



Transition Minerals Tracker

Key findings 2026

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Foreword

The mineral intensity of technologies essential to the energy transition, coupled with competing demand from the growing needs of the artificial intelligence and defense sectors, has pushed security of mineral supply chains to the top of the global policy agenda. This is quickly leading to new geopolitical tensions and increased competition for access to the mineral wealth of resource-rich countries.

In this high-pressure context, hasty and imbalanced mineral agreements can create instability in the long term. Building durable mineral partnerships and secure supply chains requires deeper investment in sustainability and good governance best practices that form the foundation for resilience in the sector.

As data from this year's BHRC Transition Minerals Tracker demonstrates, failing to engage rightsholders early, and ignoring communities, Indigenous Peoples' and workers' rights risks triggering social conflicts and raising project costs. This can slow down mineral supply chains due to operational delays, project suspensions, and even permanent closures. Increasingly, these impacts are raising alarms for investors with direct and indirect exposure to the mining sector, as supply chain disruptions present a systemic risk. The Tracker shows that harms are surging at an unprecedented rate, with attacks on defenders and allegations involving Indigenous Peoples, workers, and communities rising year on year, and pressure to extract exacerbating corruption risks.

The moral case and the business case, once deemed at odds by some, have clear common ground: resilient mineral supply chains can only be built with respect for people, ecosystems, and local benefits. Without a rights based approach across value chains – one embedded in good governance and robust regulatory frameworks to ensure rights are protected – the current mineral rush will neither deliver stable supply and strong investments, nor shared prosperity and value addition for communities and host governments.

Now is the time to forge a new path. The time is ripe to shape and accelerate conversations on rights-based global governance frameworks for mineral value chains, from extraction to refining to reuse. This is essential to support cooperation instead of competition, to raise the bar on full implementation of best-in-class international standards for responsible business conduct, and to mobilize technical and financial support for producer countries seeking to strengthen national regulations. Such a process can only be transformative if it is truly multi-stakeholder, taking into account the priorities and views of stakeholders in resource-rich countries. The technical clusters of the UN Task Force on Critical Energy Minerals offer such an opportunity, which must be seized. Mining policy processes in other fora, including ongoing G20 efforts, also have the potential to drive action on equitable and sustainable mineral partnerships.

Better governance of minerals, respect for rights, and fair partnerships are not competing priorities, but essential conditions for resilient and sustainable mineral supply chains that can advance equitable development in mineral rich countries for generations to come and deliver a just energy transition for all.



Erica Westenberg

Director of Governance Programs
Natural Resource Governance Institute

Executive summary

The solutions to the climate crisis are today well known: full fossil fuel phase-out and swift deployment of wind and solar capacity, coupled with general electrification. This critical new energy expansion is helping to fuel a global mining boom for copper, cobalt and the other transition minerals on which these installations depend – accelerated by growing competition and pressure from other expanding sectors such as tech and defence. But growing mineral demand is also fuelling environmental and human rights risks to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as rising conflict between industry and communities where these harms materialise.

This year's update of the Business and Human Rights Centre [Transition Minerals Tracker](#) (the Tracker) makes clear that a just transition – built on a corporate duty of care for human rights, fair negotiations and shared prosperity – is the answer to these clashes and to establishing rights-based and reliable mineral supply chains. But in documenting a **73% year-on-year increase in human rights abuse allegations against the sector's leading transition mineral mining operations around the world**, the Tracker also reveals that these firms are today too often choosing another course.

“The green energy transition may look sustainable, but in Kachin State, Myanmar, it is driving destructive rare earth mining. Our forests are being cleared, our land is unstable, and our water and air are polluted.”

Hkaw Lwi from Bridging Rural Integrated Development and Grassroot Empowerment (BRIDGE)

The Tracker monitors allegations of abuse associated with large-scale mining for nine key minerals for the energy transition: bauxite, cobalt, copper, lithium, manganese, nickel, iron ore and zinc, plus this year's new addition of rare earth elements, a key mineral used to manufacture wind turbine magnets.



The 2026 Tracker update paints an alarming picture of the reality facing rightsholders on and around the mines that power the decarbonisation effort:

- **329 allegations of abuse were recorded in 2025, up from 156 recorded in 2024.**
 - The majority of allegations (270) were against previously tracked mines, at which we recorded a 73% increase from last year – along with an extra 59 allegations reported against the 52 new mines added to the Tracker this year.
- **All regions recorded a surge in allegations. South America continues to be the region with the highest number of allegations across all years, with 447 recorded allegations for 2010-2025.** This year's Tracker also records a **significant surge in allegations recorded in Africa**, with 100 allegations recorded in 2025, up 122% from 2024.
- In 2025, there were **42 reported attacks against human rights and environmental defenders** (defenders), an increase of over 50% from the attacks documented at the same mines last year.
- The Tracker now includes a total of **1,226 allegations recorded for 2010-2025**, including **187 attacks on defenders**.

These alleged abuses are closely linked to rising social conflict on and around these mining operations:

- **Sixty-one cases of protests, ten strikes and 34 lawsuits were recorded in 2025, and at least 173 cases of social conflicts in 2024-2025** – representing more than a third of allegations for these years.
- **One in seven (44 out of 329) allegations of abuse recorded in the Tracker in 2025 led to lawsuits and regulatory action.** Direct action by local communities and workers and litigation have resulted in 27 instances of suspensions (or sought after in litigation), work slowdowns or closures of mines tracked in 2025.

This upsurge in resistance around transition mineral mines should raise alarm across the renewable energy value chain – from mining companies through to end users of their products, who represent a growing share of final purchasers for these minerals.

Evidence demonstrates risk of harm continues to climb:

- **Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately affected.** Seventeen percent of allegations reported for 2025 relate to abuses of Indigenous Peoples' unique rights, including 32 allegations of abuse of their right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), despite Indigenous Peoples making up only 6% of the global population.
- **Workers' rights and safety are under significant threat.** The Tracker recorded 92 allegations against workers across all regions – representing 28% of total allegations and an increase of more than double from 2024 – including 22 reports of alleged work-related deaths, nearly double the number reported in 2024.
- **Women bear an unequal weight of mining's systemic injustices**, with 39 allegations reported to relate to mining's unique impacts on women, and gender- based violence across all years.

These are dangerous trends, for people and for the transition as a whole.

They highlight that far from accelerating climate solutions, **disregarding rightsholders slows such efforts down**. And while reversal is possible, findings this year demonstrate that mining sector leadership in this effort is too limited. **Corporate human rights policies still remain too few and far between**. Of the 155 mines associated with at least one allegation in 2025, only 87, or 56%, are covered by a publicly available human rights policy. Further, **impact is dominated by a handful of mines and companies** – in part due to their market dominance. This is set to continue as large mining companies consolidate and expand their market share, with mergers and acquisitions surging in 2025. Smaller and private-owned companies continue to escape accountability.

Ignoring these harms – which represent only the tip of the iceberg – comes at a cost. The highest price is paid by frontline communities and ecosystems. But this picture is also bad for business: **lawsuits, protests and prolonged social conflict mean delays and bottom-line consequences for the firms, investors, renewable energy companies and others in the value chain** who require reliable access to these resources – today facing growing scrutiny, increasingly higher operational costs and rising cost of capital. The associated reputational, financial and legal costs represent material risks not only for mining companies but also for investors and end users, as well as governments, as public trust in their ability to safeguard rights deteriorates.

There is another way. As a recent UNDP [five-year analysis of 235 global firms](#) concludes: disregarding risks for human rights and the environment does not save costs or increase competitiveness, on the contrary, investment in human rights safeguards leads to resilience and stronger business propositions.

In practice, this means [three key principles](#) are essential for rights-based and reliable mineral supply chains: commitment to shared prosperity, fair negotiations and a corporate duty of care for human rights due diligence. At this critical juncture, investors and others in the renewable value chain, in addition to the mining sector itself, should understand these principles as essential risk management tools. **Investors in particular have an opportunity to take action, as close to 70% of the mines associated with at least one allegation in the Tracker for 2025 are owned by listed companies, either directly or through joint ventures.**

Pursuing a just energy transition is no longer a nice-to-have. It is increasingly clear that a transition grounded in these key principles is essential to delivering the global energy shift the world desperately needs. This requires that governments, investors and companies prioritise energy transition needs in mineral-related decisions and adopt rights-based policies and decision-making, while recognising Indigenous Peoples, defenders, women and local communities not as obstacles to progress but as experts and agents of change in their own right.

Key recommendations targeted to renewable energy companies, investors and governments can be found in the following primers [available on our website](#):

- **Responsible sourcing:** what renewable energy and electrification companies need to know
- **Responsible policymaking:** what governments need to know
- **Responsible mining investment:** what investors need to know

What mining companies should be alert to

Over the years, the Tracker has documented a consistent rise in allegations against the sector. This pattern raises serious concerns about the sector's willingness to make the shift toward genuinely rights-based models.

1 Lead by example: commit to respect human rights and provide remedy – and close the gap with practice on the ground

- Commit to a corporate duty of care for **human rights and environmental due diligence** beyond absent or insufficient national regulations.
- Implement gender-sensitive human rights and environmental due diligence in operations alongside **access to remedy**, through safe and inclusive grievance mechanisms.
- Extend that commitment to joint-venture participation.
- Include requirements for adherence to best practice standards as a condition of acquisition, applicable in both mergers and sale contexts.

2 Make space and time for fair negotiations – key to avoid social conflict

- Engage in **good faith** with local communities and all rightsholders – before, during, and after operations – including through full **adherence to FPIC** for Indigenous Peoples, prioritising those at heightened risk, and avoiding the dismissal of public opposition as uninformed.
- Adopt a company-wide policy commitment to **respect defenders**, to not tolerate or contribute to attacks and to work with defenders to create safe and enabling environments for engagement.

3 Understand that benefit sharing, if rights-respecting, is also key to secure durable community trust – and that it is not a top-down process

- Move away from traditional CSR approaches and bring workers, their unions, Indigenous Peoples and local communities into upstream project design to support models of shared prosperity through new models of co-management, ownership and cooperation.
- Ensure these fair and equitable benefit sharing models are rights-based, addressing both procedural and substantive rights, and adapted to local priorities and needs.

Context:

the global scramble to secure mineral supply chains risks driving further instability

In the last year and months, securing global mineral supply chains has become an even more pressing and explicit geopolitical priority for Global North governments. The US and the EU have been multiplying announcements on adopting policies and legislation to accelerate domestic permitting and sign MoUs and partnerships with mineral rich countries (often shrouded in opacity) – with the explicit aim of countering Chinese dominance of global mineral supply chains. China, on the other hand, has launched its own [international initiative](#) to promote sustainability in mining operations. In April 2026, the two blocs signed an [MoU](#) on a strategic partnership to build their cooperation on mineral supply chains. This followed a commitment adopted in October 2025 by [G7 countries](#) to develop a standards-based market, aligned with international standards on human and labour rights, environment and governance/transparency.

While these policies and partnerships are presented as essential to support domestic industries and investments – whether this will effectively be the case remains to be demonstrated. In the EU, the [lack of transparency](#) in the selection of strategic projects under its Critical Raw Materials Act has already led to [litigation](#) in one case, and the [lack of a clear prioritisation](#) of the renewable energy sector should also be of concern for European companies in the sector that depend on stable supply chains. Signed deals have also faced legal challenges: the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by the US and the DRC in December 2025, is currently [being challenged](#) before the Congolese Constitutional Court. The [Indonesia-US trade agreement](#) is also facing challenges before civil courts.

These new forms of government-to-government collaboration are negotiated under compressed timelines where expediency is prioritised. This risks further eroding already weak public trust in the mining sector and in the legitimacy of governments negotiating deals on national mineral wealth with Global North countries and their industries. This, too, is a risk for sustainable operations in resource-rich countries – exposing investors to unforeseen costs and delays.

Mining investors should also be alert to demands for better local value addition to boost development objectives that have been made by governments of resource-rich countries. While this is justified, it [does not automatically translate](#) into strong human rights and environmental safeguards built into these agreements or in national policies and regulatory frameworks. [Recent analysis](#) pointed out gaps in responsible business conduct in the national mineral policies of Zambia, South Africa and Tanzania. In Peru, [civil society](#) has been questioning extraction in the name of the energy transition, given its outsized impacts on local communities and Indigenous Peoples and the significant toll paid by ecosystems in the third-largest global producer of copper.

