



Mark Bristow,
President and CEO,
Barrick Gold Corp.
Via e-mail: mark.bristow@barrick.com

January 27, 2023

Mr. Bristow:

Re: Forced evictions and related human rights abuses ongoing at North Mara Gold Mine
In [our October 2022 report](#), and in our [letter to you](#) of 18 October 2022, we provided details of our findings while in North Mara in September and October in regard to forced evictions and related human rights abuses suffered by people of Komarera village, who are being forced out of their homes and off of their land, without adequate compensation and resettlement, to make way for the expansion of your North Mara gold mine.

The related human rights abuses we documented include excess use of force in the form of beatings and arbitrary detention by police of villagers who question the assessment process and the assessed values of their properties, homelessness resulting from the forced evictions, and loss of food security. As the evictions do not include a resettlement program in which people are resettled into new homes with land to sustain them, we met with individuals who have lived on their land for generations and are now struggling in cities, such as Mwanza, to sustain their families including children and elderly relatives.

In [your response](#) of 14 November 2022, you deny that people from Komarera are being forcibly evicted.

In December, MiningWatch received further information regarding the ongoing forced evictions including testimonies and footage of utterly distraught villagers and their children, surrounded by armed police, watching their homes being bulldozed while their newly washed clothes are still hanging to dry outside the house. The footage also shows dazed families standing amidst the rubble of their former homes with their belongings spread around them.

International Standards Regarding Forced Evictions - Barrick should be aware that the destruction of homes where families are still living, under armed guard, falls squarely under the definition of involuntary and forced eviction. In our [report of October 2022](#) (p.11) we provided sections from relevant resettlement standards from, among others, the [United Nations](#) and the [World Bank](#).

We also pointed to the standard and stated expectations of the industry association International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), of which Barrick is a member. [ICMM](#) notes that “Resettlement is voluntary when resettled households have the choice to move. **When the voluntary nature of resettlement cannot be confirmed, resettlement should be treated as involuntary** [emphasis added].” ICMM also asserts that “company members commit to either avoid or minimise involuntary resettlement. If it is unavoidable, they undertake to manage the process responsibly and in line with international standards” and, further, that [ICMM members](#) “**undertake resettlement activities responsibly and make it their goal to leave communities better off than they were previously** [emphasis added].” We maintain that the forced evictions and the lack of a resettlement program that ensures people are housed and have land for food security and income and are, in fact, better off than they were previously, is an abuse of the human rights of the people of Komarera and puts Barrick at odds with ICMM commitments, as well as with international best practice and United Nations standards.

Barrick has not only been alerted to the involuntary nature of the evictions in Komarera by MiningWatch Canada, but has also been warned about the risk to already vulnerable people of this resettlement in a report that was issued by Synergy Global Consulting (Synergy) and provided to Barrick the same month that MiningWatch was in North Mara, September 2022. **This report evaluates the risk to “impacts on livelihoods due to involuntary resettlement” to be high** (p.5).

The Synergy report points to outstanding unresolved issues regarding compensation and livelihood restoration related to past resettlements to make way for the mine and warns that the risk of the current resettlement “remains high due to the scale of resettlement, the high numbers of project affected persons.” The report calls for “further detailed studies and monitoring to understand impacts at an individual level, particularly vulnerable individuals” (p.6) and recommends that “Barrick appoint an experienced resettlement specialist to assess and address outstanding resettlement issues and plan future resettlement in a way that is consistent with international good practice” (p.7).

Barrick appears not to have followed this advice given the interviews we conducted and evidence we gathered on the forced evictions in September and October, and the evidence we have since received of ongoing forced evictions in December. Barrick’s continued denial that the evictions in Komarera are, in fact, involuntary and the fact that vulnerable people, including many children, are facing deepened poverty through loss of housing and access to land and food security in order to make way for your mine’s expansion is not consistent with international good practice or human rights standards.

As in our [letter to you](#) of 18 October 2022, we called on Barrick to:

- voluntarily and urgently halt the assessment and forced eviction process;
- carry out a transparent due diligence process on, among others, the issues that we have brought to your attention, preferably by an independent third party and make that report public;

- ensure that people who have already been harmed by this process are identified, receive equitable compensation for their losses and a rights-based resettlement;
- revised the process going forward to align it with international human rights standards and the rights of the vulnerable people affected by the mine expansion.

Our current letter follows the filing in Canada of the [third legal action](#) since 2013 regarding excess use of force by police guarding the North Mara mine against the local Kuria population. In the lead up to the filing of this latest case Barrick's primary public response to allegations, by MiningWatch Canada and others, of human rights abuses by mine security and police has been one of denial.

It is time for Barrick to stop denying the harm being done to the impacted families and communities surrounding the North Mara mine, and to provide equitable reparations.

Sincerely,



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MiningWatch Canada

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