

CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ACCRA
P.O.BOX GP 247
ACCRA - GHANA

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS
OF RELIGIOUS, GHANA
P.O.BOX MD 89
MADINA - ACCRA

**PETITION OF THE CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ACCRA AND THE
CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF RELIGIOUS, GHANA TO HIS
EXCELLENCY NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF GHANA, AS PART OF THE "ENVIRONMENTAL PRAYER WALK
AGAINST GALAMSEY"**

PRESENTED ON 11TH OCTOBER, 2024

AT THE PRESIDENCY, JUBILEE HOUSE – ACCRA

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

The priests, religious, and lay faithful of the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra, and the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious, Ghana, have observed, with great alarm, the destruction of our environment especially, through illegal mining, otherwise known as galamsey. We are however baffled at the fact that all the communiques issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference have fallen on deaf ears. As Christians, we feel compelled to do something beyond the many statements that have been issued regarding this disaster; hence our "Environmental Prayer Walk" to beseech God for His help and also to pray for those in public offices who are vested with power to direct our collective resolve.

ISSUES

Destruction of Water Bodies;

Illegal mining has polluted very many of our rivers, such as the Pra, Ankobra, Densu, Tano, Offin and Birim, rendering them undrinkable and unfit for agricultural and domestic use. A recent press statement from the Ghana Water Company Limited revealed an initial very high turbidity of 14, 000 NTU which has come down to 9, 000 NTU, instead of the recommended 5 NTU in the Pra river. This has negatively impacted the livelihoods of farmers and rural communities who depend on these water bodies.

Loss of Agricultural Lands and Crops;

Vast stretches of arable land, cocoa farms and other crops have been destroyed by illegal mining activities, reducing the nation's ability to produce food and threatening food security. This loss of farmland is particularly harmful to small-scale farmers who depend on their land for survival.

Health Risks;

The use of harmful chemicals such as mercury in illegal mining poses significant health risks, especially for miners and surrounding communities. These chemicals contaminate water sources and food supplies, leading to long-term health complications, including respiratory and neurological disorders, increase in renal and kidney diseases. How can we, for instance, justify the rise in stillbirths, physical and biological deformities in new born babies caused by such unscrupulous and selfish enterprise?

Weak Enforcement of Laws;

Despite the existence of environmental protection laws, their enforcement has been weak and inconsistent. Corruption, complicity of some politicians, chiefs, some influential private citizens and foreigners, and the apparent lack of political will over the years by various governments have further exacerbated the problem, allowing illegal mining to thrive unchecked.

Given that the majority of Ghanaians and people of good will can no longer tolerate the strategies that have so far proven ineffective in arresting the crime, the sin and the travesty that is galamsey, we therefore,

PETITION YOUR EXCELLENCY:

In the name of Almighty God who has created all things and who has entrusted the stewardship of same to humanity;

In the name of our shared humanity;

In the name of the common good;

In the name and interest of the good people of our dear motherland, Ghana;

In the name of our ancestors and generations yet unborn;

In the name of all peoples who have lost their livelihoods, personal security, becoming victims of the destruction of our ecosystem through illegal mining;

In the name of freedom, justice, probity and accountability.

WE SEEK:

Immediate and Decisive Action by Government

We urge government to **swiftly** employ all available means to **immediately** halt illegal mining activities. This means that the problem is stated clearly and unambiguously as a Social, Economic and National Security issue. Thus articulated, it must engender actions such as the declaration of a state of emergency in relation to galamsey, triggering a moratorium on issuing mining licences, repealing of LI 2462, which allows mining in forest reserves, enforcing existing laws, holding perpetrators accountable, and ensuring that those involved in illegal mining face the full force of the law without fear or favour.

Education and Awareness Campaigns

We call on the media, civil society organizations, and religious bodies to amplify education and awareness campaigns on the devastating effects of illegal mining. Communities must be empowered to understand the long-term consequences of galamsey.

Restoration of Affected Areas

We urge the government to prioritize the reclamation of destroyed lands and the restoration of polluted water bodies. This process must involve local communities, led by the Chiefs and be transparent to ensure the recovery of the environment. We recommend strongly, a temporal moratorium on all licensed community mining activities.

Promoting Sustainable Mining Practices

While mining remains an important part of Ghana's economy, it must be carried out responsibly and sustainably. We call on licensed mining companies to adhere **strictly** to environmental regulations and to adopt practices that protect the environment.

Support for Alternative Livelihood Programmes


Many of those engaged in illegal mining do so out of economic desperation. We urge the government to invest in alternative livelihood programmes that provide sustainable employment opportunities for these individuals, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Political Campaign Against Galamsey

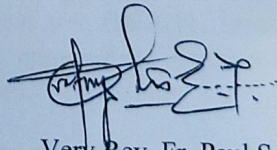
We **strongly** urge all Presidential and Parliamentary Candidates to make public commitments against galamsey in their ongoing political campaigns and call on their followers to follow suit. On our part, we promise to assist through constant prayer and education.

God bless our homeland Ghana and cause us to protect our common home from the evil of galamsey!!

Yours in the service of God and Country,



Most Rev. John Bonaventure Kwofie, CSSp
Metropolitan Archbishop of Accra



Very Rev. Fr. Paul Sadede Ennin, SMA
President, Conference of Major Superiors
of Religious, Ghana