

**PRESS BRIEFING BY HON. EMMANUEL ARMAH-KOFI BUAH,  
MINISTER FOR LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, ON THE  
GOVERNMENT’S SUSTAINED FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL MINING  
(GALAMSEY)**

Accra, April 21, 2025

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the press.

As you may recall from our previous engagements, this government, under the leadership of His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama, remains unwavering in our commitment to eradicate the scourge of illegal mining—an environmental sin against humanity and, against God. We promised to carry the good people of Ghana along with periodic updates, and today, I am here to provide key developments in this fight.

Last month, we assured the nation that we would intensify efforts to trace the financiers and owners of the heavy-duty equipment used for illegal mining. Today, we are pleased to announce a significant breakthrough in this critical fight.

One of the most egregious cases we have uncovered involves Akonta Mining Company Ltd., a company legally registered and granted a government lease to mine responsibly off-reserve outside the forest.

The company, however, does not possess an entry permit into the forest reserve of the Samreboi enclave of the Western North Region. Yet, investigations reveal that Akonta Mining has flagrantly abused this lease.

In August 2022, the Forestry Commission, with the assistance of the Ghana Police, made some arrests of persons associated with Akonta Mining, encroaching on the forest reserves, specifically compartment 161. The docket was supposedly transferred to Accra for further action, and yet nothing was heard of the case.

This company has not only trespassed into protected reserves but has become a criminal syndicate, selling access of the Aboi Forest Reserve to illegal miners for a staggering GHC 300,000 per concession. Worse, these illegal miners operate under Akonta’s protection, devastating the River Tano and surrounding forests with impunity. They have encroached compartments 49 and 121 of the Tano Nimri forest reserve.

We gathered a team of investigators to go undercover to make enquiries about the details of this operation. Our undercover team uncovered a well-oiled machinery of destruction:

One Mr. Ayisi (a representative of Akonta Mining) is the liaison on these dealings – he serves as the gatekeeper, negotiating fees and granting illegal access. The concessions are then subleased to individuals like one “Mr. Henry” and another individual identified as “Shark” who are to oversee the devastation of the Aboi Forest Reserve and the Tano River.

As part of the agreement between Akonta Mining and the illegal miners, weekly royalties of 250 grams of gold are to be paid to the company, lining the pockets of Akonta’s collaborators.

Another heartbreaking revelation is that this criminal enterprise thrives because of the active collusion and connivance of some forestry officers and some security personnel. Here is how it works – Part of the GHC 300,000 fee goes to Akonta Mining, a portion goes to Mr. Henry, Shark, and their cohorts, and another portion goes to the forestry and security officials, according to investigators. These officers take a cut as a service charge in exchange for protection and tip-offs in the event of an impending raid.

There is no control over the activities of these illegal miners whatsoever. They continue to destroy with impunity, knowing that they are operating under the cover of the lease of Akonta Mining Company Ltd

Some interviews conducted with a few residents indicate that the modus operandi of Akonta Mining is to use force to enter and destroy even the farmlands and produce of poor farmers in the area.

Armed with this intel, on the eve of Good Friday (17th April 2025) an intelligence-led operation by the Ghana Police Service and the Forestry Commission led to the raid of six illegal mining sites linked to Akonta Mining.

The operation in Compartment 49, which began at 5 a.m. and lasted a whopping 12 hours, resulted in:

- 51 arrests (8 Chinese, 39 Ghanaian men, 4 Ghanaian women)

- Seizure of about 30 excavators, 5 recovered and impounded at the operation base
- 2 Pump-action guns loaded with 5 and 2 rounds of BB cartridges each, 1 single-barrel gun retrieved
- Confiscation of 2 Toyota Hilux pickups, 1 Toyota RAV4, 4 motorbikes, and a cache of mining equipment

All suspects have been transported to Accra, in custody pending prosecution.

In light of the overwhelming evidence, I have authorized the Minerals Commission to take steps to revoke the lease of Akonta Mining Co. Ltd with immediate effect.

I have directed that forestry officials connected to these illegalities be immediately interdicted pending further investigations and prosecution. The security agencies have been notified to investigate security officers who have had dealings with Akonta Mining in this particular Forest Reserve.

The Attorney-General has also since been briefed and has taken over the investigations for further action.

Akonta Mining does not have a lease to mine in the Tano Nimiri Forest reserve, and their mining activities in the forest are illegal and criminal. And that, the Mahama government will stop at nothing to bring the company to book.

This is a warning to all large-scale mining concession holders hiding behind legal leases to fund the destruction of our forests and river bodies. We know some of your schemes – We are coming after you!

To the youth engaged in illegal mining: There is a better way. We stand ready to support you with better alternatives. But to those who persist in defiance, the state will act without mercy!

To the media and the Ghanaian people: Your vigilance is crucial. Report illegal mining activities, and trust that this government will act.

Let me be clear: We will not stop until galamsey is completely uprooted.

We will not stop until our waters run blue, we will not stop until our forests are turned green

We will not stop until the soul of our country is healed!

We will not stop until every financier, every enabler — the real architects of this destruction — will face the full rigors of the law.

We will name, shame, and prosecute them publicly.

Thank you. I will now take your questions.

Signed,

Hon. Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah  
Minister for Lands and Natural Resources