



VIOLENT EARTH

MINING, CONFLICT, AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA



THE VIOLENT EARTH

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Foreword

Nigeria's solid mineral sector holds immense potential for economic growth, job creation, and national development. Yet, this promise remains largely untapped due to a complex web of challenges, including illegal mining, environmental degradation, community grievances, and rising insecurity. These issues are further exacerbated by weak regulatory frameworks, poor coordination between federal and state authorities, and the involvement of organized crime and armed groups in resource exploitation. The convergence of these factors has transformed Nigeria's mineral wealth from a potential driver of prosperity into a source of conflict, social dislocation, and human suffering.

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between mining, insecurity, and socio-economic dynamics in Nigeria. It examines the structural, legal, and governance gaps that allow illegal mining to flourish, while also highlighting the human and environmental costs of unregulated mineral exploitation. Importantly, it sheds light on the gendered dimensions of illegal mining, the role of climate and environmental stressors in fueling conflict, and the complex dynamics of community engagement and displacement.

By offering evidence-based insights and actionable recommendations, this study aims to inform policymakers, mining regulators, civil society actors, and development partners on pathways toward a more secure, sustainable, and inclusive mining sector. It underscores the urgent need for collaborative efforts to strengthen governance, protect communities, promote climate-smart practices, and ensure that Nigeria's mineral resources contribute to national development rather than conflict.

Abiodun Baiyewu

Executive Director

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Executive Summary

“Wherever there is mining, there is violence. It seems they both move together now ...”

Dr. Tope Olaifa

Co-Chair, Nigerian Federation of Mining Host Communities

The history of West African states, including Nigeria, is incomplete without a description of the exploitation of the region for its mineral resources. For centuries, it's minerals has attracted foreign trade, colonization, multinational mining corporations and itinerant artisanal miners from across the subregion and beyond. The British colonialists were so intent on maximizing the exploitation of these minerals that they built rail from the tin mines in Jos, Plateau state, linked it to the coal mines in Enugu state, and joined both to a purpose minted port in the newly developed Port Harcourt to ferry the loot to the United Kingdom.

Tin and coal are not the only minerals exploited in Nigeria, gold, lead, zinc, tantalite, columbite, copper, kaolin, barite, gypsum; and precious stones including sapphire, tourmaline, aquamarine, topaz, garnet, and emeralds are also found in abundance. It is also well known for its abundance of hydrocarbons, which launched it as a major producer of petroleum in the 1960s. More recently, Nigeria has garnered more interest for its significant reserves of lithium, cobalt, nickel, rare earth elements, copper, manganese, and bauxite - all of which are classified as critical minerals for the global energy transition.

While its hydrocarbon industry has achieved a reasonable level of regulation, Nigeria's solid mineral sector has for the most part remained underdeveloped with an ever-growing need for stronger regulatory oversight. Eighty percent of solid mineral mining activities in the country are small-scale and artisanal in nature. The failure of governance of the sector has contributed to it becoming one of the most hazardous sectors in the country.

This study delves into the complex interplay between illegal and unregulated mining and Nigeria's endemic insecurity, examining how, rather than foster economic growth, mineral exploitation has continued to exacerbate various forms of violence and instability in host communities.

The research conducts an analysis of Nigeria's solid minerals sector, scrutinizing its regulatory framework and its associated challenges. By examining the interplay between ineffective regulation and escalating insecurity, the study seeks to provide evidence-based insights on how addressing these regulatory deficiencies can mitigate the security challenges that have dogged the sector.

An extensive literature review sets the background for this assessment. Field visits, expert interviews, and stakeholder consultations were conducted in regions notorious for active artisanal mining and insecurity, including Zamfara, Ebonyi, Osun, Kaduna, Katsina, Nasarawa,

Niger, Plateau, and Cross River States. Surveys covered 25 communities across 14 local government areas, with 116 respondents interviewed. A focus group discussion (FGD) was organized to gain deeper insights from government officials, security agencies, mining companies, local mining host communities, and industry experts.

Our survey indicates that 94.8% of respondents consider that mining activities in their communities have resulted in environmental degradation, health issues, insecurity, and economic deprivation. Additionally, the findings show that 87.7% believe that informal mining facilitates criminal activities, and, in some instances, potentially serves as a funding source for terrorism.

Key Findings:

- Weak enforcement of mining regulations and inadequate federal oversight enable the exploitation of mineral resources at the expense of local communities, resulting in environmental degradation, food insecurity, and threats to national security.
- The proliferation of unregulated and illegal artisanal mining fuels violence, environmental degradation, and socio-political unrest.
- The legal framework, which vests exclusive control of mineral resources in the federal government, creates a disconnect with state governments and discourages their active involvement in co-governing mining activities, creating governance gaps that engender insecurity.
- Strong evidence indicates the involvement of unlicensed foreign miners, particularly Chinese nationals and West Africans, which exacerbates mining-related insecurity.
- There are indications of collaboration between illegal miners and organized criminal groups, including those funding terrorism in the subregion.
- Mining regulatory agencies often fail to verify the technical competence of applicants, leading to licenses being issued to unqualified companies that employ unregulated and untrained miners.
- Local communities are frequently excluded from decision-making processes, fueling resentment and conflict.
- Persistent socio-economic challenges, including poverty and unemployment, drive many unskilled citizens into illegal mining.
- Allegations of state capture (instance where political actors provide protection and cover for sponsors of illicit mining) were repeatedly highlighted in interviews.
- Women in mining host communities are disproportionately affected by mining related insecurity. Many report facing sexual harassment and gender based violence related to mining activities ongoing in the community. They are also more often than not excluded.

This study reveals the urgent need for a multi-faceted approach to address the underlying causes of illegal mining and associated security threats in Nigeria. Strengthening regulatory frameworks,

enhancing community engagement, and fostering international cooperation are crucial to mitigating these challenges.

It makes the following recommendations:

- **Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks:** Revise and enforce mining laws, ensuring they address current challenges. Verify the technical and infrastructural capacities of mining companies before licensing.
- **Enhance Community Engagement:** Involve local communities in decision-making processes to protect their rights and ensure they benefit from resource extraction.
- **Increase Funding for Mining Regulation:** Allocate more resources to the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development for effective monitoring and regulation.
- **Adequately equip and support the NSCDC Task Force:** Strengthen and arm the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps task force to combat illegal mining.
- **Promote Sustainable Artisanal Mining:** Formalize artisanal and small-scale mining operations through training, resource access, and legal recognition.
- **Implement Environmental Regulations:** Develop and enforce strict regulations to address pollution and degradation caused by illegal mining. Nigeria's mining regulations should also be climate-smart.
- **Foster International Cooperation:** Collaborate with international partners to combat the illegal exportation of minerals from Nigeria.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns and Alternative Livelihoods:** Launch campaigns to educate communities on the dangers of illegal mining and support alternative livelihoods.
- **Improve Data Collection and Research:** Invest in research to gather data on illegal mining activities, their impacts, and the demographics involved.
- **Strengthen Law Enforcement Training:** Provide specialized training for law enforcement personnel in the Mining Marshals Corps to effectively tackle illegal mining and associated security threats.

Part One: Do They Connect?

1.1 Debating the Correlation: Artisanal Mining and Endemic Insecurity in Nigeria

Nigeria's insecurity has metastasized over the past 2 decades to endemic proportions. According to the Global Peace Index, Nigeria ranks as the [19th least peaceful country](#) in the world. The country also stands as the eighth country most [affected by terrorism](#), based on the Global Terrorism Index. As of the end of 2023, Nigeria was the fifth country in Africa with the highest risk of genocide and the twelfth worldwide with the spread of illicit firearms on the rise. The nation's endemic insecurity is driven by a complex web of structural, socio-economic, and political factors that vary across regions but converge in their impact on national stability. While the overarching cause of insecurity has been linked to the nation's weak institutions and lack of good governance, resultant conditions such as skewed competitions over finite land, grazing routes, and water have led to deadly clashes, especially in the Middle Belt of the country. The failure of human development and lack of infrastructure have made citizens more vulnerable to multidimensional poverty and have also exacerbated insecurity across the country.

In order to curb insecurity in Nigeria, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of the webs of violence and insecurity across the country, to tease out its roots and drivers. Given extant knowledge on the correlation between minerals and insecurity, it is important to interrogate if a nexus exists between Nigeria's solid mineral governance and its endemic insecurity.¹

The Legend of Resource Curse

Nigeria's vast mineral endowments have not translated into significant growth or development for its mining host communities or the nation at large. Solid mineral exploitation contributes less than 5% to the national GDP. The government continues to struggle with regulating the sector in which over 80% of its activities are carried out by artisanal miners, who leave behind a trail of environmental pollution, economic deprivation, community displacement, and insecurity². Illicit mining activities cost the country an estimated \$9 billion annually, with the only notable revenue derived from a 3% royalty paid by a handful of licensed miners. This situation persists largely due to weak governance and lax monitoring of mining activities³.

Insecurity stands alongside environmental degradation as some of the most pressing challenges confronting Nigeria's mineral-rich communities, particularly in the North West and North Central regions, with spillover effects in the southern states.⁴ The region's diverse forms of insecurity manifest through terror-pillages (otherwise called 'banditry'), intercommunal conflicts, sexual

¹ DiJohn, J. (2002). Mineral resource abundance and violent political conflict: a critical assessment of the rentier state model.

² National Bureau of Statistics (2022): Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report Q4 2022

³ AriseNews (16th July, 2024): Illegal Mining Costs Nigeria \$9bn Annually, Reveals House Committee Chairman. <https://www.arise.tv/illegal-mining-costs-nigeria-9bn-annually-reveals-house-committee-chairman/>

⁴ Maurice Ogbonnaya (2020): Illegal mining and rural banditry in North West Nigeria: Responses, successes and challenges. ENACT Policy Brief. Issue 19 | November 2020

and gender based violence, abductions, and the criminal movement of arms and drugs, all of which have devastating impacts on local populations.⁵ Some reports also point to the complicity of foreign actor - corporations and individuals - who either divert from the purposes stated in their original mining licenses, or, enter Nigeria under false pretenses.⁶

Okolie (2019) argues that illegal mining poses a serious security threat to the country. He observes that since 2011, violent local conflicts and rural banditry linked to illegal mining have sharply increased in the Northwest, particularly in Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara States.⁷ According to the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, more than 3,600 people were kidnapped between 2011 and 2019 across these states. In Zamfara state alone, 6,319 people, including women and children, were killed in mass atrocity incidents between June 2011 and May 2019.⁸

Zamfara, known for its vast gold deposits and significant contributions to the gold market in Dubai, illustrates the devastating consequences of the poor regulation of the sector. According to UN Comtrade data, approximately 97 tons of gold valued at over \$3 billion were smuggled out of Nigeria between 2012 and 2018.⁹ A good proportion of this gold loot was from Zamfara state.

