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Zumas in legal battle for mining rights

By Bongani Nkosi | Jun 28, 2017

A controversial mining company linked to the Zuma family is embroiled in a bitter legal battle over proposed mining on protected land in Mpumalanga.



Yesterday, environmental groups went to the high court in Pretoria to stop a firm whose BEE partners include Jacob Zuma's family members from mining in a land declared protected in 2014.

Eight NGOs, including Earthlife Africa Johannesburg, GroundWork and Endangered Wildlife Trust dragged Atha-Africa Ventures before Judge Hans Fabricius on an urgent basis.

Atha-Africa Ventures, an Indian company, is in partnership with Bashubile Trust - whose trustees Sizwe Christopher Zuma and Vincent Gezinhliziyo Zuma are reported to be Zuma's nephews.

Lawyers for both the company and the coalition of NGOs told the court yesterday that they were negotiating a settlement on the matter.

Atha-Africa Ventures was hoping to commence operations at its Yzermyn Coal Mine in Mabola, near Wakkerstroom, Mpumalanga, soon.

Mabola is a critical water-catchment area, and NGOs are up in arms that allowing coal mining there will contaminate the much-needed water.

Last month, MPs also lambasted the Department of Environmental Affairs for approving Atha-Africa's mining at the sanctuary. Chairman of the environmental affairs portfolio committee Mohlopi Mapulane said: "A strong case has not been made as to why the mining is allowed in a protected area."