

Study to assess illegal mining in Johannesburg

The Department of Mineral Resources has initiated a ground stability study in Johannesburg to assess whether there is any long-term damage to critical infrastructure as a result of illegal mining activities.



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The study, which is due to commence shortly, will be carried out through the department's entity, the Council for Geoscience (CGS).

"While there is no immediate threat to critical infrastructure as has been claimed, government wants to confirm this assertion scientifically, and proactively deal with this matter not only in Johannesburg, but in other areas where illegal mining occurs," the department said.

This after media reports emerged at the weekend stating that experts have sounded the alarm bell that illegal miners are blasting near highly flammable gas and fuel lines in the Johannesburg area.

The CGS is expected to provide a preliminary report on the matter within two weeks.

The department further emphasises the importance of active participation by all stakeholders in the established Gauteng Illegal Mining Forum. The forum, among others, deals with immediate pressing matters on illegal mining.

“This forum is empowered to suggest and/or take appropriate remedial action in addressing critical concerns. The department will continue to work through the National Co-ordination Strategic Management Team (NCSMT), which in turn reports to the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cabinet Committee, on how matters of illegal mining are addressed.”

The NCSMT consists of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ), the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR), the South African Police Service (SAPS) [i.e. Directorate for Priority Crimes and Investigation (DPCI)], Visible Policing (VISPOL) and Crime Intelligence (CI)], the National Intelligence and Co-ordinating Committee (NICOC) and the State Security Agency (SSA), among others.

The body was established specifically to co-ordinate government’s efforts to fight illegal mining and the trafficking of precious metals.

There are several measures that have been implemented to eradicate illegal mining operations.

These include:

- Promotion of legitimate mining
- Rehabilitation of derelict mines and sealing of holes
- Law enforcement and forensic analysis
- Policing and law enforcement
 - Law enforcement training workshops on illegal mining

Physical monitoring by the police will also be encouraged to deal decisively with illegal mining.

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