Zamfara state has one of the lowest levels of human development indicators in Nigeria. It is consistently ranked as one of the top five states for the highest number of out of school children in the country, and the second highest unemployment rate in the country.^{10, 11} In 2010, an outbreak of gold-mining-related lead poisoning resulted in the death of more than 700 children and ravaged several communities which were already struggling with environmental fragility. Concerns about insecurity in Zamfara had begun even earlier than this crisis. More recently, the state has become vulnerable to terror-pillage groups.

The surge in rural banditry and terror pillages has been attributed to violent gangs competing for control over these resources. These criminal networks deliberately incite communal violence to

⁵ Aderemi Ogunbanjo, Oluwaseun Fapohunda, Sandra Osinachi-Nwadem and Eyitayo Ajisafe (2024): Nigeria: The Nigerian Mining Sector In 2023 - Future Outlook. ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT VOLUME 1. Mondaq 5 March 2024. <https://www.mondaq.com/nigeria/mining/1431728/the-nigerian-mining-sector-in-2023---future-outlook>

⁶ Premium Times Nigeria (14 October 2020): Foreigners perpetrating illegal mining in Nigeria – Minister. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/420761-foreigners-perpetrating-illegal-mining-in-nigeria-minister.html>

⁷ CA Okoli (2019): Kidnapping for ransom has become Nigeria's latest security problem, Quartz Africa, 21 May 2019, <https://qz.com/africa/1624376/kidnapping-for-ransom-is-nigerias-latestsecurity-problem/>.

⁸ West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Addressing Armed Banditry in the North-West Region of Nigeria: Exploring the Potentials of a Multi-Dimensional Conflict Management Approach, West Africa Early Warning & Early Response Policy Brief, www.wanep.org/wanep/files/2020/Feb/POLICY_BRIEF_ON_ARMED_BANDITRY_IN_NIGERIA_-_18022020.pdf; see also Zamfara gold: Threat to development and national stability, Vanguard, 17 April 2019, www.vanguardngr.com/2019/04/zamfara-gold-threat-to-development-and-national-stability/

⁹ BBC (2020): Gold mining: How PAGMI, Nigeria Presidential Artisanal Gold Mining Development Initiative go work and benefit you. by Olubunmi Okunnu, Broadcast Journalist published on 16 July 2020 <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-53436915>

¹⁰ Prime Business Africa (22 March 2024) Top 5 States With Highest Number of Out-of-school Children In Nigeria [Top 5 States With Highest of Out-of-school Children In Nigeria](#)

¹¹ BusinessDay NG, TV, and Podcast. (2013, September 2). Unemployment – all states are not equal. *BusinessDay NG, TV, and Podcast*. <https://archive.businessday.ng/uncategorized/article/unemployment-all-states-are-not-equal/#:~:text=Zamfara%20and%20Sokoto%20States%2C%20respectively,fifth%20highest%20in%20the%20federation>

create the cover needed for their continued illicit extraction, often in collaboration with some rogue traditional rulers, politicians, and foreign opportunists.¹²

Despite the government's increased focus on curbing Nigeria's endemic insecurity, both executive authorities and security agencies appear to minimize the role the nation's mineral resources plays in fueling these crises. This strategic blind spot has prevented the development of robust analyses and in-depth understanding that could inform more effective policies and interventions. The reluctance to acknowledge mining-related violence may, in part, stem from deflection by politically exposed individuals who derive economic benefits from illicit mining - often at the expense of vulnerable host communities and the environment.

The correlation between illicit solid mineral mining and violent conflict in mineral-rich communities across Nigeria, apart from the context of crude oil and militancy in the Niger Delta has not been sufficiently studied. This gap has limited the development of concrete, evidence-based recommendations and hindered the design and implementation of transparent, accountable, and comprehensive security measures to ensure peace in mining regions.

For example, in April 2019, security agencies identified illicit gold mining as a major driver of the violence that has continued to claim hundreds of lives in Zamfara State. Reports revealed that bandits were pillaging and sacking villages for the value of the minerals that they hold; in particular, gold, lead, and rare-earth elements. Rather than commissioning an in-depth study of this phenomenon, the Buhari administration declared a blanket ban on mining in Zamfara state, arguing it would curb the pillages and atrocious killings.¹³ In practice, the ban merely drove illicit mining activities underground and the fatal bandit attacks against mining communities persisted. The main objective of these so-called "bandits" was not simply to mine and leave these mineral-rich communities, they were intent on systematically dispossessing them of their land. By July 23, 2019, the Defense Headquarters publicly admitted that the clampdown on illegal miners in Zamfara and other northwestern states had not significantly reduced violent attacks on villagers.

The pillages have continued unabated. The Tinubu administration has likewise acknowledged the connection between illegal mining, violent conflict, and banditry in the Northwest and North-central regions.¹⁴ Yet such admissions have not translated into meaningful results. The government's reliance on blanket bans on mining has continued to fail to curb illicit mining

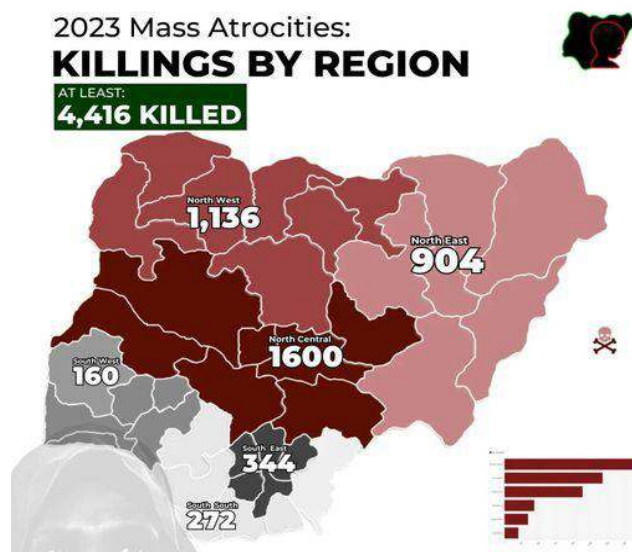
¹² LSE - Uche Igwe (2021) Tracking illicit financial flows could support Nigeria's post-pandemic recovery. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2021/04/06/tracking-illicit-financial-flows-support-nigeria-post-pandemic-recovery-corruption/>

¹³ Zamfara Violence: Nigerian govt bans mining activities in troubled state. April 7, 2019. Premium Times Nigeria. Accessed 17 April 2024 - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/324348-breaking-zamfara-violence-nigerian-govt-bans-mining-activities-in-troubled-state.html>

¹⁴ Punch Newspaper (23 April 2024): Tinubu blames illegal mining for terrorism funding. <https://punchng.com/tinubu-blames-illegal-mining-for-terrorism-funding-2/>

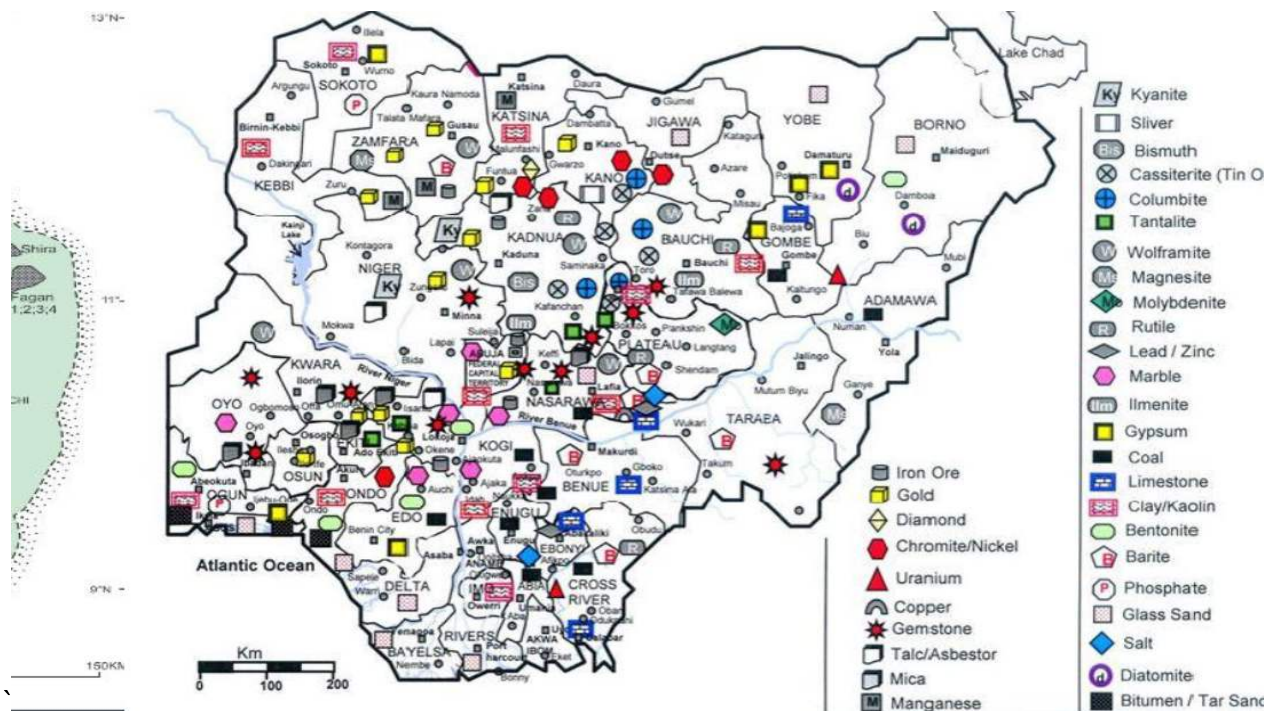
activities or sustainably address the insecurity they fuel. Critics argue that treating outright bans as a panacea for peace is akin to “throwing the baby out with the bathwater.”¹⁵

The persistent inability to contain banditry and insecurity has raised urgent questions in several quarters. Some observers argue that the government has either underestimated - or perhaps exaggerated - the role of illicit mining as a driver of violent conflict. Others highlight the possible complicity of state actors in sustaining illicit mining networks and fueling the violence they generate.¹⁶



¹⁵ Leadership Newspaper (2022): Illegal Mining Thrives Despite Ban Threat. <https://leadership.ng/illegal-mining-thrives-despite-ban-threat/>

¹⁶ Why killings continue in Zamfara despite mining ban — Nigerian Military. July 23, 2019. Premium Times Nigeria. Accessed 17 April 2024 - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/342475-why-killings-continue-in-zamfara-despite-mining-ban-nigerian-military.html?tztc=1>



Source: Adesugba, Adesoji & Hoon, Stephanie. (2018). Understanding the gemstone path and value chain in Nigeria. 5. 175-185.

