

KZN premier calls for order amid reports of illegal mining in KwaHlathi

KwaZulu-Natal premier, Sihle Zikalala, has called for order and calm amid reports of illegal mining taking place in KwaHlathi, outside Ladysmith, where throngs of people have gathered to mine what they believe are diamonds...



Image: saneews.gov.za

This follows the discovery by some of what they believe to be the precious stones.

Images and videos have been circulating on social media where some people involved in illegal mining are seen celebrating in the belief that they have discovered diamonds.

“ KZN PREMIER CALLS FOR ORDER AMID REPORTS OF A “DIAMOND RUSH” IN KWAHLATHI NEAR LADYSMITH

The KwaZulu-Natal provincial government has noted with concern, the reports of illegal mining activity taking place at KwaHlathi outside Ladysmith

Video : supplied [#DiamondRush pic.twitter.com/zy1oylhPQz](https://pic.twitter.com/zy1oylhPQz)— KZN Provincial Gov (@kzngov) [June 13, 2021](https://www.facebook.com/kzngov/posts/1015844444444444) ”

Zikalala said as soon as his office was notified of this, the provincial government tasked the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs to refer the matter to the national Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), as the relevant department which deals with such matters.

“The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy has promised to dispatch teams to the site. These teams include the department’s enforcement and compliance unit to conduct an inspection of the site.

“The second one includes a team from Mintek (Council for Mineral Technology) and CGS (Council for Geoscience). The Mintek and GCS teams will include a geologist and will focus on establishing exactly what are these items that have been discovered in KwaHlathi,” Zikalala said.

The premier said the provincial government is deeply concerned about the images showing that some people coming from as far as some neighbouring provinces and towns, flocking to KwaHlathi.

“We are worried that if not brought under control, the situation could result in chaos and a possible stampede. We call for order and calm and urge all those involved to cease their operations and vacate the site so as to allow the DMRE to conduct a proper inspection of the site, and of what has been discovered there,” Zikalala said.

The premier warned that illegal mining activities could be in violation of the Covid-19 regulations.

“It is also very concerning that in the wake of [the] third wave, we have so many people gathered in one spot, not maintaining social distancing and also not wearing masks. This could prove to be a super-spreader, and might put at risk many people, including those who are not part of the mining,” the premier said.

The provincial government will work closely with the police, including DMRE, traditional communities, traditional leadership and the local and district municipalities to bring calm to the area, and to ensure that the relevant information filters through to community members.

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