

Tailings and Air Pollution in Mfidikoe Village

Mfidikoe Village in Rustenburg has suffered from air pollution caused by tailing dams in the area. Tailing dams are used to store mining waste and are generally toxic and hazardous to the environment and the community, due to the dust that is produced from the re-mining activity. When re-mining activity happens, most of the dust particles cover the air and there are winds blowing to the North-West direction of the village. This leaves the community exposed to the toxic substances carried by the wind, especially in spring.

Air Quality Officers from Platinum Miles Resources (PMR), have to account to Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines of Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Bill (MPRDA) and the Bill of Rights, for the human rights violations. The community has not been able to have a meeting with PMR due to the long bureaucratic processes to follow.

As a human rights defender, I have already approached the Department of Health here in Mfidikoe through local clinic officials. I requested for the relevant person in the clinic to show me the statistics for Tuberculosis(TB) in ward 34. The statistics are shocking and shameful. The informal settlement has a high TB infection rate at 38%. These TB patients are from the informal settlement that is situated just under the tailing dam that is being re-mined by PMR.

The company found the squatter camp already in existence, It is not clear how they were given a mining licence by Department of Mineral Resources and how did the Department of Environmental Affairs gave them permit to mine.

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