FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rio Tinto's $250 million Bougainville commitment raises questions for Anglo American over Kabwe

ACTSA calls on Anglo American to follow Rio Tinto's example and address its historical role in Zambia's ongoing lead pollution crisis.

The announcement that mining giant Rio Tinto will contribute US$250 million towards addressing the environmental and human rights impacts of its former Panguna mine in Bougainville raises an important question for another major mining company. When will Anglo American follow suit and take concrete action to address the legacy of its historical involvement in Kabwe, Zambia?

Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) is calling on Anglo American to make a substantial financial commitment towards addressing the ongoing environmental and public health consequences of lead mining in Kabwe.

Rachel Palma Randle, Director of ACTSA, said:

"Rio Tinto's announcement sends a clear message to the world on what can be done by mining corporations to make reparations to the communities it has impacted through mining operations. It raises a question that Anglo American can no longer avoid. Why should the people of Kabwe continue to live with the consequences of Anglo American's historical mining operations without a substantial contribution from Anglo American? The people of Kabwe have lived with the consequences of historical mining operations for generations. They should not be left to bear the cost of this legacy alone. Anglo American has both the resources and the moral responsibility to help put things right."

On 16 November, Rio Tinto announced that it had agreed with the Autonomous Bougainville Government, Bougainville Copper Limited and community leaders to establish a fund to address the lasting impacts of the former Panguna mine. The company's contribution of US$250 million will support environmental remediation and social programmes for affected communities.

ACTSA believes this announcement demonstrates that mining companies can take concrete steps towards addressing the consequences of historical mining operations, even decades after production has ceased.

Key facts/ information:

- Kabwe is often described as one of the world's most polluted towns, with soil lead levels **650% above the US Environmental Protection Agency's (US EPA) regulatory hazard standard.** Meaning Kabwe is severely contaminated and far exceeds the standard residential safety recommendations.
- Anglo American took over the Broken Hill Mine in 1925 and exercised extensive operational and corporate control until 1974.
- More than 100,000 people live with the legacy of lead pollution in Kabwe.
- Lead contamination continues to affect soil, homes, waterways and agricultural land.

- Lead exposure poses serious health risks, particularly to children and women of childbearing age. There is no known safe level of lead exposure.
- ACTSA's report, *UNDENIABLE: Anglo American's role in the Kabwe sacrifice zone*, published in August 2026, presents previously unpublished archival evidence challenging Anglo American's account of its historical involvement.

About ACTSA

Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) is a UK-based organisation working in solidarity with Southern African civil society and activists to advance human rights, justice and equality. ACTSA's report, *UNDENIABLE: Anglo American's role in the Kabwe sacrifice zone* (August 2026), presents new historical evidence documenting Anglo American's extensive involvement in the operation and management of the Broken Hill Mine between 1925 and 1974. The report makes the case that Anglo American has a moral responsibility to help address the ongoing environmental contamination and public health crisis affecting communities in Kabwe, Zambia.

"We are calling on Anglo American to acknowledge the historical evidence, engage constructively with affected communities and commit substantial resources towards addressing the environmental and public health consequences of mining in Kabwe." – Anele Gcwabe (Campaigns and Communications Officer | ACTSA)

Notes to Editor:

1. ACTSA's report, *UNDENIABLE: Anglo American's role in the Kabwe sacrifice zone*, was researched and written by historian Duncan Money and published in August 2026, drawing on previously unpublished records from the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) archive in Ndola.
2. The Broken Hill Mine in Kabwe began operations in 1904 and closed in 1994. Anglo American took over the mine in 1925, was appointed its manager in 1937 and maintained management and operational control until the end of 1974.
3. Anglo American maintains that its involvement was limited to an indirect minority shareholding of approximately 10% and the provision of technical services. ACTSA's report presents archival evidence challenging this account.
4. On 16 November 2026, Rio Tinto announced a US$250 million contribution towards addressing the environmental and social legacy of its former Panguna mine in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

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About ACTSA: https://actsa.org/

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