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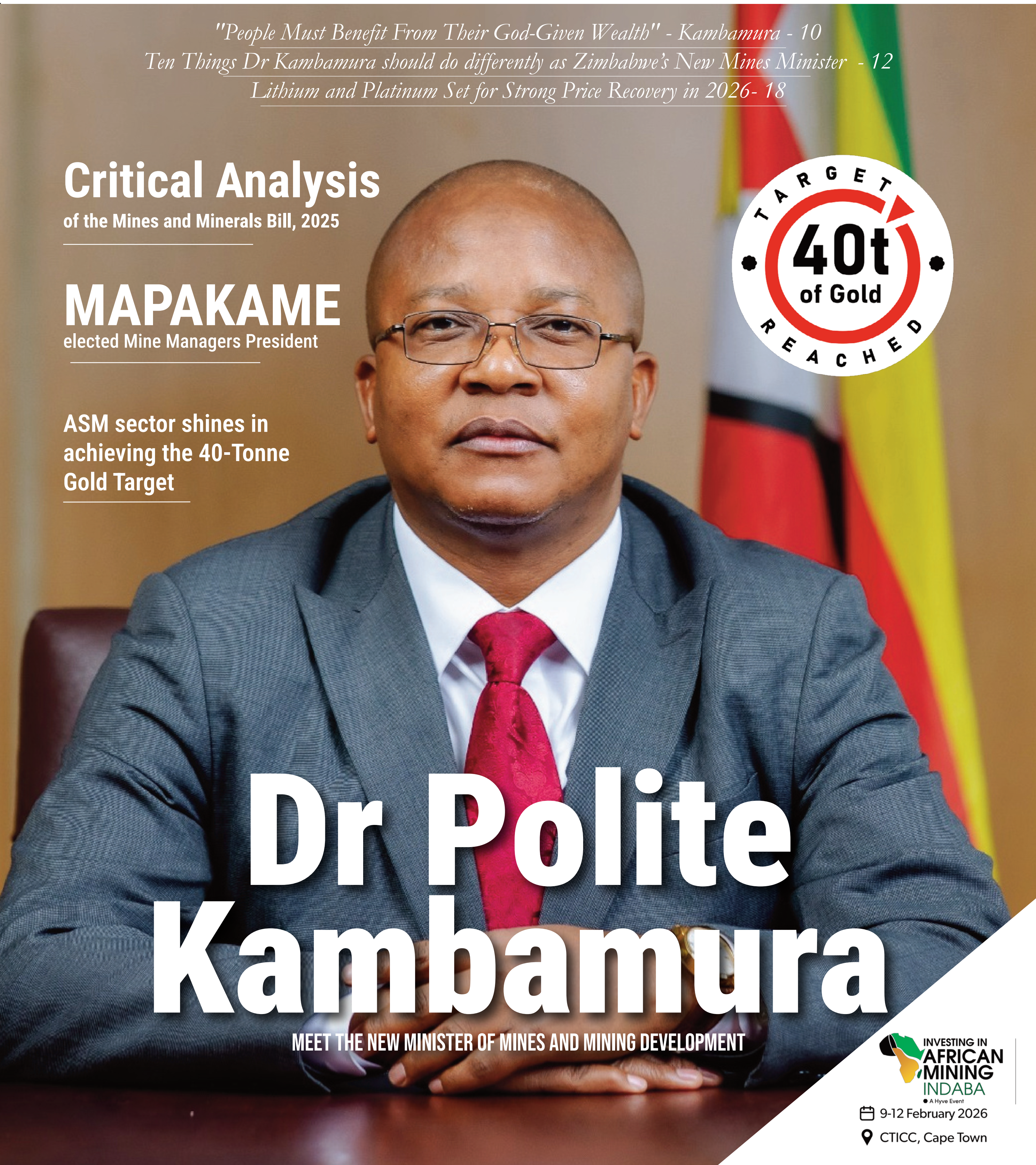
Mining ZIMBABWE

ISSUE 84 2025



Critical Analysis

of the Mines and Minerals Bill, 2025

MAPAKAME

elected Mine Managers President

ASM sector shines in achieving the 40-Tonne Gold Target

TARGET 40t of Gold REACHED

Dr Polite Kambamura

MEET THE NEW MINISTER OF MINES AND MINING DEVELOPMENT

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Hwange Colliery Company Limited Holdings

Congratulations

Hwange Colliery Company Limited Holdings (HCCL Holdings) extends its warmest congratulations to Hon. Dr. Polite Kambamura on his appointment as Minister of Mines and Mining Development.

We wish him success in this important assignment as we deepen collaboration between Government and the coal sector to advance Zimbabwe's mining industry and national prosperity.

Makorokoto! Amhlophe!

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CONGRATULATIONS
MAKOROKOTO
AMHLOPHE

Caledonia Mining Corporation congratulates Honourable Dr. Eng. Polite Kambamura [MP] on his appointment as Minister of Mines and Mining Development and wishes him success in his tenure.

Caledonia Mining
Corporation Plc

Mining ZIMBABWE

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THE CLEAR PERSPECTIVE

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As 2025 draws to a close, it stands out as one of the most defining years in Zimbabwe's modern mining history, a year of milestones, debate, resilience, and renewed confidence in the sector's ability to anchor national development.

The standout achievement of the year was undoubtedly gold. Zimbabwe not only met but smashed the 40-tonne gold target, driven largely by the resilience, innovation, and sheer determination of artisanal and small-scale miners. This performance was more than a statistic; it was a statement about the sector's depth, adaptability, and economic relevance. To the miners who worked through power cuts, financing constraints, and policy uncertainty, this was your year.

2025 was also a year of transition in leadership and policy. The appointment of a new Minister of Mines, coupled with intense national debate around the Mines and Minerals Bill, signalled a sector at a crossroads. Questions of ownership, beneficiation, transparency, and community benefit dominated conversations, and rightly so. Mining Zimbabwe remained committed to providing balanced, informed, and technically grounded coverage, amplifying industry voices while interrogating policy choices that will shape the next decade.

Lithium continued to define Zimbabwe's global relevance, moving from hype to hard reality. From dusty pegmatites to billion-dollar balance sheets, the lithium story evolved rapidly, attracting scrutiny, investment, and lessons. At the same time, platinum, chrome, diamonds, and coal reminded us that Zimbabwe's mineral wealth is diverse and that strategic thinking must go beyond single-commodity excitement.

At Mining Zimbabwe, our role has remained clear: to tell mining stories with depth, accuracy, and industry insight. In 2025, the golbal mining industry responded strongly to our content reaffirming the need for specialised mining journalism in a complex sector often misunderstood by general newsrooms.

To our readers, advertisers, contributors, and the mining community at large: thank you for trusting Mining Zimbabwe to tell your stories. The ground beneath us remains rich but it is how we manage it that will define our future.

Please support equipment and service providers who make it possible for us to bring you edition after edition, month after month.

Meet the New Minister of Mines: Dr Polite Kambamura

Zimbabwe's mining sector has entered a new chapter following the appointment of Dr Polite Kambamura as Minister of Mines and Mining Development, a move that signals both continuity and a firmer regulatory stance in one of the country's most critical economic portfolios.

Dr Polite Kambamura

Dr Kambamura assumes office at a pivotal moment, as Zimbabwe intensifies efforts to increase gold production to 40 tonnes by 2025, accelerate the development of the platinum and lithium value chains through new mining and processing facilities, and ensure that mining activities translate into tangible benefits for local communities through strengthened regulatory frameworks. The swift nature of his appointment is widely seen as a measure to guarantee stability and uninterrupted momentum in the sector.

A mining engineer by profession, Dr Kambamura brings a blend of technical expertise and political experience to the role. He holds the following academic qualifications

- Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Mining Engineering [CU-2021]
- Masters in Business Administration (CU-2019)
- Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Mining Engineering (UZ- 2002)
- Masters in Natural Resources Management and Environmental Sustainability [BUSE-2025]
- Graduate Certificate in Finance and Economics in Mining [Mining Industry Management Programme (MIMP) - Toronto University, 2024 -Canada]
- Graduate Certificate in Business Optimisation for Mining, [Australasia Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM), 2025 – Australia]
- Recently completed a Masters in Public Policy and Governance [AU]
- Studying for a Doctor of Philosophy [DPhil] in Entrepreneurship and Business Sciences (Chinhoyi University of Technology) - area of study - "Best Mining Practices as Legal Safeguards for Sustainable Development: A Governance Framework"

Dr Kambamura with President Mnangagwa at the swearing-in ceremony at State House

He also recently attained a professional certificate in business optimisation from The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM).

His professional background includes engineering roles at mining operations in Zimbabwe and South Africa, before transitioning into public service. Politically, he has served as a Member of Parliament (MP) for Sanyati Constituency since 2018 and as Deputy Minister of Mines and Mining Development for over six years, working under successive ministers and gaining first-hand exposure to ongoing reforms and strategic projects.

In his first public remarks as Minister, Dr Kambamura struck a decisive tone, declaring an end to what he described as an era of reckless and unregulated mining. He emphasised that his administration will prioritise "quality investors" those with the capital, technical capacity, and commitment to responsible mining while firmly closing the door on speculative, illicit, and environmentally damaging operations. "The issue of mining all over is now gone," he said, underscoring a clear policy shift towards order, compliance, and long-term value creation.

