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## Barrick Gold sacks hundreds: As strike continues at Bulyanhulu gold mine

by Dar es Salaam, **THISDAY**

### Barrick Gold sacks hundreds

As strike continues at Bulyanhulu gold mine

IT has been learnt that Barrick Gold Corporation has sacked hundreds of striking miners at the Bulyanhulu gold mine in Kahama District, Shinyanga Region, and is now preparing to announce new job openings to replace them.

Close to 1,000 workers are understood to be taking part in the strike that started last Thursday and by yesterday was into its fourth day, bringing mining operations at the country's largest underground gold mine to a complete standstill.

The giant mine employs a total of 1,971 workers, including 178 expatriates. Anti-riot police from the Field Force Unit (FFU) have been deployed at the mine since last week to beef up security in the wake of the growing unrest.

The mine's general manager, Greg Walker, yesterday declined to comment about the latest situation at the mine when contacted by THISDAY, but a spokesman for the mine owners Barrick Gold (Tanzania) Limited confirmed that all workers participating in the strike action were effective from yesterday being given their marching orders.

"We have been in the process of preparing letters of termination of employment for all workers taking part in the illegal strike. Some of the workers have already started to receive their (termination) letters," said Barrick Gold spokesman Teweli Teweli.

He said the company will this week announce new job vacancies at the Bulyanhulu mine to replace those whose employment will have been terminated, "so that production can resume at the mine as soon as possible."

Reports from Bulyanhulu say the mine management yesterday started issuing the employment termination letters to striking workers.

It is also understood that the Kahama District Commissioner, Kevin Msemwa, also made a last-minute attempt at the end of the week to convince the miners to call off the strike and return to work. However, they refused to budge.

A notice for the imminent sackings was issued on Saturday following a meeting between the mine management and representatives of the Tanzania Mines and Construction Workers Union (TAMICO) branch at the mine, also attended by the Kahama DC.

The notice signed by the mine's general manager informed the striking workers that they should report to the reception area at the main entrance of the mine from yesterday noon to be given their letters terminating employment.

TAMICO leaders were yesterday not immediately available to comment about the decision to sack the striking workers. However, the secretary of the trade union's Bulyanhulu gold mine branch, Merchadis Kajungu, told THISDAY earlier last week that the strike would continue come what may.

The strike, which Barrick Gold has branded as 'illegal', followed a breakdown in negotiations between the mine workers and management over salaries, working conditions, medical care and other contentious issues.

TAMICO leaders have accused the mine manager (Walker) of discriminating local staff in favour of the expatriate workers.

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