

# National Coalition on Mining (NCOM) – Ghana

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## **STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL COALITION ON MINING (NCOM) ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY STATE SECURITY IN MINING COMMUNITIES IN GHANA**

The National Coalition in Mining (NCOM) condemns the recent killing of 12 citizens and the wounding of many more by state security operatives in separate incidents at the Newmont (NGGL) Ahafo South Gold Mine in Ntotroso and the AngloGold Ashanti (AGA) mine in Obuasi.

In the late hours of Saturday 18 January 2025, soldiers guarding AGA's concession in Obuasi shot and killed nine suspected small-scale miners who allegedly breached portions of AngloGold Ashanti's Obuasi concession. About 14 others sustained varying degrees of injury and are currently receiving treatment. A week earlier (on 9 January 2025), 3 young men were killed at the NGGL Ahafo concession, allegedly for trespassing and stealing. In both cases the claims of both the Police and Military that the killings took place during a confrontation have been challenged by survivors.

These tragic incidents which have been widely condemned, are the latest in the increasing role of state security operatives in violence against citizens in mining communities on behalf of private mining companies. From Ntotroso, Ketu South, Talensi, Ada Songor through to Obuasi, there are harrowing tales of state security being used to brutalise communities on behalf of corporate interest resulting in deaths and the injuring of many. After a sustained campaign by the National Coalition on Mining, in the 2000s, the state security was withdrawn from mining communities but recent events reveal return to the bad practices of the past.

It is very disturbing that in our constitutional democracy state security agencies have been turned into the default security for private mining firms, ready to use lethal force against fellow citizens who trespass into the concessions of multinational mining companies. Currently almost all of these mining companies in the country have the military on call, with some either hosting military bases or in the process of constructing one. It is interesting to note that AngloGold Ashanti is constructing a military base at Anyankyirem, near Obuasi, at a cost of 6 million US dollars. According to the company, this facility is expected to boost the security of residents of Obuasi as if the multinational company is in charge of the country's security. It is now evident that this military facility will only serve to protect the company's interests. Without prejudice to the right of multinational mining companies engaged

in legitimate business to protect their investments, we believe that relying on the state to provide such security is not right, especially when these security agencies end up brutalising the very citizens whose taxes go to fund them.

Over the years a number of community members and suspected illegal miners have been killed and maimed. In other jurisdictions, the killing of one citizen is enough to marshal state resources to investigate and unravel the truth. Sadly, in our case, it appears the state investigative bodies are not interested in unravelling the truth so as to underline the sanctity of life, the accountability of the military and Police and ultimately seek justice for the bereaved families. Often in the past the security agencies involved in the incidents are the same bodies that purport to investigate them. Until independent investigations are conducted and the incidents brought to closure, we risk seeing a recurrence.

In the early-2000s the National Coalition on Mining (NCOM), a grouping of over 30 civil society organisations and individuals working on diverse thematic areas carried out a campaign to address human rights violations in mining areas including such brutalities meted out to citizens by state security acting on behalf of some multinational corporations in the country. The campaign led to an investigation by the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) which published a comprehensive report in 2008. CHRAJ recommended the withdrawal of the Military and Police from the mines. The NCOM campaign led to the withdrawal of security forces from the premises of most of these multinational companies. It is therefore distressing that almost twenty years on, this canker has reared its head again, even much fiercer than before.

NCOM believes that the state must do more to protect its citizens, especially those living in marginalised mining communities. In the light of this we make the following demands:

**Demands:**

1. We welcome President Mahama's directive for a probe into what happened in Obuasi. We however call on the Government to establish a Commission of Enquiry to probe the deaths in both Ntotroso and Obuasi. This will unravel the truth behind the killings the guilty can be brought to justice, and the bereaved families properly compensated.
2. We call on the Ministries of Defence and Interior to oversee the immediate withdrawal of the military and police from all mining sites across the country. Their presence has caused more harm than good, and led to killings and community agitations. Mining companies in the country must resort to the use of constructive dialogue to redress all grievances.

3. The Ministries of Defence and Interior must make a full public disclosure of the terms on which the security services have been deployed around the mines and the rules of engagement under which they operate and use their arms.
4. The government of Ghana must respect its commitments to international human rights protocols by ensuring that communities are protected from all forms of harm, including from state security agencies.

NCOM believes that every Ghana deserves to live in a safe and secure environment while going about their duties. The state has a responsibility to ensure that this is possible. Not only should the state be seen to be protecting corporate interests, it must ensure that its citizens are well protected from the state security agencies.

Thank you

1. Third World Network – Africa (TWN – Africa)
2. Centre for Social Impact Studies (CeSIS)
3. Livelihood and Environment, Ghana (LEG)
4. Alhassan Atta-Quayson, PhD
5. Savannah Research and Advocacy Network (SRAN)
6. HELP Foundation Africa
7. Innovation Development Alternatives (IDEAS)
8. GOCAP
9. Tano Women Empowerment and Development Association (TWEDA)
10. Centre for Climate Change Advocacy and Development
11. Women Empowerment and Advocacy Network
12. Network for Health and Relief Foundation (NHRF)
13. Muthashie Foundation Africa
14. Centre for the Advancement of Marginalised Persons (CAMP)
15. ABAK FOUNDATION GHANA
16. Emmanuel Gameli Dovia (ICCEP-GHANA)
17. Nature and People Trust

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