



Energy
Mineral Resources

Media statement

To all media

5 February 2020

Government commemorates four years of the Lily Mine incident

Government commemorates the Lily Mine incident, which took place in Barberton, Mpumalanga on this day in 2016. Mr Solomon Nyirenda, Ms Pretty Nkambule and Ms Yvonne Mnisi were trapped underground when the lamp-room (container) they were working in collapsed in a fall-of-ground accident. Rescue efforts after the accident were hampered by subsequent tremors following the accident, which have made the area completely inaccessible.

Following the accident, the Department of Mineral Resources initiated an investigation and inquiry, conducted in terms of Section 65(1) of the Mine Health and Safety Act No.29 of 1996 (MHSA).

A report with recommendations and remedial action to be taken was prepared and finalised.

A copy of the report was forwarded to the legal representatives of Lily mine management, employees and family members who participated in the inquiry. The report, which also contained recommendations for criminal prosecution, was forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions for further handling, as the Department does not have jurisdiction over prosecution.

It is expected that the new owner, as part of efforts to reopen the mine, will prioritise the search for the three employees. Government is concerned about the prolonged business rescue process and legal challenges emanating from the process, which have delayed all efforts to retrieve the container. To this end, the Department is supporting a process wherein the concerned parties can settle out of court. Once this has been fully agreed upon and completed, the process of retrieving the container will be accelerated. The affected families will be kept informed of proceedings.

Government remains committed to working with all relevant stakeholders to find ways to locate and retrieve the container, thus affording the affected families closure from this painful accident.

Ends –

Issued by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy