



**STATEMENT BY CHAPTER ONE FOUNDATION ON REPORTED REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO THE
ZAMBIA ARMY COMMANDER REGARDING ILLEGAL MINING OPERATIONS
Lusaka, 20 January 2026**

Chapter One Foundation has noted a video circulating on social media in which remarks are attributed to the Zambia Army Commander, indicating that the Army has been directed to “exterminate” illegal miners, while also suggesting that force is not intended to be used. We recognise that illegal mining poses serious risks to national security, public order, the environment, and Zambia’s lawful economy. We also acknowledge public concern regarding reported cases of irregular and illegal migration, particularly where illegal mining is linked to organised criminal networks and other cross-border offences.

In a constitutional democracy like ours, law enforcement must be firm but lawful, restrained, and accountable. Where the Defence Force is deployed in support of internal security, the operation remains a law enforcement operation, not a combat mission. Any use of force must be lawful, strictly necessary, proportionate, and exercised with precaution and de-escalation. The use of firearms should be an exceptional measure, and lethal force should be permissible only where strictly unavoidable to protect life.

We urge the Government to clarify that there is no policy or instruction, express or implied, authorising unlawful or indiscriminate violence in response to illegal mining. Civilian law enforcement must remain primary, with any military support clearly limited, supervised, and coordinated under lawful authority. Where arrests and seizures occur, due process must be respected. Enforcement must be carried out in a manner that preserves the integrity of investigations and prosecutions, including lawful searches and seizures, accurate records of arrests and custody, humane treatment of suspects, and prompt judicial oversight.

Accountability must be clear and credible. Where injury or death occurs during operations, reporting and independent review must follow, both to protect the public and to safeguard officers who act within the law. This is essential to maintaining public confidence and preventing escalation.

Chapter One Foundation urges the public, especially in affected areas, to cooperate with law enforcement officers; we equally urge those involved in illegal mining to disengage immediately by leaving illegal sites, refraining from resisting lawful enforcement, and refusing to be used by syndicates, as escalation only heightens the risk of unnecessary loss of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josiah Kalala", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Josiah Kalala

Executive Director

Chapter One Foundation