While reaffirming President Emmerson Mnangagwa's open-for-business policy, Dr Kambamura cautioned against its misinterpretation. He drew a clear distinction between welcoming investment and tolerating practices that have led to environmental degradation, community conflict, and revenue leakages.

His remarks directly addressed challenges such as claim speculation, uncoordinated pegging, and mining activities undertaken without proper environmental or social safeguards.
As Zimbabwe positions mining as a cornerstone of economic growth, industrialisation, and export earnings, Dr Kambamura's appointment reflects a strategic intent to balance growth with discipline.

His leadership is expected to reinforce policy continuity while introducing a more assertive regulatory approach aimed at ensuring that the country's vast mineral wealth is developed responsibly, sustainably, and for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

Zimbabwe's New Mining Czar Vows Resource Nationalism 2.0: "People Must Benefit From Their God-Given Wealth"

Zimbabwe's newly appointed Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Dr Polite Kambamura, has wasted no time in setting a new tone for the country's mining sector, declaring that mineral wealth must begin to deliver lasting benefits to local communities.


Dr Polite Kambamura - Minister of Mines & Mining Development

Speaking soon after his inauguration, Dr Kambamura said the days of symbolic gestures by mining companies were over, as government shifts from traditional corporate social responsibility (CSR) to what he calls corporate investment a model designed to leave communities better off even after mining operations come to an end.

"We are going to move from corporate social responsibility to corporate social investment," he said. "So that people get something, even after mining closes. In most cases, when mining closes, people don't benefit."

The minister's appointment follows the departure of former Mines Minister Winston Chitando and signals a change in direction in one of Zimbabwe's most important economic sectors. Mining accounts for more than 80 per cent of the country's export earnings, making the portfolio critical to economic growth and stability.

A New Approach to Resource Management

Dr Kambamura, a trained mining engineer with a Master's degree in Natural Resources Management, says his focus is on correcting long-standing imbalances where communities living near mines see little long-term value from the resources extracted in their areas.

At the centre of his thinking is the idea that mining should create permanent economic value, not just temporary jobs or short-term projects such as boreholes and classrooms. Instead, mining companies will be expected to make structured investments that support sustainable local development.

> We are going to move from **Corporate Social Responsibility** to **Corporate Social Investment**

Five Key Focus Areas

The minister outlined several priority areas that will shape policy going forward.

First is community development, where mining companies will be required to invest meaningfully in areas where they operate, creating assets and opportunities that last beyond the life of a mine.

Second is data and transparency. Dr Kambamura plans to push for a national aeromagnetic survey to better understand Zimbabwe's mineral wealth and modernise the mining cadastre system to improve transparency in the allocation of mining claims and reduce disputes and smuggling.

Third is technology and innovation. He has spoken about embracing "smart mining", including the use of digital systems and surveillance technology, to improve efficiency and strengthen oversight across the sector.

Fourth is environmental management. The minister has proposed establishing a dedicated environmental department within the Ministry of Mines, arguing that mining-related environmental issues should be handled by specialists who understand the technical realities of the sector.

Finally, Dr Kambamura says Zimbabwe will now focus on attracting quality investors. While the country remains open for business, he warned that this should not be mistaken for a free-for-all. Investors will be expected to respect the law, consult communities before mining begins, and play a role in skills transfer by employing and training local professionals.

What It Means for Investors

For investors, the new approach presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, clearer rules, better data, and a more transparent system could reduce uncertainty and improve confidence in the sector. On the other hand, stricter requirements around community investment and compliance may increase costs and slow project approvals.

Analysts say the real test will be in implementation. Zimbabwe's mining sector has seen policy shifts before, and investors will be watching closely to see whether the new rules are applied consistently and fairly.

The Road Ahead

Dr Kambamura begins his tenure with a clear plan, but the task ahead is not an easy one. Rolling out national surveys, reforming institutions, tackling smuggling, and enforcing rules across the board will require political will, technical capacity, and economic stability.

Still, for many communities living in mineral-rich areas, his message has struck a hopeful note. As Zimbabwe looks toward its Vision 2030 goals, the success of this new mining agenda may well determine whether the country's vast mineral wealth finally translates into broad-based development.

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THE CHAMBER OF MINES OF ZIMBABWE

SECRETARIES – THE CHAMBER OF MINES OF ZIMBABWE

A MEMBER OF The International Society for Mine Surveying

CONGRATULATIONS!

The **Association of Mine Surveyors of Zimbabwe (AMSZ)**, a member of the **International Society for Mine Surveyors (ISM)** and all its members and partners extend our heartfelt congratulations to **Hon. Dr. Eng. Polite Kambamura (MP)** on his appointment as the **Minister of Mines and Mining Development**.

We express our complete confidence in your forward-thinking, transformative vision to modernise our mining sector and to ensure sustainable, equitable, and holistic socio-economic and national development.

We commit to supporting you and your Ministry in accelerating the attainment of National Goals.

MAKOROKOTO, AMHLOPHE!

Ten Things Dr Kambamura should do differently as Zimbabwe's New Mines Minister

Dr. Polite Kambamura's appointment as Zimbabwe's Minister of Mines and Mining Development comes at a defining moment for the country's mining sector. With mining anchoring export earnings, beneficiation, employment, and industrial growth, expectations are high that the new Minister, an Engineerwill chart a more decisive, transparent, and growth-oriented path than his predecessors.

Dr Polite Kambamura - Minister Mines and Mining Development

To unlock the sector's full potential, the new Minister must not simply manage continuity but introduce meaningful change. Below are ten critical areas where Dr Kambamura can do things differently.

1. Bring Policy Certainty and End Regulatory Whiplash

Frequent changes in taxes, export rules, and licensing conditions potentially undermine investor confidence. The new Minister should prioritise stable, predictable mining policies that are clearly communicated and consistently applied. Mining projects require long-term capital, and certainty is as valuable as the minerals themselves.

2. Fully Implement a Transparent Mining Cadastre

A modern, digital mining cadastre must move from promise to reality. Overlapping claims, manual records, and opaque allocation processes have fueled disputes and corruption. A publicly accessible cadastre would reduce conflict, improve confidence, and ensure mining rights are allocated on merit, not connections. This will reduce downtime and potentially increase output as miners will focus on production rather than stopping to await court judgments, which may take years.

3. Tackle Corruption Head-On

Corruption remains one of the sector's most corrosive challenges. Dr Kambamura should strengthen internal oversight, enforce asset declarations were necessary, and work closely with law enforcement to dismantle rent-seeking networks within mining administration. Wrongdoers must be fully prosecuted to send a clear message that corruption has consequences. The issue of back-dating that has been raised recently on social media must be fully investigated, and perpetrators must face the full wrath of the law. A clean Ministry would be Kambamura's most powerful legacy.

> To unlock the **sector's full potential,** the new Minister must not simply manage continuity but **introduce meaningful change.**

4. Protect Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners (ASM)

Artisanal and small-scale miners produce the majority of Zimbabwe's gold yet remain under-supported. The new minister should formalise ASM operations, expand access to training, equipment, and finance, and replace punitive crackdowns with structured support and regulation. The recent arrest and sentencing of an ASMiner for a gram of gold certainly upset ASM miners as expressed on Mining Zimbabwe's platforms. That law needs to be seriously looked into, with forfeiture seemingly a better option that can be considered for such small weights.

5. Prioritise Mine Safety Over Production Numbers

Fatal accidents, particularly in small-scale operations, continue to claim lives. The ministry must enforce safety standards consistently, invest in inspections, and promote safer mining methods. Output growth should never come at the cost of human life.

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6. Press/ Media engagement

Specialised mining publications and media platforms understand the technical, regulatory and operational realities of the sector better than general newsrooms. We understand mining terminology, geology, metallurgy, safety standards, ESG obligations, and regulatory frameworks, allowing us to ask informed questions and provide context rather than sensational headlines, which drive general news providers.

We maintain close, long-term relationships with Mine managers, Engineers, regulators, and suppliers, which improves access to credible sources and balanced perspectives.

Unlike general newsrooms that often approach mining only during crises, specialised mining media provide continuous coverage of operations, policy shifts, innovation, and investment trends, ensuring stakeholders receive nuanced, factual, and industry-relevant information that supports informed decision-making.

In short, a Minister who understands the value of specialist mining media governs with better data, clearer communication, and greater credibility, leading to smarter regulation, higher compliance, and sustainable sector growth.

7. Practicality is key if the Minister is to be successful

The Minister is not a magician. No matter how good the Minister is, without a proper support structure, in this case, financial, the mission at hand is an uphill task that will be difficult to conquer.

The 2026 National Budget, presented by Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube, allocated ZiG 789 million (approximately US$26.3 million) to the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, representing a mere 1.05% of the total budget. The consequences of underfunding the Mines Ministry extend beyond bureaucratic inefficiencies. They directly translate into lost investment opportunities, reduced royalty collections from inadequate monitoring, and environmental damage from insufficient oversight.

Within its constrained budget, the Minister must address multiple critical failures. The modernisation of the mining cadastre system remains underfunded, perpetuating delays and a lack of transparency in title management. The ministry also lacks sufficient vehicles for mine inspections, hindering efforts to enforce responsible mining practices and environmental regulations. Furthermore, inadequate survey capacity leads to bottlenecks in the release of mining titles, creating uncertainty.

