



Guidance reduces illegal mining and child labour

Poor oversight of any mine site by authorities, and lack of proper management by companies, can unfortunately create the opportunity for illegal mining to occur. Adults and/or children, desperate to find any source of income to survive, may enter a mine site to work illegally. Minerals produced illegally are not traceable so their conflict status is not known, and the illegal nature of activities increases the risk of health and safety incidents. Fatalities and other serious accidents tend to become more common as a result.

In November 2015, in the Muko sector of **Musanze** district in Rwanda, illegal miners occupied an inactive mining site of Songa Minerals due to lack of proper security measures or other monitoring. Noticing that there were no guards at the site, illegal miners seized the opportunity to enter the mine, and among the miners, there were two children, aged 11 and 14, who had very recently come to the mine at the start of the school holidays.



Miners at Songa Minerals after incidents were resolved [Photo: Pact]

iTSCI field staff who are always present around the mining areas were able to identify the issue and advised the company to place security guards in the area and to work with the local community and authorities in order to eradicate the problem. The incident was highlighted to the Geology and Mines Department (GMD) of the Rwanda Government whose agents then visited the company and advised its representatives and the miners on better mining practices.

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iTSCi and GMD visited the mine to advise on a resolution of the incident and progress to better mining practices

Soon after, Songa Minerals made substantial efforts to find sustainable solutions to address the problem in collaboration with local authorities and police. Two permanent security guards were recruited to ensure the security of the mine and meetings were organised by authorities with the local population to educate them on child labour and legal mining practices. Awareness-raising activities on the detrimental effects of child labour and positive parenting skills were also carried out for parents.

Over the last few months, **no more illegal miners or children have been found** at the mine which is currently safe and employing workers whose legal status is officially recognised. The two children found mining no longer work in mining activities and are currently in school. Traceability of minerals to aid in due diligence have resumed and production is now compliant with the national laws of Rwanda and the procedures of the iTSCi system to conform to the OECD Due Diligence Guidance, however the mine will continue to be monitored for plausible production levels and activity in the coming months.

According to Bertin Makombe, the site's manager, *"the empowering guidance that the company and miners received from iTSCi helped us improve our mines."*

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A mine tunnel at Songa Minerals after incidents were resolved [Photo: Pact]

iTSCi Programme

Supporting responsible mineral production



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iTSCi was developed and is managed by the global not-for-profit tin and tantalum industry associations ITRI and T.I.C. as an inclusive, sustainable, multi-stakeholder programme. We assist all actors in implementing OECD recommended due diligence to create responsible 3T mineral supply chains and benefit from trade, even from high risk areas. iTSCi has a track record of global co-operation and achievement contributing to capacity building, better governance, human rights and stability through monitoring more than 1,500 mine sites in Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, and protecting the livelihood of tens of thousands of miners plus their communities.

See more news and information on <http://itsci.org>

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