

# How 38 Miners Died In Plateau



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Thu, 19 Feb 2026 6:10:21 WAT



**At least 38 miners have been confirmed dead following a carbon monoxide leak at a mining site in Kampani Zurak community, Wase Local Government Area of Plateau State.**

The incident occurred in the early hours of Wednesday as the miners went about their routine activities underground.

More than 20 others sustained varying degrees of injuries and have been rushed to different medical facilities for treatment, while over 10 persons are still reported missing as rescue efforts continue.

Residents and eyewitnesses said the incident happened at about 6:30 a.m., shortly after the

victims had observed their morning prayers and returned to the mining site.

They reportedly began experiencing breathing difficulties and other symptoms consistent with gas inhalation inside the tunnel.

Community members described the tragedy as unprecedented, noting that fatalities of such magnitude linked to carbon monoxide exposure are rare in Kampani Zurak since the establishment of Solid Unity Nigeria Limited, a mining firm, where the incident happened.

The Plateau State Commissioner for Information and Communication, Joyce Lohya Ramnap, described the incident as shocking and deeply saddening.

In a statement on Wednesday, she extended the government's heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased.

“The Plateau State Government has received with deep shock and profound sadness reports of a tragic explosion at a mining site in Kampani Zurak, reportedly owned by Solid Unity Nig. Ltd.

“According to preliminary information, about 33 persons were said to have been inside the mining tunnel at the time of the explosion. Sadly, many lives are feared lost, while

others who sustained injuries are currently receiving treatment in nearby hospitals. We share in your grief at this painful moment,” the statement said.

While eyewitnesses attributed the incident to a carbon monoxide leak in the mining pit, the state government referred to it as an explosion, without providing details on what might have triggered it.

Sources told our correspondent that this was not the first of such occurrence at the site. In 2025, a similar incident reportedly claimed two lives.

The Daily Trust gathered that the mining company has been operating in the area for decades, extracting lead and zinc.

Hundreds of people from Wase and other parts of the country depend on the site for their livelihoods. Most of the workers are young men aged between 25 and 40, many of whom reportedly work to support their parents and families.

### **How the incident occurred – Witnesses**

Eyewitnesses and residents of the Kampani Zurak community have recounted how the incident unfolded at the mining site.

Safiyanu Haruna, a miner in the community, said, “We believe this tragedy came from Allah. It was caused by a type of gas that often builds up during mining activities. But today, the gas came with full force and could not be controlled. Oxygen was brought in an attempt to neutralise the carbon monoxide, but it was unsuccessful.

“This is where we earn a living to support our families. People come here from different parts of the country to work. We have lost many colleagues, and at the moment, we cannot even identify where some of the victims came from,” he said.

Another resident explained that the victims had briefly left the site for early morning prayers before the incident occurred.

“It was carbon monoxide gas that leaked and killed them. We woke up to the heartbreaking news of losing 38 miners who were struggling to make ends meet. Around 5:30 a.m., they were all alive because they had left the site for prayers. It was when they returned that they were found in that condition.

“There was no immediate rescue because those scheduled to resume work in the morning had not yet arrived at the site. Thirty-eight persons have been confirmed dead, while over 20 others are receiving treatment in the hospital,” he said.

## **‘My deceased uncle left 11 children behind’**

Family members of the victims described the incident as traumatic and heartbreaking, calling on the government and relevant authorities for assistance.

Isa Jafaru, an uncle to one of the deceased, said the family has been thrown into deep distress.

“We found ourselves in a very difficult situation. From Allah we came, and to Him we shall return. Anyone who witnesses this will surely pity us because we have lost our loved ones. The government should come to our aid.

“I lost my uncle in the incident; he left behind 11 children. The responsibility for those children now rests on me. Other relatives of mine were also affected,” he lamented.

Similarly, Sapi’i Sambo, a resident of Wase, said he lost three nephews in the tragedy.

“I lost three nephews — Ibrahim Audu (25), Usman Audu (25) and Musa Abdullahi (29). They were young and hardworking, supporting their parents and siblings. Today,

they are no more. It is very painful. We are deeply disturbed and appeal to the government to assist the families of the victims,” he said.

## **FG shuts mining site**

The Plateau State Commissioner for Information and Communication, Joyce Lohya Ramnap, has disclosed that the federal government has ordered the immediate closure of the affected mining site in Kampani Zurak following the tragic incident.

She said the Minister of Environment, Balarabe Abbas Lawal, had earlier contacted the state governor and directed the total shutdown of all mining activities in the area pending further investigations.

“In furtherance of this directive, a high-powered team of experts from the Federal Ministry of Environment will arrive in Wase on Thursday from Abuja to assess the situation.

“The government assures the public that no stone will be left unturned in addressing this tragedy and safeguarding lives across mining communities in the state,” she said.

The commissioner added that the government is working closely with security agencies, emergency responders and health authorities to stabilise the situation.

Efforts, she said, are ongoing to secure the site, provide medical care to the injured and prevent further loss of life.

She called on residents of Kampani Zurak and neighbouring communities to remain calm and law-abiding, while urging relevant federal and state agencies responsible for mining regulation and safety enforcement to conduct a thorough investigation and ensure strict compliance with safety standards to prevent a recurrence.

### **Experts speak**

Muhammad Labiru Abdullahi of the Anthony Nyong Climate Centre of Excellence, University of Jos, and Publicity Secretary of the Nigerian Meteorological Society (NMets), said the tragedy was most likely caused by carbon monoxide exposure, a common hazard in underground mining.

“Carbon monoxide is often found in underground mining. The victims were likely exposed to a high concentration of the gas. Once inhaled, it prevents oxygen from

reaching the blood, and without oxygen, the brain quickly shuts down. This may have resulted from poor ventilation after the gas was triggered,” he explained.

Environmental activist Philip Jakpor, Executive Director of Renevlyn Development Initiative, blamed possible negligence by site managers.

He said exposure to carbon monoxide can cause nausea, dizziness and death after prolonged inhalation.

“The deaths of the young miners in Zurak are tragic and could have been avoided if basic safety measures had been enforced.

“This incident highlights weak regulatory oversight and disregard for the safety of mostly inexperienced artisanal miners,” he said, calling for accountability and justice for the victims.

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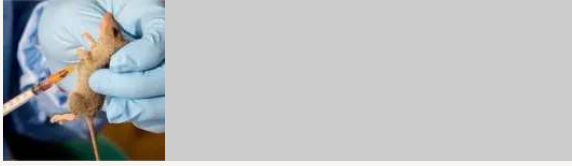
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