8. Strengthen Data Transparency and Reporting

Zimbabwe's mining sector seemingly has weak public data on production, revenues, and exports. Publishing regular statistics would improve accountability, curb smuggling, and allow informed policy debate. Transparency is a powerful deterrent to leakages.

9. Balance Foreign Investment with Local Participation

Foreign capital, particularly from China, has driven growth, but overreliance on a single source weakens national bargaining power. The minister should diversify investment sources while ensuring meaningful local participation through joint ventures, skills transfer, and local procurement.

10. Engage the Industry, Not Just Announce to It

Too often, policy is unveiled without adequate consultation. Dr. Kambamura should institutionalise regular dialogue with mining bodies, mainly the Chamber of Mines and ZMF, unions, communities, and financiers. Listening first and legislating second would mark a decisive break from the past.

A Moment for Leadership

Dr Kambamura inherits a sector rich in minerals. If he can improve transparency, stability, and genuine stakeholder engagement, Zimbabwe's mining industry could finally move to sustained growth.

The difference between success and stagnation will lie not in rhetoric, but in how differently the new Minister chooses to act.

We wish the Minister the very best in his new role!

Gift Mapakame elected Mine Managers President

Eng Gift Mapakame

Eng George Wayeni

Gift Mapakame was elected the Association of Mine Managers of Zimbabwe (AMMZ) President at the 2025 AMMZ Conference and AGM which happened in November 2025.

Makapame, whose tenure will run from November 2025 until November 2027, currently serves as the General Manager of Kuvimba-owned Shamva Gold Mine.

With over 14 years of experience, more than seven in senior management, Engineer Mapakame has played a significant role in transforming Shamva Gold Mine into one of the nation's leading gold producers. Under his leadership, Shamva mine has achieved remarkable milestones, including significantly scaling up production and surpassing 1.2 million fatality-free shifts.

After earning his degree from the University of Zimbabwe, Mapakame began his career at Bindura Nickel Corporation and later transitioned to Freda Rebecca Gold Mine, where he contributed to its revival in 2010. His journey progressed through various roles, culminating in his appointment as General Manager of Shamva Mining Company in 2022, where he now contributes to the growth of a broader commodities group.

Mapakame will be deputised by RZM Murowa's George Wayeni.

The following will serve as Council members.

- Dave Matyanga
- Ray Chiridza
- Lewis Munyoro
- Eddington Vere
- Larnston Gowera
- Sandres Sandres
- Elton Gwatidzo
- Alfred Chinyere
- Coburn Katanda

CONGRATULATIONS! MAKOROKOTO! AMHLOPHE!

Eng. Gift Mapakame

The Board, Management, and Staff of Kuvimba Mining House extend their heartfelt congratulations to **Eng. Gift Mapakame**, General Manager of Shamva Mine, on his election as President of the Association of Mine Managers of Zimbabwe (AMMZ).

We also extend our warm congratulations to the newly elected Council Members: Eddington Vere (Kuvimba Mining House), Sandres Sandres (Freda Rebecca)and Alfred Chinyere (Freda Rebecca).

We are immensely proud of your achievement and extend our best wishes for a successful tenure in this esteemed position.

Kuvimba Mining House
Beyond generations

Elvington Mines
A member of Kuvimba Mining House

Freda Rebecca Gold Mine
A member of Kuvimba Mining House

Great Dyke Investments
A member of Kuvimba Mining House

Jena Mines
A member of Kuvimba Mining House

Shamva Mine
A member of Kuvimba Mining House

Zimbabwe Alloys Limited
A member of Kuvimba Mining House

Sandawana Mines
A member of Kuvimba Mining House

ASM sector shines in achieving the 40-Tonne Gold Target: Here is Why

The Zimbabwe Miners Federation (ZMF) has spearheaded a historic, nation-defining economic achievement. Under its representation, the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) sector has delivered a monumental performance, directly driving the country past its ambitious 40-tonne annual gold target a full month before year-end, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

By Rudairo Mapuranga

The numbers are unequivocal: by the end of November 2025, total deliveries to Fidelity Gold Refinery (FGR) soared to over 41.7 tonnes, with the ASM sector contributing a staggering 75% of this total. This is more than a milestone; it is a powerful testament to the transformed role of small-scale miners, from informal operators to the undisputed engine of national gold production and foreign currency generation. The story of this success is one of visionary leadership, strategic advocacy, and the unleashing of indigenous entrepreneurial potential.

A Target Shattered, a Narrative Transformed

For years, the narrative around artisanal mining in Zimbabwe and across the continent has been fraught with challenges, often overshadowing its immense potential. The 2025 gold delivery results have irrevocably changed that story. Surpassing the 40-tonne target is a monumental economic victory for a nation where gold is the single largest foreign currency earner. The significance is amplified by the source of the success. The ASM sector has, in recent years, emerged not as a supplementary player but as the unequivocal engine of national gold production. Their consistent monthly deliveries, culminating in over 31 tonnes from this sector alone, provided the unstoppable momentum that carried the nation past its goal. This performance demonstrates a seismic shift from informal, fragmented activity to a coordinated, powerful, and formalised economic force.

The Architect: Henrietta Rushwaya's Visionary Confidence

When asked about the profound significance of this achievement, ZMF President Ms Henrietta Rushwaya's response transcended mere celebration, revealing a deep-seated belief in indigenous capability.

"This is not an accident; it is a validation," Rushwaya stated. "It shows that indigenous Zimbabweans, given the right support and a conducive environment, possess an innate capacity to not only transform a sector but to lead it. Our miners have done this with grit, minimal initial capital, and relentless determination. They have mastered the geology, navigated the complexities, and optimised recovery with little more than their expertise. This achievement is a blueprint. If they can do this with gold, they can replicate it in value addition, in industrialisation, and across other minerals. This is proof that the greatest resource of this nation is not just in the ground, but in the hands and minds of its people."

Total deliveries to Fidelity Gold Refinery (FGR) soared to over **41.7 tonnes**, with the ASM sector **contributing a staggering 75%** of this total.

Her prescient confidence, famously expressed at Mine Entra when she predicted the target would be "gladly surpassed," was rooted in unique, on-the-ground intelligence. While others saw disparate miners, Rushwaya saw a latent network of productivity waiting to be unlocked through strategic empowerment—a vision that has now been spectacularly realised.

The Catalyst: A Genius Blueprint for Unlocking Potential

Identifying the primary catalysts for the sector's performance, Rushwaya outlined a multi-faceted strategy that functioned like a precision engine, with each component carefully calibrated.

1. The Price Imperative:

"The foundational catalyst was the favourable and transparent pricing mechanism at Fidelity Gold Refinery," she explained. "By ensuring prices remained competitive, consistently above US$115 per gram, and crucially, by ensuring those prices were communicated instantly and directly to our members nationwide, we created a powerful economic signal. It made the formal channel the most logical, lucrative, and secure choice. This wasn't just about a good price; it was about building trust in the system."

2. Strategic Advocacy and the 'Hand-in-Glove' Relationship:

Beyond price, Rushwaya engineered a transformative partnership. "We moved beyond traditional advocacy to architect a synergistic, 'hand-in-glove' operational relationship between ZMF and FGR," she noted. "This meant daily communication, joint problem-solving forums, and establishing ZMF as the reliable conduit for sector concerns. We advocated not from the sidelines, but from within the process, ensuring policies were not just created but were practical and effective on the ground."

continued on the page 17>>

ZMF President Ms Henrietta Rushwaya

3. The Financial Engineering Break-through:

Perhaps the most genius stroke was addressing the sector's perennial Achilles' heel: capital. "We reframed the narrative from one of handouts to one of investment," Rushwaya said. "By advocating for and securing dedicated funding facilities through FGR and financial institutions, we enabled miners to transition from subsistence diggers to business owners. This access to capital for equipment, mine development, and processing plants was the game-changer. It allowed for investment in efficiency, turning low-grade ore from a barrier into an opportunity."

4. Unwavering Forex Retention:

A critical, often overlooked factor was the fierce advocacy for a 100% foreign currency retention threshold for ASM deliveries. "This policy, which we fought for tirelessly, is the lifeblood of sustainability," she emphasised. "It allows miners to cover their hard-currency operational costs, reinvest in better technology, and build resilience. It treated them not as subjects, but as serious export-oriented businesses."

The role of ZMF under Rushwaya's leadership was that of a master conductor, transforming a cacophony of individual efforts into a harmonious national symphony of production.

"Our most critical function was systemisation," Rushwaya detailed. "First, we became the central nervous system for information, broadcasting FGR prices and policy updates directly to miners' phones, eliminating predatory middlemen. Second, we institutionalised advocacy, moving from reactive complaints to proactive policy shaping, fighting for and winning better incentives, tax frameworks, and formalisation pathways. Third, and most importantly, we provided a collective identity. We turned thousands of individual miners into a unified sector with a powerful voice. We coordinated their efforts, championed their cause, and ensured their productivity directly translated into national gain. ZMF became the essential bridge between the miner in the trench and the national vault at FGR."

The Parliamentary Pillar: Building a Supportive Ecosystem

This monumental achievement did not occur in a policy vacuum. It was bolstered by deliberate legislative and parliamentary support, a fact highlighted by Honourable Jonah Nyevera, a member of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Mines and Mining Development.

