

Papua New Guinea Mine Watch

JANUARY 21, 2016 · 10:46 AM

Government acts too late over Sinivit mine pollution



MRA allowed New Guinea Gold to abandon the Sinivit mine in 2014

MRA tells firm to clean up mine

Elizabeth Vuvu | The National aka The Loggers Times

THE Mineral Resources Authority has told a Canadian company to come and clean up the Sinivit mine in East New Britain it had abandoned.

New Guinea Gold Limited abandoned the East New Britain gold project in September 2014 after blaming the Government and the authority “for not quickly renewing our mining lease”.

MRA managing director Philip Samar told The National that they had notified the company to return and rectify safety and environment issues related to the Sinivit project.

Samar said they had told New Guinea Gold Ltd that it was their responsibility to clean up their mess at the mine site.

“Under the Mining Act, the company still has a mining lease that has not been cancelled,” he said.

“Therefore, New Guinea Gold remains responsible to ensure all mining and environment regulations are complied with and safety measures are followed.

“As the mining lease holder, it needs to be responsible and cannot shift the blame here and there.”

He said the company responded by blaming the State and the Mineral Resources Authority for not acting quickly on its mining lease.

“These unsubstantiated and misplaced claims by the tenement holder did not change New Guinea Gold’s social and regulatory obligations to fully maintain the mine.

Samar said the company had not lodged any application with the MRA to have the mine placed in a “care and maintenance” phase.

He said production had stopped but the site would continue to be managed safely and responsibly to ensure the mine’s security and stability.

“There is a process to follow and you cannot just walk away after giving us a letter,” Samar said.

“It is a legal requirement that a formal application is submitted.

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“Mines are not tuckerboxes and companies who operate them must ensure they have the sources to maintain these mines.”

The Sinivit mine is currently under a renewal application for a new 10-year term.

That application was with the Minister for Mining for a final determination in accordance with the National Court order issued in February 2014.

There were reports that when the Sinivit mine was abandoned, locals looted and used explosives and chemicals.

Reports had surfaced of chemicals from the abandoned vats flowing into the Warang River. Authorities had warned the people of Dadul, Riet and Uramot to stay clear of the mine.

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