



Mongolia: Rights groups report exposes mining's serious threats to defenders, local communities and environment

(Ulaanbaatar/Bangkok, 22 October 2019) – Mining operations, regardless of their scale and nature, are posing a series of concrete threats to the environment and local communities of the districts (*soums*) of Binder, Batnorov, and Tsagaan-Ovoo, in north-eastern Mongolia.

The report 'Our Land,' launched today in Ulaanbaatar by the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRД), is based on a Fact-Finding Mission conducted in May 2019 that collected testimonies from key stakeholders on the impacts of mining in the respective areas.

The report highlights shortcomings in national legislation, such as the Law to Prohibit Mineral Exploration and Mining Operations at Headwaters of Rivers, Protected Zones of Water Reservoirs (Law with Long Name), enabling mining operations to circumvent provisions that supposedly aim at conserving and protecting Mongolia's lush biodiversity and habitat. As a result, local communities are increasingly fearing for their safety and livelihoods. In a parallel way, artisanal mining further exacerbates already volatile conditions, with harassment against local communities and permanent damages to the pasture land.

The report further reveals the struggle of community-based human rights defenders and women human rights defenders in opposing large-scale mining operations, with intimidation and threats among the top forms of harassment they experienced. Harrowing excerpts detailed by community-based defenders give insight to Mongolian defenders' increasingly perilous human rights work.

Based on these findings, and in light of Mongolian laws and obligations under international human rights standards, the report provides a set of recommendations, above all calling on the Mongolian Government to strengthen the current draft of the Human Rights Defenders Protection Law, to substantially protect the legitimate activities of defenders when advocating on business-related human rights violations and to push for the enactment of a National Action Plan on Business and Human rights. The report also recommends the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia to synergise its work by expanding the mandate and resources of its provincial representatives.

Recommendations are further made to Khentii Province (*Aimags*) Government; Batshireet, Binder and Tsagaan-Ovoo *soums* Governments; mining companies Aivuuntes, Pegmatite, and Steppe Gold; and to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders who visited the country in May and September this year.

The full report can be accessed here [ENG]: <https://www.forum-asia.org/uploads/wp/2019/10/FFM-Mongolia-2019-Report.pdf>

The summary report can be accessed here [ENG/MNG]: <https://www.forum-asia.org/uploads/wp/2019/10/Summary-FFM-Mongolia-Report-2019.pdf>

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