

Govt's proposed chrome export tax threatens jobs

South Africa's proposed chrome ore export tax will hurt miners' profitability and lead to job losses across the sector, the country's Minerals Council has said.



Image credit: Dion Beetson on Unsplash

Africa's most advanced economy is the world's biggest exporter of chrome, which is mostly used in the manufacture of stainless steel.

South Africa also used to be the biggest global producer of ferrochrome, a combination of chrome and iron but lost that pole position to China, mostly due to high electricity costs which have forced many smelters to shut.



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On June 26 2025, South Africa's cabinet announced it had agreed to lower power tariffs for chrome smelters as well as a proposal to impose a tax on chrome ore exports as part of efforts to stop the decline of the ferrochrome industry.

The Minerals Council South Africa (MCSA), which represents the country's biggest miners, said in a statement that the tax "would not achieve the government's aims of sustaining the ferrochrome industry and the preservation of jobs".

It would instead "hurt chrome producers and the significant contribution this industry makes to both South Africa's economy and the jobs it sustains and grows".



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South Africa's chrome sector directly employs 25,000 people and earned the country R85bn (\$4.85 billion) in export revenue in 2024, according to the Minerals Council.

It exported a record 20.5 million metric tons of chrome concentrate in 2024, mostly to China, the world's biggest importer of the commodity.

Companies mining and processing chrome in South Africa include Glencore, Tharisa Plc and South32.

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