



# JUSTICE FOUNDATION FOR PORGERA LIMITED

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### Barrick PNG Negotiations Stall with Landowners

Negotiations between the world's largest gold mining company and indigenous landowners in Papua New Guinea have broken down, leaving the future of a mine that's produced twenty million ounces of gold in doubt.

Canadian company, Barrick, is under pressure to have its Porgera Joint Venture gold mine lease in Papua New Guinea renewed for another 20 years before the current agreement expires on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2019.

The mine is the subject of a multi-billion-dollar lawsuit for damages caused over its 30-year life and Papua New Guinea's new Prime Minister James Marape has recently made public statements that his Government is looking to revert resource wealth ownership back to PNG citizens.

The chairman of a majority landowner group in Porgera, Justice Foundation for Porgera (JFP), says the desperate company is stacking its consultation with a cherry-picked landowners who represent the minority.

In a recent press release issued by the company, Barrick CEO Mark Bristow claims to have met with senior landowners to discuss the lease:

*"In our meeting with the Porgera landowners, we invited our stakeholders to join us in continuing to improve the quality of life, security, and welfare in the Porgera valley."*

What Barrick didn't disclose was that it met with only six of the twenty-four chiefs who represent the people of Porgera.

Essentially, Barrick consulted with about 5 thousand locals and left 30 thousand out in the cold with no interest in discussing with them how it intends to keep mining on the peoples' land.

"The mining company and the state **require all 24 signatures to proceed and from our end, it is unlikely** that the 18 landowner agents, that the Justice Foundations for Porgera represents, will consent to any signatures to be provided on any contract," Justice Foundation for Porgera Chairman Jonathan Paraia said.

"Barrick's new CEO Mark Bristow flew into Port Moresby on his private jet in an Italian suit and wanted a meeting with the natives of Porgera without presenting a business plan.

"To negotiate any deal about the future of a \$20b mine, the 18 chiefs and JFP expected a commercial proposal from Barrick before any meeting could take place," Mr Paraia said.

For these reasons, the 18 landowner agents and JFP did not attend the meeting.

“Without a position statement and the necessary negotiation protocols in place and in an environment where Barrick continues to direct aggressive litigation against the landowners in the National Courts in Papua New Guinea, the meeting was meaningless,” he said

Justice Foundation for Porgera is a sophisticated organisation that wishes to engage in proper commercial discussions with Barrick.

“Instead the six local stakeholders who attended were offered ‘cheap glass necklaces for gold’,” he said.

“Barrick promised health care; the hospital has closed down. Barrick promised education; a school has been swept away by tailings not to be replaced. Barrick promised to resettle landowners; families are squatting in relatives houses or have had their down houses burnt down. Barrick promised to secure our children’s future; their lawyers prevent funds being released,” said Mr. Paraia.

In a letter to Mr Paraia, Mr Bristow said, “the meetings were to discuss ways of jointly improving the social environment in Porgera including improving the law and order situation”.

“What about the rapes committed against our sisters by employees of the mine, what about the pollution of our waterways and land, with destructive mining practices outlawed in other countries will those abhorrent and unacceptable situations be addressed?” he asks.

Mr Paraia says he has been told by a number of sources including a former member of parliament that before the last public hearing about the mine’s renewal the company paid for airfares, hire cars, accommodation, and food as well as giving cash and pro-Barrick clothing for locals to wear at the hearing, all to garner support for the mine.

“Barrick knows full well the vast majority of landowners are sick to death of the human rights abuses, the environmental destruction, the hollow promises. We signed up to these promises 30 years ago in good faith that they would be delivered, and they expect us to naively sign up again. It won’t happen,” he said.

Mr Paraia and the 18 chiefs of Porgera are highly offended at the lack of respect Barrick’s CEO has shown towards them while trying to engage them in a significant international mining contract with a 20-year life.

“When Mr Bristow flew into Port Moresby, he left his respect and civility for the people of Porgera and their traditions and customs on the seat of his private plane.

“In any marriage, there must be mutual respect between the partners for it to last for 20 years,” Mr Paraia said.

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### **For further background**

Human Rights Watch - "Gold's Costly Dividend"

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/02/01/golds-costly-dividend/human-rights-impacts-papua-new-guinea-s-porgera-gold-mine#>

### **JFPL BACKGROUND**

The Justice Foundation for Porgera Ltd was formed in 2013, by landowner clan agents whose traditional lands are within the Special Mining Lease area, to fight for justice when PLOA executives evaded AGMs for many years and continued stealing landowners' royalty monies in PLOA.

There are 24 landowner agents recognised by the State in a Memorandum of Agreement signed in May 1989.

The JFPL was formed because of growing concern amongst the majority of landowners that the Porgera Landowners Association was failing to seek justice for significant and irreparable losses and catastrophic damage as a result of the operation of the Porgera Gold Mine over the last 29 years.

The Porgera Joint Venture (95% owned by Canadian company Barrick Gold and Chinese company Zijin) has produced 143 million tonnes of ore from the open pit and the underground has produced over 20 million ounces of gold since it began operation.