"The historic performance of the ASM sector is a direct result of a conscious policy decision by the Government, Parliament, and HE Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa's vision to nurture this critical segment," Hon. Nyevera stated. "We recognised that treating artisanal miners with the same blanket fiscal measures as large-scale corporates would stifle growth and perpetuate informality. This is why we championed a distinct, enabling tax and regulatory bracket for the ASM sector. The logic is visionary in its simplicity: you cannot formalise a sector by crushing it with burdens it cannot bear. You must create a runway for growth. The differentiated framework was designed to allow ploughed-back retention, incentivise formal registration, and provide the breathing room for these entrepreneurs to scale. Their success today vindicates this strategic, empathetic approach to legislation. Our role is to continue crafting laws that protect, empower, and unlock potential, turning national assets in the ground into widespread national prosperity in support of HE Mnangagwa's vision for the country to become an upper-middle-income economy by 2030."

The Future Roadmap: Institutionalising a Golden Era

With the 40-tonne benchmark now a starting point, Rushwaya's vision expands ambitiously toward a sustainable future.

"The next target is unequivocal: we believe the ASM sector alone can deliver 40 tonnes in the coming year," she declared with conviction. "This is not wishful thinking; it is a projection based on current trajectories and strategic planning. The favourable prices of this past year were not just for profit-taking; we have been relentlessly encouraging our members to invest in serious mine development, in advanced processing technologies like cyanidation plants and hammer mills, and in skills. This internal reinvestment cycle, fuelled by fair retention and access to capital, is what builds permanence and scale."

She outlined a multi-year institutionalisation strategy: "Our focus is now on moving up the value chain and embedding efficiency. We are launching targeted programs on mining low-grade ore economically, enhancing recovery rates, and promoting environmental stewardship. We will leverage our data from this year's success to guide miners to more productive practices. Furthermore, ZMF is formalising its role as a technical service hub, facilitating equipment acquisition and fostering partnerships for cutting-edge, appropriate technology. The growth will not only be in tonnes but in the sophistication, sustainability, and global competitiveness of the entire ASM ecosystem. We are building an industry, not just extracting a mineral."

Zimbabwe's smashing of the 40-tonne gold target is a landmark event with reverberations far beyond the vaults of Fidelity Gold Refinery. It is a story of a sector rising, a leadership vision proving true, and a policy environment aligning to unlock human potential. The genius of Henrietta Rushwaya and ZMF lay in seeing the diamond in the rough, understanding that with the right mix of price incentives, fearless advocacy, financial empowerment, and cohesive organisation, the scattered strength of artisanal miners could be consolidated into an unstoppable national force.

Coupled with the enlightened legislative support exemplified by voices like Hon. Jonah Nyevera, this has created a virtuous cycle of formalisation, production, and reinvestment. The ASM sector has not just contributed gold; it has contributed a new model for inclusive, indigenous-led economic growth. As Zimbabwe looks ahead, the lesson is clear: the nation's golden future is being forged, ounce by ounce, by the hands of its small-scale miners—and its brilliance is only just beginning to shine.

ASMiners in Mashwest pose for a picture

Lithium and Platinum

Set for Strong Price Recovery in 2026

Platinum group metals (PGMs) and lithium, widely known as the "white gold" of the energy transition, are expected to anchor Zimbabwe's mineral earnings rebound in 2026, with forecasts pointing to the strongest price recovery across the commodities basket, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

By Ryan Chigoche

These two critical minerals have endured sharp price declines in recent years due to oversupply, weaker global demand, and a slowdown in electric vehicle (EV) uptake. However, both international trends and domestic projections now point to a strong recovery beginning in 2026.

The Chamber of Mines Zimbabwe has already signalled a decisive shift in sentiment, noting that "lithium producers expect lithium carbonate prices to recover significantly in 2026, driven by strengthening demand from EVs and energy-storage sectors, tightening supply conditions, and a gradual drawdown of existing inventories."

"PGMs producers are expecting platinum prices to average around US$1,600 per ounce in 2026, approximately 23% higher than prices recorded in 2025, with the outlook underpinned by surging demand and a persistent supply deficit."

These projections mark a notable improvement from the subdued 2025 averages, when platinum hovered at around US$1,300 per ounce.

Similarly, lithium carbonate averaged roughly US$10,500 per tonne in 2025, and the Chamber now forecasts a 2026 average of US$13,000, a 24% year-on-year increase that underscores the renewed strength of the global battery-materials market.

Lithium Turns Bullish Again

Global sentiment towards lithium shifted dramatically in 2025 as the market tightened and demand strengthened, particularly from EV manufacturers and the rapidly expanding energy-storage industry.

After bottoming out around mid-2025 following a prolonged post-2022 slump, lithium prices entered a steady recovery phase supported by firmer demand, aggressive inventory drawdowns, and stricter regulatory interventions, including the shutdown of a major Chinese lithium mine by CATL.

Western governments' push to delink their supply chains from China further buoyed prices throughout late 2025, helping lithium carbonate register more than 25% year-to-date gains.

With Zimbabwean producers anticipating tightening supply and strong EV-driven demand, expectations of a meaningful 2026 price lift have continued to strengthen.

PGMs Set for Strong Upside

Platinum, palladium, and rhodium are also positioned for substantial gains in 2026. Producers are now forecasting platinum to average US$1,600 per ounce, up from US$1,300 in 2025—a clear reflection of rising industrial demand and a persistent global supply deficit caused by mine closures, reduced production in South Africa, and growing applications across the automotive and hydrogen-energy sectors.

MMCZ analysis reinforces this view, pointing to tightening supply that is likely to support higher prices across the entire PGM basket through 2026.

Why the Rebound Matters for Zimbabwe

A strong recovery in lithium and PGMs carries major implications for Zimbabwe, which has cemented its position among the world's top ten lithium-producing nations, accounting for nearly 2% of global output.

With new mines ramping up and expansions underway, Zimbabwe is increasingly recognised as a strategic supplier of battery-grade minerals at a time when global competition for secure supply is intensifying.

A sustained price rebound in 2026 would significantly boost mineral revenues. Higher earnings from lithium and PGMs, alongside continued strength in gold-where producers anticipate an additional 15% increase could push Zimbabwe's mineral receipts toward the projected US$7.5 billion.

This would offer much-needed relief after several challenging years marked by market volatility and subdued investment.

As demand accelerates across the clean-energy value chain and supply tightens globally, Zimbabwe enters 2026 well positioned to benefit from one of the strongest commodity price recovery cycles in recent memory.

US$15 Billion:

The Great Zimbabwe Diamond Heist That Never Happened

It was the astronomical figure that shook a nation and cemented a legacy of plunder in the global imagination. The year was 2016, and the late President Robert Mugabe stood before the world and declared that Zimbabwe had been robbed of a staggering US$15 billion in diamond revenues, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

By Rudairo Mapuranga

The headline was explosive, perfect for a narrative of a nation being bled dry. It was a story so sensational that it took on a life of its own, a political ghost that refuses to be exorcised.

To understand why the **US$15 billion claim is a fantasy**, one must step back and look at the cold, unfeeling **landscape of the global diamond industry.**

But years have passed, and a stubborn, inconvenient truth remains: the story is a mathematical fantasy, a monster of a number so vast it loses all connection to reality. It is time, once and for all, to drag this myth into the light and dismantle it with the cold, hard tools of fact and reason.

The tale of the missing billions didn't emerge from a vacuum. It was born from a potent cocktail of political accusation and theatrical revelation. Former Finance Minister Tendai Biti alleged he had presented evidence of diamond looting to Mugabe, who supposedly shrugged it off. Then Mugabe himself, in a dramatic turn, became the story's chief narrator, publicly accusing diamond companies of "robbing" the country and using the US$15 billion figure to justify a sweeping nationalisation of the industry.

The number, once unleashed, began to mutate in the public arena. Some versions claimed the entire sum was stolen from the fabled Marange fields between 2008 and 2015. Others, like a report from Partnership Africa Canada, scaled it down to a "mere" US$2 billion, a figure that, as we will see, is itself a monumental exaggeration. The most recent whispers in 2024 attempt to link the fortunes of sitting Vice President Constantino Chiwenga to this same fictional loot. The story is versatile, durable, and politically useful, but it is not true.

To understand why the US$15 billion claim is a fantasy, one must step back and look at the cold, unfeeling landscape of the global diamond industry. The figure isn't just a little exaggerated; it is a figure of galactic proportions that collapses under the slightest scrutiny.

Imagine this: at the time of Mugabe's claim, the entire continent of Africa, from the mighty mines of Botswana to the prolific fields of Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, was producing roughly US$6 billion in diamonds annually. This simple fact delivers a knockout blow to the myth. How could Zimbabwe alone lose more than double the entire continent's documented output? It would be like claiming a single Mudzengerere village in Chendambuya consumed more electricity than the whole of Africa.

Let's bring it closer to home. Botswana, Africa's diamond giant and a model of stable governance, exported a peak of US$4.588 billion in rough diamonds in 2022. Are we to believe that shady dealers in Zimbabwe smuggled out three times what the entire, well-regulated nation of Botswana produced annually? The idea is not just implausible; it is an insult to basic economic sense.

And what of Zimbabwe's own documented reality?

