

“Stop the cover-up!” Readers demand full investigation and justice for New Zealand mine disaster victims

Our reporters
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The World Socialist Web Site is publishing statements in support of the Pike River Families Committee, which represents 23 of the 29 families of the men who died in the 2010 Pike River coal mine disaster in New Zealand. The families are fighting to overturn the Labour Party-led government’s decision to end an underground forensic investigation of the mine. The government aims to prevent the recovery and examination of evidence that could be used in criminal prosecutions of those responsible for the disaster.

More than a decade after the explosions at Pike River, no one has been brought to justice. Successive governments, union bureaucrats, and state agencies have protected the company’s executives and managers, whose negligence turned the mine into a death trap. The WSWs urges readers around the world to read and share our statement, Justice for the 29 miners killed at New Zealand’s Pike River!, and send messages of support for this crucial fight.

To read previously published statements from readers around the world, click [here](#) and [here](#). Former miners in the UK have contributed statements [here](#).

Rachel Raue, New Zealand:

I fully support the Pike River Families Committee in their demand for a thorough investigation into the disaster that killed their loved family members on November 19, 2010. Further to this I agree that the company leaders, found to be responsible for this gross and fatal negligence to secure the safety of their workers, must be prosecuted.

Twenty-nine workers were killed, and yet over ten years have passed since the catastrophe, with no closure for families and communities.

The Ardern Labour government has a responsibility

to ensure the safety of all workers in New Zealand. Without transparency in this most important case, that will never be possible. Corporate greed will continue to see to it that the lives of workers are to put at risk to ensure profit margins are met.

While the minister for the Pike River Recovery, Andrew Little, postures that the government’s decision to cease a forensic investigation is due to prioritising “the living,” the details of the cover-up suggest, if not blatantly reveal, that this is really about protecting big business. Protecting the working class of New Zealand does not appear to be a priority. Neither is compassion or closure for all the victims of the Pike River disaster, either living or deceased.

International mining experts are backing these New Zealand families. Yet, their own government is turning their back on them, denying the enforcement of justice while supporting the continued enactment of the capitalist agenda that puts profit over people and planet.

Lynette Stevens, New Zealand:

Our family completely supports Dean and Bernie and others who need justice! Our family lost our brother on a corporate farm in NZ exactly a year after the Pike disaster... we know what the fight against corruption is like... so our utmost respect to you all!

Heather Christiansen, New Zealand:

I support the Pike River families, at the very least they deserve a fair trial. This has been a joke on behalf of our government. Why enter and investigate now to get their hopes up, only to shut it down again before it’s even started? All that hard work, sweat and tears, has just put them through more turmoil and pain. These families need justice and at least a proper answer to put this to rest.

They say it's unsafe to enter, yet people put their life at risk to save other people every day. If someone wants to do it, let them. If it costs too much, why start it in the first place? The government wastes millions every year on silly things like referendums, for example John Key wanting to change the NZ flag. That is the least of our worries. Likewise, the cannabis and end of life referendums. These are all just to keep us distracted from what's really going on in our country. I'm pleading for the investigation to continue, no one deserves to go to work to die and not to return home.

Lisa, United States:

We in the International Working Class demand this Pike Coal Mine remain open for continued investigation. This wasn't an accident. This occurred due to PRC putting their profits before the health and safety of workers who extract this coal. It was ruled by the Supreme Court as to the complicity of regulators with Whittall to keep the mine open when it clearly wasn't safe. The PRC, government regulators, "union" are responsible for the deaths of these workers and clearly need to be held accountable!

Don't close the Pike River Mine!

Amy Jesensek, New Zealand:

The cause of this disaster should be identified. Too often the powerful people at the top get away with no consequences, while workers pay the ultimate price. If you have the power to make decisions, which can affect a worker's life or death, and are paid handsomely for it, you need to be held responsible if your decisions lead to the deaths of workers.

STOP THE COVERUP!

EXPOSE THE CORPORATIONS!

PROSECUTE THOSE RESPONSIBLE!

JUSTICE FOR ALL—NOT JUST AGAINST THE POOR!

JACINDA WE ARE LOOKING AT YOU—BACK UP YOUR PRETTY WORDS WITH REAL ACTION!

Stan Mackowiak, New Zealand:

There can be no retreat from the mine, scientific and forensic evidence must be collected. The families must be reunited with the remains of their loved ones, and criminal prosecution of corporate and individual entities must proceed. The culpability of Unions and governments of all stripes must be revealed.

Neil Munro, New Zealand:

This is obviously a HUGE coverup. The NEW

ZEALAND GOVERNMENT has and is continuing to try and stop this, claiming it is too expensive or dangerous. World mining experts disagree. People need to be held accountable, and the real reasons for the disaster found out to stop a repeat in the future.

Gina King, New Zealand:

We need this investigation to continue. The men need to go home, answers to so many questions are not far. Labour promised the families and New Zealand they would get answers.

Neville Hooker, New Zealand:

Absolutely so wrong that the 29 lost miners' families have had to go through such a long, drawn out, stressful, non-committal approach by the government and past governments to retrieve the families' loved ones. So bad and wrong. Looking at evidence to date that this horrific tragedy even happened and even worse that these poor miners' families have had to bear such a stressful happening without even being able to lay to rest their loved ones. Come on, government, get these brave miners back to their loved ones now!

Tina-Marie, Australia/New Zealand:

It is very sad that these men have not been returned to their families and the truth uncovered. I was born in Greymouth but have lived in Australia for many years now and it is deeply saddening to see that this tragedy has still not been resolved. Absolutely heartbreaking that the families are still fighting for the right thing to be done. Bring the men home, do the right thing!!!!

Hoani T McGregor, New Zealand

They have gone this far, complete the bloody job. Someone is responsible for what happened. I want whoever it is to be brought to account. I am of modest means but am willing to make a contribution. If as many of us that are willing paid maybe 20 or 30 dollars we could get there. I do not want to let the Government off the hook, though.

John Whyte, Australia:

So close but so far. Surely the government can fund this to the end, hopefully we can still bring them home, most of the hard work is done.



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