

SGO suspends operations, takes steps to protect its personnel

The following is an unofficial summary translation by Business & Human Rights Resource Centre of:

["SGO arrête les opérations et sécurise son personnel"](#), Boubacar Tamba, Sud Quotidien (Senegal), 17 Feb. 2016

Residents of Sabodala municipality occupied roads on Tuesday (16 February), and set up a barricade near Faloumbou village, preventing vehicles belonging to Sabodala Gold Operations and coming from Gora mine from reaching a factory. Due to damage to equipment including a bulldozer and a security post, Sabodala Gold Operations stopped operations in order to safeguard its staff. Several youths were detained; some protesters were taken to Sabodala police station for questioning. The prefect of Saraya and the commander of the Kédougou police station came to calm the situation.

Local residents accuse the company of taking food from their mouths by closing off access to an artisanal mining site at Bangouraya. A spokesperson for the residents, Moussa Cissokho, admitted that the site is not recognised by the government as an authorised artisanal mining area, but said that the loss of the site caused the residents to lose a large part of their traditional means of subsistence. The Bangouraya site is located within Sabodala Gold Operations' concession; specialists on the matter stated that the law does not permit artisanal mining within a company's concession.

These problems began with the thorny question of mining operations at Niakafiri, which local populations categorically opposed. The problems continued with road closures mining related to mining of the Golouma deposit, which the populations also did not agree to, even if the closure was for the protection of local residents.

[Ed. note: Niakafiri and Golouma deposits are also now being mined by Sabodala Gold Operations.]