



Media Coalition Against Galamsey



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT: URGENT CALL FOR LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT MINING IN ALL FOREST RESERVES AND BIODIVERSITY AREAS – REVOKE LI 2462 & EI 144

Like several well-meaning Ghanaians, OccupyGhana and the Media Coalition Against Galamsey were considerably concerned at the news that some mining right had been granted or recognised over the Kakum Forest. We have noted the Minerals Commission's undated letter, which said that indeed they had received such an application but had rejected it. That Press Release did not say whether the application was for a reconnaissance or prospecting licence or a mining lease, or whether this High Street Company had acquired other permits from either the Forestry Commission or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Minerals Commission's rejection of the application and assurance that 'no mineral right...shall be considered or granted in the Kakum National Park,' gives us little or no comfort because mining operations have taken place in Ghana and in our forest reserves behind the Minerals Commission, by persons who claim to have obtained other permits from the Forestry Commission and/or EPA.

We believe that Ghana needs a simple legislative fiat that says '**WE DO NOT MINE OR DRILL IN OUR FOREST RESERVES.**' We therefore invite Parliament, as a matter of urgency, to pass an Act that forbids the grant of any mining or drilling permit, licence or lease or any other associated activities in all forest reserves and significant biodiversity areas.

This would mean revoking the so-called Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulations (LI 2462), and the power it gives to the President to give written approval 'to a mining company to undertake mining activity in a globally significant biodiversity area in the national interest.' We believe that the sheer existence of this LI is what emboldened the current application.

And to ensure that Government does not evade the aims of the proposed law by simply revoking the status of current forest reserves, we recommend that any decision on the cessation of forest reserves should be, first, on the advice of the Forestry Commission and Lands Commission, and, second, with the approval of Parliament after a public hearing and engagement with the chiefs and the people of the area in question. This would require the amendment of the Forest Act, 1927 (Cap 157) to take away the power of the President to do this simply by issuing an Executive Instrument. **To this end we also demand the express revocation of the ill-fated Forests (Cessation of Forest Reserve) Instrument (EI 144 of 2022),** which purported to revoke the forest reserve status of the Achimota Forest.

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Media Coalition Against Galamsey and OccupyGhana