Lack of a Shared Definition

The absence of a shared definition and the persistent conceptual confusion about what constitutes “illegal mining”, and what should be termed “unregulated mining” continue to cloud policy debates and affects the degree of accountability for solid mineral governance. This challenge is further aggravated by deliberate misrepresentations and partisan interests, as well as overly narrow interpretations of the origins of these conflicts and the most effective methods for addressing them.

To move forward, there is a pressing need to define what constitutes illegal mining in Nigeria, the degree to which governance failures in the sector results in its poor oversight and regulation and results in mining activities being ‘unregulated’. There is also a need to build political and social consensus on the true nature of mining-related conflicts and their drivers. Without such clarity, efforts will remain fragmented and ineffective. Only then can Nigeria develop comprehensive and practical strategies that not only tackle the root causes of conflict but also promote stability, strengthen community resilience, and ensure that the mining sector contributes meaningfully to inclusive development.

1.2 Justification

Nigeria is endowed with vast deposits of solid minerals, including gold, lithium, cobalt, lead, zinc, and rare earth elements—resources that hold significant potential for national development and global energy transition. Yet, paradoxically, rather than serve as drivers of prosperity, these

resources have become enmeshed in cycles of violence, environmental degradation, and poverty in several communities. However, the relationship between Nigeria's mineral wealth and the country's endemic insecurity remains poorly understood, underexplored, and often downplayed in both policy and academic discourse.

Existing research and security responses have focused predominantly on militancy in the Niger Delta and on terrorism in the Northeast, with limited attention given to how illegal, unregulated, or poorly governed mining operations contribute to the rise of rural banditry, communal violence, and organized criminal networks across the country. In states such as Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, and Plateau, evidence suggests that mineral exploitation—especially artisanal and small-scale mining—has financed violent groups, exacerbated community conflicts, and attracted the participation of transnational actors. However, the lack of systematic analysis has hindered policymakers from designing effective interventions.

This study is therefore justified on the following grounds:

1. Strategic Relevance: Nigeria faces persistent insecurity across multiple regions, from banditry in the North-West to insurgency in the North-East and communal violence in the Middle Belt. Simultaneously, the country harbors vast deposits of solid minerals—many of which are exploited outside formal regulatory frameworks. This study is crucial to unpack how illicit mining operations fuel, sustain, or exploit insecurity, and vice versa.

2. Policy Blind Spot: Despite growing attention to extractive governance, the intersection of mineral exploitation and security remains underexplored in Nigerian policy discourse. Existing frameworks—such as the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act (2007) and the National Security Strategy—rarely address how unregulated mining contributes to armed group financing, territorial contestation, or environmental degradation that exacerbates local grievances.

3. Human Impact and Civic Exclusion: Illicit mining often occurs in marginalized communities, where state presence is weak and civic protection is minimal. These areas become flashpoints for violence, displacement, and exploitation. Understanding this nexus is essential for designing inclusive security and development interventions that center affected populations and uphold their rights.

4. Economic and Governance Implications: Illicit mining undermines Nigeria's economic potential by diverting revenues, weakening institutional trust, and fostering corruption. It also complicates efforts to formalize the sector, attract responsible investment, and enforce environmental standards. A rigorous study can inform reforms that align economic governance with peacebuilding and anti-corruption goals.

5. Global and Regional Dimensions: The transnational nature of mineral smuggling links local insecurity to global supply chains. Nigeria's porous borders and weak enforcement mechanisms allow armed groups and criminal networks to profit from resource extraction, with implications for regional stability and international accountability.

6. Evidence for Actionable Advocacy: This study will generate empirical evidence to support targeted advocacy—whether through legislative briefs, stakeholder maps, or visual policy tools. It will empower the executive and legislative arms of government, civil society, and affected communities to push for reforms that integrate security, extractive governance, and community resilience.

By interrogating whether, and to what extent, Nigeria’s solid minerals are linked to its endemic insecurity, this study will fill an urgent knowledge gap. Its findings will provide a foundation for developing integrated security, governance, and development responses that can transform Nigeria’s mineral wealth from a driver of conflict into a catalyst for peace and prosperity.

1.3 Research Questions: The Guiding Questions

This study focuses on the following research questions:

1. What are the structural and operational links between illicit solid mineral mining and patterns of insecurity across Nigeria’s regions?
2. How do Nigeria’s legal, regulatory, and enforcement frameworks enable or fail to disrupt the nexus between insecurity and unregulated mining?
3. What are the socio-economic and civic impacts of illicit mining on communities in conflict-prone, mineral-rich areas?
4. How can evidence-based advocacy and multi-stakeholder engagement reshape extractive governance to promote peace, accountability, and inclusion?

1.4 Research Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Quantitative data was collected through surveys, data analysis, and geospatial mapping to assess insecurity patterns and illegal mining activities. Qualitative data was gathered through interviews with experts, policymakers, community members, CSOs, and mineral sector stakeholders. Specifically, the study conducted:

- Desk Review: An extensive literature review was conducted to gather existing data, reports, and studies related to insecurity and the mineral sector in Nigeria. This provided a comprehensive background for the assessment.
- Field Visits and Stakeholder Consultations: Key regions within Nigeria known for active artisanal mining activities and insecurity were visited; specifically, Zamfara, Ebonyi, Osun, Katsina, Niger, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau and Cross River State were surveyed. Twenty-five communities across 14 Local Government Areas (LGAs) were visited, and 116 respondents were interviewed. A Focused Group Discussion (FDG) was organized to glean

further insight on the subject matter from key stakeholders, including government officials, security agencies, mining companies, local communities, and experts in the field, who were engaged in online and in-person (physical) interviews. Their insights and perspectives on the subject matter were gathered, analyzed, and presented in this report.

Part Two: Historical Context of Mineral Sector and Insecurity in Nigeria

2.1 Historical Context of Mineral Exploration and Exploitation in Nigeria

2.1.1 Pre-Colonial Era

There is considerable indication that mining took place in the region now known as Nigeria as far back as the 12th century, predating its colonial invasion.¹⁷ Evidence of this includes tin mining in Bauchi, gold mining and iron working in various regions, and salt mining. Indigenous communities engaged in shallow-pit mining for gold and used local ores to produce essential metal goods, such as iron hoes and spears, demonstrating a well-established tradition of resource extraction and metallurgy before European influence.¹⁸

Tin mining was particularly prominent in the Jos Plateau region. Indigenous groups such as the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere engaged in small-scale tin mining using rudimentary tools. Tin was highly valued for its use in making alloys like bronze and for its role in trade with neighboring societies. The trade networks facilitated by tin mining connected local communities with broader regional markets.

Gold mining was practiced by various ethnic groups across Nigeria, notably by the Akan people in present-day southwestern Nigeria. Significant deposits were found in places like Ilesha and Ijebu-Ode. Gold was used for personal adornment and trade with neighboring territories and kingdoms, such as the Oyo and Benin empires, fostering economic and cultural exchanges.

While coal mining became more significant during the colonial period, there is evidence of pre-colonial coal mining activities in Enugu State. Indigenous peoples, including the Ngwo and Udi, mined domestic coal for cooking and heating. The scale of exploitation was limited compared to later periods, but it laid the groundwork for future mining activities.¹⁹

Other minerals such as iron ore, lead, zinc, and limestone were also exploited and utilized by indigenous peoples to craft tools, weapons, and building materials. The resourcefulness and ingenuity of these communities in harnessing the country's mineral wealth played a crucial role in their livelihoods and cultural practices.²⁰

2.1.2 Colonial Era

During the colonial era (1900 - 1960), the British colonial administration significantly transformed mineral exploration and exploitation in Nigeria. As they did in other colonies, the British aimed to

¹⁷ Frances, J. O. (2021). Traditional Economy in Nigeria Before Colonial Administration. *Webology*, 18(6). Pp6-7

¹⁸ Falola, Toyin, and Matthew M. Heaton. A History of Nigeria. Cambridge University Press, 2008. https://books.google.com.ng/books/about/A_History_of_Nigeria.html?id=XygZjbNRap0C&redir_esc=y

¹⁹ Adeyinka O. Omotehinse, Bankole D. Ako, The environmental implications of the exploration and exploitation of solid minerals in Nigeria with a special focus on Tin in Jos and Coal in Enugu, *Journal of Sustainable Mining*, Volume 18, Issue 1, 2019, Pages 18-24, ISSN 2300-3960, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsm.2018.12.001>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2300396018301113>)

²⁰ From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Mining industry of Nigeria. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mining_industry_of_Nigeria#:~:text=Organized%20mining%20began%20in%201903,tin%2C%20columbite%2C%20and%20coal.

exploit Nigeria's mineral resources for economic gain and to support their industrial growth. The British colonial administration formalized mining activities, focusing on tin and coal. The establishment of the Nigeria Minerals Ordinance in 1946 aimed to regulate the sector. Tin mining in Jos, and coal mining in Enugu were significant during this period, contributing to infrastructural developments and the economy.

The British focused on extracting minerals that could be exported for profit, such as tin, columbite, coal, and oil. Tin and columbite mining in the Jos Plateau became particularly significant, supplying essential materials for British industries. Coal mining in Enugu was also intensified to meet the demands of British railways and power stations.

