



## THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

29th December 2023

For Immediate Release

### **Withdraw the eviction notice served on Ada East Salt Miners: Respect their Human Rights**

The Ada East District Assembly in the Greater Accra Region has issued an eviction notice to all Salt Farmers in the District to vacate their lands by 31st December 2023. This is against on-going parliamentary and CHRAJ probe and investigations of widespread human right abuses, threats of violence and fatalities following the infamous large scale government allocation of salt mining right to a single corporate entity known as Electrochem Ghana.

Located along the shores of the Songor Lagoon, more than 20 communities with over 10,000 salt farmers per the eviction notice by the District Assembly are going to lose their ancestral lands, which have sustained them for generations, with the threat coming from the Electrochem Ghana, a multinational corporation seeking to develop the salt flats for industrial expansion.

Electrochem Gh, a subsidiary of the McDan Group of Companies, in October 2020 secured a leasehold by the Government of Ghana, a 41,000 acreage within the Songhor Salt Mining Lagoon, amidst widespread condemnation from communities to whom these salt plains constitute not only their livelihoods but also their cultural and ancestral heritage.

In a recent Mission Visit by the Environment Report in the Ada East area, it was discovered that, the threat to evict these salt farmers is troubling them as they have lived in those communities for centuries and have lived in harmony on the land, practicing sustainable salt production methods passed down through the ages. Thus, their salt pans have been the source of livelihood and cultural identity, and have defined the rhythm of their lives and that of their communities, and evicting them completely from the land is very worrying.



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Fortunately, the First Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Joseph Osei Owusu, on Thursday 9th November directed the Committee on Lands and Forestry and Mines and Energy to conduct a probe into the leasehold agreement that authorized Electrochem Ghana to embark on salt mining in Ada.

The Committee's work according to the First Deputy Speaker would help ascertain the need to amend the ratification for part of the concession to be ceded to indigenes of Ada. The Committee will also help to investigate the recent shooting incident at Toflopo killing one person and injuring many others.

While the Committee is yet to finish its work and present its findings to the Speaker of Parliament for action to be taken, we will urge the local assembly to immediately withdraw the eviction notice to allow Parliament to conclude its work.

### Operationalizing the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

Further to this, the escalating business associated human rights issues in the area, involving Electrochem and the Communities was flagged by CSOs within the mining and environmental sector during the 4th Cycle Universal Periodic Review as part of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 4th Cycle Review. This subsequently prompted CHRAJ to commission a report on the developments in the area, considering it had critical ramifications for Ghana's adherence to the UN business and human rights guidelines, for which Ghana was strongly recommended to implement to curtail human rights abuses by corporations in the country.

While the two investigations on issues of human rights abuses in the Ada East area allegedly caused by the corporate giant continue, we urge Parliament and the Local Government Authority to push for the operationalization of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The eviction notice must therefore be withdrawn immediately.



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The "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework", were developed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The Human Rights Council endorsed the Guiding Principles in its resolution 17/4 of 16 June 2011 but it is not operational in Ghana.

The Operational principles of the policy which define the General State regulatory and policy functions are:

- (a) Enforce laws that are aimed at, or have the effect of, requiring business enterprises to respect human rights, and periodically to assess the adequacy of such laws and address any gaps;
- (b) Ensure that other laws and policies governing the creation and ongoing operation of business enterprises, such as corporate law, do not constrain but enable business respect for human rights;
- (c) Provide effective guidance to business enterprises on how to respect human rights throughout their operations;
- (d) Encourage, and where appropriate require, business enterprises to communicate how they address their human rights impacts.

These when operationalized will bring peace and harmony between corporate institutions and the communities they operate.

Signed  
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