Competing interests in access for mineral resources driven by national economic agendas are not conducive to global cooperation to prevent further harms and to avoid [supply chains which are reliable precisely because they are responsible](#). Discussions on a global governance framework for minerals essential to the energy transition had momentum in 2024 when the report of the UNSG-led panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals was launched. While consultations still are ongoing – pushback on inclusion of language on minerals at [COP30](#) is cause for concern.

Mineral demand scenarios depend on key policy choices – or otherwise risk becoming self-fulfilling prophecies

Mineral demand for energy transition needs is reported as growing exponentially in the next years and decades. However, not all minerals currently labelled as ‘transition’ or ‘critical’ are effectively used in the manufacturing of energy transition related technologies. The IEA forecasts a 35% share for [copper](#) by 2040, 40% for [nickel](#) – compared to 87% for [lithium](#). Other sectors that are heavily dependent on mineral supply are also currently expanding, and the defence industry in particular. [Recent communication](#) by the EU, for example, outlined intention to prioritise the aerospace and defence sectors – to the potential detriment of renewable energy technologies in the event of supply disruptions. A just transition begs further reflection on global equity in energy usages, to curb demand for new minerals.

A key aspect that is often overlooked is that demand scenarios also heavily depend on key policy choices. Recent civil society reports and analysis have evidenced that global mineral demand could be divided by more than three as compared to the IEA Net Zero Scenarios, if policies to reduce energy demand are also adopted. Lithium, in particular, is sensitive to public policy choices regarding transportation: demand for the white mineral in the US could be reduced by up to 92 percent in 2050 – if key policies on decreasing car dependency and size of EV batteries, and creating a robust recycling system, are adopted.

This global state of affairs should make downstream actors in the renewable energy sector – who depend on access to resilient supply chains of minerals – pause and assess their own strategies. [BHRC’s recent policy assessment](#) of leading developers and manufacturers in the wind and solar sectors showed that responsible mineral sourcing remains a nascent practice. This risks exposure to reputational costs, at a minimum, as well as to supply chain disruptions.



Key findings

Allegations by region



Ten companies were associated with 50% of allegations in 2025

● Companies remaining in Top 10 for the last five years



1,226 allegations, including 187 reported attacks on defenders

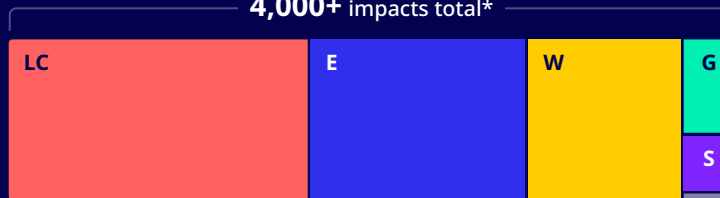
329 in 2025

897 in 2010-2024



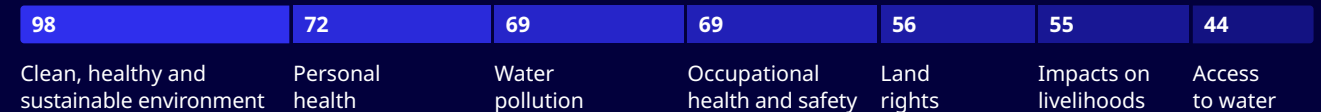
Allegations of abuses remain highly multifaceted and interrelated: affected groups are often the same individuals and families living near mining sites and their local environment, with **100 allegations impacting local communities and their environment**

4,000+ impacts total*



- 1,783 on local communities (LC)
- 1,284 on the environment (E)
- 918 on workers (W)
- 188 on governance and transparency (G)
- 112 related to security issues and conflict zones (S)
- 19 related to Covid-19 (C)

2025 TOP IMPACTS



* One allegation can be associated with more than one impact. Impacts are categorised in six categories: impacts on local communities, impacts on the environment, impacts on workers, governance and transparency issues, security-related issues and Covid-19 related impacts. For more detailed information on the terms used in this analysis and on the Tracker's methodology, please refer to the Terms and approaches section.

Direct action and litigation



Affected rightsholders undertake direct action, with **61 cases of protests**, **10 strikes** and **44 lawsuits and regulatory actions** reported in 2025.

These direct actions and litigation have resulted in **27 instances of suspensions** (or litigation seeking suspension), work slowdowns or closures of mines tracked in 2025, representing nearly **8% of total allegations**.

Global analysis and 2025 updates













Companies and mines linked to allegations

Just a handful of companies and mines have consistently been associated with a significant proportion of allegations recorded in the Tracker – 33 mines (out of 299 tracked) are associated with half of allegations in 2025.

This is set to continue as large mining companies consolidate and expand their market share. In 2025, mergers and acquisitions in the mining sector surged, with annual deal value at its [highest in 18 years](#). Copper, a key metal for the energy transition, accounted for a significant proportion of merger and acquisition dealmaking in the sector, with a total deal value of [USD30.81 billion](#) for 14 copper-focused deals.

The top ten companies associated with the highest number of allegations in the past five years (2020 to 2024), either directly through their wholly owned subsidiaries, or through joint ventures, include large and well-established companies:

2020-2024 ALLEGATIONS

Company	Headquarters	Allegations:	● As parent company	● As joint venture participant
Glencore	 Switzerland	49	25	24
Georgian American Alloys	 USA	29	29	0
Zijin Mining	 China	28	16	12
China Minmetals	 China	28	28	0
Rio Tinto	 UK	27	11	16
Grupo México	 Mexico	26	23	3
BHP	 Australia	24	5	19
Codelco	 Chile	22	19	3
First Quantum Minerals	 Canada	21	18	3
Solway Group	 Switzerland	20	20	0

In 2025, six companies remain in the top ten: **Glencore**, **Rio Tinto**, **BHP**, **Zijin Mining**, **Grupo México** and **First Quantum Minerals**. **PT Mining Industry Indonesia (MIND ID)**, **China Nonferrous Metal Mining (CNMC)**, **DCH** and **Vale** also joined the top ten in 2025. Companies associated with the highest number of allegations are mostly headquartered in the Global North, with **Glencore** (Switzerland), **First Quantum Minerals** (Canada) and **Rio Tinto** (UK) leading the pack. In total, allegations against those ten companies account for half of all 2025 allegations.

2025 ALLEGATIONS

Company	Headquarters	Allegations:	As parent company	As joint venture participant
Glencore	Switzerland	30	7	23
First Quantum Minerals	Canada	23	5	18
Rio Tinto	UK	20	6	14
MIND ID	Indonesia	18	17	0
BHP	Australia	15	4	11
CNMC	China	14	8	6
DCH	Ukraine	14	14	0
Zijin Mining	China	13	2	11
Grupo México	Mexico	11	11	0
Vale	Brazil	8	5	3

In the past five years (2020-2024), the top ten mining sites in the Tracker were associated with a quarter of allegations.

2020-2024 ALLEGATIONS

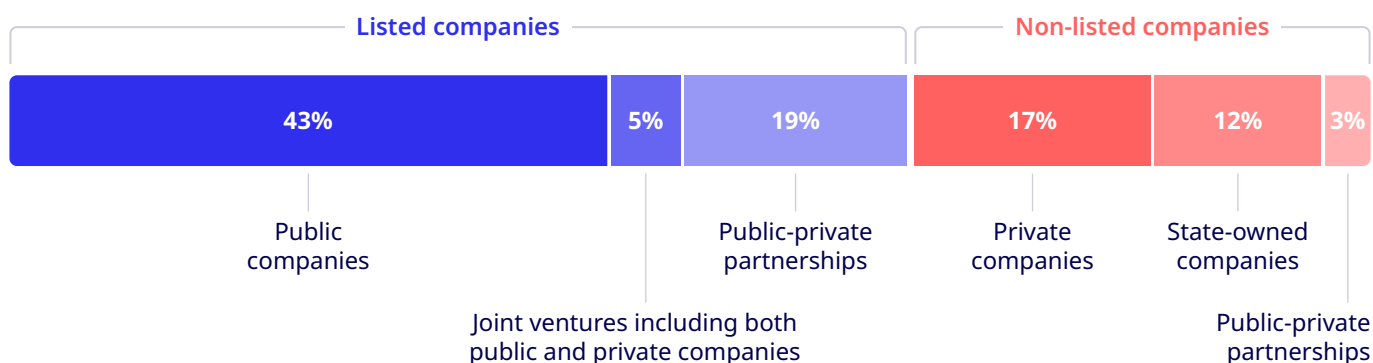
Mining site	Allegations:	Defender attacks	Other allegations
Chiatura mines	29	5	24
Las Bambas	26	6	20
Fenix (El Estor)	20	13	7
Bor Copper Mines	15	15	0
Cobre Panama	12	8	4
Antamina	10	5	5
Bikita Mine	10	1	9
Tenke Fungurume	10	10	0
Cerro Matoso	8	2	6
Harita Group Nickel mines in Indonesia	8	1	7
Tintaya; Antapaccay	8	8	0

In 2025, two mining sites in the Tracker were associated with 10% of allegations. As in 2024, Cobre Panama and Tenke Fungurume are among the mines associated with the highest number of allegations.

2025 ALLEGATIONS

Mining site	Allegations: ● Defender attacks ● Other allegations	
Grasberg Block Cave	17	16 1
Cobre Panama	16	11 5
Yuvileyna mine	13	13
Sino Metals Leach Zambia Copper Mine(s)	8	3 5
Kamoa-Kakula	5	5
Kolwezi	5	5
Salar de Uyuni	5	5
Simandou North (blocks 1 and 2)	5	5
Simandou South (blocks 3 and 4)	5	5
Tenke Fungurume	5	5

Of the 155 projects associated with at least one allegation in 2025, 66 projects (43%) are owned by listed companies and a further 38 projects (24%) by listed companies in joint ventures or partnerships with private or state-owned companies. Investors in these companies have an important oversight role to play to ensure that their investments are not tainted by human rights violations. For example, in September 2025, Norway’s sovereign wealth fund [excluded Eramet](#) from its portfolio after the fund’s Council on Ethics found an “unacceptable risk that the company is contributing to, or is itself responsible for, severe environmental damage and serious violation of the human rights of uncontacted [I]ndigenous [P]eople” at PT Weda Bay Nickel in Indonesia, where Eramet is a minority shareholder and operator. In [response](#) to a report by Survival International as well as in its dedicated [FAQ](#) section, Eramet has previously commented that such allegations are inaccurate, as “all the studies carried out by PT Weda Bay Nickel have found no evidence that any of O’Hongana Manyawa living in the concession are in voluntary isolation”. The company has [publicly commented](#) to Reuters that it “deeply regretted the exclusion and that it was reviewing the fund’s report.”



Adoption of human rights policies remains poor – and overreliance on certification mechanisms is risky

Of the 155 mines associated with at least one allegation in the Tracker, only 87 (56%) are covered by a publicly available human rights policy.

The [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs) provide that, in order to respect human rights, companies must adopt human rights policies, due diligence and remediation processes (UNGP 15). The UNGPs specify that human rights policy commitments should be approved at companies' most senior level and that such policies should be publicly available and communicated internally and externally. These measures are essential to embed a rights-respecting culture at all levels of a company.

Seven of the ten companies associated with the highest number of allegations recorded in 2025 (**Glencore, First Quantum Minerals, Rio Tinto, BHP, Zijin, Grupo México** and **Vale**) have a publicly available human rights policy. The remaining three companies (**PT Mining Industry Indonesia (MIND ID), China Nonferrous Metal Mining (CNMC), DCH Investments**) do not. Although the increasing adoption of human rights policies is positive, companies must ensure implementation of these policies across their business operations, including in their subsidiaries and joint ventures.

Companies' policies to protect the rights of human rights defenders also remain vastly insufficient, as evidenced by our [Defenders policy tracker](#). No mining company's policy meets all three criteria laid out in the Corporate Human Rights Benchmark: commitment not to tolerate or contribute to attacks; expectation of the same in their business relationships; and active engagement with defenders to create enabling environments.

