



# **MINORITY CAUCUS**

## **PARLIAMENT OF GHANA**

Parliament House – Accra (Ghana)

6<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

### **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **PRESIDENT MAHAMA’S CSOs ENCOUNTER A PUBLICITY GIMMICK TO COVER UP HIS FAILED FIGHT AGAINST GALAMSEY.**

The Minority Caucus in Parliament has keenly followed recent developments relating to illegal mining and its impact on our water bodies, forests, and the health and livelihoods of our people. The Caucus has, also, monitored the President’s encounter with selected Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on the illegal mining menace and the Government’s responses at that encounter which seek to downplay the urgency to deal with this looming national disaster. It is clear that the encounter with the CSOs was a publicity stunt calculated to cover up the Government’s failed attempts at dealing with illegal mining.

It is obvious that the galamsey menace keeps worsening by the day. We are, therefore, surprised that amid increasing turbidity levels and the glaring browning of our water bodies, the heavy contamination of soils and food crops, as recently confirmed by the joint Report by Pure Earth and the Environmental Protection Authority, the wanton destruction of our forest resources, and the indiscriminate degradation of our lands, the President of the Republic could look into the eyes of Ghanaians and tell us he is winning the fight against illegal mining.

Instead of dealing decisively with this looming crisis, as promised when in opposition, the Government has resorted to publicity gimmicks to sway the minds of unsuspecting Ghanaians from its failures. Without a doubt, this Government lacks the political will to

fight galamsey, and has merely resorted to the renaming of policies and programmes introduced by the Akufo-Addo Government..

It would be recalled that when the Akufo-Addo Government came into office in 2017, the galamsey menace had reached a crescendo, and there were warnings that Ghana would have to import water if the destruction continued. To deal with this, Government put a six-month moratorium on all forms of small scale mining (legal or illegal), which was extended for a period of one and a half years. During this period, under the outstanding leadership of President Akufo-Addo, Government:

- established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM) to coordinate the fight against illegal mining;
- launched Operation Vanguard to rid our water bodies and forests reserves of mining;
- in partnership with George Grant University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa (UMaT), trained some four thousand (4000) small scale miners to undertake responsible and environmentally-sound small scale mining practices; and
- amended the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) to enhance the punishment for offences relating to illegal mining.

These measures helped the then Government to come to grips with the illegal mining menace. Subsequently, the Government adopted a two-pronged approach to deal with the canker, combining law enforcement with regulatory, operational, and policy reforms. Under law enforcement, which was aimed at ensuring compliance with the law while punishing those who engaged in irresponsible and unsustainable mining practices, Government:

- declared water bodies as Red Zones for all mining activities, and banned all reconnaissance, prospecting and/or exploration activities in Forest Reserves, except in exceptional circumstances, to prevent the wanton destruction to Forest Reserves and water bodies in the country. This remained in place until the Akufo-Addo Government left office, and the Red Zones are now being rechristened as “security zones”;

- introduced Operation Halt II, in partnership with the Ministry of Defence, to rid river bodies and Forest Reserves of illegal mining, arrest persons engaged in these illegalities, and, where necessary, decommission mining equipment found at these illegal mining sites, and we established a Situation Room with a call centre to receive reports of illegal mining. This has now been renamed as “NAIMOS”;
- acquired five speed boats for the Ghana Navy to patrol river bodies;
- trained some two hundred (200) river guards to assist in the protection of river bodies. These guards were not deployed before leaving office, but have now been deployed and renamed Blue Water Guards;
- recruited more Mine Inspectors, and resourced the Minerals Commission with logistics, including vehicles, to undertake effective regulation of the sector;
- established Small Scale Mining Committees in all eighty-three (83) mining districts of the country, to assist the District Offices of the Minerals Commission to effectively monitor, promote and develop mining operations in their jurisdictions, in accordance with section 92 of Act 703. This was the first time, since the enactment of Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), that Small Scale Mining Committees had been established in all mining districts in the country;
- placed a ban on the sale and dealings in the floating platform popularly known as “Changfan”;
- passed the Minerals and Mining (Minerals Operation – Tracking of Earthmoving and Mining Equipment) Regulations, 2020 (L.I. 2404), and begun its implementation by installing tracking devices in mining equipment and geofenced them to particular mining sites;
- established a Control Room at the Minerals Commission to monitor all tracked mining equipment and to demobilise mining equipment that leave their geofenced area. This Control Room was inaugurated on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2022; and
- organised training sessions for Judges in mining areas on the need for strict enforcement of Act 703, as amended by Act 995.

To support the various law enforcement measures, the Akufo-Addo Government introduced a number of regulatory, policy and operational reforms to curb illegal mining and promote responsible small scale mining. They include:

- revamping of the Community Mining Scheme and the development of a Community Mining and Small Scale Mining Operational Manual to facilitate the adoption of responsible, viable and sustainable mining practices right from the inception of the operations. These Schemes have been renamed Responsible Cooperative Mining;
- introduction of mercury-free gold processing equipment, known as “Gold Kacha,” to prevent the use of mercury in small scale mining;
- introduction of online application process, to facilitate the acquisition of small scale mining licences, and reduce the time for processing such applications;
- retooling of the Inspectorate Division of the Minerals Commission to make it more efficient;
- decentralisation of the work of the Minerals Commission to bring it closer to the communities to facilitate easy access to the Commission. New Regional and District Offices of the Minerals Commission were built to facilitate the decentralisation;
- blocking out more areas for small scale gold mining through continuous geological investigations by the Ghana Geological Survey Authority (GGSA), and negotiations with large-scale mining companies;
- vetting of applications for small scale mining in partnership with the Ghana National Association of Small Scale Miners (GNASSM);
- institution of Small-Scale Miners Award Scheme, to identify and reward responsible small-scale miners, as a way of encouraging responsible small-scale mining; and
- introduction of the National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Programmes (NAELPs), to provide alternative sources of livelihood for persons affected by the clamp down on illegal mining. This Programme has now been rechristened Responsible Cooperative Mining and Skills Development Programme (rCOMSDEP).

It is becoming increasingly clear that the Government of President Mahama has failed to demonstrate the level of resolve required to address the galamsey crisis in a comprehensive and effective manner. As a result, the nation is facing escalating health and environmental dangers. Turbidity levels in our rivers are now dangerously high, vital organs of citizens are being irreparably damaged by contaminated food and water, railway lines have become unsafe, and our forest reserves are being degraded into mining enclaves. These are pressing realities that continue to endanger lives and threaten the very sustainability of our environment and our nation at large.

Ghanaians can no longer be subjected to propaganda and publicity gimmicks in place of genuine solutions. The nation requires competent and effective governance in the public interest. We therefore call on Civil Society Organisations, the Clergy, traditional leaders, and all stakeholders to speak out, just as they did in times past, in defence of our collective national interest.

We further urge President Mahama and his Government to move beyond rhetoric and demonstrate real political will. The fight against illegal mining can only be won through bold, consistent, and effective action. Anything less would be a grave abdication of duty to the people of Ghana and to future generations.

**-ENDS-**

**HON. KWAKU AMPRATWUM-SARPONG,  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MAMPONG CONSTITUENCY &  
RANKING MEMBER, LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE.**