The colonial mining industry relied heavily on African labour, often coerced or recruited through forced labour practices such as the "hut tax" system and conscription.²¹ Many local communities were forcibly displaced to make way for mining operations, leading to social upheaval and resentment.²² The colonial government invested in infrastructure such as railways and roads to facilitate the transportation of minerals from mining sites to ports for export. This infrastructure development primarily supported the export-oriented mining industry and had limited benefits for local communities.

The colonial mining industry had significant environmental impacts, including deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution of water bodies due to mining waste and effluents. These environmental concerns were often overlooked in favour of maximizing profits and meeting production targets. Local communities experienced economic marginalization and environmental degradation without reaping commensurate benefits from mining activities.²³

However, the discovery of hydrocarbons in the late 1950s diverted investment and attention away from coal and other solid minerals. Along side this diversion, government oversight of the sector weakened considerably.

2.1.3 Post-Independence Period

Nigeria gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960. Following independence, the Nigerian government began to assert more control over the country's mineral resources through nationalization policies.²⁴ The Nigerian Mining Corporation was established in 1972 to oversee the sector.

²¹ Dalyop, D. D., & Yacob, S. (2018). Taxation: A Veritable Instrument for the Coerced Proletarianization of the Berom People of Northern Nigeria, 1902-1960. *SEJARAH: Journal of the Department of History*, 27(2 (December)), 1-16.

²² Chimee, Ihediwa Nkemjika. "Coal and British Colonialism in Nigeria." In: "Energy (and) Colonialism, Energy (In)Dependence: Africa, Europe, Greenland, North America," edited by Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga and Helmuth Trischler, *RCC Perspectives* 2014, no. 5, 19–26.

²³ Historical Background Of The Nigeria Solid Mineral Sector, Aug 13, 2018. <https://www.nairaland.com/4673124/historical-background-nigeria-solid-mineral>

²⁴ Falola, Toyin, and Matthew M. Heaton. *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press, 2008. https://books.google.com.ng/books/about/A_History_of_Nigeria.html?id=XyqZibNRap0C&redir_esc=y

The government embarked on nationalization policies to manage mineral resources. State-owned enterprises such as the Nigerian Coal Corporation (NCC) and Nigerian Mining Corporation (NMC) were established to oversee mining operations. These policies aimed to ensure that the exploitation of mineral resources contributed to national development. However, the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) severely disrupted mining activities, leading to a further decline in the coal industry. The environmental impact of mining practices, particularly unregulated artisanal mining, has also been a concern, contributing to issues like soil erosion in mining regions.

Today, Nigeria is endowed with over 40 different solid minerals, yet the mining sector contributes only a negligible fraction (approximately 0.5%) to the GDP. The government has initiated various policies to revitalize the sector, focusing on gold and other minerals, but challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, illegal mining, and poor regulatory frameworks persist. Targeting sustainable mining practices and attracting foreign investment, the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act of 2007 was established to encourage private sector participation and modernize the mining sector.²⁵

2.2 Mapping of Minerals in Nigeria

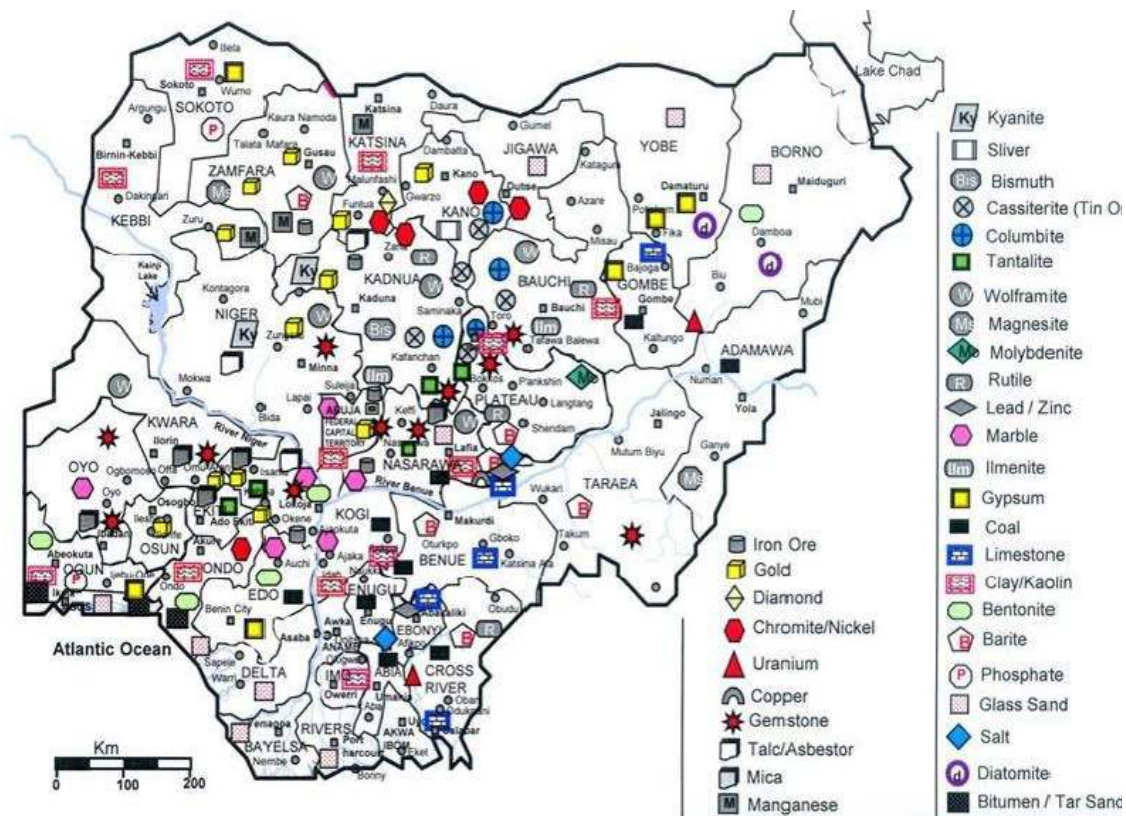
Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and most populous nation is endowed with commercial quantities of more than 44 types of solid mineral resources, distributed across over 500 locations in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Below is a list of these minerals:

Barite	Uranium	Gravel	Garnet	Zircon
Kaolin	Gold	Laterite	Nickel	Salt
Gypsum	Cassiterite	Sand	Phosphate	Talc
Feldspar	Columbite	Sapphire	Silver	Bentonite
Limestone	Iron ore	Tourmaline	Tin	Clay
Coal	Lead-zinc	Emerald	Wolframite	Dolomite
Bitumen	Copper	Topaz	Tantalite	Fluorite
Lignite	Granite	Amethyst	Mica	Magnesite
Marble	Manganese	Quartz	Slate	Lithium

Mineral Types	Major States They can be Found
Coal	Enugu, Benue, Kogi, Bauchi, Adamawa, and Gombe states
Tin	Jos Plateau
Columbite	Jos Plateau
Gold	Zamfara, Osun, Kaduna, Niger, Kebbi, and Kwara.

²⁵ Ministry of Solid Minerals Development. Nigerian Minerals and Mining Regulations 2011. <https://msmd.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Nigerian-Minerals-Mines-Regulations-2011.pdf>

Iron Ore	Kogi, Enugu, Niger, Zamfara, and Kaduna states.
Lead and Zinc	Enugu, Ebonyi, and Zamfara
Limestone	Benue, Ogun, Kogi, and Cross River states
Gypsum	Yobe, Sokoto, and Borno states.
Bitumen	Ondo and Ogun.
Bauxite	Adamawa and Ekiti states.
Uranium	Cross River, Adamawa, and Plateau.
Barite	Cross River, Benue, and Nasarawa states.
Kaolin	Ogun, Kogi, and Kaduna.
Tantalite	Nasarawa, Kogi, and Kwara states.
Granite and Marble	Ondo, Ekiti, Kaduna, and Cross River.
Salt	Ebonyi, Benue, and Akwa Ibom states.
Phosphate	Sokoto and Ogun states.
Wolframite	Plateau, Kaduna, Bauchi, and Kano states
Manganese	Kebbi, Plateau, and Adamawa
Silica Sand	Lagos, Delta, and Ondo
Diatomite	Yobe and Borno states
Graphite	Kaduna and Kogi state
Kaolinite	Oyo Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto
Clay	Niger, Delta, Ondo, Oyo, Abuja, Akwa Ibom, Benue, Bauchi, Anambra, Edo, Lagos, Nasarawa, Ogun
Mica	Kaduna and Nasarawa states
Copper	Nasarawa, Bauchi, and Kano
Silver	Zamfara state
Nickel	Kaduna state
Platinum	Zamfara and Kaduna
Sapphire	Mambilla Plateau and Taraba state
Emerald	Jos Plateau.
Tourmaline	Oyo and Kaduna
Topaz	Jos Plateau.
Garnet	Kaduna and Bauchi states
Lignite	Lagos, Edo, Delta, and Imo states
Quartz	Nasarawa, Ogun,
Feldspar	Kaduna and Bauchi
Magnetite	Kogi and Zamfara
Cassiterite	Plateau and Kano states
Galena	Nasarawa
Lithium	Nasarawa, Kogi, Kwara, Ekiti, Niger, and Cross River



Source: Adesugba, Adesoji & Hoon, Stephanie. (2018). Understanding the gemstone path and value chain in Nigeria. 5.175-185.

2.3 Mining-Related Insecurity in Nigeria

Solid minerals have fueled insecurity in many regions, and the reasons are not far-fetched. The contest over the value these resources generate often pits groups and individuals against one another in struggles for ownership and control. The sudden influx of miners seeking opportunities frequently disrupts otherwise peaceful communities, leading to violent conflict and insecurity. In addition, the environmental degradation that accompanies mining has sparked tensions and instability in host communities. Nigeria has not been exempt from these dynamics. One of the earliest examples was the November 1949 worker protests at the Enugu coal mines which culminated in a massacre with several miners killed.

Again, the oil boom, coupled with the subsequent neglect of the solid minerals sector, resulted in weak governance and poor regulation, creating space for the proliferation of artisanal mining across the country. This, in turn, has fueled conflicts and violence. A good example is the contestation for land between farmers, herders, and miners in the Jos Plateau, which has been one of the drivers of violent clashes in the region.

