

ZAMBIA'S KANGALUWI MINE GOES AHEAD IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION

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Reports and images indicate that the controversial Kangaluwi open-cast copper mine in Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park, opposite Zimbabwe's Mana Pools/Sapi/Chewore World Heritage Site, has begun development, with potentially damaging downstream impacts on biodiversity, conservation and the fishing and tourism industries of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

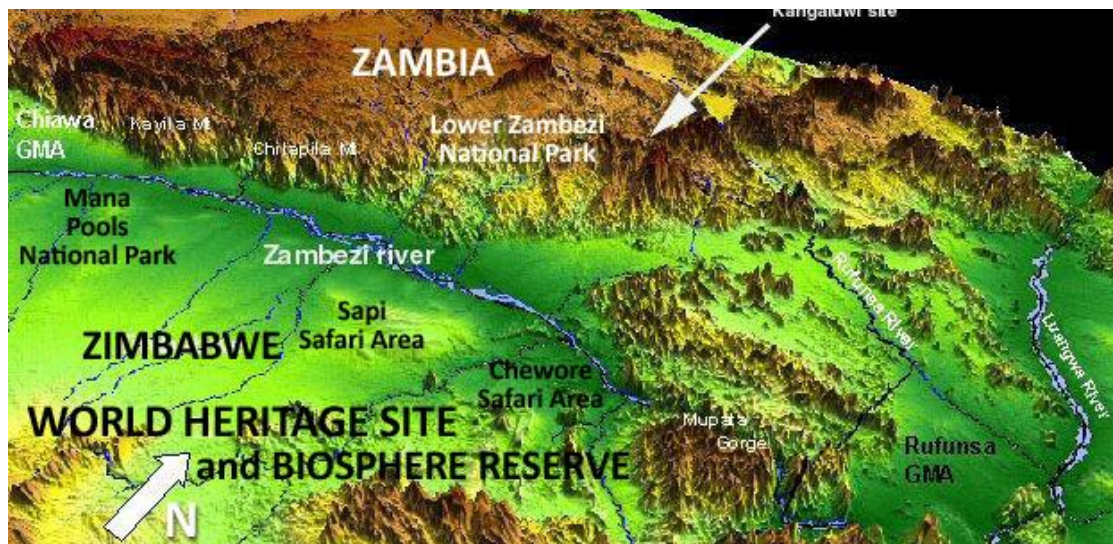
This comes after the Zambian Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) approved the project in May 2021, after almost a decade of backlash and legal interventions from stakeholders and the public. (See previous Zambezi Society news items about this issue in [July 2021](#) and [November 2014](#)).



A detailed update and report on the Kangaluwi Mine situation (including a [Timeline of Key Events](#)) was compiled by the [Zambezi Valley Conservation Network](#) in December 2022, revealed the aerial images above, which appear to show developments at the mine project site including clearing, equipment and containers in July 2022, and road grading and vehicles/equipment in November 2022.

The decision by ZEMA sparked an international campaign called [Save Zambezi, Safe Zambezi](#) (SZSZ) driven by a coalition of concerned citizens, NGOs and other stakeholders. The campaign reached over 1.2 million people around the world in six months. Despite failing (so far) to change the mind of the Zambian government, the campaign has created much wider awareness of the mine, the scale of the project and its potentially devastating impacts on the lower Zambezi Valley, affecting not only Zambia but also Zimbabwe and Mozambique

“The Lower Zambezi National Park is an integral part of the wider Zambezi Basin, which is the most significant shared resource that contributes to the economic, environmental and social development of southern Africa. Sustainable management of this resource is crucial in securing the futures of over 250 million people in the broader region that depend on it” (Save Zambezi, Safe Zambezi Campaign, 2022).



The Kanguwi mine licence area covers 24,500 hectares with the overall operations including road infrastructure and power lines covering an estimated 28% of the Lower Zambezi National Park.

TRANSBOUNDARY IMPACTS

Apart from its impact on the environment and biodiversity of the Park itself, there are major concerns about transboundary impacts. Zimbabwe's Mana Pools/Sapi/Chewore World Heritage Site lies across the Zambezi River, only 30 kms away, right opposite the mine. Discharges from the mine risk polluting and contaminating the ground and water sources not only for wildlife and communities in both Zambia and Zimbabwe but for the entire Zambezi Delta in Mozambique, potentially destroying fishing and farming livelihoods.

“River pollution caused by the mine could threaten the Zambezi River’s 2,000-ton subsistence fishery, which directly provides food and protein security to 20,000 people along the river’s banks” (Save Zambezi, Safe Zambezi Campaign, 2022).

TOURISM IMPACTS

Another major concern is the impact on the tourism industry. The Zambezi Basin is a significant tourism destination for Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

“Eco-tourism in the area depends largely on the renewable wildlife and habitat resources and contributes significantly to the local and national economies around the LZNP. Tourism establishments in the park and surrounding Game Management Areas (GMAs) employ more than 1,000 local people, generating a local wage bill of \$4 million annually that indirectly supports thousands more people at a local community level” (Save Zambezi, Safe Zambezi Campaign, 2022).

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

This mine also potentially threatens upcoming conservation projects, including the \$12.5 million Lower Zambezi Flagship Species Restoration project, which aims to bring back locally extinct species such as the black rhino and eland, thereby restoring biodiversity and improving ecosystem processes in the area.

Furthermore, it seems a proposal to UNESCO to establish the Lower Zambezi Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (LZEBR) has been rejected twice due to the proposed copper mine development, which is not in line with the principles of a Biosphere Reserve. (See more [HERE](#))

THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT JOBS

However, not all stakeholders have opposed the mine, with some local chiefs and authorities as well as many Zambian citizens supporting the project in the hope that the mine will bring much needed jobs to their communities – an expectation that has been created by the mining developers and representatives which have promised royalties, benefits and up to 2,500 jobs. This is despite a statement in the project’s official Environmental Impact Statement, which reads: “It is estimated that a personnel of about 300 persons will be required for the project”.

NO REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT OR CONSULTATION

What is most alarming, is that the Zambian government has authorised a project impacting the largest shared water resource in the SADC region without conducting regional stakeholder engagement or acknowledging the potential impact on livelihoods regionally. They have also made no attempt to reassure Zimbabwe and Mozambique that the developer has sufficient technologies and strategies to mitigate the highlighted potential impacts.

In 2022, a smaller group from the **Save Zambezi Safe Zambezi** coalition decided to challenge ZEMA’s approval of the project through the courts and this process is now being driven by the NGO **Conservation Advocates Limited**.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP STOP THIS COPPER MINE?

1. Support the coalition led by NGO **Conservation Advocates Limited** in Zambia in their litigation. A legal procedure has been identified as the most effective way to fight the mine, however it is a lengthy and financially resource-intensive exercise. (Contacts available from both The Zambezi Society and the Zambezi Valley Conservation Network)
2. Help to spread awareness of the Kangaluwi Copper Mine development by forwarding and sharing this article and associated posts regarding this issue
3. Sign the petition <https://www.change.org/p/president-hakainde-hichilema-save-zambezi-safe-zambezi-people-water-land-and-wildlife>

