

## **Indonesian Court Clears Newmont**

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A district court in Indonesia cleared a subsidiary of U.S.-based Newmont Mining Corp. of pollution charges Tuesday, the second ruling in favor of the American resources giant this year.

PT Newmont Minahasa Raya was acquitted of any wrongdoing in the civil lawsuit filed in March by leading Indonesian environmental group Walhi. The organization accused Newmont of polluting Buyat Bay in North Sulawesi province with mercury tailings from gold mining operations there.

The South Jakarta District Court ruled in Newmont's favor, but denied its request that Walhi pay compensation for alleged defamation damages.

Earlier this year, Newmont executive Richard Ness and his employer were found innocent of dumping dangerous amounts of toxic waste into the bay in a separate criminal case.

The charges against Ness and Indonesia's outdated mining law have deterred international companies from setting up business here, even as global metal and energy prices soared.

Newmont, which has been active in the mineral-rich archipelago for two decades, has said it will expand Indonesian investments despite the legal complications.

The Mesel Gold Mine in North Sulawesi was shut in 2004 due to ore depletion.