Industry-led standards and certification schemes, which can be useful tools for assessing human rights risks if they are robust enough, cannot replace the comprehensive internal mechanisms mandated by the UNGPs. The [Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance](#) (IRMA) standards are the most robust within the sector, aligned with international standards on responsible business conduct, including a clear requirement to obtain FPIC.

Other existing or new standards are weaker. In 2025, the [Consolidated Mining Standard Initiative](#) (CMSI), an initiative by the Copper Mark, the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), the Mining Association of Canada's Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) and the World Gold Council to combine their respective voluntary standards, concluded its public consultation process.

While the final draft published for comment improves on the first draft by requiring companies to adopt human rights policies, [more must be done](#) including in relation to human rights due diligence across value chains, clear commitments to protect human rights defenders, and remediation of human rights abuses. Indigenous Peoples' rights are also inadequately protected in the latest [draft of the Consolidated Mining Standard Initiative](#) (CMSI). The CMSI must recognise Indigenous Peoples' right to FPIC as a binding right that includes the ability to give, withhold or withdraw consent at any time, with binding procedures to pause or halt activities when consent is not granted, rather than simply a process of consultation, as the current language suggests.

Disregarding human rights is a poor business decision

The notion that engaging communities and identifying human rights and environmental risks will slow down project development is not supported by evidence. In fact, there is evidence that ignoring the material impacts of transition mineral extraction on peoples and ecosystems, [failing to meaningfully engage and identify benefit sharing options](#), breeds social conflicts that can lead to additional costs and supply chain disruptions. Civic space shrinking and insufficient engagement with those raising concerns about the impacts of mining – and in some contexts, outright repression by governments – is bad news for investors and companies as it creates an [‘information black box’](#) on the presence and materiality of risks. It also contributes to a deterioration of public trust, social conflicts and opposition to other types of large-scale infrastructure projects that the energy transition depends on, and that investors may be exposed to.

These are ‘hidden’ risks for investors who are exposed to the mining sector directly or indirectly through energy transition investments, as well as companies sourcing minerals for the manufacturing of renewable energy technologies.

There is a better alternative. A recent UNDP [five-year analysis of 235 global firms](#) concludes that companies which have better human rights due diligence in place have seen financial benefits – and that in particular, more resilient supply chains built through careful due diligence represent smart long-term investments. This should make mining companies pause and reflect on their own policies and practices. It should also make downstream companies and investors reconsider the opportunity they have to demand more of the mining sector through their own due diligence policies.



Analysis by mineral

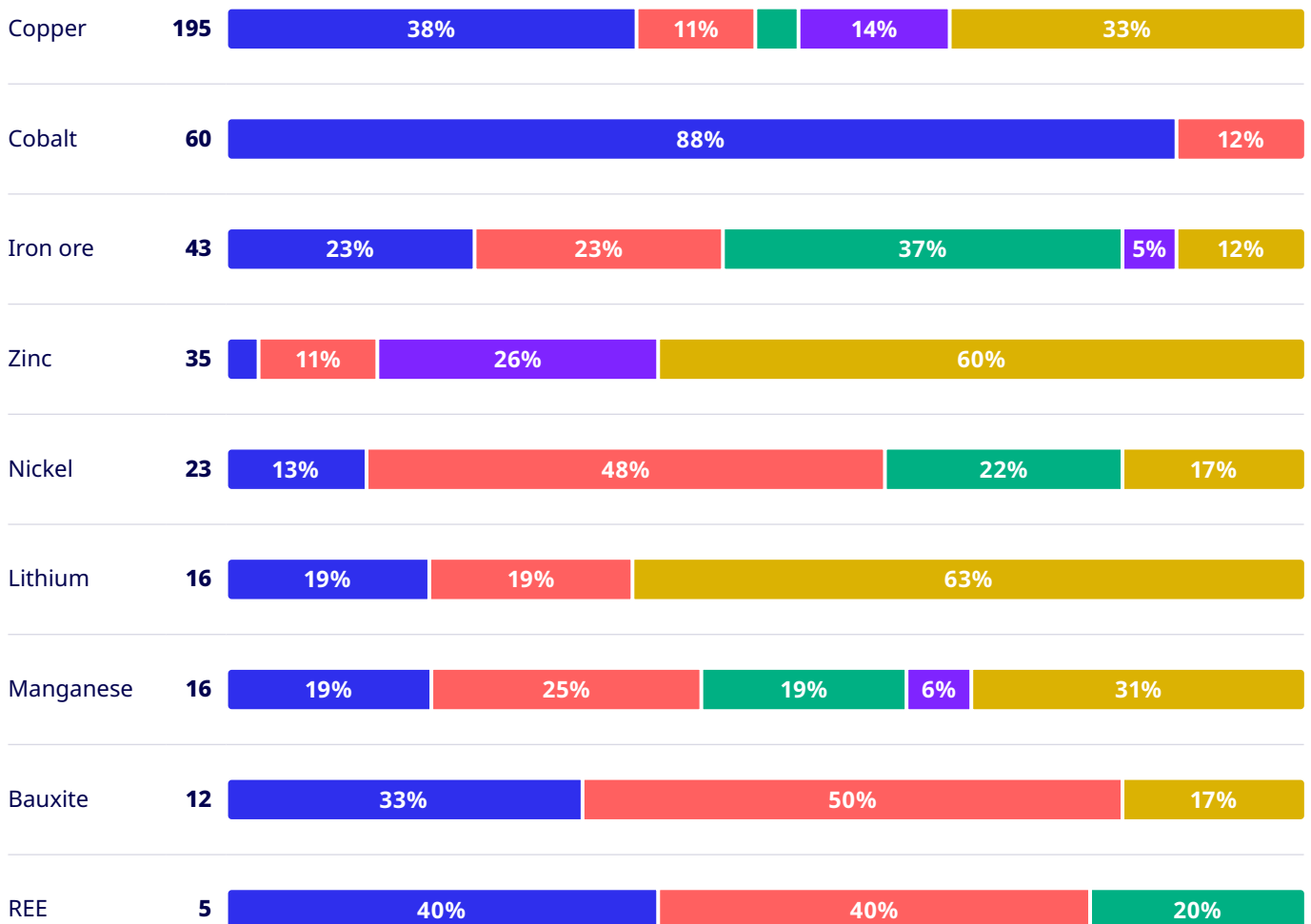
Copper continues to accumulate the highest number of allegations of abuse, associated with 738 – or 60% – across all years. A similar proportion (195, or about 60%) of all 2025 allegations were associated with copper extraction, including mines in which copper is extracted in association with other minerals.

Copper is a conductive metal and an essential energy transition raw material, used across a wide range of technologies and in power grids for electrification. The share of clean energy transition demand for this mineral [could reach close to 50% by 2035](#). Copper extraction is associated with significant risks to the environment and human rights, with 52% of copper mines located in high water stress areas, associated with 226 impacts on water access and/or water pollution in the Tracker.

Allegations against copper mines in 2025 are geographically spread across 23 countries, with Africa and South America accounting for the greater share of copper allegations. Allegations relating to other minerals are less geographically spread – bauxite, in particular, is highly concentrated, with allegations of abuse recorded in only three countries. Similarly, allegations related to rare earth elements, cobalt, nickel, manganese, iron ore and lithium are found in fewer than eight countries.

2025 ALLEGATIONS BY REGION

● Africa ● Asia and Pacific ● Europe and Central Asia ● North/Central America and Caribbean ● South America



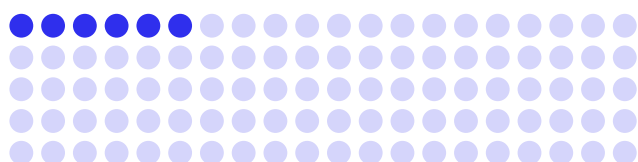
Trends analysis

Indigenous Peoples continue to be disproportionately affected

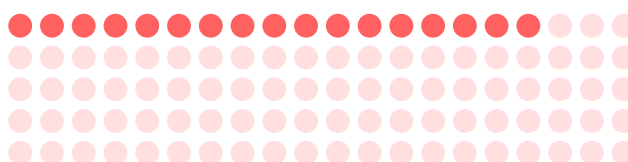
Despite Indigenous Peoples’ critical role as stewards of the world’s biodiversity – and the fact that more than half of global transition mineral reserves lie on or near their lands – decisions on where and how mining occurs continue to be made without their full and effective participation and consent.

Seventeen percent of allegations reported for 2025 relate to abuses of Indigenous Peoples’ rights. This is more than double their share of the global population (6%) – sharply highlighting the [outsized risks](#) that Indigenous Peoples, who are on the frontlines of the protection of land and ecosystems, face.

6% Indigenous Peoples (IP) population share












17% Allegations of abuses of IPs rights



Fifty-seven new allegations impacting Indigenous Peoples were recorded by the Tracker in 2025, including 32 allegations of abuse of their right to FPIC (see table below), 22 allegations of impacts on their local environment, as well as 25 allegations related to land rights and 11 allegations impacting their cultural rights.

Region/country	Operation/project and parent company (JV = joint venture)	Allegations
Asia and Pacific		11
Australia	Christmas Creek Fortescue	1
	Gove mine Rio Tinto	1
	Kings Valley Fortescue	1
	McArthur River Mine Glencore	1
India	Sijimali Vedanta Resources Limited	1
Indonesia	Dairi Prima project JV (PT Bumi Resources Minerals and China Nonferrous Metal Mining (CNMC))	1
	Harita Group Nickel mines in Obi Island Harita Nickel	1
	PT Stardust Estate Nickel Mine(s) in Morowali PT Stardust Estate Investment	1
	Weda Bay Project JV (Eramet, Tsingshan Holding Group and PT Antam Tbk)	2
Papua New Guinea	Wafi-Golpu JV (Harmony Gold and Newmont)	1

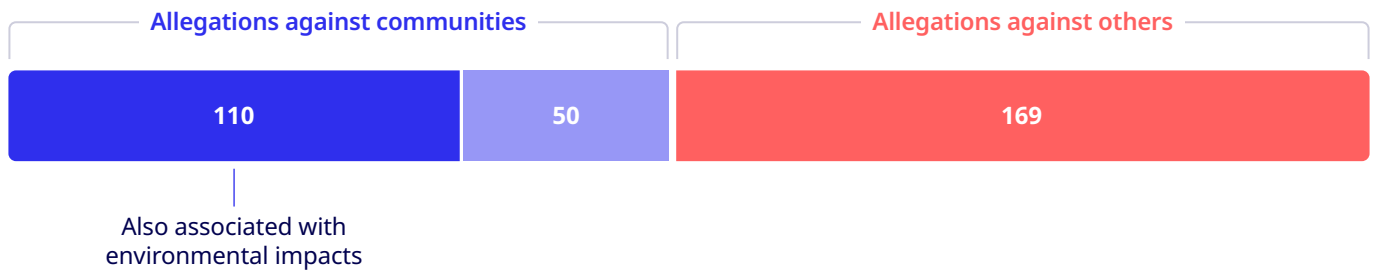
Region/country	Operation/project and parent company (JV = joint venture)	Allegations
North America, Central America and the Caribbean		●●● 3
 Canada	Copper Mountain Mine Hudbay Minerals	● 1
 Guatemala	Escobal Mine Pan American Silver	● 1
 Mexico	Peña Colorada Consorcio Minero Benito Juárez Peña Colorada (part of Ternium & ArcelorMittal)	● 1
South America		●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●● 18
 Argentina	Cauchari-Olaroz JV (Lithium Argentina, Ganfeng Lithium and JEMSE)	● 1
	Fenix (Salar del Hombre Muerto) Rio Tinto	●● 2
 Bolivia	El Bolivar Sinchi Wayra-Illapa	● 1
	Salar de Uyuni Yacimientos de Litio Bolivianos (YLB)	●●●● 4
 Brazil	Mineração Rio do Norte (MRN) JV (Glencore, South32 and Rio Tinto)	● 1
	Vale Iron Ore Complex in Carajás, Pára Vale	● 1
 Chile	Candelaria JV (Lundin Mining, Sumitomo Corp and Sumitomo Metal Mining)	● 1
	Collahuasi JV (Anglo American, Glencore and Japan Collahuasi Resources, part of Mitsui & Co.)	● 1
	Pascua-Lama Barrick Mining Corporation (formerly Barrick Gold Corp)	● 1
 Ecuador	El Domo, Curipamba JV (Silvercorp Metals Inc and Salazar Resources)	●● 2
 Peru	Antamina JV (BHP, Glencore, Teck Resources and Mitsubishi Corporation)	● 1
	Tintaya; Antapaccay Glencore	●● 2

Water access issues and pollution appear to be the leading sources of environmental harm for Indigenous Peoples, as recorded in 31 allegations (10%). In Bolivia, for instance, Indigenous Quechua communities have been [struggling for access to water](#) since their water springs have been allegedly dried or polluted by activities at the **Bolívar mine** (a JV between **Corporación Minera de Bolivia** and **Santa Cruz Silver Mining**). These conditions have forced some families to leave the community, while many others have had to sell their cattle – assets which represent not only economic security but also an important part of livelihoods and cultural identity. The owners of Bolívar mine were reached out to several times and through different means by the reporter, but no response was received.