The government's own coffers told a very different story. In 2015, the state collected a paltry US$23 million in diamond royalties and fees, a sharp fall from US$84 million the year before. This is the real scale of the industry millions, not billions.

The government's own ambitious target

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for the entire mining sector, gold, platinum, chrome, and everything else was to hit US$12 billion by 2023, a target championed by the former Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Honourable Winston Chitando. Yet the whole sector is only now struggling to reach US$6 billion this year. The diamond sector, even at its most optimistic, was a fraction of this. The Minister's own projections never placed annual diamond revenue anywhere near a billion dollars; it was likely a fraction, perhaps not even reaching the US$0.5 billion mark. To have lost US$15 billion, the sector would have had to generate far more than that, a sheer impossibility.

This is where the drama of numbers truly unfolds. People often undervalue the sheer weight of a "billion." Let's put it in the context of Zimbabwe's entire economy.

Today, international bodies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank project stable economic growth for Zimbabwe. This growth is happening, notably, while the nation's foreign currency reserves are reported to hold less than US$1 billion. Let that sink in. The entire country operates and grows with reserves that are a tiny fraction of the alleged stolen sum.

If US$15 billion had truly been siphoned out of the economy, an amount that could have filled the national reserves fifteen times over, the nation would have experienced an economic apocalypse. The theft would have cratered the currency, obliterated public services, and left a scar far deeper than any hyperinflation. Instead, we see a nation steadily rebuilding. This simple, powerful contrast between the mythical theft and the actual size of the national purse reveals the story for what it is: a fable.

The persistent myth of the US$15 billion heist does a **disservice to Zimbabwe. It warps the public's understanding of their own economy**, fosters a deep and often misplaced cynicism, and prevents a clear-eyed assessment of the **country's genuine challenges and opportunities.**

Even the international community's response puts the number in perspective. When the IMF launched a project to help 16 African countries combat the illicit diamond trade, the entire technical assistance fund was US$500,000, a mere drop in the ocean compared to the fictional US$15 billion tidal wave.

So why does this fantastical figure persist with such tenacity? The answer lies in the dark art of political theatre. For politicians, a number isn't just a fact; it is a weapon. A figure of US$15 billion is not meant to be accurate; it is meant to shock, to outrage, and to distract.

It creates a villain, a colossal theft that justifies radical action, like the state's seizure of the diamond fields. For the opposition, it is the ultimate symbol of government corruption, a rallying cry that draws international headlines and public fury. As one critic aptly noted, politicians "always exaggerate numbers; it's in their nature, they're always on the extreme side." The US$15 billion diamond heist is a perfect case study in this principle.

It also serves as a perfect smokescreen. Mugabe's own alleged retort to his finance minister, "why go after diamonds, how about platinum," speaks volumes. It reveals a cynical game of deflection, where an impossible number in one sector draws attention away from potential malfeasance in another.

Let us be clear: this is not a defence of Zimbabwe's diamond sector. There was undoubtedly corruption, leakages, and theft. Diamonds were stolen, but certainly not US$15 billion, or even the US$2 billion later mentioned. The tragedy is that the real, smaller-scale crimes have been completely obscured by a fictional, multi-billion-dollar monster. The pursuit of accountability is undermined when it is built on a foundation of fantasy.

The persistent myth of the US$15 billion heist does a disservice to Zimbabwe. It warps the public's understanding of their own economy, fosters a deep and often misplaced cynicism, and prevents a clear-eyed assessment of the country's genuine challenges and opportunities.

The story has been told for too long. It is a dramatic, sensational, and utterly false narrative. It is time to finally close the book on the great US$15 billion diamond heist that never was, and demand a conversation about Zimbabwe's resources built on truth, not political theatre. The real story of Zimbabwe's diamonds may be less sensational, but it is the only one that matters for a future built on transparency and the real, hard-won growth recognized by institutions like the IMF.

From Dust to Destiny:

A First-Hand Chronicle of Zimbabwe's Lithium Revolution

As a mining journalist who has spent over half a decade with boots on the ground, from the deep-level gold shafts of Kwekwe to the sprawling PGM concentrators of the Great Dyke, I have learned to listen to the earth's stories.

As a mining journalist who has spent over half a decade with boots on the ground, from the deep-level gold shafts of Kwekwe to the sprawling PGM concentrators of the Great Dyke, I have learned to listen to the earth's stories.

By Rudairo Mapuranga

The most compelling narrative unfolding in Zimbabwe today is not just about extracting minerals, but about extracting potential from places and people long considered peripheral. The lithium rush, often framed in the stark binaries of exploitation versus empowerment, reveals a far more nuanced tapestry when you walk its length. This is a chronicle of that walk, a journey through the nascent heart of what many call "white gold" country.

The dominant discourse is saturated with valid, urgent talk: value addition, community rights, environmental stewardship, and a fair share. These are not mere talking points; they are the pillars upon which sustainable mining must be built. The noise from communities, the whispers of displacement, the clamour for better jobs, the anxiety over water and land, is a crucial counterpoint that must shape policy and practice.

Yet, to report solely through the lens of deficit is to miss a profound, ground-level truth. To understand the impact of lithium, one must first understand the profound void that preceded it in many of these areas. This sector, still in its swaddling clothes and already battered by an insane global price collapse from over $85,000 per tonne to below $15,000, is not operating on a blank slate. It is operating on a slate of neglect, often writing its first, imperfect lines of development over decades of silence. My evidence is comparative, drawn from repeated visits before the rigs arrived and after the concrete was poured. It is a story of resurrection, measured not in perfect outcomes, but in the stark difference between nothing and something.

Kamativi: A Symphony of Resurrection in the Silence

I will never forget my first time in Kamativi in late 2021. The term "ghost town" feels romantic; this was something colder. It was a post-industrial cadaver. The sprawling, crumbling infrastructure of the old Kamativi Tin Mine stood as a haunting monument to a severed economic aorta. When the tin mine died, it took the town's soul with it. There was no grid electricity; the switch had been thrown off for the wider community years before. The only reliable water source for the primary school was a distant, often-dry borehole, a crisis I documented in a prior report. The streets, where they were paved, were webbed with cracks. The soundtrack was wind, silence, and the occasional barking dog. The few vehicles were either ours and the occasional geologist's 4x4, or those of the handful of families clinging to memory. The palpable feeling was one of terminus.

Returning in early 2025, I had to recalibrate my senses. The transformation was so visceral it felt cinematic. Kamativi Mining Company (KMC), the Chinese-backed entity holding the lithium rights, had undertaken a project of fundamental restoration. Before major extraction began, they drilled and equipped multiple high-yield solar-powered boreholes, solving the acute water crisis for the school and hundreds of households. They spearheaded the technical and financial push to reconnect the entire town to the national grid, relighting homes, streets, and dreams in one fell swoop.

The effect has been catalytic. The town is now lively, pulsing. New businesses have materialised: a bank branch where residents can save their earnings, not just hide them; lively leisure centres and bottle stores where social life is reigniting; and a proliferation of vendors and small shops. The airstrip, once overgrown, is seeing activity. The complaints, and they exist, focused on desires for more local employment and better communication, are now voiced in a vibrant marketplace, not a hollow echo chamber. The alternative to this imperfect boom was not a pristine, agrarian idyll; it was a continued, silent slide into oblivion.

And then there is Bravura. This Pan-African mining group, led by Zimbabwean experts, entered the scene as KMC's operations accelerated. I visited their site office, a hub of local hiring. But their most poignant contribution is visible on the ground: a cluster of modern, solidly built houses they constructed for families in the direct footprint of their planned exploration work. These are not temporary shacks; they are permanent, dignified homes with proper sanitation, built before any major disruption. In an industry where resettlement is often a painful afterthought, Bravura's proactive approach in Kamativi sets a powerful, humane precedent. They built a community asset first.

Arcadia & Goromonzi: Where the Macro and Micro Roads Converge

The scale of change at Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe's Arcadia project is of a different magnitude, setting the benchmark for the entire sector. When Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt acquired this asset for US$422 million, it wasn't just a financial transaction; it was the implantation of an industrial heart in rural Goromonzi. My first visits here in the early exploration days showed a typical rural landscape: scattered homesteads, subsistence farming, and the ubiquitous dust of untarred roads churned up by prospect drilling rigs.

Today, it is a landscape transformed by colossal ambition. The processing plant is a leviathan of steel and precision, a 4.5 million-tonne-per-annum hard-rock lithium concentrator that ranks among the largest and most advanced of its kind globally. The employment numbers are staggering: over 2,000 direct employees and thousands more in indirect contracting roles, a seismic shock to the local labour market. But to only cite the plant is to miss the connective tissue of development.

For years, the community's primary grievance was the degradation of the

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Lithium Concentrates at Bikita await export

Goromonzi Road by endless streams of heavy trucks. The dust was a constant plague, a literal and metaphorical irritant. Huayou's response was not just palliative; it was transformational. They have not just patched potholes; they have financed, engineered, and are now tarring over 20 kilometres of road from the Goromonzi growth point to the mine, with plans extending further. This is not a mine service road; it is a public infrastructure project that upgrades the very mobility of an entire district, boosting every farmer, teacher, and trader who uses it. Goromonzi growth point itself is undergoing a quiet commercial revolution. New shops, hardware stores, eateries, and rental properties are rising, all fuelled by the circulating capital of mine salaries and service contracts. The buzz is tangible.