Even formal, licensed mining operations have triggered insecurity. For example, skirmishes between Crushed Rock Industries Limited and Amokwe community in Ishiagu, Ebonyi State, escalated into a violent clash in 2011 over royalties, leaving the community trapped in recurrent

fatal disputes. Elsewhere, conflicts between host communities and mining companies have arisen over environmental degradation, loss of potable water, non-compliance with community development agreements, and perceived corporate bias.²⁶

Several interrelated factors contribute to and perpetuate for the various forms of insecurity in Nigeria's solid mineral sector, some of which are discussed below.

2.3.1 Key Factors Contributing to and Perpetuating Mining-Related Insecurity

Resource Control and Conflicts: The competition for control over mineral resources often fuels conflicts, particularly in mineral-rich regions such as those abundant in gold and tin. Both formal and artisanal mining often take place in areas where local communities exercise little to no control over the resources within their environment, and these contestations frequently escalate into disputes and violence. The absence of effective governance in the remote communities where most mining activities occur, only further deepens the crisis, while the complicity of organized criminal groups exacerbates the situation. In such contexts, the gap between regulatory authorities and the lived realities of mining host communities provides fertile ground for unrest.

^{27,28}

In states like Zamfara and Katsina, mineral-rich lands, especially those rich in gold, have become battlegrounds for control. Powerful financiers behind mining operations often resort to violence to assert dominance over lucrative mining fields. This struggle for supremacy fuels recurrent clashes between rival groups, leading to widespread loss of life and the displacement of entire communities.^{29,30,31, 32}

Socioeconomic Pressure and Economic Marginalization: Many mining communities experience deep economic marginalization despite the vast wealth extracted from their resources. This exclusion fuels resentment and often sparks unrest, as local populations feel denied the benefits of mining activities in their regions, but are left to bear the brunt of mining impacts.³³

²⁶ Daily Champion (25 November 2011) Nigeria: How Mineral Royalty, Politics Fuel Violence in Ebonyi Community

²⁷ PWC (July 2023) Nigerian Mining – Progress but Still a long way to go. <https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/nigerian-mining-progress-but-still-a-long-way-to-go1.pdf>

²⁸ Stephen J. Mallo (2012): THE NIGERIAN MINING SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW. Continental Journal Applied Sciences 7 (1): 34 - 45, 2012. ISSN 1597 - 9928
https://www.academia.edu/26142029/THE_NIGERIAN_MINING_SECTOR_AN_OVERVIEW_Stephen_J_Mallo

²⁹ Maurice Ogonnaya (2020): <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/how-illegal-mining-is-driving-local-conflicts-in-nigeria>

³⁰ HumAngle (2021): How illegal mining is driving local conflicts in Nigeria. Institute for Security Studies. Published on 16 June 2020 in ISS Today <https://humanglemedia.com/how-illegal-mining-is-contributing-to-local-conflicts-in-nigeria/>

³¹ The Cable (May 13, 2020): How Illegal Mining is Sabotaging the Nigerian Economy. <https://www.thecable.ng/how-illegal-mining-is-sabotaging-the-nigerian-economy/>

³² Radio Nigeria (Feb 2, 2024): Checking Illegal Mining in Nigeria. <https://radionigeria.gov.ng/2024/02/03/checking-illegal-mining-in-nigeria/>

³³ Peter, Prof & Akper, Peter & Ani, Laura. (2023). Legal Analysis Of Nigeria's Mining Law And Policy: A Historical Perspective. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369377349_LEGAL_ANALYSIS_OF_NIGERIA%27S_MINING_LAW_AND_POLICY_A_HISTORICAL_PERSPECTIVE

High levels of poverty and unemployment further drive vulnerability, making informal mining an attractive - though dangerous - source of livelihood. Many young people are lured into the sector by the promise of immediate financial gain, despite the risks involved. These socioeconomic pressures are compounded by the environmental degradation caused by mining, which erodes local resources, undermines traditional livelihoods, and heightens tensions within host communities.^{34,35}

Environmental Degradation: Mining activities, particularly unregulated artisanal mining, have caused severe environmental degradation, resulting in resource scarcity and heightened tensions among communities. The destruction of land and the contamination and/or depletion of water resources exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, often triggering conflicts over access to these essential resources.³⁶

Complicity of State Capture, Foreign Interests and Organized Criminal Groups: Some reports have asserted that informal mining activities are frequently linked to armed groups, which use violence to intimidate local populations and secure continued access to mining areas.³⁷ Moreover, politically connected individuals and foreign corporations who enter the country under the guise of unrelated business activities, or licensed to prospect for specific minerals are often complicit in illegal mining ventures. These alliances foster the growth of criminal networks that exploit mineral resources while simultaneously funding banditry and other forms of violence.^{38,39}

Weak Government Oversight, Corruption, and Regulatory Failures: The Nigerian government's attempts to regulate the mining sector have largely been inadequate. While measures such as deploying military forces to enforce bans on illegal mining have been introduced, these efforts have yielded limited results. Chronic underfunding, lack of equipment, and, at times, corruption among regulatory officials continue to undermine enforcement. Many miners operate without valid permits, and existing laws are often not enforced, allowing illegal activities to continue

³⁴ HumAngle (2021): How Illegal Mining Is Contributing To Local Conflicts In Nigeria by Adejumo Kabir on September 1, 2021. <https://humanglemedia.com/how-illegal-mining-is-contributing-to-local-conflicts-in-nigeria/>

³⁵ WikiTimes (February 22, 2024): In Jos, Continued Violence is Driving More Women and Children to Illegal Mining. <https://wikitimes.com/in-jos-continued-violence-is-driving-more-women-and-children-to-illegal-mining/>

³⁶ Heinrich Böll Stiftung Nigeria (2015): HISTORY: The History of Coal in Nigeria by Abiodun Baiyewu-Teru on 2 December 2015 <https://ng.boell.org/en/2015/12/03/history-history-coal-nigeria>

³⁷ VOA (2 June 2024): Nigeria cracking down on illegal mining By Associated Press: <https://www.voanews.com/a/nigeria-cracking-down-on-illegal-mining/7637134.html>

³⁸ Freedom Onuoha and Oluwale Ojewale (Accessed 22 July 2024): Illegal mining by Chinese actors complicates Nigeria's criminal landscape <http://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/illegal-mining-by-chinese-actors-complicates-nigeria-s-criminal-landscape>

³⁹ ISSAfrica (8 January 2024): Foreign criminals go for gold in Nigeria. Institute for Security Studies. Online - <http://issafrica.org/iss-today/foreign-criminals-go-for-gold-in-nigeria>

unabated.⁴⁰ Moreover, the involvement and protection of politically exposed individuals enable illegal mining to thrive, further entrenching violence in affected communities.^{41, 42, 43,44}

Lack of Intergovernmental Synergy: The failure to ensure policy coherence and collaboration among allied government agencies leads to poor oversight of the sector and exacerbates the crises in the sector. Most notable is the lack of coordination between states and the Federal government due to perceptions of competition. This sense of competition and turf guarding also extends to the various ministries and departments of government at the federal level.

Climate Patterns and Environmental Changes: Climate patterns and environmental changes in Nigeria are increasingly exacerbating mining-related insecurity, particularly in regions where communities and livelihoods are heavily dependent on land and natural resources. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and unpredictable rainfall have degraded arable land, reduced water availability, and intensified competition over both agricultural and mineral-rich areas. In mining communities, these climate stresses often push vulnerable populations toward artisanal and illegal mining as alternative livelihoods, increasing exposure to hazardous conditions and conflict. Simultaneously, environmental degradation caused by mining—such as deforestation, soil erosion, and water pollution—interacts with climate pressures to amplify tensions between communities, miners, and security forces. These combined factors create a cycle in which climate variability fuels resource scarcity, drives illegal mining, and heightens insecurity, making sustainable governance of Nigeria’s mineral sector increasingly challenging.

An often-repeated allegation during focus group discussions (FGDs) with CSOs and members of the miners’ association was that the Mining Cadastral Office frequently fails to thoroughly verify the technical competence and available resources of applicant companies seeking mining licenses. The issuance of licenses to ill-prepared operators, encourage the involvement of unregulated, untrained, and illegal miners who are not official staff of licensed companies. Such unethical practices allow licensed operators to lease or cede their sites to hazardous, exploitative, and illegal mining activities without fear of investigation or exposure. Participants further argued that the ministry’s negligence effectively abets the extortion of host communities and vulnerable laborers who depend on mining for their livelihoods, while also enabling severe environmental pollution—carried out with impunity and without enforcement or accountability.

⁴⁰ Amosu C.O. and Adeosun T.A (2021): Curtailing Illegal Mining Operation in Nigeria. International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM) Volume 2, Issue 12, pp: 121-129 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252. https://ijaem.net/issue_dcp/Curtailing%20Illegal%20Mining%20Operation%20in%20Nigeria.pdf

⁴¹ Punch Newspaper (16 July 2024): Elite frustrating efforts to stop foreign illegal miners — Military. <https://punchng.com/elite-frustrating-efforts-to-stop-foreign-illegal-miners-military/>

⁴² Radio Nigeria (Feb 2, 2024): Checking Illegal Mining in Nigeria. <https://radionigeria.gov.ng/2024/02/03/checking-illegal-mining-in-nigeria/>

⁴³ Business Day Newspaper (2022). How corruption denies Nigeria of mining sector dollars by Nosa Igbinadolor published on March 21, 2022. <https://businessday.ng/big-read/article/how-corruption-denies-nigeria-of-mining-sector-dollars/>

⁴⁴ TheCable (October 29, 2022): Mining company in court over alleged dealing by authority, demands N5bn. <https://www.thecable.ng/adamawa-mining-company-in-court-over-alleged-dealing-by-authority-demands-n5bn/>

Environmental and Social Impacts

Mining related environmental degradation is inevitable, but weak governance oversight makes it worse. Environmental harm is worse when caused by artisanal miners who use crude mining tools. In Nigeria, at least 80% of all mining activities are artisanal. The environment and consequently the communities that depend on them bear the cost of this devastation. While the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act of 2007, and the Nigerian Mining Regulation of 2011 provide directions for mining activities, including requiring environmental impact assessments with remediation plans from large and medium scale mining operations, there are no environmental safeguard requirements for artisanal mining in the country. The significant ecological damage that has already occurred has contributed to social tensions and conflicts within mining communities which suffer from pollution, erosion and resource depletion. These grievances occasionally escalate into violence and unrest.

