

MINES **RESCUE** **SERVICES** South Africa

VERTICAL MINE SHAFT RESCUE AND RECOVERY

Operation at 1 289m - a World-First Success

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✓ What is difference between artisanal and illegal mining

✓ Artisanal Mining

Definition: Small-scale mining carried out by individuals, families, or small groups using basic tools and techniques.

Legal Status: Can be **legal** or **informal**, depending on whether it complies with government regulations.

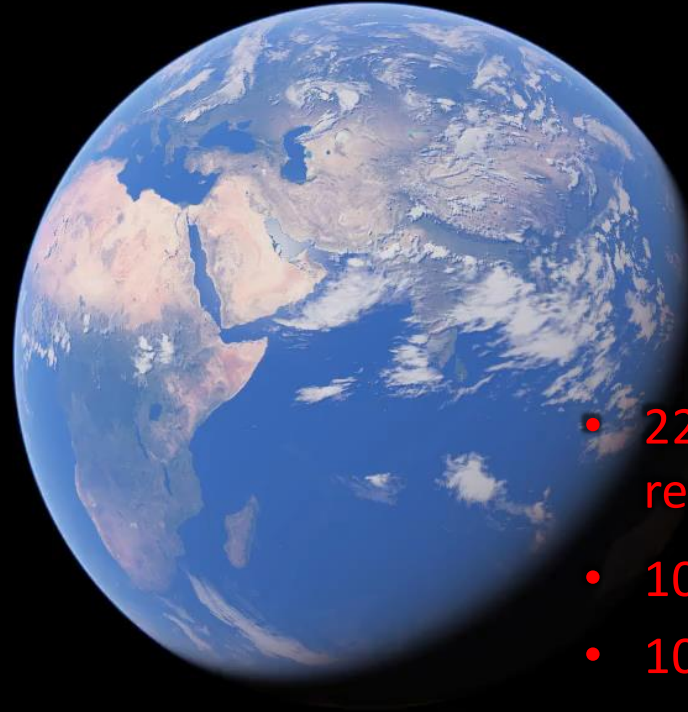
⊘ Illegal Mining

Definition: Mining activities that are **explicitly prohibited** by law or carried out **without proper authorization**.

Legal Status: Always **illegal**, regardless of the scale.

"Vala Umgodi" is a South African government operation aimed at combating illegal mining activities and related crimes.

Stilfontein Buffelsfontein Mine 11 Shaft



- 22 November 2024 Camera Inspection requested by the Mine
- 10 January 2025 SLA with Authorities
- 10 January 2025 MRS Mobilised
- 22 Nov to 10 Jan Stand-off scenario

Google Earth
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy

246 Alive and 78 Deceased = 324 Total

Summary

✓ FACTS

- Huge Media Presence and International news – often sensation driven reporting
- Social Impacts – Human Rights abuses, solicitation, violence, substance abuse
- Environmental Damage – pollution, deforestation, infrastructure
- Economic Losses – taxes, royalties and stolen minerals
- Organised Crime - What illegal actions happen in the Background?



Continued collaboration and partnerships with host communities, industries, government and law enforcement is crucial

Shaft Descending Methodologies



Shaft Descending Methodologies

✓FACTS

- Depths of more than 2 000m
- Dedicated Lowering Teams
- Communication by means of cell phones and vuvuzelas and letters attached to ropes



Shaft Descending Methodologies



✓FACTS

- Sadly and unfortunately some fall and do not survive

Shaft Ascending Methodologies



✓FACTS

- 1 289 meters (4 230 feet)
- Stated +/- 480 to 550 persons UG
- +/-2 hrs hand hoist round trip
- 2 hrs per day food lowering (1 trip max 120 kg food)
- 6 hrs per day hoisting
- Self hoisted could have been @ 8 hrs /day -108 days

Initial Site Inspection



✓ **FACTS**

- Inaccessible with the Mobile Rescue Winder

Camera Inspection Methodologies



✓FACTS

- Establish facts on situation
- Possible communication and negotiations

Camera Inspection Findings



Camera Inspection Findings



✓FACTS

- Responded +/- 550 people and all want to surface
- Many deceased and situation critical

Possible Second Evacuation Option



✓ **FACTS**

- Holed Shafts on different elevation tunnels
- Imploded Head Gear
- Physical condition of persons

Possible Second Evacuation Option



✓FACTS

- +/- 5km Walk and Elevation Differences
- Physical condition of persons impossible

Actual Conditions



✓FACTS

- Ground Preparations for safe working conditions
- Prevention of damage to equipment
- +/- 45Ton Mobile Rescue Winder access

Road Entrance Preparation



Supplies During Preparation



✓FACTS

- Last Opportunity was given to illegals to lower food and supplies underground, prior rescue operations as they did not understand that the rescue winder will send down supplies during the operation.

Ground Preparations



✓ **FACTS**

- Heavy Rains created safety challenges and high risks

Shaft Descending Methodologies

✓ FACTS

- At last, after 2 days groundwork
- At risk weather



First Cage Hoisted



✓ **FACTS**

- Initial reaction from Illegals
- 6 Man cage, we loaded up to 13 persons
- Weak condition of persons

First Cage Hoisted

✓FACTS

- Exact position to ensure readiness at all times
- Preparation on arrival at Surface



Communication Methodologies



✓ FACTS

- Policed scanned all food for intel or weapons and communications

Bodies Recovered



✓FACTS

- Body's bagged by Illegals during the night
- Loaded alternately between persons being hoisted

Bodies Recovered



✓FACTS

- Removed asap for hygiene purposes
- Separated from “Alive” section processing

Were we Safe?



✓FACTS

- Camera Surveillance
- Unknowns During Operation?

Summary – Fact Sheet

1 Day 1 = 26 Alive 9 Deceased

2 Day 2 = 106 Alive 51 Deceased

3 Day 3 = 114 Alive 18 Deceased

4 Total = 34 Trips
~ 40 min round trip
~ 9 minutes Loading



**3 341 persons rescued
by our Rescue Team
Members in 10 years**

246 Alive

78 Deceased

= 324 Hoisted Total

WORLD FIRST



✓ SALUTE

- Dirk Odendaal
- Dawie Jacobs
- Willem Botha
- Quentin Shanahan
- Wynand Aveling
- Akhona Mthelekiso
- Danie Prinsloo
- Divan Naude
- Mannas Fourie
- William Phefo
- Donovan Williams
- Daan Smith
- Ruaan Jacobs (*in front*)

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