Yet, the true strategic import of Arcadia lies in its next phase. The government's 2027 ban on lithium concentrate exports was a bold policy gambit to force beneficiation. Arcadia is the first and most critical test of that policy. Huayou is investing a further US$400 million to construct a lithium sulphate plant on-site, with first production targeted for early 2026. This plant will not produce concentrate for export; it will produce lithium sulphate, a direct feedstock for lithium-ion battery cathodes. This leap from raw material to advanced chemical is the single most significant step in Zimbabwe's ambition to capture downstream value. It moves the narrative from "dig and ship" to "refine and retain," creating higher-skilled jobs and anchoring more of the final product's value on Zimbabwean soil.

Bikita Minerals: Architecting a Social Ecosystem

Travelling south to Bikita, the narrative shifts from industrial might to social architecture. Under Sinomine Resource Group, Bikita Minerals has approached its social licence with a comprehensive, if company-directed, vision. My repeated visits have shown a focus on creating a stable, invested workforce and community. The construction of modern, spacious housing estates for employees is a standout feature. In a country where mine workers often endure substandard hostels or long commutes, this provision of decent family homes is a fundamental dignity that fosters loyalty and stability.

> The most compelling narrative unfolding in Zimbabwe today is not just about extracting minerals, but about extracting potential from places and people long considered peripheral.

Their community engagement is multifaceted. The funding and branding of Bikita Minerals Football Club provide more than entertainment; they offer youth engagement, local pride, and a platform for talent. Their school feeding programs in surrounding areas attack the foundational issue of childhood nutrition, enabling learning. They have also invested in local clinic upgrades and water infrastructure.

However, Bikita also exemplifies the sector's fragility. The cataclysmic 80%+ crash in lithium prices in 2023–2024 hit operations hard, forcing temporary production cuts and contract reviews. This volatility, driven by a surge in global supply (much from projects like their own) and fluctuating EV demand, is an existential threat to this infant industry. Yet, Sinomine's continued investment in a planned cesium plant and a separate lithium sulphate facility signals a long-term, value-add commitment that seeks to weather such storms by diversifying and deepening their product portfolio.

Sabi Star (Buhera) & Gwanda Lithium

The experience in Buhera at Sabi Star, operated by Chengxin Lithium, is the most potent case study in the sector's complex, often painful, dualities. My visit there laid bare the raw edges of rapid development. Academic and NGO reports, which I have reviewed and whose findings I saw echoes of on the ground, document serious issues: allegations of forced displacement, compensation disputes, and the loss of community access to the Mukwasi Dam, a critical water source now reportedly dedicated to mine use. The road to the mine remains a brutal, bone-jarring track, a daily reminder of neglected public infrastructure and a primary community grievance.

These are not minor complaints; they are fundamental breaches of social contract that threaten the sector's long-term legitimacy. They highlight a desperate need for a robust, transparent, and legally enforceable national framework for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and resettlement.

Yet, to stop the analysis there is to ignore the other, simultaneous reality. The mine exists. It employs over a thousand people directly. The economic gravity of its payroll is pulling a new local economy into existence. In the surrounding villages, I observed new brick houses under construction, more vendors at local markets, and an influx of small-scale service providers. This is trickle-down economics in its rawest, most visible form. The challenge, the monumental challenge, is to ensure that the undeniable economic activation is not built upon a foundation of dispossession and broken trust. Sabi Star's future, and the sector's reputation, depend on urgently addressing the foundational grievances while channelling the economic benefits into formal, community-agreed development projects.

My journey south led me to the sunbaked hills of Gwanda, home to the Dinson-owned Gwanda Lithium Mine. This operation truly tests the narrative, presenting both the sector's growing pains and its unwavering commitment to push forward. The mine itself is a significant achievement, a reactivated former tin site now housing a modern processing plant producing lithium concentrate. The company provides direct employment for about 1,300 people, with 80% hired from the local community, a vital injection of formal employment into the regional economy.

Yes, the journey to the site highlights the dire need for infrastructure investment, a challenge the company acknowledges. The significant truck traffic servicing the

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plant, which also processes ore from Sandawana, underscores the urgent need for road upgrades. However, this logistical pressure is a symptom of active production and economic integration. Importantly, the broader solution is being addressed through government-led development like the Gwanda–Kezi road project, which will ultimately benefit the entire region beyond the mine's lifespan.

The company has initiated tangible Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects, focusing on supporting local schools, an investment in the community's long-term human capital. While community relations require constant, attentive work, the operational reality is one of progress. The mine is functioning, people are working, and its role as a processor for other national assets like Sandawana strengthens the domestic lithium value chain.

The Steady Ascent of Zulu

Not far away, near Fort Rixon, the story at Premier African Minerals' Zulu Lithium project is one of meticulous, determined advancement. As one of the country's most significant undeveloped resources, its path has focused on mastering the complex engineering required for sustainable production. My dialogue with the project highlights a commendable commitment to getting the technical details right.

The company has been diligently working through plant optimisation, conducting thorough technical audits, and successfully installing key upgrades like new spodumene cleaner cells to improve product quality. This careful, professional approach may lack the drama of instant success, but it builds a far more stable and reliable foundation for long-term operations and job security. Their planned secondary flotation facility represents the next confident step toward achieving full design capacity. Zulu's story is a testament to the perseverance required to build a lasting mining operation, ensuring that when it reaches full throttle, it does so on a solid and sustainable foundation.

Sandawana (Mberengwa) & The Indigenous Model

The reawakening of the legendary Sandawana emerald mines in Mberengwa under Kuvimba Mining House (KMH) introduces a pivotal narrative: indigenous capital and strategic state partnership. KMH, a complex entity with significant state-linked ownership, represents Zimbabwe's ambition to be a principal, not just a permit issuer, in its resource destiny. My discussions there reveal a site in transition, with vast lithium potential layered over its famous gemstone history. Initial estimates suggest a resource potentially exceeding 100 million tonnes, which could position it as a giant.

The significance of Sandawana lies in its ownership structure. It is a testbed for the government's stated policy of securing a meaningful free-carry stake in strategic minerals. The development model here, if executed with transparency and efficiency, could demonstrate how resource wealth can be leveraged for broader national benefit, funding fiscal needs without solely relying on taxes from foreign operators. Their planned concentrator plant is a first step. The world will be watching to see if this model of "resource nationalism" can translate into effective, productive investment and community development, avoiding the pitfalls of patronage and mismanagement.

The Infancy Argument and the Precarious Global Stage

Any honest assessment must begin with this truth: Zimbabwe's lithium sector is a toddler. It is less than five years into its modern production phase. To compare its community development footprint or its economic muscle to the mature, decades-old PGM and gold sectors is a category error. Those industries have had generations to build towns like Zvishavane and Bindura, to establish trust (and sometimes resentment), and to refine their social strategies.

Furthermore, this toddler learned to walk during an earthquake. The sector's launch coincided with a historic price spike, only to be immediately crippled by a historic collapse. The price of spodumene concentrate (6%) fell from over $6,000 per tonne in late 2022 to below $1,000 by end-2024. This volatility is not an excuse for poor practices, but it is the essential context for understanding corporate decisions, cash flows, and the precariousness of the very investments communities are pinning their hopes on. That companies like Huayou and Sinomine are committing hundreds of millions to sulphate plants in this climate speaks to a calculated, long-term bet on Zimbabwe,a bet that itself needs nurturing.

The Crossroads: Policy, Power, and the Path to 2027

The visible benefits, resurrected towns, paved roads, new houses, thousands of jobs, and pioneering sulphate plants are the undeniable, tangible fruits of this lithium dawn. They form a foundation upon which to build. But a foundation is not a finished house. The grievances, land rights, environmental fears, the desire for genuine skills transfer and equity are the architectural plans that must now guide the construction.

Zimbabwe stands at a policy crossroads. The long-delayed Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill must be finalised and enacted. It needs to move beyond the 1961 Act's antiquated provisions, establishing clear, modern rules for environmental management, community benefit sharing, and transparent licensing. The proposed mandatory listing of mining companies on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange is a brilliant concept for fostering local ownership and transparency, but its design and enforcement will be critical.

The next great leap is the planned 2027 ban on lithium concentrate exports. This is a high-risk, high-reward strategy. It aims to force the next stage of beneficiation, beyond sulphate to perhaps cathode precursor material, onto Zimbabwean soil. Its success depends on two factors: first, that the necessary billions in investment for even more advanced chemical plants are attracted (which requires policy stability and competitive energy costs); and second, that the state uses its leverage during this transition to negotiate binding commitments on technology transfer, advanced technical training, and local equity participation.

Finally, the geopolitical reality must be managed. The current dominance of Chinese capital filled an investment vacuum. For long-term national interest, a diversified investor base including European, North American, and other African capital is essential. This creates competitive tension, improves bargaining power, and aligns with global battery supply chain requirements seeking diversified, ESG-compliant sources of lithium.