Against this backdrop, it is no surprise that COP30 in Belém, held in November 2025, saw [record Indigenous participation and widespread protests](#) calling for stronger land protections and genuine inclusion in international decision-making bodies to end abuse of their rights in the energy transition.

Communities and local ecosystems are under pressure

The Tracker recorded 160 allegations of abuse against local communities across all regions in 2025 (representing close to 50% of total allegations). Three fifths of those allegations are associated with reported environmental impacts, mainly issues associated with water pollution and/or access to water (99 allegations), soil pollution (26 allegations), air pollution (26 allegations) and deforestation (19 allegations).



Impacts on air, water, soil and biodiversity in areas where communities live often result in livelihood impacts (13 allegations) and community health impacts (33 allegations recorded). This is exemplified by the alleged [increase in diseases and pathologies](#) reported amongst residents living near **QIT Madagascar Minerals (QMM)** rare earth mine in Madagascar. In its [response](#) to the allegation, QMM highlighted the mining sector's role in regional development and reaffirmed the company's commitment to delivering positive benefits for all stakeholders.

Allegations directly affecting community rights, even when not tied to environmental issues, are equally alarming. At least 29 new allegations have been linked to insufficient/inadequate consultation, 19 to land rights, 14 to inadequate living standards or precarious living conditions, and 14 to displacement or forced relocation. For instance, the **Sangaredi** bauxite mine in Guinea has allegedly [displaced and impoverished](#) thousands of people living close to the mining site. **Compagnie des bauxites de Guinée (CBG)**, owner of the Sangaredi bauxite mine, did not respond to a request for comment by the authors of the report.

The **Weda Bay nickel and cobalt project** in Indonesia has allegedly led to [land grabbing](#) affecting local communities and Indigenous Peoples', whose livelihoods and health have reportedly already been harmed by pollution from the mine. **PT Weda Bay Nickel** [responded](#) to BHRC's response request, stating it acknowledges the recommendations put forward by Climate Rights International and Nexus3 Foundation, noting that the company recognises the importance of minimising its impacts and reaffirming its commitment to responsible mining practices.

Year after year, the Tracker also records persistent impacts and lack of rehabilitation or remediation despite demands for judicial and non-judicial remedy. Examples of poor mining waste management turning into threats for local communities include the disaster at Brazil's **Mariana complex** (iron ore) – which caused hundreds of deaths, widespread displacement and lasting environmental harm – as well as [current concerns about a potential dam burst](#) at **Mineração Rio do Norte (MRN)** bauxite mine in Brazil. **Vale's** [response](#) to allegations related to the Mariana complex acknowledges the complexity of the impacts caused by the collapse of the **Samarco** dam and reiterates its commitment to full, just and human rights-oriented reparation for the affected people and territories. **Glencore**, the larger joint venture participant at MRN, [responded](#) that *"In joint ventures that we do not control or operate, we seek to use our influence to encourage them to act in accordance with our policies, for example through representation on the board."*

Patterns of retaliation against human rights defenders raising concerns about the impacts of mining operations

In 2025, BHRC recorded 790 instances of reported attacks against defenders raising concerns about business-related risks and harms across all geographies and nearly all business sectors. Of these, 181 were related to mining and 42 of those were related to operations and mines included in the Tracker, including seven confidential cases. Mining continues to be the sector connected with the highest number of reported attacks. A third of defenders who were murdered over the past decade had raised concerns about mining projects. Year after year, the Tracker highlights the continuum of violence against defenders speaking out about the impacts of mining operations.

In the context of transition mineral mining, reported attacks in 2025 included intimidation, threats, physical violence, arrest or detention and judicial harassment – primarily carried out by police, but also by private security personnel and actors within the judicial system. In Indonesia, for instance, at least nine students protesting for the closure of **PT Freeport Grasberg** mine in West Papua [were injured](#) following police violence, use of tear gas and forced dispersals. At least seven [were also arrested](#). In April 2026 BHRC invited **PT Freeport Indonesia** to [respond](#); the company stressed that it rejects any form of threats, intimidation or violence against defenders and that it, like all businesses in Indonesia, relies on the government for the maintenance of public order in Grasberg. The company has put MoUs in place with Indonesia’s national police and military to detail their working relationship, including business ethics and human rights.

In May 2025, Ngäbe-Buglé Indigenous communities and others engaged in public protest against the potential reopening of the **Cobre Panamá** mine, the approval of reforms to Panama’s social security system without prior consultation, and a memorandum of understanding between Panama and the United States which would allow increased US military presence in Panama. Reprisals by state forces included arbitrary detention of protestors by the National Border Service, violent raids by military forces in several communities, the issuing of arrest warrants for Indigenous leaders by the Public Prosecutor’s office and a serious gunshot injury to a peaceful student protestor, allegedly by police. In March 2026, in response to an invitation from BHRC, **First Quantum Minerals (FQM)** said that it *“unequivocally condemns any violation, intimidation or threats against human rights defenders or Indigenous communities and categorically rejects any suggestion that it was involved in the attacks,”* noting that *“none of the attacks on human rights defenders were carried out by or in coordination with Cobre Panamá or its employees, contractors, or affiliated persons.”* FQM also noted that it should not be assumed that all protestors were mobilised in relation to the potential reopening of the Cobre Panama, as it *“was mentioned only as part of the wider discussion and did not constitute a central driver of the protests.”*

Attacks on defenders in 2025 related to mines included in the Tracker cover several regions, but the majority of attacks documented are concentrated in only five mines.

Operation/project and parent company	Country	Attacks
Grasberg JV (MIND ID and Freeport McMoRan Inc)	 Indonesia	16 
Cobre Panamá JV (First Quantum Minerals and KOMIR)	 Panama	11 
Sino Metals China Nonferrous Metal Mining (CNMC)	 Zambia	3 
Curipampa-El Domo JV (Silvercorp Metals and Salazar Resources)	 Ecuador	3 
Tia Maria Grupo México	 Peru	2 

This situation is in stark contrast with expectations articulated by the UNGPs on Business and Human Rights and the [UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights' guidance on defenders](#), as well as sectoral guidance, such as the [ICMM guidance on Human Rights Defenders](#) and the [Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights' Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders](#).

Women bear unequal weight of mining's systemic injustices

Women are uniquely impacted by mining activities and disproportionately affected by violence near extractive sites. This reality is underscored by Oxfam's [recent analysis](#) of the gendered costs of heavy metal exposure in Peru. The findings show that women spend up to three times more hours than men caring for people poisoned by heavy metals. As a result, they lose wages by dedicating substantial time to caregiving, and frequently at the expense of their own physical and mental health. Other examples of gendered impacts have also been recorded in the DRC, where mining in **Kolwezi** allegedly poses [serious harm](#) to the reproductive health of women, and in Zambia, where **Kansanshi** mine contractors allegedly engaged in [sexual exploitation](#) of girls. The parent company of Kolwezi, **COMMUS**, [responded](#) that there have been no findings by competent authorities indicating any violations. **First Quantum Minerals**, which owns 80% of Kansanshi mine, said in its [response](#) that *"the Company maintains a zero-tolerance approach to any form of sexual exploitation, abuse or harm by directors, officers, employees, contractors or suppliers."*

Although gendered abuse is likely to be underreported due to fear of reprisals, structural biases and lack of media coverage, the Tracker recorded 39 allegations against women across all years.

Women are also largely excluded from compensation mechanisms related to remediation, as well as decision making related to mining operations. They typically make up a more limited part of the mining workforce and often face risks of gender-based violence and discrimination in the workplace, as exemplified in recent litigation against major **Rio Tinto** mines in Western Australia, relating to allegations of [systemic sexual harassment and discrimination](#).

Women often lead community resistance and are therefore targeted due to their visibility. Attacks on women human rights defenders also include misogynistic attacks and/or gender-based violence. At times, women are targeted because of their association with male defenders. In one example, representatives of **Sino Metals**, a unit of **China Nonferrous Metal Mining**, allegedly [went to the home of Timmy](#), a defender, and intimidated his 80-year-old mother into signing an agreement on the extent of damages following the tailing dam spill, even though she did not fully understand it. China Nonferrous Metal Mining [did not respond](#) to our request for comment.



Workers' rights and safety jeopardised

We recorded 92 allegations of labour rights abuse across all regions (representing 28% of total allegations) in 2025. In total, 66 occupational health and safety issues were reported, including 22 allegations involving at least one reported death, and ten allegations with at least one worker injured. Examples include the [collapse](#) of Codelco's **El Teniente** mine, which caused the death of six workers, or the [landslide](#) at **Freeport Grasberg** mine in Indonesia, resulting in two deaths and five missing workers. **Codelco** [responded](#) to our request for comment stating that due to ongoing nature of the investigation it could not provide detail on the causes of the accident, but that the company *"took measures to maintain active communication with the public and to safeguard the right to emotional and social protection of affected families of the workers."* **PT Freeport Indonesia** [did not respond](#) to a journalist's request for comment.

Besides health and safety, the high number of allegations of abuse concerning workers' freedom of association or right to unionisation (recorded in 20 allegations) remain concerning. Allegations of [union suppression](#) and outright discrimination against workers were reported at several mining sites in the DRC, including the **Sicomines, Kolwezi, Mazhamba East, Katanga, Kamoto Copper Company, Kamoto Underground (KTO), Tenke Fungurume (TFM), Deziwa** mines and at the **Metalkol RTR** project. Of those, only **COMMUS**, owner of Kolwezi; **CMOC**, owner of TFM; and **ERG**, owner of Metalkol, [responded](#) to allegations. COMMUS and ERG highlighted that they take allegations seriously, but refute the claims. CMOC explained the company's processes and grievance mechanisms to strengthen contractors' sustainable operational capabilities.

These mines have also recorded significant allegations of labour rights abuses, and they are not isolated cases. This year our Tracker recorded 13 allegations related to work and conditions, 18 related to fair and equal wages, ten related to unfair dismissals, and nine related to wage theft, living wage or poverty wages.

In many cases, workers were not easily silenced: we recorded at least ten reported cases of worker protests to demand better working conditions, 20 lawsuits, and ten reported strikes and other work stoppages. For instance, Grupo México's **Taxco** mine [has been on strike](#) for 18 years as a result of labour conflicts, mainly related to alleged lack of investments in health and safety and violations to the collective workers' contract. **Grupo México** [did not respond](#) to our request for comment. Taxco is not the only mine owned by Grupo México that has seen worker strikes: **Mina San Martín** has been recently ordered to pay back wages and social security to workers who [have also been on strike](#) for 18 years. Congolese workers have increasingly turned to [legal action](#) against mining companies to hold them accountable for a range of labour issues including union suppression, unlawful termination and injury – scoring significant wins.



