 940 unaddressed human rights cases filed with the mine and recognized that there are still many others whose claims have not yet been filed as there is no functioning grievance mechanism, and, in 2018, provided concrete recommendations and a timeline for the co-creation of a fair and functioning grievance mechanism, Barrick and its local subsidiary Barrick (Niugini) Limited (BNL) have taken no steps to work with us to create this mechanism;

We denounce that we are still not provided clean drinking water from the reservoir that supplies drinking water to the mine;

We denounce the many broken promises the mine's owners and managers have made over 30 years.

On April 24 the Government of Papua New Guinea announced that it would not renew Barrick (Niugini) Ltd.'s license. In news reports our Prime Minister James Marape has cited environmental, resettlement and many legacy issues as reasons.

To the Government of Papua New Guinea

It is the duty of all governments to **protect the human rights** of their citizens. Successive governments have failed the people of Porgera, putting the interests of investors over our human rights.

We the grassroots organizations that have been the only organizations to consistently advocate for the human rights of the people of Porgera who have suffered so much call on Prime Minister James Marape to **reach out to us and include us in your discussions about the future of the Porgera mine.**

¹ Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic & Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic. [Righting Wrongs? Barrick Gold's Remedy Mechanism for Sexual Violence in Papua New Guinea: Concerns and Lessons Learned.](#) November 2015.

² BRS. [In Search of Justice: Pathways to Remedy at the Porgera Gold Mine.](#) September, 2018.

The future of the mine, whether it operates or is closed down, must include justice for the many hundreds of victims of human rights abuses who have been ignored by Barrick and BNL.

To Barrick and Barrick (Niugini) Limited

You have no social license to mine in Porgera. You have not even been able to get the support of the majority of our 24 landowner agents after negotiating with them for more than two years.

You have not respected our human rights or our indigenous rights. Your operations have harmed our men, women, boys and girls repeatedly and you have not worked with us to put in place an equitable grievance mechanism to handle the nearly one thousand files we have brought to you and the hundreds more that still need to be brought, as called for by the UN Guiding Principles³ and by your own consultants BSR.

Our government has now denied you a continued mining license but you still owe remedy to the hundreds of victims of your mining operations. We will continue to pursue justice from you.

Approved for Release:

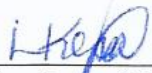


Mr. James J. Wangia
CEO Akali Tange Association

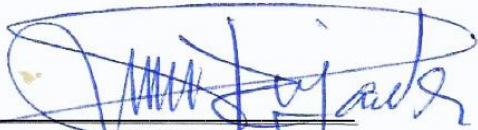


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Chairman – Akali Tange Association

³ [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)



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Mr. Rex Kundaka
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Mr. Nosa Lumbita
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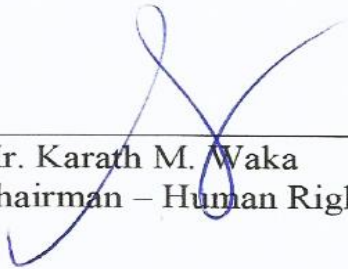
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