Disrupting Water is Disrupting Life

A common instance is of mining companies diverting, disrupting, depleting, or polluting the water sources that their mining host communities depend on. A forensic report by Global Rights in 2018 revealed that its 2016 publication [Power At What Cost?](#) at Okobo and Itobe Communities, in Awo Local Government Area of Kogi state, had lost their existential water source to pollution by ETA Zuma mines.⁴⁵ Subsequent publication [Power At All Cost!](#), repeats the same tragedy in the context of Maiganga community in Gombe state.⁴⁶

An investigation by [TheCable](#) revealed that the sole water source for several remote communities in the Karshi council area of the Federal Capital Territory was contaminated by mining activities conducted by a Chinese firm, Hongao Mining Company Limited. The stream that supplies water to Angwandadi, where the company's site is located, as well as at least eight neighboring communities, is no longer safe for use. This contamination is due to Hongao Mining utilizing the stream's water to wash its stones. The communities and particularly farmers, who depend on the stream to irrigate their crops and meet their domestic and hygiene needs, have been forced to trek long distances to find alternative water sources.



Photo Narrative: The Contaminated Stream In Kutasa | The Company Site Which Is Located By The Stream | An Armed Policeman At The Site

⁴⁵ Global Rights. (2016). Power At What Cost? - Global Rights. Global Rights. <https://www.globalrights.org/document/power-at-what-cost/>

⁴⁶ Global Rights. (n.d.). Global Rights. <https://www.globalrights.org/document-library/>

“We have Nuggets, We Need Guns”

Throughout West and Central Africa, mining is a highly contentious activity that regularly occasions violence. Most miners (both corporations and artisanal miners) arm themselves in order to protect their goods and the land on which they mine. While corporations tend to hire armed state security personnel and licensed private security companies, there is no evidence that artisanal miners are licensed to carry arms, and anecdotal evidence suggests that they derive these arms from weapons black markets and easily ferry them across porous borders.

Evidence derived during this study also points to the involvement of organized criminal groups in informal mining operations. These groups are not only armed, but run several illicit businesses alongside their mining operations, further fueling the cycle of violence and insecurity. For example, these groups often engage in commercial kidnappings, cattle rustling, and other criminal activities to finance their operations, creating an environment of fear and instability in mining communities. The intertwining of illegal mining and armed conflict has made it difficult for local populations to feel secure and has led to increased militarization in these regions.^{47,48}

The Larger Context of Violence: The wider context of endemic insecurity and violence across Nigeria - ranging from insurgency and banditry to communal clashes - directly exacerbate violence in mining host communities. With state security forces overstretched, mining regions are left under-policed, creating a vacuum in which armed groups, criminal networks, and even insurgents exploit mineral resources as a source of revenue. Licensed operators often collude with or yield ground to these actors, blurring the line between legal and illegal mining and embedding operations within broader criminal economies. For already vulnerable host communities, this convergence of insecurity, state neglect, and corporate malpractice fuels displacement, exploitation, and environmental degradation, while grievances over exclusion from mining benefits escalate into conflict. The wider culture of impunity in Nigeria, where violence frequently goes unpunished, reinforces the cycle: armed groups and corrupt operators alike act without fear of accountability, leaving communities caught in webs of violence, poverty, and distrust toward both the state and mining companies.

Mapping Mining Related Conflicts Across Nigeria

Mining related insecurity is endemic across Nigeria. To get a sense of its gravity, this study undertook a media sweep on related articles. Table 2.4.2 below presents data from media tracking of incidents of violence and insecurity associated with mining operations in Nigeria. Analysis of the dataset indicates that recurrent violent incidents and significant environmental degradation in mining host communities are predominantly linked to illegal and unregulated

⁴⁷ LSE (July 12, 2021): Illicit natural resource extraction in Nigeria fuels violence and insecurity by Uche Igwe <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2021/07/12/illicit-natural-resource-extraction-gold-nigeria-violence-insecurity-buhari/>

⁴⁸ VOA (2 June 2024): Nigeria cracking down on illegal mining By Associated Press: <https://www.voanews.com/a/nigeria-cracking-down-on-illegal-mining/7637134.html>

mining activities. These patterns are most pronounced in Zamfara, Niger, Benue, and Plateau States, with emerging evidence of a gradual spread toward parts of Southwest and Southeast Nigeria.

2.3.2 Case Studies in Nigerian: States, their Natural Resources & Reports on Illegal Mining Led Insecurity and Actions

S/N	STATE	NATURAL RESOURCES	Media Reports on Illegal Mining, Actions & Insecurity in Nigeria
1	Abia	Gold, Lead/Zinc, Limestone, Oil/Gas & Salt, Clay and Coal	23 February 2024: Abia NSCDC Arrests 10 Suspected Illegal Miners 10 May 2024: Deadly Gully Erosion Kills Two, Destroys Property In Abia Community 26 June 2024: Illegal Mining, NSCDC Arrests Chinese National in Abia State 12 July 2024: FG arraigns eight Chinese nationals over 'illegal mining'. The federal government says eight Chinese nationals and one Nigerian were arrested for alleged illegal mining in Lokpaukwu community, Umunneochi LGA, Abia state. 28 July 2024: NAF Airstrikes Blow Off Illegal Mining Sites In Abia, Rivers
2	Abuja (FCT)	Cassiterite, Clay, Dolomite, Gold, Lead, Zinc, Marble & Tantalite, Feldspar, & Iron Ore, Clay	7 July 2020: INVESTIGATION: How Chinese miners endangering FCT residents enjoy police protection 17 November 2022: Abuja communities where residents live in fear of miners 22 November 2022: Boko Haram created to distract Nigerians from opposing illegal mining activities in the country 25 October 2023: NSCDC Nabs 11 Suspects For Vandalism, Illegal Mining In FCT 8 September 2023: 30 die in Abuja landslide, 19 kidnapped 22 November 2023: Illegal miners warned to vacate sites as FG revokes 1,633 mining licenses 28 December 2023: NSCDC arrests 22 suspected illegal miners in FCT 7 February 2024: Troops of Operation Whirl Punch arrested 42 suspected illegal miners and insurgents from a mining site in Kwali Area Council of FCT Abuja 26 February 2024: NSCDC arrests 51 illegal miners, vandals in Abuja 23 April 2024: Tinubu blames illegal mining for terrorism funding 31 May 2024: FG Seals Illegal Mining Site In FCT, Arrests Three Suspects 12 July 2024: Court sends Chinese nationals to prison for illegal mining activities 25 July 2024: EFCC arrests 13 suspected illegal miners in Abuja
3	Adamawa	Bentonite, Basalt, Gypsum, Kaolin, Mica, & Magnesite, Coal, & Clay	22 June 2023: A Set Up C'ttee To Investigate Illegal Mining Activities In Mubi South LGA 4 March 2024: Community Leaders of Ganye LG send red alerts on illegal mining activities in Adamawa
4	Akwa Ibom	Clay, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Oil/Gas, Salt & Uranium, Kaolin, Coal and Clay	12 April 2016: Nigeria – Akwa Ibom: Illegal sand mining threatens Calabar-Itu, Mkpok bridges 18 April 2021: How Mining Is Destroying Infrastructure, Causing Disaffection In Akwa Ibom 11 October 2023: Chinese firm gets quit notice over 'illegal' mining in A'Ibom communities 19 October 2023: Illegal mining in Akwa Ibom 30 August 2023: Akwa Ibom Govt shuts illegal mining company run by Chinese 11 January 2024: NSCDC nabs eight suspects for abduction, illegal mining in Akwa Ibom

			12 January 2024: NSCDC arrests 11 suspects for 'illegal mining' in Akwa Ibom 24 February 2024: Akwa Ibom Insecurity: NSCDC Arrests 13 For Illegal Mining, Smuggling Petroleum Products, Others 20 March 2024: Illegal mining site collapses in Akwa Ibom, two people killed, three injured 6 April 2024: NSCDC restates commitment to tackling illegal mining in Akwa Ibom 15 April 2024: NSCDC Arrests 4 Suspected Oil Thieves, Illegal Miners In Akwa Ibom
5	Anambra	Clay, Glass-Sand, Gypsum, Iron-ore, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Phosphate & Salt	28 August 2020: Illegal Mining Kingpins Allegedly Attack Anambra Assembly 3 September 2020: Illegal Mining: Anambra Community Alleges Plan To Sabotage Probe 9 October 2020: Illegal Oil Miners devastating our lands, Anambra Council Boss cries out 11 January 2024: Anambra State Government Arrest 30 Suspected Illegal Miners 4 February 2024: Anambra declares war on illegal mining 18 April 2024: NSCDC arrests two illegal mining suspects in Anambra 17 April 2024: Two arrested for illegal mining of over N20 million-worth of solid minerals 17 April, 2024: Two alleged illegal miners arrested with 600 bags of kaolin in Anambra 8 May 2024: Sand mining heightens gully erosion in Anambra community 28 June 2024: NSCDC nabs 4 illegal miners in Anambra 14 July 2024: Anambra State Govt Suspends All Mining Activities 31 July 2024: Anambra sand mining ban threatening 8,500 jobs, state revenue – Miners
6	Bauchi	Gold, Cassiterite (tine ore), Columbite, Gypsum, Wolfram, Coal, Limestone, Lead, Zinc, Lignite, Iron-ore & Clay, Kaolin, Tin, Rutile, Clay, Copper, Fluorite, Wolframite, and Gemstones	30 December 2022: At least 20 Killed In Attacks In Nigeria's Bauchi State 6 August 2023: Mining site collapses, kills four 'illegal' miners in Bauchi 29 October 2023: Why I Resorted to 'Local Mining' – Bauchi Civil Servant Recounts Ordeal After Fuel Subsidy Removal 6 January 2024: Bauchi bans individuals, monarchs from issuing consent letters to mining investors 7 January 2024: Bauchi Bans Issuance of Consent Letters To Mining Investors Without Clearance 30 January 2024: Bauchi mourns as four women die in mining site 20 April 2024: Inside Bauchi's illegal mining hub 12 May 2024: How my sister died in Bauchi mining pit collapse — Brother 22 May 2024: Consent letter policy best strategy against illegal mining – Bauchi govt 21 July 2024: Bauchi To Streamline Mineral Exploration, Exploitation For Sanity In Sector
7	Bayelsa	Clay, Gypsum, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Manganese, Oil/Gas & Uranium, Clay	1 April 2016: Bayelsa: NSCDC deploys 100 operatives to protect solid minerals 18 November 2016: Agency Assesses Other Mineral Resources In Bayelsa To Grow Revenue 14 May 2024: JTF Uncovers Over 50 Illegal Mining Sites In Bayelsa Forest, Nigerian Customs Signs MOU With China