Disrespect for rightsholders sparks resistance and derails supply chain resilience

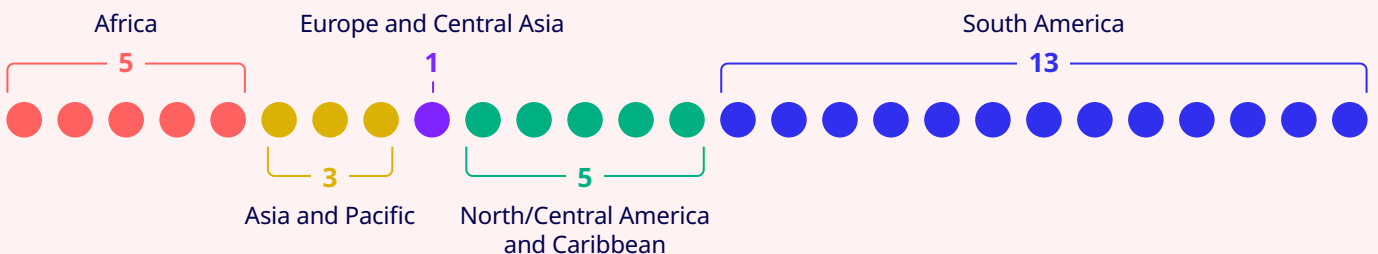
Faced with abuses of their rights, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and workers are mobilising, taking action to demand prevention of risks and remediation where harms have occurred. In 2024 and 2025 the Tracker recorded at least 173 cases of social conflicts, including 76 reported cases of protests, 25 strikes, and 94 lawsuits and regulatory actions, representing 36% of all allegations in those two years.

Increasingly, communities', Indigenous Peoples' and workers' mobilisation efforts are leading to the suspension of mining operations and adjacent costs for companies and their investors. A decade ago, [seminal research](#) on the cost of company-community conflicts in the sector highlighted that the most frequent costs were those due to temporary shutdowns or delay in operations. As mining for transition minerals accelerates, so does the risk of social conflicts and costs borne first by communities and their environment, along with impacts on companies and their investors.

In 2025, 27 cases of social conflict that led to mine suspensions (or suspensions sought after in litigation), slowdowns or closures were recorded in the Tracker, representing 8% of total allegations. Sixteen of these allegations related to protests and strikes; six were ordered in lawsuits and regulatory action; and in five cases, suspensions were sought in litigation that has not yet been adjudicated.

Most of the social conflicts that led to suspensions, slowdowns or closures were located in South America, followed by North America, Central America and the Caribbean, and Africa.

SOCIAL CONFLICTS BY REGION



For instance, in March 2025, Indigenous communities initiated a [10-day blockade](#) at Glencore's **Antapaccay copper mine**, located in the Cusco region of Peru. This action was taken to protest against the mine's expansion plans, which have raised environmental concerns among local residents.

Another example of persistent community protest with concrete consequences for companies is found in **Rio Tinto's** proposed lithium project in Serbia's **Jadar Valley**, which has seen [widespread opposition](#) since 2021. Protests led to the suspension of the project in 2022, but in 2024 the government reinstated the mining licence, reigniting public dissent and ongoing demonstrations. In 2025, Rio Tinto [placed the Jadar project under care and maintenance](#). Besides protests, Indigenous Peoples and communities are taking their fight to the courts: in Brazil, for instance, **Norsk Hydro** bauxite mining operations in Pará were [suspended](#) after a class action lawsuit filed by a local association of Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian communities. This followed years of conflict and [insufficient engagement](#) with local quilombola communities.

In previous years, large mining projects have been suspended due to social conflict. **China Minmetals' Las Bambas mine** in Peru, which reportedly contributes 1% of the country's GDP, has been mired by ongoing conflict with local communities. Local NGOs say affected communities have a [range of concerns](#), including doubts about economic opportunities, environmental issues and lack of adequate compensation for land. In 2022, local community members occupied the mine site, which led to a [suspension](#) of operations. Earlier that year, communities blocked the road used to transport ore from the mine, and in 2021, blockades on that road led to suspension of mining operations. A local union estimates blockades at Las Bambas [cost](#) China Minmetals USD9.5 million per day. According to China Minmetals, transportation of materials has been blocked on [over 400 days](#) since the company began operations in 2016 – an overall estimated loss of USD3.8 billion.

Other recent examples include **Southern Copper Corp's Cuajone copper mine** in Peru, which faced a 52-day shutdown as a result of protests by Indigenous Peoples for rights violations. The company, a subsidiary of **Grupo México**, faced significant operational disruptions and losses exceeding [USD260 million in exports](#) and a [10% decline](#) in its overall copper production during that period.



Litigation in focus

In 2025, a significant proportion of allegations of human rights abuse in the Tracker led to lawsuits and regulatory action: 44 out of 329 (13%). This trend should serve as a warning to companies of the legal, financial and reputational consequences associated with failure to embed respect for human rights in their operations. Lawsuits and regulatory complaints are one way that mining-affected communities are demanding respect for their rights – often as a last resort measure when conflicts have been long entrenched and companies unresponsive to their grievances.

Of the 44 allegations associated with lawsuits or regulatory action, eight (18%) involved Indigenous Peoples' rights. A salient example relates to **Vale's Onça Puma** nickel mine in Brazil, where the Federal Prosecutor's Office, responsible for protecting Indigenous Peoples' rights, is [suing](#) the company in relation to heavy metal contamination in the Catete River allegedly linked to dangerously high levels of heavy metals in the bloodstreams of the Xikrin People. The Federal Prosecutor's Office is demanding that Vale establish a permanent health monitoring programme for the community. While this case seeks to influence how the company conducts its operations in the future, several other litigants have sought the suspension of mining operations. Six lawsuits and regulatory action recorded in 2025 led to the suspension of operations. A further five seek suspension of mining operations but have not yet been adjudicated.

In Bolivia, for example, the state-owned **Yacimientos de Litio (YLB)** has been ordered by a local court to refrain from taking any administrative or operational steps in relation to two contracts concluded with Russian and Chinese companies to establish direct lithium extraction operations in **Salar de Uyuni**. YLB conducted preliminary activities without the required legislative approvals, environmental assessments and consultations with Indigenous Peoples.

In India, similarly, the Union Government temporarily [ordered Vedanta to halt](#) its plans to clear forestland for its **Sijimali bauxite mine** for alleged failure to seek the consent of local Adivasi and other communities whose livelihoods and religious and cultural practices are linked to the forests. The petitioners allege Vedanta provided fraudulent documentation as evidence of consultation with local communities.



Regional updates



South America

South America continues to be a hotspot in the Tracker, with alleged abuses at assessed mines totaling 97 in 2025, nearly double the number of allegations recorded in 2024.

Cases in the region continue to show interrelation between impacts on the environment, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In Peru, the soon-to-operate **Ariana mine** would allegedly [put the right to water of more than 10 million people in Lima and Callao at risk](#) due to potential impacts in the Marcapomacocha river basin. The mine's parent company, **Alpayana**, did not respond to our request for comment. In Jujuy, Argentina, the **Cauchari-Olaroz mine**, owned by **Minera Exar**, allegedly [disrupts natural water cycles](#), threatening high-Andean wetlands with salinisation and putting at risk local biodiversity and the survival of Indigenous communities. Despite the project's area of influence overlapping with constitutionally recognised Indigenous Peoples' land, FPIC has reportedly not been secured. Minera Exar did not respond to our request for comment.

A – allegations, **LC** – local communities and attacks against civil society organisations, **E** – environmental impacts, **W** – impacts on workers, **G** – governance and transparency, **S** – security issues and conflict zones

Country	Parent company (JV = joint venture)	Operation/project	Minerals	A	LC	E	W	G	S	
Argentina	Glencore	El Pachón	Copper	1		3				
		Minera Agua Rica Alumbraera (Proyecto MARA)	Copper	1	2	2				
	Integra Capital	El Aguilar	Zinc	2	1	1		1		
	JV Minera Exar SA (Lithium Argentina, Ganfeng Lithium and JEMSE)	Cauchari-Olaroz	Lithium	1	5	2				
	Rio Tinto	Fenix (Salar del Hombre Muerto)	Lithium	3	8	2				
Bolivia	Sinchi Wayra-Illapa	El Bolivar	Zinc	3	10	4				
	Sumitomo Corporation (part of Sumitomo Group)	San Cristobal	Zinc	1		1		1		
	YLB (Yacimientos de Litio Bolivianos)	Salar de Uyuni	Lithium	5	11	9		1		
Brazil	Mineração Buritirama	Unknown	Manganese	3	6	3				
	LHG Mining	Urucum mine	Manganese	1		3		1		
	JV Mineração Rio do Norte (MRN) (Glencore, South32 and Rio Tinto)	Mineração Rio do Norte (MRN)	Bauxite	2	6	4		1		
	Nexa Resources (part of Votorantim)	Vazante mine	Zinc	1	1	3	5			
	Vale	Mariana Complex		Iron ore	3	4	1			
			Onça Puma	Nickel	1	2	4			
		Vale Iron Ore Complex in Carajás, Pará	Iron ore	1	3					
JV Vale Base Metals (Vale S.A. and Manara Minerals Investment Co)	Sossego	Copper	3	1	4		1			
Chile	Albemarle	Salar de Atacama (Albemarle)	Lithium	1		3				
	Barrick Mining Corporation (formerly Barrick Gold Corp)	Pascua-Lama	Copper	1	1	2				
	BHP	Spence	Copper	4	1	2	7			
	Codelco	Andina	Copper	1			1			
		Chuquicamata	Copper	2	1		2			

Country	Parent company (JV = joint venture)	Operation/project	Minerals	A	LC	E	W	G	S
		El Teniente	Copper	1	1		4		
		Salvador	Copper	2	1		10		
	JV Compañía Contractual Minera Candelaria (Lundin Mining, Sumitomo Corp and Sumitomo Metal Mining)	Alcaparrosa	Copper	1	2	2			
		Candelaria	Copper	1	4	4			
	JV Compañía Minera Doña Inés de Collahuasi (Anglo American, Glencore and Japan Collahuasi Resources)	Collahuasi	Copper	2	3	1	1		
	JV Compañía Minera Teck Carmen de Andacollo (Teck Resources and Empresa Nacional de Minería)	Carmen de Andacollo	Copper	1	2	3			
	JV Compañía Minera Zaldivar SpA (Antofagasta Plc and Barrick Gold)	Zaldivar	Copper	2	2	1	3		
	JV Minera Escondida Ltd (BHP, Rio Tinto and JECO Corp)	Escondida	Copper	3	1	2	2		
	JV Minera Los Pelambres (Antofagasta, Mitsubishi Corp, Marubeni Corp, Mitsubishi Materials Corp and JX Metals Corp)	Los Pelambres	Copper	1			2		
	JV Sierra Gorda SCM (KGHM and South32)	Sierra Gorda	Copper	2		2	3		
Colombia	Atico Mining	El Roble	Copper	4	3	4	5	2	
	CoreX Holding BV	Cerro Matoso	Nickel	3	5	8	1		
Ecuador	JV Curimining S.A. (Silvercorp Metals Inc and Salazar Resources)	El Domo, Curipamba	Copper, Zinc	4	16	4		1	
	JV Ecuacorriente SA (Tongling Nonferrous Metals and China Railway Construction Corporation)	Mirador	Copper	2	8	6			
Guyana	Bosai Minerals Group	Matthews Ridge	Manganese	1			4		
Peru	Alpayana	Ariana	Zinc, Copper	1		3			
	China Minmetals	Las Bambas	Copper	3	6				
	JV Compañía Minera Antamina (BHP, Glencore, Teck Resources, Mitsubishi Corporation)	Antamina	Copper, Zinc	4	16		8		
	JV Compañía Minera Zafranal SAC (Teck Resources and Mitsubishi Materials Corporation)	Zafranal	Copper	2	3				
	Glencore	Tintaya; Antapaccay	Copper	4	4	4	3		
	Grupo México	Tia Maria	Copper	3	8	5			
		Toquepala	Copper	2	1	1	2		
	Integra Capital	Unknown	Zinc	1		2		1	
		Yauli, Andaychagua	Copper, Zinc	1	3				
	Nexa Resources (part of Votorantim)	Atacocha San Gerardo	Copper, Zinc	1	1				
		El Porvenir	Zinc, Copper	2	1		3		
	JV Sociedad Minera Cerro Verde (Freeport-McMoRan, SMM Cerro Verde Netherlands and Compañía de Minas Buenaventura S.A.A.)	Cerro Verde	Copper	2	4	4	7		
				97	158	109	73	10	

Ongoing reprisals for those voicing concerns around Curipamba-El Domo project in Ecuador

The **Curipamba-El Domo mining project** in Las Naves, Bolívar – operated by **Curimining**, a joint venture between Canadian companies **Salazar Resources** and **Silvercorp Metals** – is expected to produce copper, gold, silver, zinc and lead. Operations are scheduled to begin in July 2027. Local communities have raised concerns about the consultation process and potential environmental and social impacts, arguing that public participation was insufficient and conducted with limited information. Civil society groups have also questioned the adequacy of the project’s environmental impact assessments.

