

On the eve of the 3rd anniversary of the Brumadinho tailings dam disaster in which 270 people lost their lives, more than 150 people came together to pray, pay tribute, and discuss how to prevent it from happening again.



The event this week, hosted by the Church of England Pensions Board, included industry leaders, investors, local people from Brumadinho and UN representatives to commemorate the loss of life and also discuss the steps being taken to implement the Global Mining Industry Standard. Attendees on the Zoom call heard from families of the victims who are still seeking justice and support from the mining company who owned and operated the site.

Bishop David Urquhart of Birmingham and Chair of the Global Mining Faiths Reflection Initiative (MFRI), led the group in prayer and Angelica Amanda Andrade who lost her sister in the disaster, gave a moving account of the disaster from the point of view of her family.

Adam Matthews, Chief Responsible Investment Officer for the Church of England Pensions Board and Chair of the global investor Mining and Tailings Safety initiative, said:

"With the low carbon transition leading to increased demand for mining, the legacy of the Brumadinho disaster has to lead to a completely reformed mining sector. We now have a Global Industry Standard where previously one did not exist and investors are working intensively with the UN, industry and other stakeholders to establish the first independent global Institute to verify the Standard is being applied at individual mine sites.

"If anyone doubts the continued risk posed by tailings dams, there have been 12 incidents at mine sites since Brumadinho leading to further loss of life and destruction of the environment. Tailings safety remains a clear and present risk to communities and the environment as well as to those invested in companies or providing them with insurance or banking facilities. We are not yet confident this issue is being properly addressed.

"We are encouraged by the number of companies that have confirmed they will adopt the Global Industry Standard or are assessing alignment. However, any company that sets itself against the Standard will face considerable scrutiny from investors. As a first step we will vote against the chair of those companies and are considering shareholder resolutions. If the chair of a board does not see this as a major risk that requires the highest standards of operation, then they themselves pose a risk to us as a shareholder in that company."

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