8	Benue	Barite, Clay, Coal, Gemstone, Gypsum, Iron-Ore, Lead, Zinc, Limestone, Marble, Fluorite & Salt	12 April 2018: Many feared dead as gunmen attack two villages - The gunmen were said to have attacked a mining site at Kuru-kuru village and also ambushed some people from the neighboring Jarkuka village. in Anka Local Government Area. 26 Feared Dead - March 2018: The bandits had attacked Bawan Daji village in the same Anka Local Government Area 2 weeks ago and killed over 30 people. 3 August 2020: Okwori Onaji: Ortom constitutes committee to probe mining in Owukpa, denies involvement in activist arrest 18 September 2020: Dangote ordered to stop mining in Benue 24 March 2021: Women protest in Idoma community over coal mining as herdsmen invade Owukpa 30 March 2021: Benue women storm mining site, curse corrupt leaders as protest hits 7 days [VIDEO] 17 April 2022: GOLD MINING IN BENUE: BNSG SUSPENDS MINING ACTIVITIES OVER LOST OF REVENUE 18 August 2022: Ortom suspends mining activities in Benue over security, environmental threats. 4 April 2023: Gunmen kill community leader, two others in renewed attack in Benue. Igbobi in Apka Local Government Area, (LGA), of Benue State. 12 October 2023: House: Influx of Illegal Local, Foreign Miners Causing Unrest in Benue. 18 October 2023: House: Influx of Illegal Local, Foreign Miners Causing Unrest in Benue 21 January 2024: Largest Illegal Mining Site Discovered In Benue Community 19 February 2024 : MIREMCO working hard to tackle illegal miners in Benue – Mnyim 22 March 2024: Governor suspends mining activities across Benue 23 March 2024: Benue Gov't launches Marshals to secure mining sites 17 February 2024: Benue: Illegal mining activities short-changing state – AG, Mnyim laments 4 April 2024: Police arraigns two Chinese, others over illegal mining in Benue 19 April 2024: Minister promises tough sanctions for Benue illegal miners 20 April 2024: FG vows to revoke license of operators illegally extracting uranium in Benue 21 April 2024: FG To Investigate Alleged Illegal Mining In Benue – Alake
9	Borno	Bentonite, Clay, Diatomite, Fluorite, Gypsum, Hydro-carbon, Kaolin & Limestone	8 October 2022: Borno Assembly laments illegal mining 13 October 2023: Borno bans mining activities 10 September 2023: Northern governors urge FG to address banditry, illegal mining 6 December 2023: NSCDC parades 42 suspects for committing various offenses in Borno 7 January 2024: Ban on illegal mining still in force – Borno 30 March 2024: NSCDC raises alarm over Illegal mining in Borno despite 4 April 2024: Police arrest four for alleged illegal mining in Borno

10	Cross River	Barite, Lead, Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Manganese, Oil/Gas, Iron Ore, Tantalite, Tourmaline, Rutile, Lithium, Cassiterite, Columbite, Clay & Uranium	17 April 2019: Illegal Mining: Time for FG to Consider Calls for Restructuring–Onuesoke 28 January 2022: Six buried alive in Cross River illegal mine collapse 21 October 2022: Cross River: Community leaders battle mining firms over undeclared prospects 17 November 2022: C'River govt announces ban on illegal mining activities 18 November 2022: Cross River communities hail deployment of security at illegal mining sites 16 May 2023: NSCDC arrests 21 over illegal miners Cross River communities 22 August 2023: 14 sentenced to prison over illegal mining 6 September 2023: Public outrage forces FG to withdraw licenses from mining firms in Cross River 17 September 2023: As Miners Plunder C'River Communities, Natives Flee 28 February 2024: Illegal miners attack soldiers, forest rangers, damage rifle in Cross River 20 March 2024: Two dead as 'illegal' mining well collapses in Cross River 2 May 2024: Cross River Raises Alarm Over Illegal Mining, Invasion Of Park By Foreigners 4 May 2024: Elders, chiefs cry out as foreign illegal gold miners take over Cross River community 11 May 2024: Gold Rush: C'River town becomes melting pot of local, foreign illegal miners 11 May 2024: Youths Protest Alleged Illegal Mining, Timber Logging By Businessman In Cross River 11 June 2024: FG, Cross-River Deepen Cooperation To Address Illegal Mining 6 June 2024: Illegal Mining: Armed Nigeriens, Chadians occupy Cross River forests – State govt 21 June 2024: Reject enticing gifts from illegal miners, C'River govt urges local chief 22 June 2024: Cross River monarchs back govt's ban on illegal mining. 12 July 2024: CSO backs Cross River Govt over ban on illegal mining activities 25 July 2024: Cross River Assembly calls for crackdown on illegal miners
11	Delta	Clay, Glass-sand, Gypsum, Iron-ore, Kaolin, Lignite, Marble, Silica Sand, Clay & Oil/Gas	20 January 2010: Nigeria: 'No Place in N'delta for Illegal Dredgers' 20 April 2016: NSCDC arrests illegal miners, suspected vandals in Delta 6 June 2017: Delta State Assembly moves to stop illegal mining activities 9 June 2017: Okowa assures on infrastructure, warns against illegal mining / 16 October 2017: Delta inaugurates 8-man c'ttee on mining 7 November 2017: FG, Delta Discover Illegal Miners, Solid Mineral Sites 2 May 2018: Delta uncovers N2bn Illegal mining deal in Ukwu-Nzu, Obomkpa 20 April 2019: Illegal Mining in North: N'Delta Youths Threaten To Seize Control of Oil Resources If... 11 October 2022: Delta: NSCDC arrests three suspects over alleged illegal mining.

			17 November 2023: Community leader decries illegal dredging on East-West road 20 December 2023: Illegal Mining: Provost, Asagba Of Asaba Clash 22 December 2023: Delta monarch decries illegal mining 10 February 2024: Delta community raises alarm over alleged pollution of rivers
12	Ebonyi	Baryte, Coal, Clay, Limestone, Fluorite, Lead, Silver, Gold, Zinc & Salt	1 November 2012: Illegal mining: Ebonyi community laments death of 17 indigenes 6 December 2017: Illegal mining: Ebonyi women protest arrest of husbands, sons 13 January 2018: UNDERCOVER: In Ebonyi, orphans and little kids are mining in the pits of death 7 February 2018: Four Chinese, 16 others arrested in Ebonyi over illegal mining 25 May 2018: Police arrest, Lebanese, 16 others over alleged illegal mining deal; over alleged breakdown of law and order in the state. 9 November 2018: Ebonyi tackles mining hazards 14 November 2019: Ebonyi Seals Illegal Mining Sites 31 January 2020: Ebonyi community Protest Illegal mining of limestone 10 July 2020: Illegal shutdown: Mining company sues Ebonyi state government 23 September 2020: Ebonyi community demands N300 million compensation over alleged land pollution by mining company 23 December 2020: Ebonyi fined N10m, ordered to reopen firm's quarry 4 February 2021: FG to commence operation on Artisanal and Small scale mining-lead processing plant in Ebonyi 2 April 2021: Ebonyi: Crude oil discovery, illegal mining responsible for killings in Effium — AESID 18 August 2021: Those Destroying Our Lands Will Hear From Us, Umahi Threatens Miners 19 September 2021: Ebonyi arrests 5 suspected illegal miners as closure of illegal mining pits begins 26 September 2021: Pupils' Lives At Risk Over Illegal Mining In Ebonyi 2 April 2021: Group Links Ebonyi Killings To Discovery Of Mineral Deposits In Affected Community 7 October 2021: Mining pits of death, environmental degradation in Ebonyi 3 May 2022: Inside Ebonyi community where women and children illegally mine lead, zinc 10 October 2022: Gunmen killed a Chinese expatriate at a mining site in Iboko, Izzi LGA of Ebonyi state. 23 June 2023: Experts Lament Pollution In Ebonyi Mining Sites 16 February 2024: Ebonyi Govt Demolishes 30 Illegal Structures, Warns Citizens against Defacing City 15 March 2024: Ebonyi seals illegal Mining sites 24 March 2024: INVESTIGATION: Company makes fortunes blasting rocks in Ebonyi, but residents pay with their health
13	Edo	Bitumen, Clay, Bentonite, Dolomite, Phosphate, Glass-	5 December 2017: BUA illegally mining marble, limestone in Edo, says ministry

