

South African Silicosis

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Related Practice Areas: **Environmental Threats, Civil and Human Rights, Mass Torts and Public Health Threats**

Hausfeld achieved a groundbreaking settlement on behalf of Southern African gold miners suffering from occupational lung disease in Johannesburg, South Africa. This historic class action settlement, the first ever of its kind in South Africa, reflects more than a decade of preparation and litigation aimed at providing compensation to the gold miners who suffered from silicosis and tuberculosis over the last 50 years.

In May 2016, the Johannesburg High Court certified the case as a class action against most of South Africa's gold mining industry by a unanimous three-judge panel. Extensive negotiations over a three-year period with the defendants resulted in this landmark settlement. The settlement calls for the compensation of all eligible gold miners who suffered silicosis or tuberculosis, and sets up a trust to provide medical examinations of miners and compensation payments. Benefits for eligible miners will be in the range from 10,000 to 500,000 South African Rand.

This groundbreaking settlement brings much-needed relief to thousands of workers whose legal rights were ignored and forgotten. It brings an important measure of justice to a system where it has been absent for decades.

Hausfeld, along with the South African law firm Abrahams Kiewitz Inc., first filed the case in August 2012. The case was consolidated with another action brought a few months later by South African attorney Richard Spoor, with assistance from Motley Rice, and these firms, along with The Legal Resources Center, worked together to achieve class certification and settlement. The parties are currently seeking the necessary approval of the settlement by the High Court in Johannesburg.

For more information related to the settlement, please see our press releases announcing the settlement and approval.