

South Africa closes mine for investigation

by UPI

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa - South African officials said they have suspended operations at the gold mine where 3,200 miners were stranded to determine the cause of the mishap. The officials said one day after the accident at the Elandsrand mine that it would be closed for up to six weeks while investigators work to determine the cause of the incident, the International Herald Tribune reported Friday. Amelia Soares, a spokeswoman for the mine's owner, Harmony Gold, said one of the miners was injured when he fell while awaiting rescue. Harmony Gold lifted the trapped miners to safety using an auxiliary elevator in a ventilation shaft. The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa claimed the accident was the cause of poor safety standards at the mine and Harmony Gold's policy of running mining operations at the location 24 hours a day. The mine, which is located about 40 miles southwest of Johannesburg, is one of several operations mining gold from the country's Witwatersrand, the world's most heavily mined gold deposit.

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