
All mining and stacking stopped at Spence mine - BHP

Thursday, 29 Oct, 2009

Bloomberg quoted BHP Billiton Limited as saying that all non essential activity at its Spence copper mine in Chile has stopped because of a strike that began October 13th 2009.

BHP said that all mining, crushing and stacking has been suspended at Spence adding that it's now difficult to resume talks with the workers.

BHP said that "Strikers continue to illegally occupy a location within the property area of the company and accordingly making it difficult for the company to resume the negotiations without having the appropriate level of confidence on the safety and security conditions at the site."

Mr Andres Ramirez president of the union representing the miners said after government mediated talks failed that BHP's wage offer to the Spence workers is insufficient,.

The company said that BHP produced 172,685 tonnes of copper at the mine in the 12 months through June 30 and aims to reach full capacity of 200,000 tonnes in the coming year.

Mr Pedro Marin president of Chile's Mining Federation said that workers are demanding a 5% pay increase and benefits similar to those offered to workers at Escondida. Strikers may disrupt Spence's operations by blocking roads to halt copper shipments if the company doesn't listen to workers' demands.

(Sourced from Bloomberg)

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