



Press release

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**“ AFREWATCH DENOUNCES THE PRESENCE OF THE ARMY IN ARTISANAL MINING SITES AND CONDEMNS THE SHOOTINGS AGAINST MINERS IN THE MULONDO QUARRY ”**

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African Resources Watch, known by its acronym "AFREWATCH," an NGO specialising in the promotion and defence of human rights in the extractive sector, denounces the presence of the army in mining sites and condemns the deaths of dozens of artisanal miners in the MULONDO quarry.

On 15 November 2025, a deadly tragedy took place at the MULONDO mining quarry, involving members of the Republican Guard (GR). According to survivors' testimonies, it was on the orders of an unidentified GR major that the soldiers opened fire on the artisanal miners in the quarry, causing several deaths. The controversial provisional death toll stands at 35 according to the official statement from the Lualaba provincial government, but this figure is contradicted by several other sources which believes the number to be greatly underestimated. AFREWATCH calls for an independent investigation to determine the exact number of victims of this incident.

As a reminder, MULONDO was a camp for farmers from the communities of KAINDU, RIANDA and KAPASO in the province of LUALABA. Artisanal mining activities began around the year 2000, before the company CHEMAF arrived in 2006 to carry out exploratory drilling operations prior to obtaining an operating licence (PE 2350). In 2024, an unidentified mining cooperative began operations there, secured by members of the Republican Guard and certain activists from the political party Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS). A compromise was reached between the mining cooperative and the artisanal miners, granting the latter two days of access to the quarry, namely Saturday and Sunday.



According to the testimony of one of the surviving artisanal miners who was present at the scene at the time of the incident, due to the lack of artisanal mining areas, the artisanal miners who carry out their activities at the MULONDO site, which is highly militarised with the presence of several well-armed members of the Republican Guard, were prevented from accessing the quarry for their activities on Saturday 15 November 2025. Faced with resistance from the artisanal miners, on the orders of their commander, members of the Republican Guard opened fire on them. Some were shot directly, while several others, trying to escape, drowned in the galleries and trenches filled with water.

AFREWATCH deplors the violation of the provisions of Articles 10 to 16 of the Mining Code by the interference and presence of army services at several mining sites, not only in Lualaba but also throughout the country, in place of the mining police and, more often than not, to cover up illegal mining activities. This unauthorised presence is often accompanied by several human rights violations, as is the case with the deadly incidents in Mulondo, referred to above.

AFREWATCH recalls that under the terms of Article 3 of Ordinance No. 13-063 on the organisation and functioning of the Republican Guard, dated 22 June 2013: "In addition to the common missions assigned to the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republican Guard has the specific missions of ensuring :

- the guarding and protection of the President of the Republic and his family, as well as distinguished guests;
- the security of presidential property and facilities;
- escorts and honours at the level of the Presidency of the Republic."



Furthermore, AFREWATCH questions the interests that the GR protects in these mining areas while committing so many human rights violations with complete impunity.

These human rights abuses by the public security services in mining sites have been recorded after the Democratic Republic of Congo's accession to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights and its commitment to implement the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

AFREWATCH, which welcomed the new Minister of Mines' commitment to providing urgent responses to the effective formalisation of artisanal mining, in particular through the creation of viable ZEA zones and the efficient supervision of mining operators, remains concerned about the ineffectiveness of SAEMAPE in supervising artisanal mining activities throughout the national territory.

In light of the above, AFREWATCH recommends:

**1. The Government to:**

- Set up an independent commission of inquiry to shed light on the incidents that occurred on 15 November 2025 at the MULONDO mining site, in particular by providing the actual number of people killed and injured;
- Order the immediate withdrawal of all military personnel from mining sites;
- Identify and hand over the commanders and soldiers of the Republican Guard present at the MULONDO site to the military prosecutor's office to answer for their actions;



## 2. To the Minister of Mines :

- Accelerate the process of creating viable ZEA throughout the country;
- Proceed with the evaluation of SAEMAPE governance prior to its reform for better supervision of artisanal miners;

## 3. To the Auditor General of the FARDC :

- To order the initiation of legal proceedings against the commander and soldiers responsible for criminal acts and human rights violations at the Mulondo mining site;
- To open an investigation into the presence of the GR at mining sites.

**AFREWATCH**

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