

## [Extractive industries in Africa: towards a better protection of human rights](#)

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(Geneva - 2 July 2013) - In May 2013, the Working Group on extractive industries of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights carried out its first on-site visit during its second meeting in South Africa. The Working Group was established by the African Commission in 2009 to examine the impact of extractive industries in Africa within the context of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The Working Group travelled to South Africa to meet with NGOs from the sub-region to carry out a mapping exercise of the extractive industries in Africa and gain a greater understanding of their human rights impact. During the mission, the group made an informal visit to the Maricana mine complex, where in 2012, 34 miners were shot dead by security forces during a strike to demand better working conditions and pay. The group gained insights about the situation on the ground and the realities of communities living in the shadow of extractive industries. The group noted that the families of those killed and injured have yet to receive appropriate remedies for the violations they suffered. The families continue to wait for the results of the Commission of inquiry set up by the government to investigate the events. The group hopes that the Commission of inquiry will finalise its work soon so that the victims receive timely compensation and perpetrators are brought to justice swiftly.

Part of the mandate of the Working Group is to undertake research on the violations of human and people's rights by non-state actors connected to extractive industries on the African continent, alongside state responsibility. The Working Group was mandated to study the possible liability of such non-state actors for such violations. The Commission also asked the Working Group to formulate recommendations, proposals and activities for the prevention of violations.

In its meeting in South Africa the Working Group adopted its calendar of work for 2013. It planned visits to Zambia in August and Liberia in December. In 2013 the Working Group will also present its first report to the African Commission on the impact of extractive industries on human rights in the continent. This report will focus on the protections included in the African Charter and discuss the key rights at stake when it comes to extractive industries on the continent. In order to elaborate the report the Working Group will circulate a

survey which community based organisations, NGOs, representatives of the business sector and Governments can use to provide information to the Group. The Working Group welcomes [inputs](#) from all actors. Cooperation with all key stakeholders will be a key to its success.

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