

Communities at risk in Malawi's mining push

Malawi's government has failed to protect the rights and livelihoods of people living in nascent mining communities. Families living near coal and uranium mining operations face serious problems with water, food, and housing, and are left in the dark about health and other risks from mining.

A Human Rights Watch released a 96-page report, *They Destroyed Everything: Mining and Human Rights in Malawi*, examines the impact of extractive industries on communities in Karonga district located on the north-western shores of Lake Malawi.



Photo: Lauren Clifford-Holmes

Malawi's government has promoted private investment in mining and resource extraction to diversify its economy. But environmental risks are common in resource extraction and mining significantly contributes to climate change, which in turn affects governments' ability to realise the rights to health, water, and food.

"Malawi shouldn't repeat the mistakes made in resource extraction in other countries in Southern Africa," said Katharina Rall, researcher at Human Rights Watch. "It is not enough to create a fertile investment climate for mining companies. The government urgently needs to protect the rights of affected communities."

The report is based on research in Malawi from July 2015 to July 2016, including more than 150 interviews, 78 of which were with people living in areas where companies are actively mining or had mining operations in the recent past. Human

Rights Watch also interviewed representatives of the companies; the central, regional, and local governments; national and international non-governmental organisations; and international organisations.

Source: AllAfrica

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