In 2025, organisations that support the communities that are opposing the project reported increasing pressure and intimidation. Ecuador’s **Comisión Ecuémica de Derechos Humanos (CEDHU)** faced judicial harassment after publishing a video criticising the consultation process. The **Frente Nacional Antiminero (FNA)** also reported defamation after being publicly accused of links to organised crime and illegal mining.

Likewise, the FNA and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) also denounced violent police repression during protests in Las Naves, where several people were reportedly injured, even as the project continued to advance through its development phase. BHRG invited Silvercorp Metals and Curimining to respond to reported attacks against defenders. The companies’ attorney responded that *“all constitutional actions filed against the Curipamba-El Domo project before local courts have been dismissed and/or declared inadmissible by local judges and by the Constitutional Court of Ecuador.”*



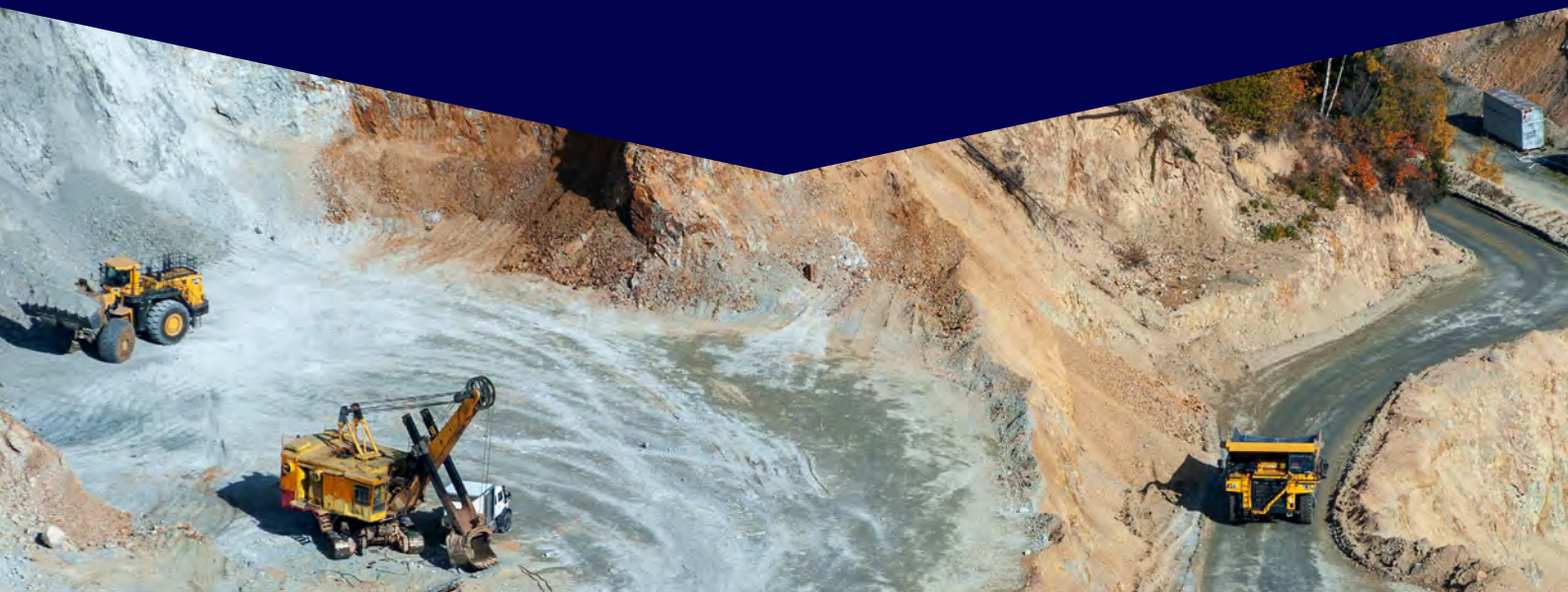
Africa and Middle East

In Africa, 100 allegations were recorded in 2025 – up 122% from 2024's 45 allegations. This is an alarming continuation of the increase in allegations recorded in the region in our last global analysis (in 2023, 26 allegations were recorded). As demand for Africa's minerals continues to increase and global powers vie for market access in the [DRC](#), [Zambia](#) and elsewhere, human rights abuses are also likely to rise unless companies, states and investors take decisive action to prevent and remediate abuses.

As in 2024, the DRC accounted for the highest number of allegations in Africa (56). Workers' rights emerged as a key area of concern, with 115 impacts recorded including [reports of below poverty wages](#) at key large-scale mining operations in the DRC, as well as unsafe working conditions leading to fatalities, among other abuses. Twelve allegations contributing a total of 45 impacts on workers' rights are recorded against **Kamoto Copper Company**, a joint venture between **Glencore** (70%), the state-owned company **Gecamines** (25%) and the DRC government (5%), across three mining operations: **Kamoto Underground Mine (KTO)**, **Katanga KOV mine** and **Mashamba East; Tilwezembe**.

In 2025, we began tracking allegations in Uganda, with the addition of the **Makuutu** rare earth elements mine. One allegation was recorded in 2025, and we will continue to monitor Uganda's mining industry in the Tracker, especially given the [limited civic space](#) in the country. **Makuutu** is directly owned by a local entity, **Rwenzori Rare Metals**, in which a 60% stake is held by Australian company **Ionic Rare Earths**. Local communities allege they [have not been properly consulted](#) by the mining company, including in relation to land and water use and long-term benefits. Rwenzori Rare Metals denies the allegation, stating that *"extensive stakeholder engagement [was] undertaken in connection with the Makuutu project."* As Western countries seek to diversify their rare earth supply chains following Chinese [export restrictions](#) on rare earth elements in 2025, development of rare earth projects, including in Africa, are likely to accelerate.

A major [environmental disaster](#) occurred in Zambia in February 2025 when a tailings dam at a **Sino-Metals Leach Zambia copper mine** collapsed and released an estimated 50 million litres of toxic material into a stream that feeds the Kafue river. The river, which is Zambia's most significant waterway, is a source of water for drinking, fishing, irrigation and industrial use, in addition to supporting ecosystems. Affected communities have filed a lawsuit against **China Nonferrous Mining Corporation (CNMC)**, the parent company of Sino-Metals Leach Zambia, claiming immediate payment of USD200 million as an emergency fund and USD80 billion for a government-managed remediation fund. CNMC [opposes](#) the lawsuit.



A – allegations, **LC** – local communities and attacks against civil society organisations, **E** – environmental impacts, **W** – impacts on workers, **G** – governance and transparency, **S** – security issues and conflict zones

Country	Parent company (JV = joint venture)	Operation/project	Minerals	A	LC	E	W	G	S
DRC	JV Boss Mining (Eurasian Resources Group and Gecamines)	Boss Mining	Copper, Cobalt	1	1	6			
	China Minmetals	Kinsevere	Copper, Cobalt	2	3	2			
	JV Comika Mining (Wanbao Mining and DRC government)	Kamoya	Copper, Cobalt	2	1	8			
	Congo Dongfang International Mining (CDM)	Unknown	Cobalt	1	2	4			
	Eurasian Resources Group (ERG)	Metalkol RTR Project	Copper, Cobalt	4	2	5	9	2	
	JV Kambove Mining (China Nonferrous Metals Company and Gécamines)	Kambove	Copper, Cobalt	3	3	7			
	JV Kamoia Copper SA (Zijin Mining, Ivanhoe, DRC government and Crystal River Global Limited)	Kamoia-Kakula	Copper	5	6	2		2	
	JV Kamoto Copper Company (Glencore and Gecamines)	Unknown	Copper, Cobalt	3		3	5	2	
		Unknown	Copper, Cobalt	1	1		9		
		Kamoto Underground Mine (KTO)	Copper, Cobalt	2	1		9	2	
		Katanga	Copper, Cobalt	3	1		11	2	
	JV Kisanfu Mining (KIMIN) (Somika and Gecamines)	Unknown	Copper, Cobalt	1	1		5		2
	JV La Compagnie Minière de Musonoie (Zijin Mining Group, Gécamines and DRC government)	Kolwezi	Copper, Cobalt	5	5	2	20	2	
	JV Mutanda Mining (Glencore and DRC government)	Mutanda	Copper, Cobalt	3	2	5		2	
	JV Ruashi Mining SAS (Metorex and Gecamines)	Musonoi	Copper, Cobalt	1		4			
		Ruashi Mine	Copper, Cobalt	3	1	5		2	
	Shalina Resources Ltd.	Etoile mine	Copper, Cobalt	1	1		7		
	JV Sicominex (Gécamines, SIMCO, China Railway Engineering Corporation, Sinohydro and Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt)	Sicomines Copper-Cobalt mine project	Copper, Cobalt	2	1		9	2	
	JV Société Minière De Deziwa (Somidez) (China Nonferrous Metal Mining Group and Gécamines)	Deziwa mine	Copper, Cobalt	2	1		10	2	
Somika (Société Minière du Katanga)	Unknown	Cobalt, Copper	1		4				
JV Tenke Fungurume Mining (TFM) (CMOC and Gecamines)	Tenke Fungurume	Copper, Cobalt	5	2	5	9	2		
Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Co. Ltd.	Unknown	Cobalt	1	2	2	1			
	Unknown	Copper, Cobalt	1		4				
Gabon	JV Compagnie Minière de l'Ogooué (ERAMET and Société Équatoriale des Mines)	Moanda	Manganese	1			2		

Country	Parent company (JV = joint venture)	Operation/project	Minerals	A	LC	E	W	G	S
Guinea	JV Baowu Winning Consortium Simandou (China Baowu Steel Group, Winning Intl. Group and Weiqiao Aluminium)	Simandou North (blocks 1 and 2)	Iron ore	5	6	12	6		
	JV Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (Guinean Government and Halco Mining)	Sangaredi mine	Bauxite	2	3	8			
	Emirates Global Aluminium	GAC mine	Bauxite	1		2			
	JV SimFer Jersey Ltd (Rio Tinto and Chalco Iron Ore Holdings)	Simandou South (blocks 3 and 4)	Iron ore	5	6	10	6		
	JV Société Minière de Boké (Winning Intl. Group, United Mining Supply, Shandong Weiqiao Aluminium and Power, Guinean Government)	SMB-Winning Boke Bauxite Mining Project	Bauxite	1			5		
Madagascar	JV QIT Madagascar Minerals (Rio Tinto and Govt. of Madagascar)	QIT Madagascar Minerals (QMM)	REE	1	2	1			
Namibia	JV Rosh Pinah Zinc Corporation (Appian Capital Advisory, PE Minerals, Jaguar Investments Four and Rosh Pinah Employee Empowerment Participation Scheme Trust)	Rosh Pinah	Zinc	1	3	3			
South Africa	JV Assmang Proprietary Ltd (Assore and African Rainbow Minerals)	Black Rock Operation	Manganese	1	1			1	
	JV United Manganese of Kalahari (Majestic Silver Trading 40 and New African Manganese Investments)	United Manganese of Kalahari	Manganese	1	2			1	
Uganda	Ionic Rare Earths	Makuutu Project	REE	1	1	2		1	
Zambia	Barrick Mining Corporation (formerly Barrick Gold Corp)	Lumwana	Copper	2	1		5		
	China Nonferrous Metal Mining (CNMC)	Unknown	Copper	8	18	15	2	1	
	Consolidated Nickel Mines	Munali	Nickel	1			3		
	First Quantum Minerals	Unknown	Copper	3	1	1	5		
		Sentinel	Copper, Nickel	1			4		
	JV Kansanshi Mining Plc (First Quantum Minerals and ZCCM)	Kansanshi Mine	Copper	2	8				
		Sentinel	Copper, Nickel	1	7				
	JV Konkola Copper Mines (Vedanta Resources Limited and ZCCM Investments Holdings)	Nchanga	Copper	1	1	4			
JV Mopani Copper Mines (ZCCM Investment Holdings and International Resources Holding RSC)	Mopani	Copper, Cobalt	2	2	4	1			
Zimbabwe	Kuvimba Mining House	Sandawana Mines	Lithium	2	3	7	1	1	
	Sinomine Resource Group	Bikita Mine	Lithium	1	5	3			
				100	108	140	155	29	2

New project, old issues: militarisation of the DRC mining sector in the Lobito Corridor

Written in collaboration with International Peace Information Service (IPIS) and Initiative pour la Bonne Gouvernance et les Droits Humains (IBGDH)

The Lobito Corridor plans to connect the mineral-rich provinces of Haut-Katanga and Lualaba in the DRC with the port of Lobito in Angola through a new railway system. The corridor has become a flagship project of the EU Global Gateway and the US Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, and is presented as an important driver of development in a region that is lacking essential transportation infrastructure. Yet the Lobito Corridor will only bring benefits for local communities if it also enables the mobility of passengers and other goods – not only minerals – or otherwise risks deepening adverse sentiments towards the mining sector.

