

Argor-Heraeus | Peru

The government of Peru has declared an emergency throughout the Madre de Dios Amazonas region following reports of a high content of mercury in the entire region caused by illegal gold mining operations that use mercury to separate the gold from rock.

Argor-Heraeus does not process gold that originates from the Madre de Dios region, nor has it ever done so in the past. As a leading precious metals processor, Argor-Heraeus is committed to a responsible and sustainable precious metals value chain. We process gold in compliance with strict national and international standards.

To ensure that we do not process raw material that is illegal, originates from questionable sources or has been produced in disregard of ethical or environmental standards, Argor-Heraeus has put in place a comprehensive and multi-layered control system that is continually revised and enhanced. We do not merely rely on affirmations of business partners and the review of documents; instead, we personally examine the local situation in the mining operations and conduct face-to-face interviews.

The events in Peru have reinforced us in our approach to continue actively and relentlessly promoting the global standardisation and implementation of the existing set of mandatory rules and voluntary commitments.

FAQ

1. Is Argor-Heraeus mining for gold in Peru?

No. Argor-Heraeus operates exclusively as a downstream service provider in the processing of precious metals and is not itself a precious metals miner. As a pivotal link in the value chain, Argor-Heraeus offers its clients gold, silver, platinum and palladium refining, the production of bullion and coins as well as semi-finished products for the watch and jewellery industries. We also provide support services for precious metals trading.

2. Does Argor-Heraeus refine gold from illegal mining in Madre de Dios?

No. Argor-Heraeus does not process gold that originates from the Madre de Dios region, nor has it ever done so in the past.

3. Does Argor-Heraeus refine gold from other regions in Peru?

Peru is among the ten largest gold mining countries worldwide and an important trading partner for Switzerland. Argor-Heraeus, for instance, is processing gold from Peru that has been produced in the context of the “Better Gold Initiative”. This initiative, which has been co-founded by Argor-Heraeus, promotes sustainable small-scale mining in Peru and enables small and medium-sized mining operations to comply with the strict requirements for sustainable and environmentally responsible gold mining.

4. Is or was Argor-Heraeus in any way involved in the environmental pollution in Peru?

No. Argor-Heraeus is neither involved in the pollution nor in any other way responsible for it. On the contrary, through initiatives such as the “Better Gold Initiative”, the company actively promotes high environmental, labour and living standards in small-scale mining in Peru.

5. In the light of current developments, wouldn't it be better to no longer process gold from Peru?

Mining is an important industry for the local population. Argor-Heraeus has therefore made it a priority to support better environmental standards and improve labour and living conditions of workers in legal local mining operations. As an example, the "Better Gold Initiative" rewards small mining entities in Peru that implement exemplary environmental, labour and social standards.

6. Can Argor-Heraeus prove that the company is not processing materials from illegal sources?

Argor-Heraeus has put in place a continually revised, globally operating and locally anchored compliance system that meticulously examines the provenance of all precious metals and ensures that orders are consistently declined in the event of doubt.

Of course, we also maintain comprehensive written documentation on this process for each individual order. Our business excellence and compliance systems are also subject to extensive annual audits by independent experts.

7. Does Argor-Heraeus actively take actions against illegal mining?

Argor-Heraeus contributes to the continual development and global standardisation of existing rules and actively promotes their international implementation. More specifically, Argor-Heraeus also promotes legal small-scale mining to help local entities comply with high environmental and ethical quality standards. With that, the company actively contributes to greater sustainability directly where the gold originates from.