



## MACUA& WAMUA - ADVICE OFFICE

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### **MACUA Challenges DMPR's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan: Mining Justice Cannot Be Achieved Without Communities at the Centre**

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**Johannesburg** – Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA) today issued a comprehensive response to the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources' (DMPR) newly published 2025-2030 Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan.

While the DMPR claims its new plan will transform the mining sector and advance inclusive growth, MACUA warns that the Department's approach risks deepening existing inequalities and repeating the injustices of the past – unless mining-affected communities are placed at the centre of decision-making.

The DMPR's Strategic Plan outlines ambitions to increase investment in mining and petroleum infrastructure, improve licensing systems through digitisation, promote critical minerals exports, and oversee Social and Labour Plans (SLPs) linked to mining rights.

However, the reality behind these targets reveals a troubling persistence of old patterns: elite capture, community exclusion, environmental neglect, and hostility toward civil society oversight.

**"Transformation without the participation of those who bear the brunt of extraction is a hollow promise,"** said MACUA's National Secretary Gift Radebe. **"Justice in mining must mean dignity, power, and real economic opportunities for communities, not crumbs handed out to politically connected elites."**

#### **MACUA's critique of the DMPR Plan**

##### **1. Community Ownership vs Elite Empowerment**

Although the DMPR boasts that over 80% of mining assets have some black ownership, MACUA points out that this ownership is concentrated among a small group of politically connected individuals. There is no real commitment to community shareholding, cooperatives, or direct ownership models.

Instead, companies continue to establish the so-called "community trusts" controlled by traditional leaders and elites – as seen in Richards Bay and Bakwena ba Mogopa in Bethanie, North – excluding ordinary people from meaningful benefit.

MACUA demands transparent, democratic, and community-controlled ownership structures that genuinely transfer mineral wealth to the people.



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## 2. Broken promises on Social and Labour Plans (SLPs)

The DMPR plans to oversee 132 new SLP projects and conduct 212 inspections during the year. Yet, SLPs continue to be designed without community input, often negotiated secretly between mining houses and municipalities.

MACUA's soon-to-be-released national audit of SLPs shows that in most cases, projects fail to meet community priorities, and many promised developments exist only on paper.

We demand that SLPs must be developed with and by communities and must be made legally enforceable through independent mechanisms rooted in community structures.

## 3. Criminalisation of artisanal mining

The DMPR's approach continues to criminalise so-called "illegal miners" without addressing the economic exclusion that forces many into artisanal mining.

MACUA demands the immediate decriminalisation and formalisation of artisanal and small-scale mining, with state support for community mining initiatives.

## 4. Risk of digital exclusion

While the DMPR plans to roll out a new digital cadastral system to modernise mining licensing, there is no clear commitment to public access or community training. Without transparency, communities will remain shut out of vital information about who holds mining rights, the obligations attached to those rights, and whether mining companies are complying.

MACUA demands an open, publicly accessible cadastral system, accompanied by training programs to empower communities to use the data for accountability.

## 5. Critical minerals without a Just Transition

The DMPR sees critical minerals – such as those needed for batteries and green energy – mainly as an opportunity to boost state revenue and exports. But this ignores the need for a **just transition** that repairs historical injustices and builds sustainable local economies. If communities are excluded once again, the "green economy" will merely repeat the colonial patterns of exploitation under a new name.

We demand that critical minerals must drive local beneficiation, job creation, and community-owned green industries – not simply enrich elites and foreign corporations.

## **6. Inadequate rehabilitation and missed economic opportunities**

The DMPR's plan to seal only 40 mine shafts and rehabilitate 3 asbestos sites per year is grossly insufficient. Rehabilitation is treated as a technical exercise, ignoring the massive economic and environmental opportunities it could create if communities were at the centre.

MACUA demands that rehabilitation be reimagined as a community-led process, where former mining lands are repurposed for agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, and other sustainable alternatives.

## **7. Hostility towards civil society**

Throughout the DMPR's plan, civil society organisations are framed as obstacles rather than partners. Litigation brought by NGOs and mining-affected communities to enforce rights is seen as a "threat" to development.

MACUA emphatically rejects this view. Civil society plays an essential constitutional role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and justice. Only those who fear exposure of corruption fear the involvement of communities.

MACUA demands that the DMPR recognise civil society and communities as vital partners in safeguarding our constitutional democracy and ensuring mineral wealth benefits all South Africans.

### **MACUA's Key Demands:**

- Full community ownership models incorporated into the MPRDA Amendment.
- Mandatory community-driven and enforceable SLPs.
- Decriminalisation and support of artisanal miners.
- Open, publicly accessible mining cadastre systems with community training.
- Domestic beneficiation and local green industrialisation strategies centred on communities.
- Accelerated, community-led rehabilitation projects.
- Full protection for civil society advocacy and participation.

MACUA calls on Parliament, the DMPR, and the South African public to reject false transformation and demand real mining justice. Transformation must mean more than statistics on paper – it must mean the material restoration of dignity, livelihoods, and power to the people most affected by mining.



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**"We will not accept a future where communities remain poor while our minerals build fortunes for others," said MACUA's National Secretary Gift Radebe. "We demand a new model – one based on justice, dignity, and shared prosperity."**

**NOTE:** MACUA will soon release a comprehensive report that exposes the systemic corruption and development fraud underpinning the current SLP system. This report will amplify the voices of mining-affected communities and strengthen our demand for a complete restructuring of the mining sector in favour of transparency, equity, and genuine community-led development.

**For media inquiries, please contact:** Magnificent Mndebele, head of communication and media at MACUA-WAMUA Advice Office on 064 785 9746/  
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**#MiningJusticeNow #CommunitiesFirst #JustTransitionForAll #EndDevelopmentFraud**