These benefit sharing concerns intersect with broader and longstanding governance challenges linked to mining in the DRC, including in Lualaba province, that often resorts to the use of the military. Mining companies have reportedly bolstered their security by directly enlisting law enforcement and the military: in July 2019, **Kamoto Cooper Company (KCC)** and **Tenke Fungurume Mining (TFM)** allegedly allowed around 850 soldiers from the national military forces (Forces Armées de la RDC – FARDC) to officially enter the mining sector to remove artisanal miners. **Glencore** and **CMOC**, which own KCC and TFM respectively, in joint venture with state-owned mining company **Gécamines**, deny requesting the deployment of the army.

Today, the military operates clandestinely both at industrial and artisanal mining sites. Paradoxically, the soldiers who were called in to expel artisanal miners are now reported to be participating in the illegal takeover of mining concessions: the Kazakh group ERG has officially complained to the Congolese government about Congolese Army generals being involved in illegal looting at its mining sites.

According to the International Peace Information Service, the FARDC is present at 64% of the artisanal mining sites in Lualaba. This increased militarisation is reportedly accompanied by human rights violations committed by these soldiers. As local NGO Initiative pour la Bonne Gouvernance et les Droits Humains (IBGDH) stated: *“In the Musonoie neighbourhood of Kolwezi, residents regularly report live-fire shooting and stray bullets that threaten the lives of civilians. Checkpoints manned by soldiers crisscross the mining areas to collect ransoms.”*

While the militarisation of mining sites has caused violence and human rights abuses, the government’s recent announcement of a new USD100 million ‘Mining Guard’ programme, backed by the United States and United Arab Emirates, will likely further deteriorate social acceptance of mining actors operating along the Lobito Corridor.



Europe and Central Asia

Europe and Central Asia reported 28 new allegations in 2025. Workers are the most frequently affected group, mainly due to **Yuvileyna iron ore mine**, in Ukraine, which recorded 13 worker-related allegations, and **Chiatura manganese mines**, in Georgia, which recorded three worker-related allegations. Impacts on local communities and biodiversity are also significant. In Serbia, locals allege toxic pollution, forced or pressured relocations, and unfulfilled cleanup promises by Chinese-owned **Bor copper mines**. Villagers report poisoned air, degraded farmland, and health issues. The company denies wrongdoing, claiming legal compliance and environmental investment, while affected communities continue to suffer and resist.

A – allegations, **LC** – local communities and attacks against civil society organisations, **E** – environmental impacts, **W** – impacts on workers, **G** – governance and transparency, **S** – security issues and conflict zones

Country	Parent company (JV = joint venture)	Operation/project	Minerals	A	LC	E	W	G	S
Georgia	Georgian Manganese LLC	Chiatura mines	Manganese	3	1	1	5		
Russia	JSC Holding Company Metalloinvest	Unknown	Iron ore	1			2		
	Metalloinvest Management Company LLC	Unknown	Iron ore	1			3		
	Norilsk Nickel	Komsomolsky mine	Nickel, Copper	2		1	3		
		Mayak mine	Nickel, Copper	1		1			
		Oktyabrsky mine	Copper, Nickel	1		1			
		Taimyrsky mine	Copper, Nickel	1			3		
Rosatom	Karnasurt mine	REE	1	1		2			
Serbia	Zijin Mining	Bor Copper Mines	Copper	3	7	4	1		
Ukraine	DCH	Frunze mine	Iron ore	1	1		2		
		Yuvileyna mine	Iron ore	13	13		27		
				28	23	8	48		



Communities use legal action to halt Chiatura mine expansion in their backyards

Written in collaboration with Green Alternative

Manganese extraction in Chiatura began nearly 150 years ago, but the scale of operations and their adverse environmental and social impact have intensified in recent decades. In 2006, a 40-year mineral extraction licence for manganese mining in the Chiatura Municipality was granted without a prior Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This licence is currently held by **Georgian Manganese LLC**.

Since 2006, it is alleged that Georgian Manganese has not fully met the requirements and regulation established by Georgian legislation governing mineral extraction and processing. Following a partial inspection of the company's operations, the environmental damage caused between 2013 and 2017 alone was valued at GEL416 million (USD166.4 million in 2017). In 2017, the state appointed a Special Environmental Manager to oversee the company after a court found that the company had caused “extremely severe ecological conditions” in Chiatura. But the situation did not improve and the scale of extraction expanded significantly, thereby increasing the scale of environmental degradation and social conflict. Nine years after the introduction of this temporary management regime, several villages – including Shukruti, Rgani, Mghvimevi, Darkveti, Tabagrebi, Khalipauri and others – still face irreversible damage and destruction as a result of the company's activities. In July 2025, BHRC published an analysis of transition minerals' impacts in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and invited companies to respond to the allegations. Georgian Manganese was invited, but it did not respond.

In 2023, a resident learned that Georgian Manganese intended to commence manganese extraction in his neighbourhood, specifically within residential yards. After no clarification was received from the National Agency of Mineral Resources, the resident, with the support of NGOs (Green Alternative, the Civil Activities Center and Chiatura of the Future), pursued legal remedy through the courts. The lawsuit was brought against the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia before the Tbilisi City Court in 2024.



Photo by Mariam Nikuradze, OC Media

The plaintiff seeks the partial annulment of the decision granting the mineral extraction licence, specifically challenging the provisions authorising open-cast mining in the village. He claims that the contested decision to grant the licence violates the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and the right to participate in decision making processes regarding environmental matters, both under national and international law.

By reaching a decision without conducting a prior Environmental Impact Assessment, he alleges that the state has further neglected its constitutional obligation to protect the environment and ensure the rational use of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, as mandated by Article 29 of the Constitution of Georgia.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture is challenging the plaintiff's grounds stating that the claim is based on speculative/prospective damages.

Although the Tbilisi City Court admitted the lawsuit for proceedings, the case review period has been extended to five months. As of May 2026, there have been no further developments in the proceedings, and the case is still ongoing. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture maintains that the Ministry is not the proper defendant, it also explains that the plaintiff's claim is based on speculative/prospective damages and that the statute of limitations for challenging the decision to issue the licence has already expired.

It is important to note that Georgia's civic space has been deteriorating year after year, with the adoption of several laws to restrict freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. This is exemplified by the increased number of attacks recorded in Georgia against defenders raising concerns about business, including five recorded attacks connected with Georgian Manganese in 2024. As a result, access to justice may still not be guaranteed.



Photo by Mariam Nikuradze, OC Media

Asia and the Pacific

In 2025, 62 allegations were recorded against operations in Asia and the Pacific, up 121% from the 28 allegations recorded in the region in 2024.

The highest number of allegations by country was recorded in Indonesia (28), mainly related to allegations of defenders' attacks in **Grasberg Block Cave** (17). Serious environmental and human rights abuses allegations also related to the extraction of nickel and cobalt in **Weda Bay** (4).

Several allegations (15) were also recorded in Australia, of which five related to iron ore operations that **BHP** holds a majority stake in (**Mt Newman (formerly Mt Whaleback)**, **South Flank**, **Area C (Mt Goldsworthy)** and **Jimblebar**). Three of these allegations impact workers' rights. Labour unions representing workers at **South Flank** and **Area C** alleged that BHP was frustrating negotiations related to wages and working conditions and threatened to complain to the Fair Work Commission, Australia's workplace tribunal, if the company continued to postpone negotiations. Local media describes such negotiations as "unthinkable just a few years ago", demonstrating the impact of a regulatory environment that protects workers' rights coupled with strong unions.

There was a sharp increase in the number of allegations recorded against mines in India, from three in 2024 to six in 2025. A third of allegations in India in 2025 are associated with the state-owned **Manganese Ore India Limited (MOIL)**, against which no allegations were recorded in 2024, with four allegations across three mining operations.

Of allegations relating to the extraction of rare earth elements, 40% were recorded in Asia and the Pacific. Two allegations against mines in China indicate a troubling pattern of media intimidation. In the course of investigating allegations of soil and water pollution in connection with radioactive mine waste at a mine owned by **China Rare Earth Group Co** in Inner Mongolia, BBC journalists were stopped and questioned by police and confronted and effectively detained for three hours by company officials. Similarly, at the **Bayan Obo** mine, owned by **Baogang Group**, New York Times journalists investigating pollution from the mine were stopped and questioned by police officers and company security guards before being held on company premises for two hours for further questioning.

A – allegations, **LC** – local communities and attacks against civil society organisations, **E** – environmental impacts, **W** – impacts on workers, **G** – governance and transparency, **S** – security issues and conflict zones

Country	Parent company (JV = joint venture)	Operation/project	Minerals	A	LC	E	W	G	S
Australia	Alcoa	Huntly mine	Bauxite	1		4			
		Willowdale mine	Bauxite	1		4			
	JV Area C (BHP, Itochu Minerals and Energy, Mitsui Iron Ore Corporation)	Area C (Mt Goldsworthy)	Iron ore	1			1		
	Fortescue	Christmas Creek	Iron ore	2	5		2		
		Kings Valley	Iron ore	1	3	1			
	Glencore	McArthur River Mine	Zinc	1	6	4			
	JV Jimblebar (BHP, Itochu Minerals and Energy, Mitsui&Co)	Jimblebar	Iron ore	1		1			
	JV Mt Newman (BHP, Mitsui-Itochu Iron, Itochu Minerals & Energy Australia Pty Ltd)	Mt Newman (formerly Mt Whaleback)	Iron ore	1	1		1		

Country	Parent company (JV = joint venture)	Operation/project	Minerals	A	LC	E	W	G	S
	Rio Tinto	Gove mine	Bauxite	1	5				
	JV South Flank (BHP, Itochu Minerals and Energy, Mitsui Iron Ore Corporation)	South Flank	Iron ore	1			1		
	JV Talison Lithium (Tianqi, IGO Ltd and Albemarle)	Greenbushes	Lithium	2	1	2	2		
	JV Worsley Alumina (South32, Japan Alumina Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd, Sojitz Resources (Australia) Pty Ltd)	Boddington Bauxite Mine	Bauxite	2	2	7			
China	Baotou Iron & Steel (Baogang)	Bayan Obo Rare Earth Mine	REE	1	6	4			
	China National Gold Group	Wunugetushan Mine	Copper	1	2		1		
	China Rare Earth Jiangxi Company	Unknown	REE	1	8	6			
	Panzhuhua Iron & Steel	Zhulan Iron Mine	Iron ore	1			3		
	Zangge Mining Co., Ltd.	Chaerhan Salt Lake	Lithium	1	1				
India	JV Hindustan Zinc Minerals (Vedanta Resources and the Govt. of India)	Rampura Agucha mine	Zinc	2	1		8	1	
	Manganese Ore India Limited	Chikhla	Manganese	1			4		
		Unknown	Manganese	2	1		3	1	
		Tirodi	Manganese	1		1			
	National Mineral Development Corporation	Bailadila Mines	Iron ore	2		1	3		
	Vedanta Resources Limited	Sijimali	Bauxite	1	6	1	1	1	
Indonesia	Harita Group	Unknown	Nickel, Cobalt	1	1	1			
	Harita Nickel	Unknown	Nickel	2	12	7		1	2
	PT Bukit Makmur Istindo Nikeltama	Unknown		1	1	1			
	JV PT Dairi Prima (PT Bumi Resources Minerals and China Nonferrous Metal Mining (CNMC))	Dairi Prima project		1	5	1		1	
	JV PT Freeport Indonesia (PT Mining Industry Indonesia, Freeport McMoRan Inc)	Grasberg Block Cave		17	48		3		
	PT Mining Industry Indonesia	Pakal Island mine		1		3			
	PT Stardust Estate Investment	Unknown		1	5				
	JV PT Weda Bay Nickel (Eramet, Tsingshan Holding Group, and PT Antam Tbk)	Weda Bay Project		4	11	15		1	
Mongolia	JV Oyu Tolgoi LLC (Rio Tinto and Edernes Oyu Tolgoi LLC)	Oyu Tolgoi		1				1	
Myanmar	Norinco Group	Monywa		1	1			1	1
Papua New Guinea	Rio Tinto	Panguna		1	3	4			
	JV Wafi-Golpu Project (Harmony Gold and Newmont)	Wafi-Golpu		1	3	2			
Philippines	JV Rio Tuba Mining Corporation (Nickel Asia Corp, PAMCO and Sojitz)	Rio Tuba		1	1	6			
				62	139	76	33	8	3

Illicit and unregulated rare earth mining in Myanmar injects into global supplies

Rare earth elements have recently come to the forefront of global geopolitics due to their critical role in renewable energy technologies, AI and defence systems.