Critical Analysis of the Mines and Minerals Bill, 2025

After taking a deep insight into the gazetted Mines and Minerals Bill, I shall be writing in series the said analysis bordering both on the policy perspective and clause-by-clause analysis. *By Thammary Brenda Vhiriri*

Thammary Brenda Vhiriri

i. To begin with, the amendment of the Bill has taken so much time and state financial resources without a tangible return for several years (value for money concept). It would be noble that the provisions of the Bill that are too contentious be set aside for further debate, while those that are progressive are retained, and the amendments proceed. Some things that have been recycled in the series of Bills are gradually being overtaken by technological advancement, and no one is taking notice. There are key areas, such as taxes, farmer-miner issues, that cannot wait in abeyance for another five (5) years or so waiting for an opportunity for a perfect Bill to come by.

ii. The second thing is the absence of a national mining policy, we will continue to be a reactional nation instead of planning ahead and learning from other jurisdictions. A national policy belongs to the nation, and we determine what constitutes the mining policy, but to remain without a policy altogether is nothing but detrimental to the growth of the mining sector and economy. The mining policy would give a general sense of certainty as it relates to investment, a clear integrated road map with other local administrative structures, value addition and beneficiation strategy.

iii. Besides the proposed Cadastra system, the provisions of the Bill do not seem to cater for the new innovations and evolution of technology, for example, for airborne explorations. There has to be a clear embracing of new technology, and also restrictions applicable. Casting a blind eye, yet technology is advancing, will only place us in a reactionary mode without any legal basis to enforce any restriction or compulsion for the release of information or imposition of penalties, because without a doubt, there are some components of illegal airborne explorations happening in and around the globe. A balance between embracing and restrictions of airborne surveys must be clearly spelt out in the current Bill.

iv. There's need for clarity as to the roles of the PMD and the Mining Cadastra Registra. Lessons learnt from other jurisdictions will show you that the current PMD title is absorbed as the Cadastra Registrar, who will work with the support of other technical persons, including ICT. Cadastra Registra is the actual issuer of title that fall under his/her jurisdiction and refers all the other applications to the relevant issuing authorities. It is not possible to have both the Cadstrar Registrar and PMD, and s/he does not have to be an ICT person but purely an administrator with support staff. This person reports to the Secretary. The system is automated on first come first serve basis, if you meet the compliance issues and according to the computerised system the ground is open to pegging and prospecting you should get the license without any hustles. The computer will recommend issuance and Cadastar Registrar will sign and upload the certificate. There is no basis of having both PMD and Cadastra Registrar. It is also disastrous to suggest that the Secretary becomes the Cadastra Registrar. In as much as the Secretary can not be the PMD or could not be a Mining Commissioner then (as they were previously known) the Secretary cannot be the Cadastra Registrar. Cadastra system is the movement from use of paper work by uploading the said paperwork into soft copy version, create a platform where all users can interface with the dashboard and track the application, the computerised systems which blocks ground not open to pegging will automatically reject an application over ground that is already occupied, if it is a reservation the computer will advise and the Registrar through his team will refer the application to the relevant issuing authority. If a block is overdue for payment either of levies or renewal license the dashboard will report and an automated abandonment will be recorded after the prescribed grace period has lapsed. There is nothing in the digitalisation process that requires the Secretary to become the Cadastra Registar, Zimbabwe will be the first country with such a setup, further the post simply requires someone with administrative capabilities beyond them being a technical expert of ICT. The critical role that ICT plays in this area is to ensure that the system is effectively maintained and always up and running not for the ICT to be engrossed in evaluating submitted documents and assessing compliance and signing off mining licences. The primary role of ICT is purely technical, which is the heart of the system, its functionality, efficiency and addressing delays or glitches. Once coordinates of registered blocks are entered into the system, reserved areas are entered, special features such as rivers, game parks etc are entered into the system (this is the key contribution which the ICT should play including the coding) once entered there is no further role that is required from ICT but to maintain and monitor the system.

> Besides the proposed **Cadastra system**, the provisions of the Bill does not seem to cater for the new innovations and evolution of technology, for example, for **airborne explorations.**

v. As it stand PMD is already issuing titles even in the present Bill, while the Secretary issues a certain class of Special Grants and plays a key oversight role with the powers to correct some mistakes made by the PMD and the same should just continue under the computerised system. Currently despite the PMD having the powers to administer the Act, the Secretary remains the custodian of Act balancing both the administrative issues and liaising with the political executive arm being the Minister's office. The Secretary remains the Accounting Officer and has for all the years been accountable for the actions taken by his officials albeit the use of manual systems. The Cadastra Registrar remains a subordinate of the Secretary. (example is the court system, the Chief Justice or the Secretary for Justice are not the registrar even after the coming in of IECMS). Role clarity should be considered more than we should be concerned about titles.

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Critical Analysis of the Mines and Minerals Bill, 2025

The general expectation is that the proposed Bill was going to tackle the some of the real issues that are fuelling mining dispute beyond just the realignment of sections.

vi. The issues around the resurrection of forfeited or old blocks by some registered prospectors(peggers) and some people with financial muscle with the help of some officials. There are several court cases against some registered peggers who are registering blocks to unsuspecting prospective miners, these peggers either give the said miner wrong coordinates and later register the said block in their names or to 3rd parties at a price. While some peggers are demanding exorbitant amounts of money outside the agreed service payment, failure by the miner will result in the pegger creating a mining dispute either as a boundary issue or complete ownership issue after resuscitating an ancient block.

vii. The proposed bill instead of repeating the same forfeiture terms as provided in the current Act, which are clearly not working should have come up with a practical way of dealing this issue. Unfortunately, when the claim holder goes to court, the onus is placed on the miner to prove that forfeiture occurred by supplying the forfeiture notice. This task is usually impossible because the notice is the property of the Ministry which is placed on a notice board and removed only by the Ministry. It is also impossible in many times for the Ministry to release the forfeiture notices especially if there is connivance. Further due to the manual record keeping system some documents get misplaced over the years or the effort of trying to locate the notice is too taxing for the officials. Thereby leaving the title holder with nothing to back his claim save for his certificate or license which clearly shows that his licence is a 're-pegg" as this is endorsed on the licence. In court the Ministry of Mines is not put to task to explain why the certificate is so endorsed. Majority of the time the claim holder losses the case on technical grounds.

Proposal

Introduce an automatic abandonment for failure by any registered miner to pay for the inspection certificate, which is the basis of keeping his license current. That way it removes the obligations on the Ministry to issue forfeiture notices. This will also automatically remove any claims that a block that was registered in 1969 is still current though no one was working on it and no one claimed ownership until the current owner starts making tangible profits. And in most time the claimants fail to produce inspection fees certificates for the previous years as is expected.

The court should also put the Ministry of to task to prove that the said block has been making inspection fees payments and show proof for the previous years and reports from their actual inspections of the said blocks that the said claimant was working on the said block since 1969 and also a way forward in terms of compensation in respect of the new title holder who has submitted an application which the Ministry should have done a thorough job before issuing title and allowing someone to make such huge investments and fail to recover from such investments.

Mining should be considered as a business at whatever level of production and each miner has the obligation to ensure that their licence to operate remains current. Failure to do so within the prescribed period should be taken that, the said miner has abandoned his mining block and his mining rights are automatically cancelled. This position will eventually come into effect with the coming of the Cadastra System if lessons learnt from other jurisdictions is to go by. The Cadastra system will automatically highlight the noncompliance and after a certain period of time the block is automatically opened to pegging and prospecting, thereby automatically cancelling any previous mining titles.

viii. It is taking too long for the Ministry of Mines to conduct pre-registration and confirmation surveys due to lack of resources. This is resulting in overlapping of mining title applications especially in provinces where the Cadastra system has not been effective and also due to the unavailability of electricity. This sometimes results in the prior applications being overtaken by new applications.

Proposal

The proposed bill should have made a provision for the miner to make a payment for the travelling costs. Currently officials are hesitant to accept money for fuel from prospective miners. But the current status quo is creating more problems and rendering the Ministry very ineffective . Everyone including the Ministry of Mines ends up wasting productive time resolving disputes or attending court.

ix. The internal process of dispute resolution should have been dealt with extensively. The current appeals that can legally be presided over by the Minister are the ones that fall under section 50 of the current Act. Experience informs us that there are several issues that arise and cause disputes that require a review process. The benefits are that, the Minister is armed with technical personnel and can resolve the matters faster than for parties to go to court only to be returned back to the Minister by way of court order after having spent several months for their court case to be heard(in this case not even finalised) and they have to start all over again and join the waiting queue. Further the court is forced to get the version of events only from the PMD and the court has no choice but to rely on his or her submitted position and in some instances the said position might not necessarly be correct or truthful due to various reasons. As such an opportunity for an internal process to review makes the result more reliable and the court needs not refer the case back to the Minister unless if it is an application for review. Courts are flooded with cases that are eventually referred back to the Ministry for a second overview opinion of the Minister due to their technical nature.

Proposal

1. Formally establish the dispute hearing committee in the Bill which advises the Minister.

2. It should be properly constituted by competent persons, if it means the Ministry should outsource persons for appointment, such room should be created if there is any intention to sanitize the mining sector.

There are several court cases **against some registered peggers who are registering blocks to unsuspecting prospective miners**, these peggers either **give the said miner wrong coordinates and later register the said block in their names or to 3rd parties at a price.**

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3. provisions for the change of technical team (Minister can appoint a team from a different province) in the event of field investigation should be made that could also include the hiring of private surveyors by any party who is willing to pay for the same to be part of the process and whose results should be considered in the hearings. Notification should be given to the Ministry.

