



TO ENHANCE COMPLIANCE WITH BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MONITORS KOIDU LIMITED

Freetown- 28th April, 2021

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) has completed a two day monitoring exercise on the operations of Koidu Limited Mining Company in Kono district. This is part of its mandate to monitor and document violations of human rights in Sierra Leone pursuant to section 7 (2) (f) of the HRCSL Act No. 9 of 2014. Furthermore, the monitoring of business establishments especially mining companies is to ascertain their level of compliance with business and human rights standards in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

During the exercise, the team including the Chairperson, Patricia Narsu Ndanema, Vice-Chair, Victor I. Lansana, oversight Commissioner for Monitoring and Research, Dr. Gassan Abess, Deputy Director of Business and Human Rights, Abdulai Yollah Bangura and Moses Massaquoi, Senior Human Rights Officer, met with Representatives of the District Human Rights Committee, Affected Persons, Paramount Chief, Senior Management of Koidu Limited Company and Mining Workers Union.

According to the Human Rights Committee and Affected Persons of mining areas, the company does not keep to its promises, uphold safety measures for its workers, low employment of indigenous people and unsatisfactory relocation packages. Currently, the Affected Persons have filed a lawsuit against the company for not paying adequate compensation for properties destroyed and other environmental abuses they continue to suffer from the hands of the company.

Chief Paul Saquee of Tankoro Chiefdom, the community that hosts the company said, the company to a greater extent has complied with all the provisions in the agreement relating to the resettlement of communities and sometimes he forces them to go beyond their mandate. He said the relocated communities are equipped with all facilities they had in their previous settlements. These include; buildings for clinics, community centers, religious houses, police posts and markets. He noted that for the first time in the history of mining in Kono District,



the Community Development Fund paid to the central government was given to the local authorities to implement projects within their districts.

He said currently they have undertaken projects such a building of a well-furnished community center for hosting big district events and have also invested in building markets and other facilities needed within the community. The General Manager for Koidu Limited, Rocco Vermuelen, did a presentation on their operations ranging from human resources, safety, security, environment, government regulations and corporate social responsibility. Based on the discussions with the Affected Persons, the Commission sought clarification especially on those issues bothering on human rights.

Mr. Vermuelen further explained that since inception, 'they have met all the provisions in the agreement as contained in their mining lease and sometimes go above just so they maintain a good relationship with the community.' He facilitated the tour by members of the Commission to the mining tunnel that is 470 meters below ground level.

Commissioners were shown all safety measures in place including airways at the tunnel. The Commission also spoke to some of the workers who said they were happy on the job and all safety protocols were adhered to by the company including food and medical facilities for them and their families.

The team later inspected previous settlements and the newly relocated settlements of the Affected Persons which are still under construction by the company.

At the close of the engagement with the company, the Chairperson of HRCSL Patricia Narsu Ndanema presented a copy of the Guidelines for Monitoring Business and Human Rights to the company in order to guide their operations towards compliance to human rights standards.