

October 5, 2015

Fatal accident in the Bantaco mine in Senegal

The Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) expresses its grief and condolences to the relatives and close friends of the three women who died in the artisanal mine of Bantaco last Thursday.

Even in normal conditions, mining is very dangerous in Bantaco, located alongside the Gambia River. It is even more risky during the rainy season because it is exposed to landslides and flooding. Despite regulations prohibiting any mining activity in the rainy season, many people motivated by the lack of money in this resource scarce period, return to the mining sites in an attempt to improve their precarious economic situation. The Bantaco mining community and the entire region of Kédougou were very affected by the three-month extension of the prohibition period enacted by a presidential decree. As the prohibition was lifted, miners began resuming their work trying to compensate and recover from the delay of the season, which usually starts in November (and only started in February this year).

This tragic accident reveals four things. First, it is clear that mining should be banned in the rainy season. Second, it is necessary that the miners have the possibility to work all months outside the rainy season given their economic difficulties and the fact that mining is the only income-generating opportunity for the families in these regions. Third, there is an urgent need to implement strict health and safety security practices. And fourth, ARM should continue to work to support these communities.

For more than two years, ARM, in collaboration with the NGO SADEV, has supported the mining organization GIE Foukhaba in Bantaco which is made up of more more than 100 members, in the implementation of best practices that can lead to Fairmined Certification. We can say with pride that the implemented practices have resulted in a more structured and legalized organization that now implements good accounting and organizational procedures. The following implementation period was dedicated to better health and safety practices and technical support in water management.

We will intensify our efforts to promote the integration of women in the organization. We know that we must multiply our efforts for the women miners, who traditionally work with most precarious conditions and methods at the sites. Our will to accompany them in this work has multiplied. This is a message of support we wish to express to friends and members of the GIE: we support you so that such accidents will never happen again!

XXX



ALLIANCE FOR
RESPONSIBLE MINING

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About the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM)

ARM is an independent, global-scale, pioneering initiative established in 2004 to enhance equity and wellbeing in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) communities. ARM works to transform ASM into a socially and environmentally responsible activity that improves the quality of life of artisanal miners, their families and communities.

Through the Fairmined Standard for Gold and ARM's support, artisanal miners are able to produce Fairmined certified metals and gain access to responsible supply chains. ARM supports miners in making a real change in the way they run their businesses and support their local communities.

The Fairmined Standard and Certification System is in the center of ARM's efforts, to which everything else is related and supported. It is a rigorous, third party certification system that ensures that ASM miners formalize while meeting world-leading standards for responsible practices. The Fairmined Standard includes a set of requirements to guarantee legality of operations, environmental protection, fair labor conditions, social development and to assure the gold is traceable and conflict free.

For more information go to www.responsiblemines.org

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