4. The Ministry can consider creating a register of companies that provide survey work (at a price) so that these may be an option for prospective miners who may prefer to use these for their initial prospecting work instead of the registered prospectors (peggers) and in the event of dispute wherein parties are interested in procuring an extra expertise to their matter the option is available but these are still subject to reporting to the Minister just like the registered peggers.

5. further the removal of the section 345(1) of the current Act that allows a party to deny jurisdiction of the of the provincial court at will without cause. This clause has been abused and has failed to cure the problem which it was meant to resolve. Every dispute should be heard at provincial level as a court of first instance. In the event that a party would want the PMD or his team members to be recused the said party should write to the Secretary, who can constitute a different team to handle the matter or on that basis the matter is presented straight before the established hearing committee. Some people who are at initial stages of venturing into mining might not have enough financial resources to pursue court litigation, and simply because their cause does not fall under the case classified as an appeal by section 50 of the current Act are left to suffer because their case can not be reviewed by the Minister nor the Secretary because the validity of such determinations are being challenged at law, since such appeals are not provided for in the Act. On the other they rely on section 345 (1) to deny the PMD jurisdiction to preside over the matter.

6. further, there is also need to re-evaluate how after the issuance of a licence or approval of any process, the same PMD is given powers to preside over the same matter. Save for boundary disputes. The Ministry should set up a proper circuit court that moves around provinces for purposes for being the court of first instance consisting of the relevant technical and non technical persons with relevant capabilities to preside over such matters.

x. The other cause of disputes is the abuse of power by some current or former employees who have historical information about the company who are purporting to be "appearing" on behalf of certain big companies during the PMD's hearings and are issued orders in their favour them after resuscitating old claims but without any current inspection certificates(the technical arguments have been raised above). It has come to light that most of the time the real company will be aware that the said claims were forfeited but because the Ministry in handling the dispute did not communicate directly with the company but with the imposters as such the company can not interfere. Further due to increased numbers of the cases the companies do not have resources to allocated persue each and every case which is not of direct interest to it as a company.

Proposal

The Ministry should demand an annual update of contact details including emails and telephone numbers of company directors and executive, including that of the mine manager so that the invitation to a hearing is not given to a single person but the whole system is alerted and a resolution of appointing a representative should be signed by the listed directors and executives and if there is no resolution of appointment of a representative is not received within 14 days of notification it shall be deemed that the company does not associate itself with claims being made under such dispute.

xi. We should however acknowledge the progressive provision that has restricted the acquisition of the EIA certificate to the operationalisation of an issued license. The current legal position was ruthless and some people have lost their mining investments yet there existed a legal gap has taken too long to be addressed at the expense of miners. Apparently one could not be issued with an EIA without an exclusively registered, reserved and defined area of mining interest because this was a pre-requisite for the application of the EIA. On the other hand, the Environmental Management Act has a provision that has the effect of invalidating any mining license that is issued before the acquisition of an EIA. This provision was not properly worded considering the impossibility of its implementation, further the cost of conducting an EIA is such a huge investment, which one cannot make over ground that one has no guarantee of being issued a title over.

xii. One other area of dispute is the farmer-miner conflict. The current Bill has tried to protect the interests of farmers using the current tenure system to extend rights that were only enjoyed by private land holders only under the current Act. Though the issue of consent is retained for those with farms that are less than 100 hectares there are several issues that still need to be interrogated. Under the current Bill there is a full clause that is dealing with how a mining title can be issued in the event that a farmer unreasonably withholds consent. The current Act under Part V starting from section 63 onwards already considers farm land that is less than 100 hectares as ground under automatic reservation and has a laid down procedure of how that can be done.

Further, there is also need to **re-evaluate how after the issuance of a licence or approval of any process, the same PMD** is given powers to preside over the same matter

Proposal

1. Supposedly someone has 105 hactares (or 500 hactares for arguments sake.) Does this mean that the ground is open to pegging and prospecting and issuance of several mining licenses within the same farm without restriction? To the extent that one farm runs the risk of having over 5 to 10 mining entities within the farm. There are several moral and cultural issues associated with mining activities and the proliferation of mining entities in one farm ends up rendering the farm not suitable for farming, and a haven of several illicit activities. While there are set parameters that restrict mining activities from cultivated land and homesteads etc. There are issues of rotation and resting the ground for different seasons hence a farmer might not be able to show evidence that the land is cultivated. Further sometimes at the material time of registration by the miner the it might not be during the season of cultivation or that there is no evidence that the ground was worked on during the previous season.

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2. There has to be a limit of the number of miners that can be registered within each farm based on hectorage of land. Anything after the set number should be by consent of the land holder.

3. The regulator has in recent years failed to gazzet the minimum payments that should be made by the miner to the land owner as stipulated in the Act, this should be implemented to reduce disputes.

4. Several countries have set up a national document that regulate the relationship between farmer and miner. We could make use of the set examples.

5. There is need to merge the new proposals under the Bill and the old current Part V provisions. Further that the process of issuance of the actual mining title as it stands the process ends at exploration stages only.

6. In other jurisdictions wherein a farmer unreasonably withholds consent because their farm is protected at law is also denied the right to mine over that same ground and neither are they allowed to issue the consent to any other third party, effectively the ground can only be utilised by the state should the state take an interest over the said ground due to the economic viability at a fair compensation to the land owner. It has been a common pattern that some farmers will let a prospective miner do all the exploration and even get a mining license, set a working site and investment, only then will they start claiming that consent was not properly issued or not issued at all. A farmer should understand that minerals at his farm do not belong to them personally but to the state and they do not possess the first right of refusal. Resources have to be shared and so are the means of production, if they already possess land as a means of production and resource they should allow someone else to benefit the minerals.

7. Courts have warmed up to idea of reserving some remaining parts of the farm so that the Ministry of Mines issued further title within a farmer only with the consent of the farmer and I have managed to secure favourable judgement in this regard.

xiii. Turning to the general principles and provisions within the Bill. There is a motion suggesting that inspections are going to be done by works instead of payments. While the concept of use it or lose is very noble it is paramount that we also try to understand the concept of mining. Mining unlike farming, it is not possible to work on all the mining blocks at the same time and try to "harvest" from all the blocks at the same time. One can spend years profitably harvesting form a single shaft within their mining blocks. There are several technical issues that come to play. Issues intense capital investment associated with every stage of extraction, the mineralisation concept and viability, following the direction of the "belt" e.t.c Under the current Act, issues of drilling and continuous exploration are considered as workings. Under the new Bill there appears to be no digression from the same definition and the definition of "works/working" is not even provided for under the interpretation clause 4. So as to avoid the abrupt loss of mining rights either due to misinterpretation of provisions or lack of clarity as was the case with section 400 of the Act in the previous seasons. There is need for clarity as to what level of "no workings" warranty cancellation and the feasibility of the expected workings from the registered miner vis-à-vis the number of blocks owned.

Proposal

1. To cure the effects of one individual or an entity hoarding several mining claims either for speculative purposes or for generational wealth, the Bill should restrict the number of blocks that a person can have at a given time/period. Or restriction by mineral type etc.

2. Strict collection of levies will force some entities to relinquish ground and these provisions are already provided for in the current Act and it is an issue of enforcement more than it is about the law in the strict sense.

3. The Ministry of Mines should be allowed to retain a certain percentage of their generated income so that they are able to do the actual verifications of the purported workings, to do inspections and ground verification exercises otherwise the lack of resources is leaving the Ministry to rely on workings that are submitted on paper yet there is nothing on the ground in reality.

xiv. There is also a proposal to convert some Special Grant into mining leases and convert them into mining leases. Care must be taken to ensure that the very purpose or circumstances for which that ground had been protected and declared a reservation area no longer exists.

xv. For this series I will just touch on just a few clauses of the Bill namely clause 3 (2). I believe that an addition statement to the effect that, such issuance of mining title does not translate to ownership of land rights nor the right to erect permanent structures on the said surface without the consent of landholder.

xvi. Clause 4 (1) has some missing definations such as the meaning of "work" to avoid repossession under the proposed use it or lose it concept, the Cadastrar System is not defined. The issue of approved cultivation scheme should also include the board because the board also presides over these matters especial if it is a Special Grant. Clause 4 requires its own space but to mention just a few without venturing into it, it should just be highlighted that there is need to have a look over the said clause for missing detail and critical definitions. END//

xvii. To be continued 2 part in the making..........................

Authored by Thammary Brenda Vhiriri a legal practitioner with a wealth of experience of the mining sector and land issues after having worked for Ministry of Mines and the Zimbabwe Land Commission as a legal Counsel.

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Mining
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Thank you to Zimbabwe's gold miners for smashing the 40-tonne gold target in 2025. Your hard work, resilience, and commitment have delivered a historic national achievement.
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MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINING DEVELOPMENT

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

The Deputy Ministers, Hon. Caleb Makwiranzou, Hon. Fred Moyo, together with the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Pfungwa Kunaka, the Chief Directors, Directors and the entire staff of the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, extend their sincere congratulations to Honourable Dr. Eng. Polite Kambamura [MP] on his appointment as Minister of Mines and Mining Development.

We look forward to working under your leadership as we drive the transformation of Zimbabwe into a leading global mineral extraction and beneficiation hub, as we push towards the national vision of attaining an upper-middle-income economy by 2030.

Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Mines and Mining Development

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