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## Over 200 Communities Members Protesting Against Sephaku Cement Mine

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Members of the Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA) in the Bodibe Branch, along with residents of Springbokpan, Itsoseng, Matile, Verdwaal, and surrounding communities in the North West, have been protesting against Sephaku Cement Mine since 10 June. The protest with over 200 protestors seeks to address long-standing issues which Sephaku Cement Mine has failed to prioritise. The protest is expected to end on 13 June when the communities present a memorandum of demands to the mine management.

For many years, residents have felt excluded and ignored by the mining company. The communities demand a fair and equitable shareholding in the mining activities rather than merely a lease agreement as this will ensure that they benefit from the resources extracted from their land, the mine establish regular community forums and engage in transparent and meaningful dialogue, to fulfil! their commitment to uplift the local labour force by providing training and employment opportunities and for the allocation of resources to improve the quality of education in the community.

The lack of regular forums and open dialogue has resulted in a climate of mistrust and frustration. The community requires Sephaku Cement Mine to maintain open and meaningful communication with the affected communities.

High unemployment rates in the area have fuelled dissatisfaction, with many residents believing the mine is not doing enough to support the local workforce. The communities are demanding Sephaku Cement Mine to keep its promises to provide local residents with training and employment opportunities, which are critical for the youth to build better futures for themselves and their families.

As the protest progresses, Sephaku requested that the community hand over their memorandum and call-off the march, promising to review the memorandum and respond in seven days. The community refused to meet under these terms, insisting on direct and immediate engagement. The ongoing protest underscores the urgent need for the mine to engage genuinely and constructively with the communities it impacts.

Jerry Moatswi, branch Secretary of Springbokpan, said: "The community is very clear on this. We will not accept vague promises or dismissive comments. If they want to address something, they should do it directly to us. We deserve respect and transparency."

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