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Foolish Search Damages Kolombangara Crater

KIBCA is warning local people not to waste their time looking for precious minerals in the Kolombangara Crater, Kongu Rano. They are causing damage to the crater and will only find fool's gold.

"KIBCA has been growing increasingly concerned over damage caused by fossickers to the Kolombangara Crater, Kongu Rano", said Ferguson Vaghi, KIBCA Coordinator. "KIBCA held a special Executive meeting earlier in the month and has resolved to do all it can to urge people to protect the crater and avoid visiting it."

"Over the last two months, rumours have been circulating about precious minerals such as gold being found inside the Kolombangara Crater. This had led to several visits per week from large parties of locals hoping to find these minerals."

"In fact there is no credible evidence that there are any valuable minerals. Only pyrites, or fool's gold, has been found. KIBCA does not believe that there is any gold or other precious minerals in the crater", said Mr Vaghi.

"The fossickers are polluting the Vila River, the drinking water supply to Ringgi. They are also leaving rubbish in the crater, damaging KIBCA hut and shelter and potentially scaring away international tourists. Until now the crater has been a popular destination for walkers who visit the crater's spectacular steep-walled gorges, waterfalls, rapids and unlogged rainforest."

"Kolombangara Crater is the centre of Kolombangara Island indigenous tribesmen. It is said to be the womb of all Kolombangarans. Culturally it is a sacred place, so there should be no digging, shouting or other disrespectful activities," said Mr Vaghi.

"KIBCA manages the area above 400m altitude on Kolombangara, including the Vila River valley above Imbu Rano Lodge and Kolombangara Crater, as a conservation area on behalf of all landholders. Thus all logging and mining is banned. This includes fossicking and mineral exploration."

Mr Vaghi is also disappointed because the fossickers are occupying the KIBCA hut and shelter without paying any money for using them. "They even use timber from the huts for cooking fires."

"KIBCA is happy for anybody to visit Kolombangara Crater, as long as they respect it," concluded Mr Vaghi.

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