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All Members

UTAG Communique on Ongoing Strike Action

Following our decision on October 10th to embark on industrial action in protest against mining in waterbodies, forest reserves and farmlands, the National Executive Council (NEC) has actively engaged the media nationwide to advocate for government intervention and public awareness on this critical issue. NEC met on October 16th to review the state of the strike action and update members on developments, key amongst which is the fact that all efforts by NEC to engage with the government to discuss UTAG proposals on how to effectively deal with the existential threat caused by irresponsible mining in waterbodies, forest reserves and farmlands have not yielded results.

Specifically, as you may recall, the government announced several measures, including the commencement of processes to **revoke the Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves Regulations, 2022 (L.I. 2462))** and the **deployment of additional military personnel** to the field to halt illegal mining (galamsey). NEC wishes to report that from our sources in Parliament, the revocation process has started. We are closely monitoring this process and expect Parliament to take swift action to expedite the revocation. We also ask that the government swiftly revoke all licenses that are not yet finalised but have started the processes and take measures to annul existing licenses for mining in waterbodies and forest reserves.

UTAG briefings and observations from media reports and official statements show that hundred (100) military personnel have been deployed with a mandate limited to protecting waterbodies, leaving forest reserves and farmlands vulnerable to continued destruction, especially by illegal mining (galamsey) activities. This partial approach undermines the broader fight against mining-induced environmental destruction, as we are told that active mining activities are ongoing in the forest reserves. With the widespread nature of illegal mining (galamsey) in waterbodies in particular, deploying only 100 military personnel is insufficient to tackle this growing menace effectively. In some media footage, there have been alarming incidents where illegal miners and their security forces (in some cases state military) have overpowered and detained the official government task force members and journalists, highlighting the scale of the challenge we face. The tip-off act to miners about the schedules of the task force teams undermines the government's efforts, which has to stop immediately.

While the efforts made by the government so far are commendable, a lot more sustained and strategic interventions are needed to yield the desired impact Ghanaians expect. The establishment of more designated courts to expedite the prosecution of illegal miners, as

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1

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contained in the government's roadmap, is yet to be seen. Similarly, the signing of a national pact by Presidential Candidates of political parties in support of the fight against illegal mining (galamsey) in Ghana as per the government's roadmap is also yet to be realised. Thus, after reviewing the situation, we urge the government to take further decisive actions, including:

1. **Expanding the task force's mandate** to include forest reserves and farmlands would ensure a comprehensive approach to stopping the destruction, especially by illegal mining activities.
2. **Expediting parliamentary revocation** of the L.I. 2462 to curb mining in forest reserves.
3. **Commencing immediate prosecution** of individuals arrested for engaging in illegal mining activities.
4. **Engaging** with UTAG to discuss proposals on how to fight illegal mining while promoting responsible and sustainable mining for inclusive development.

In addition, UTAG has offered to take the lead in developing the National Pact on the Fight Against Illegal Mining (Galamsey) with the Presidential Candidates in the upcoming 2024 elections and other stakeholders to commit towards this cause. This pact seeks a permanent solution to the mining and environmental crisis threatening our existence. We have also prepared a **Galamsey Response Pact** with strategic recommendations to strengthen the fight against illegal mining, which will be shared with the government for consideration and action.

We also wish to report to Members that NEC extended an invitation to Leaders of the group describing itself as the "*Silent Majority of UTAG*" to discuss their concerns. Unfortunately, they did not honour the invitation. We are ready to engage any individual Member or group of Members in constructive dialogue that aims to advance the collective interest of our great Association. Thus, we strongly encourage all members to share alternative proposals on how UTAG can support the government in tackling the existential threat caused by unsustainable mining activities in waterbodies, forest reserves, and farmlands with the National Secretariat for consideration.

We will continue to monitor progress closely and call on the general public to support this vital national cause. NEC extends its sincere appreciation to all UTAG Members across the campuses, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the general public for their unwavering support and solidarity since the strike action began on October 10, 2024. Your continued commitment is crucial as we demand that the government take the necessary actions.

In the meantime, let us stay home until next week as advised.

Thank you.



Dr Eliasu Mumuni
National Secretary