The extraction, processing and manufacturing of rare earth elements is heavily concentrated in China and Myanmar. While China monopolises global processing and manufacturing stages, Myanmar dominates extraction of the heavy rare earths dysprosium and terbium, with [experts believing](#) 50-75% of those two minerals originate in the country.

The majority of mined rare earth elements go to China, which accounts for [85% of global processing capacity](#) and [90% of manufacturing capacity](#) of high-strength rare-earth permanent magnets.

Myanmar's rare earth elements lie in areas of existing conflict, mainly in Kachin state, close to the border with China. Local warlords aligned with the Myanmar military, which overthrew the elected government in 2021 and plunged the country into ongoing civil war, have enabled Chinese entities to establish and operate mines illicitly.

In 2024 anti-junta armed forces [seized control](#) of many mines in Kachin, causing a temporary collapse of over three quarters of imports. China pushed to expand sources in Myanmar as a result, and other mines [have been established](#) in other parts of the China-Myanmar borders, including in territories controlled by other autonomous armed groups with a long history of human rights abuses. Currently, armed anti-junta forces have begun negotiating with the Chinese mining companies that were active there under junta control, and are [exploring ways to reduce environmental impact](#). The armed anti-junta forces [established a monitoring committee](#) to oversee mining operations. Miners, however, report that [abuses persist](#).



Photo by Brang Aung, [KRCG](#)

Evidence from [Heinrich Böll Foundation](#), [Global Witness](#), [Earth Rights International](#) and many other organisations and media platforms show how the mines have caused irreversible environmental damage, destroying livelihoods and harming community health, and even extending their impact downstream into [Thailand](#) and [Laos](#) due to [river contamination](#).

Our Tracker captures allegations of abuse of licensed large-scale mines, and therefore allegations of illegal or unregulated small, medium or large-scale Myanmar mines are not part of the Tracker, but their impacts are equally severe and significant.

Illegal and/or unregulated mining does not only happen in Myanmar, but is also significant in other geographies and minerals, as highlighted in a recent [UNDP report](#) looking at criminal infiltration in the supply chains of transition minerals. When illegal and/or unregulated mines develop in conflict affected areas, such as the ones in Myanmar, heightened due diligence must be triggered, as it is highly likely that human right abuses are severe and hidden.



Photo by Brang Aung, [KRCG](#)

North America, Central America and the Caribbean

In 2025, 35 allegations were tracked against mines in North America, Central America and the Caribbean, with a high concentration of impacts on local communities (33) and the environment (79). This is a 106% increase from the 17 allegations recorded against mines in this region in 2024. Allegations in the United States and Mexico, in particular, increased in 2025, from two to five in the United States, and from five to 11 in Mexico.

The two allegations recorded against mining operations in the United States in 2024 show no signs of meaningful remediation. An [alleged worker fatality](#) was recorded against **Nyrstar's** zinc mines in 2025, following occupational health and safety issues recorded in [previous years](#). In response to the death of a worker underground in July 2025, Nyrstar said in a statement that “[s]afety is and remains a critical priority” for the company. Similarly, [allegations of environmental harm](#) were recorded against **Rio Tinto's Kennecott (Bingham Canyon) copper mine** in both 2024 and 2025. In response to allegations that its tailings pond had contaminated the Great Salt Lake, Rio Tinto said that it “stand[s] by the safety of our tailings impoundment and affirm that it meets, and in some cases exceeds, the required standards.”

In 2025, allegations of environmental harm were also recorded against **Freeport McMoRan's Morenci copper mine**, **Grupo México's Silver Bell copper mine**, and **Teck Resources' Red Dog zinc mine**. Morenci mine is allegedly a significant nitrogen oxide emitter. In response to BHRC's response request, Freeport McMoRan said that it intends to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by investing in vehicles that allow for more efficient movement of ore. Asarco sought to expand its Silver Bell mine into the boundaries of Ironwood Forest, a US national monument, prompting opposition from local environmental groups. Grupo México, Asarco's parent company, [did not respond](#) to BHRC's request for comment. At the Red Dog mine, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation reported a spill of up to 400,000 gallons of process water, some of which allegedly reached Red Dog Creek, a spawning ground for chum salmon. Teck said that 180,000 gallons of water were spilled, and that it did not anticipate impacts on human health or aquatic systems.

In Mexico, **Grupo México's Buenavista del Cobre** copper mine and **Minera Tizapa's Tizapa** copper/zinc mine, against each of which two allegations were recorded in 2024, again appear in the Tracker with, respectively, three allegations impacting the environment, workers and governance issues, and one allegation, [impacting workers' rights](#). Grupo México [did not respond](#) to BHRCB's request for comment.



A – allegations, **LC** – local communities and attacks against civil society organisations, **E** – environmental impacts, **W** – impacts on workers, **G** – governance and transparency, **S** – security issues and conflict zones

Country	Parent company (JV = joint venture)	Operation/project	Minerals	A	LC	E	W	G	S
Canada	Hudbay Minerals	Copper Mountain Mine	Copper	1	3	1			
Guatemala	Pan American Silver	Escobal Mine	Zinc	1	8	3			
Mexico	Capstone Copper Corp	Cozamin	Copper, Zinc	2	4	1		3	
	Consortio Minero Benito Juárez Peña Colorada (part of Ternium & ArcelorMittal)	Peña Colorada	Iron ore	2	9	4			
	Grupo México	Buenavista del Cobre	Copper	3		3	3	1	
		San Martín Mining Unit	Copper, Zinc	1	1		8		
		Taxco	Zinc	1			9		
		Minera Autlán (part of Grupo Ferrominero)	Unknown	Manganese	1	1	3		
	JV Minera Tizapa (Peñoles, Dowa Mining and Sumitomo Corporation)	Tizapa	Zinc, Copper	1			5		
Panama	First Quantum Minerals	Cobre Panama	Copper	1	1				
	JV Minera Panamá (First Quantum Minerals and Korea Mine Rehabilitation and Mineral Resources Corporation)	Cobre Panama	Copper	15	50	8		1	
USA	Coeur Mining	Silvertip	Zinc	1		1			
	JV Freeport-McMoRan Morenci Inc. (Freeport McMoran and Sumitomo Corp)	Morenci	Copper	1		2			
	Grupo México	Silver Bell	Copper	1	2	1			
	Nyrstar	Unknown	Zinc	1			3		
	Rio Tinto	Kennecott (Bingham Canyon)	Copper	1		3		1	
	Teck Resources	Red Dog mine	Zinc	1		3			
				35	79	33	28	6	



Terms and approaches

The term “Tracker” refers to this tool’s entire dataset covering 299 mining operations and their owners from 2010-2025. The Tracker aims to cover significant and large-scale mines that are, or have recently been, in production for nine key minerals/mineral groups in the energy transition (bauxite, cobalt, copper, iron ore, lithium, manganese, nickel, rare earth elements and zinc) across all geographies.

Mining is a capital-intensive and technically complex sector, and it is common for mining operations to be owned by joint ventures, in which participants contribute different resources and expertise. Of the 299 mines in the Tracker, 118 are owned by joint ventures. In 2025, we began tracking allegations against joint venture participants. Allegations are now associated with all joint venture participants in mining operations, rather than with only the direct owner of the operation and, in the case of wholly owned subsidiaries, the parent company. This allows for more accurate representation of the human rights impacts of mining companies, particularly large companies with global footprints. The ranking of companies associated by number of allegations, either directly through their wholly owned subsidiaries, or through joint ventures, has not been weighted.

Rare earth elements were added as a ninth mineral group in 2025, with the inclusion of 16 mines. The Tracker methodology is limited to large scale and legal mining operations. This excludes a [significant proportion](#) of rare earth extraction, which occurs in illicit and unregulated operations, largely in Myanmar. In order to highlight the human rights abuses that are not captured by the Tracker methodology, we have included a case study on illicit and unregulated rare earth element extraction in Myanmar.

The list of mines covered in the Tracker has also been reviewed and expanded in 2025 to ensure that it captures the top producing mines for each of the minerals.

This seventh edition of the Tracker follows previous analysis and covers allegations between 2010 and 2025, with allegations for the most recently added mines and for rare earth element mines ranging from 2023 to 2025. **The term “allegation” refers to publicly reported allegations of specific incidents of alleged abuse by a company, action against companies including lawsuits and regulatory action or publicly reported attacks against human rights defenders.** One allegation can be associated with multiple impacts, e.g. an incidence of water pollution may have other impacts, such as health impacts or impact on livelihoods.

Our typology includes 103 types of impact, analysed in six categories: environmental impacts (E), local communities and attacks against civil society organisations (LC), impacts on workers (W), governance and transparency (G), security issues and conflict zones (S) and the Covid-19 pandemic (C). The full dataset is available for download on our website.

The Tracker does not purport to provide comprehensive information on all allegations of abuses against all mining companies. Furthermore, it only includes publicly available information, which is a function of the state of media and civic freedoms. Restrictions in certain parts of the world, coupled with limited means of action for affected parties and fears of reprisals, can translate into under-reporting abuses.

In line with BHRC's broader policy, we make every effort to reach out to companies accused of abuse and ask them to respond to allegations made, unless the company has already publicly commented on the case, publicly declined to comment (we publish additional comments provided by companies when volunteered), or if the abuse is the basis of a lawsuit or regulatory action.

Our analysis includes an assessment of whether each of the 299 mining operations in the Tracker is covered by a human rights policy. A parent company's general human rights policy will not be considered to cover a particular mining operation unless the policy explicitly says that it applies to subsidiaries. In the case of joint ventures, an operation will be considered as covered by a human rights policy if the joint venture entity has a human rights policy, or if shareholder/s that own over 50% of the joint venture have a human rights policy that applies to joint ventures. If joint venture participants' human rights policies indicate that the company will seek to influence its joint venture partners, rather than apply the policy to joint ventures, the operation will not be considered to be covered by a human rights policy.

In this year's global analysis, we focused on the increasing prevalence of litigation against mining companies or related to their operations. For further analysis, see BHRC's [Just Transition Litigation Tracking Tool](#) (JTLTT), a hub for lawsuits against companies undertaking, and/or states authorising, transition mineral mining or renewable energy projects. The analysis of lawsuits and regulatory action in the Tracker includes lawsuits that are not part of the JTLTT because they do not fit the [JTLTT methodology](#) or have not been selected to be profiled at this stage. Additionally, some mining-related lawsuits included in the JTLTT are not included in the Tracker because they concern mines that do not meet the criteria in the Tracker [methodology](#).

The [methodology](#) of recording attacks against defenders has been updated this year. The cases published in our [public database](#) are illustrative and do not include all cases we have documented of reported attacks on defenders raising concerns about business-related risks and harms. Starting in 2025, the database includes cases where both defenders and companies are named in public sources and the defender has consented for the attack to be added. All attacks we have documented are included in our aggregate statistics and analysis.

A full [Tracker Methodology](#) is available on the BHRC website. Analysis presented in this briefing and the accompanying dataset reflects information available at the time of publication (June 2026).



Business and Human Rights Centre is an international NGO which tracks the human rights impacts of over 10,000 companies in over 180 countries, making information available on our 10-language website.

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