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Red rage

Residents fume over mine dust

Gugu Myeni

FED-UP with dust blanketing their homes and posing a serious health risk, Mtunzini residents are squaring up against the neighbouring Fairbreeze mine.

Angry residents are demanding urgent action as dust emissions from the Tronox-owned mining operation persist.

This is amid growing concerns over the ongoing harm caused by the dust, together with its health implications, particularly for those with respiratory conditions. According to the chairperson of Mtunzini Conservancy, Dawn Wade, who has been relaying the community's plight, the dust has been excessive recently owing to the strong winds.

"We receive many complaints from residents who wake up to their homes covered in dust - both indoors and outdoors," said Wade.

"When there are strong winds, it becomes unbearable. Our tables, floors and the bottom of the swimming pool turn red.

"Children are picking up the dust like magnets when playing outside or inside, and the rate of people complaining about sinus flare-ups is high.

"Then there is the persistent coughing and when you blow your nose, you can visibly see the impact of the dust.

"I am asthmatic and have got worse, and I have a daughter who battles with sinuses," she said.

Wade further expressed frustration with the endless promises that the problem will be addressed.

"We are still getting complaints from residents and there is still a back-and-forth with Tronox outlining what they are going to do.

"We are just tired and we need this problem to be dealt with urgently because it is a very serious issue," she said.

Tronox responds

Responding to the ZO, Tronox acknowledged the recent complaints, saying they have been actively engaging with the Mtunzini Residents' Association (MRA).

"MRA representatives visited the mine in March and August, where Tronox provided updates on mining activities and rehabilitation efforts near Mtunzini village, followed by site tours for the residents.

"Recent meetings with MRA representatives have led to specific resolutions, including the MRA's request for additional dust monitoring points," said Tronox in a statement.

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Red dust blankets surfaces and sinks to the bottom of swimming pools



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