



Rights and Accountability in Development

## **Tanzanian Government investigation receives hundreds of reports of violence and deaths at Acacia's North Mara Mine**

**23 September 2016 – Ottawa/Oxford - For the first time the Tanzanian Government has acknowledged the scale of violence surrounding the North Mara Gold Mine, say MiningWatch Canada and the British NGO Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID) in their most recent field assessment, *Adding Insult to Injury at the North Mara Mine* (released today).<sup>i</sup> A Tanzanian Government investigation confirms receiving claims that 65 people have been killed and 270 people injured by police responsible for mine security.<sup>ii</sup> However this may be only a fraction of the actual number of victims. According to human rights monitors and opposition sources there have been more than 300 violent deaths at the North Mara mine since 1999.<sup>iii</sup> The government report has not been widely disseminated and a Swahili summary has only been made available in the villages closest to the mine.**

In November 2014 the Tanzanian Government had warned the company about the need to act to reduce the number of fatalities at North Mara mine, which it said were partly due to corruption among the 160 officers of the Tanzanian Police Force whom Acacia employs to guard the mine site.<sup>iv</sup> But the violence has continued.

“It is incomprehensible and deeply concerning that any corporation would tolerate such levels of abuse in pursuit of profit” says Catherine Coumans of MiningWatch Canada, “let alone one that claims to respect international human rights standards.”

On 23 July 2016 the Tanzanian Ministry of Energy and Minerals finally revealed some of the findings of an inquiry that it had set up to investigate the long-standing problems at the North Mara Gold Mine, operated by UK-listed Acacia Mining, a majority-owned subsidiary of Barrick Gold Corporation.<sup>v</sup> The Committee, which also had a remit to examine complaints about land acquisition, dust and water pollution and inadequate compensation for forced relocation, visited the villages around the mine in February and March to collect evidence.<sup>vi</sup> Opposition members of the Committee complain that the report's findings have been watered down to protect the interests of the mine.<sup>vii</sup> They point out that the victims include women and children killed in their homes and men taken away by police who were later reported to have died.<sup>viii</sup> No one has been prosecuted for these crimes.

“Our research has uncovered examples where evidence has been tampered with and hospital records and post mortem reports falsified in apparent attempts to cover up the extent of mine-related deaths and injuries” says Tricia Feeny of RAID.

Over the past three years RAID and MiningWatch Canada have collected first hand testimony (and other evidence) on 22 cases of alleged unlawful killings by police or mine security personnel, most of which have occurred since 2014. They have interviewed 21 women – some were allegedly raped or beaten by police or mine employees or their husbands killed in mine-related violence; and 69 (mostly young) men who have been left with severe, life-changing injuries, allegedly after being assaulted by police or mine security personnel.

RAID and MiningWatch’s recent field assessment also examined Acacia’s operational level grievance mechanism at the North Mara mine. RAID and MiningWatch Canada have interviewed 26 claimants who allegedly suffered harm at the hands of police or mine employees and who signed settlement agreements with Acacia’s North Mara Gold Mine Limited. All have expressed their dissatisfaction with: lack of fairness in the process leading up to the agreements; deficiencies in the way in which the agreements have been implemented; and a hostile or indifferent stance adopted by grievance mechanism staff or their agents when challenged. Acacia has engaged in extensive exchanges with RAID and MiningWatch Canada over the past two years<sup>x</sup> and has fleshed out its procedures for dealing with complaints.<sup>x</sup> But recent claimants (2015-2016) complain that the mine is not dealing with their cases in a timely and consistent manner and are unclear whether the grievance mechanism at North Mara really exists.

“The whole process appears driven by a desire to limit legal liability, rather than to remedy serious human rights harms,” says Catherine Coumans of MiningWatch.

“The grievance mechanism is a black hole. It is opaque, unpredictable, and procedurally unfair; the remedies offered are woefully inadequate.”, says Tricia Feeney of RAID.

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<sup>i</sup> RAID and MiningWatch Canada *Adding Insult to Injury at the North Mara Mine*, September 2016. Available at: [www.raid-uk.org](http://www.raid-uk.org)

<sup>ii</sup> MEM ‘Mapendekezo Ya Namna Bora Ya Utekelezaji Wa Taarifa Ya Kamati Ya Kuchunguza Malamiko Kati Ya Wananchi Na Mgodhi Wa Dhahabu Wa North Mara’ July 2016 (Investigating Committee’s Recommendations for the Best Means of Resolving Complaints between Citizens and the North Mara Gold Mine).

<sup>iii</sup> Letter from John Heche, Member of Parliament, Tarime Rural Constituency to MiningWatch Canada, LHRC et al. 31.07.2016. Heche is a member of the opposition Party for Democracy and Progress (known by its Swahili acronym, Chadema).

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<sup>iv</sup> Letter from Eliakim Maswi, Permanent Secretary, Tanzanian Ministry of Energy and Minerals, to Deo Mwanyika, Vice President Africa Barrick Gold 19 November 2014. A copy of the letter was released to the 2016 Government-led Committee of Inquiry.

<sup>v</sup> The Committee was due to submit its report after 30 days but its findings and recommendations were only disclosed by Sospeter Muhongo, the Minister of Energy and Minerals, at meetings held in affected villages in Tarime District on 23 and 24 July. Mugini Jacob 'Settle Disputes Out of Court' Daily News 25 July 2016 <http://www.dailynews.co.tz/index.php/home-news/52008-settle-disputes-out-of-court>

<sup>vi</sup> Beldina Nyakeke 'Committee Set to End North Mara Gold Mine Conflicts', The Citizen, 16 Feb 2016 <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/1840340-3079268-lqqq6jz/index.html>

<sup>vii</sup> Letter from John Heche MP to the Minister of Energy and Minerals, 29 July 2016 (original Swahili)  
RE: Major Limitations of the Committee to Resolve Disputes between Citizens and the Mine

<sup>viii</sup> Letter from John Heche to MiningWatch et al 31 July 2016

<sup>ix</sup> MiningWatch Canada and RAID: 'In Need of Repair: Acacia Mining's Grievance Mechanism at North Mara Gold Mine, Tanzania', May 2016. Available at: <http://www.raid-uk.org/documents/memorandumtoacaciarevised-pdf>

<sup>x</sup> Acacia Mining, Community Grievance Management and Resolution Procedures. Available at: <http://www.acciamining.com/sustainability/our-material-areas/community-relations/grievance-mechanism.aspx>