



CNRG APPALLED BY LACK OF POLITICAL WILL TO CURB SMUGGLING AND MINERAL RESOURCES LEAKAGES

By Simiso Mlevu Posted May 10, 2021 In Campaigns, Front

The Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) is gravely concerned with the continued smuggling of Zimbabwe's mineral resources by politically connected criminal networks. On Sunday the 9th of May 2021, South Africa's Hawks Serious Organised Crime Investigation team arrested Tashinga Nyasha Masinire at OR Tambo International Airport on charges of illegally possessing 23 pieces of gold valued at R11 million or \$700,000. The gold was discovered in Masinire's luggage and he failed to produce a permit that allows him to transport the gold.

The arrest of Masinire by South African authorities raises questions about the porosity of Zimbabwe's ports. The smooth departure of Masinire with his loot exposes the complicity of Zimbabwe's immigration and security authorities in the smuggling of the country's minerals. The arrest of Masinire follows another high profile arrest of Zimbabwe Miners Federation President, Ms Henrietta Rushwaya in October 2020, who was found with contraband of 6kg of gold. Rushwaya is yet to be cleared by the courts and remains the President of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation. It has also since emerged that Masinire is Rushwaya's former driver.

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Zimbabwe continues to lose BILLIONS OF DOLLARS annually to organised criminal syndicates which have spread their wings from diamonds, chrome, gold, semi-precious gemstones, coal to copper, among other minerals. The syndicates abuse their proximity to power and defraud Zimbabweans and the central government of funds that should be expanding the country's revenue base and improving the socio-economic lives of Zimbabweans. Today taxpayers bear a heavy burden of funding government expenditure when mineral resources are being plundered by a few.

Mineral resources are Zimbabwe's natural wealth; wealth for current and future generations and should be exploited for the purposes of improving the social and economic conditions of every Zimbabwean. CNRG believes that the continued smuggling of minerals through Robert Mugabe International Airport and other ports signals a lack of political will by the political leaders to address the problem or their complicit involvement with criminal networks prejudicing Zimbabwe.

CNRG calls on:

- The government of Zimbabwe to thoroughly investigate the circumstances in which minerals such as gold are smuggled out of the country through RGM International Airport.
- Parliament of Zimbabwe to carry out a thorough investigation into the smuggling of minerals and recommend executive action to halt the scourge
- The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate the role of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation and politically connected cartels in the smuggling of minerals.
- The judiciary to consider smuggling of minerals as a high-level crime and impose deterrent sentences on members of criminal networks involved in smuggling of minerals
- Fidelity Printers and Refineries to make public the register of gold buyers and dealers in Zimbabwe



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