		sand, Gold, Gypsum, Kaolin, Feldspar, Iron-ore, Lignite, Limestone, Marble & Oil/Gas	19 December 2017: EDO Gov shuts down disputed Obu Mines in Okpella 3 January 2018: Obaseki Orders Arrest Of Two BUA Cement Staff, Shuts Obu Mines 4 January 2018: BUA Group tackles Edo govt. for sealing mining site, arresting staff 6 January 2018: Edo govt accuses BUA Group of attack on Gov. Obaseki 12 January 2018: Dangote cement plc vs BUA cement: The fight over gold deposits in Edo state 17 May 2018: Edo community tackles Dangote over mining land acquisition 7 July 2018: Edo Govt raises alarm over issuance of fake mining 28 October 2018: Sand miners fault Edo govt over closure of burrow pits 20 April 2019: Edo Govt plans database for miners 16 March 2021: Firm, workers flee site as illegal miners invade Edo community 5 May 2021: Illegal miners invade Edo communities, heighten security fears 7 May 2021: Anxiety in Edo community over alleged influx of illegal miners 17 December 2021: Edo community accuses NSCDC of providing security for illegal miners 19 December 2021: One injured, as illegal miners, community members clash in Edo 23 December 2021: Four arrested in Edo for illegal gold mining 9 January 2022: Four suspected illegal gold miners arrested in Edo 11 January 2022: Edo Community Laments Security Challenges over illegal mining 17 January 2022: Scramble For Gold In Edo: Uneasy Calm As Illegal Northern Miners Troop In 14 January 2022: Six arrested for illegal mining in Edo 18 March 2022: Sand Mining: Ukhun community cries out as Ekpoma road collapsing 11 July 2023: NSCDC Operatives Arrest 12 Suspected Illegal Miners in Edo State 24 July 2023: Illegal mining: NSCDC arrests 12 suspects, impounds trucks in Edo 3 May 2024: Edo community seeks govt intervention on illegal gold mining Egbetua autonomous community in Ososo, Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State said illegal miners have led to criminal activities in the area. The gold mining site has been in operation for over 25 years. 29 March 2024: Russian firm begins lithium exploration in Edo 26 March 2024: Edo gets 40 new solid minerals licenses 6 May 2024: Edo govt gives 7-day ultimatum to illegal miners 19 June 2024: Edo Govt To Sanction FG Officials Issuing Illegal Permits To Miners - June 2024: Dangote Cement complies with minerals, mining Act, signs CDA agreement with Okpella communities in Edo
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14	Ekiti	Feldspar, Granite, Kaolin, Syenite & Tatum, Lithium, Tantalite, Mica, & Clay	27 September, 2015: IJERO-EKITI: A town at the mercy of illegal miners 2022: EFCC To Tackle Illegal Mining In Kwara, Kogi, Ekiti 15 July 2021: Illegal miners threatening Ekiti security, ruining lands: ACLSD 18 August, 2023: EFCC, NCS partner to fight illegal mining in southwest 18 August 2023: EFCC, customs partner to fight illegal mining in southwest
15	Enugu	Coal, Clay, Lead, Zinc, Iron Ore & Limestone	25 August 2023: NSCDC busts over 40 illegal miners in Enugu 20 September 2023: Enugu State Government Begins Sealing of Illegal Mining Sites 19 September 2023: Enugu govt begins sealing of illegal mining sites 26 September 2023: Illegal mining: Environmental disaster inevitable – Enugu Commissioner 6 March 2024: Enugu communities raise alarm over illegal mining activities
16	Gombe	Coal, Limestone, Clay, Gemstone, Fluorite, & Gypsum	3 Mar 2020: Gombe Inaugurates Joint Task Force On Illegal Mining - Jul 3, 2022: FG Asks Undocumented Miners in Gombe State to Register their Operation 10 September 2023: North-East govs decry rising banditry, illegal mining 22 October 2023: Gombe: NSCDC Arrests 3 Suspects as Gov't Suspends Mining Activity 10 January 2024: We're Committed To Developing Mining Sector In Gombe' - Gov. Inuwa 28 May 2024: Security nabs 5 illegal miners in Gombe
17	Imo	Gypsum, Lead, Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Marcasite, Oil/Gas, Phosphate, Kaolin, Coal, Clay & Salt	- October 3, 2020: NSCDC arrests 29 illegal mining operators in Imo; paraded 29 persons arrested for allegedly engaging in illegal mining activities in various locations. 5 June 2019: Ihedioha upgrades Imo zoo, bans illegal mining of Nworie River 22 July 2020: Illegal Mining, Borrow- Pits Banned In Imo 26 June 2020: Imo Commissioner Bemoans Neglect Of Environment, Warns Against Illegal Mining 3 October 2020: NSCDC arrests 29 illegal mining operators in Imo 10 October 2022: Thousands displaced as flood sweeps 17 Imo communities 7 April 2024: How illegal rock blasting, mining endanger Nigerians 13 April 2024: NSCDC Arrests Suspected Illegal Miners, Uncovers Bunkering Site In Owerri 13 April 2024: illegal mining: NSCDC arrests 12 suspects, 6 tippers, one truck in Imo 26 June 2020: Imo Commissioner Bemoans Neglect Of Environment, Warns Against Illegal Mining 30 June 2020: Imo alerts to fake mining agents, bans activities in Owerri 19 July 2024: Environmental Management: Imo govt ends illegal mining, warns operators
18	Jigawa	Butyles, Silica Sand, & Clay	5 November 2018: Jigawa spends N18m to obtain license for 25 miner groups

			3 December, 2020: Mineral rich Jigawa obtains 11 licenses, calls on investors to capitalize on state's gold, copper, iron ore endowments 18 June 2024: Jigawa State Governor Issues Stern Warning To Land Grabbers Over Illegal Allocation Of Govt Lands
19	Kaduna	Amethyst, Aqua Marine, Asbestos, Clay, Gemstone, Gold, Graphite, Kaolin, Hyanite, Mica, Rock Crystal, Ruby, Sapphire, Sihnite, Superntinite, Tentallime, Topaz, Kaolin, Talc, Feldspar/Floster, Kyanite, Bismuth, Wolframite, Manganese, Columbite, Sapphire, Iron Ore, & Tourmaline	30 April 2018: Gunmen kill 14 miners in Kaduna, several others injured 27 January 2023: Gunmen kill five mining operators in Kaduna- in Hayin Udawa community, Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State - January 2023: The attack took place not far from where bandits ambushed the personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), killing seven, as well as six miners a few weeks ago. 15 January 2023: Slain NSCDC personnel laid to rest in Kaduna 16 December 2023: FG warns Kaduna communities against illegal mining 2024: Buda community in Kaduna State - Nigeria Gunmen Kidnap At least 61 People, Residents Say 3 May 2024: Gunmen suspected to be bandits have killed eight members of a vigilante group and two others at Kakangi and Ungwan Matinja communities of Birnin Gwari local government area of Kaduna State. 6 May 2024: Gunmen kill 6, injure 8 in attack on Kaduna community – Ambe Communities of Sanga LGA in Kaduna
20	Kano	Coal, Feldspar, Silver, Gold, Wolframite, Clay, Cassiterite, Copper, Columbite, Gemstone, Glass-sand, Lead/Zinc, Pyrochlinre & Tantalite	29 December, 2023: Inside Kano community where illegal miners cash-in on residents' pains 28 September, 2023: INVESTIGATION: Kano farmers helpless as sand mining destroys farmlands 1 November, 2021: Bandits relocating from Zamfara, Katsina to Kano gold mining camps 9 March 2018: Fashola decries illegal sand mining at Tamburawa River in Kano 5 November, 2018: Jigawa spends N18m to obtain license for 25 miner groups 3 April 2021: Kano emirate raises alarm over influx of 'illegal miners' from Zamfara 28 October 2021: Villagers Report Influx Of Illegal Miners Into Kano Communities 18 July 2022: Two illegal miners die as Kano mine collapses 27 July 2023: Kwara lawmakers seek end to illegal mining 29 December 2023: Inside Kano community where illegal miners cash-in on residents' pains 19 May 2024: Kano govt reads riot act to illegal sand miners amid safety concern.
21	Katsina	Kaolin, Marble, Gold, Manganese, Clay, Silica Sand, & Salt	6 November, 2020: Illegal mining cause of armed banditry in North West — Katsina govt 1 November 2021: Bandits relocating from Zamfara, Katsina to Kano gold mining camps 12 January, 2022: Katsina Govt announce ban on illegal mining activities 1 August, 2023: Radda suspends mining activities in Katsina 21 December 2023: Katsina govt. vows to prosecute illegal miners

22	Kebbi	Gold, Kaolin, Iron-Ore, Talc, Feldspar, Gold, Clay and Manganese	14 December 2022: NSCDC Warns Illegal Miners In Kebbi 23 September 2023: Why We Banned Mining Activities, Shut Down Sites – Kebbi Govt 22 September 2023: Kebbi govt suspends mining activities over insecurity 17 February 2024: How illegal miners wreak havoc on Nigeria — Investigation
23	Kogi	Coal, Mica, Talc, Clay, Feldspar, Granite, Limestone (Dolomite), Gypsum, Iron-ore, Kaolin, Marble, Lithium, Talc & Tantalite	30 August 2022: Two Die in Kogi as Mine Site Collapses, Govt. Orders Probe 22 September 2023: Kogi Assembly takes steps to resolve land disputes, stop illegal mining 8 December 2023: Kogi Govt prohibits illegal mining 20 December, 2023: Kogi Government Arrests 10 Illegal Miners, Impounds Over 50 Coal Laden Trucks 23 January 2024: Kogi State's Anti-Illegal Mining Taskforce Impounds 21 Trucks of Coal 19 July 2024: Security Operatives Arrest Seven Suspected Illegal Miners In Kogi
24	Kwara	Cassiterite, Clay, Dolomite, Columbite, Feldspar, Gold, Iron-ore, Marble, Gemstones, Mica, Lead, Zinc, Lithium and lepidolite & Tantalite	6 July 2022: Nigeria: Unknown Gunmen Kill Policeman, Abduct Chinese In Kwara 22 September 2022: Kwara Govt Commends EFCC On Fight Against Illegal - Illegal Mining: EFCC Arrests 5, Impounds 3 Trucks In Kwara, Oyo 22 March 2023: Father of six bags one year jail term for illegal mining in Kwara 13 July 2023: EFCC Arrests 13 Chinese For Alleged Illegal Mining Activities in Kwara (illegal mining sites in almost all the 16 Local Government Areas of the State). 19 Feb, 2024: Again, EFCC Arrests 2 Chinese Citizens for Illegal Mining in Kwara 27 March 2024: Again, EFCC Arrests Five Illegal Miners in Kwara, Recovers Three Truckloads of Assorted Minerals - May 29, 2024: EFCC arrests 7 over alleged illegal mining activities in Ilorin 13 June 2024: EFCC Arrests 18 For Suspected Illegal Mining Activities In Ilorin
25	Lagos	Bitumen, Clay, Silica or Glass-sand	11 Sept 2020: NSCDC Parades Two Suspects Over Alleged Illegal Mining 20 March 2017: Lagos : Fed Government shuts three illegal mining sites 16 September 2022: NSCDC uncovers illegal mining site in Lagos 7 April 2024: How illegal rock blasting, mining endanger Nigerians 20 January 2024: Lagos govt vows to enforce laws against illegal miners 25 July 2024: Lagos community plans showdown with dredgers over bad road
26	Nasarawa	Amethyst (Topaz Garnet), Barytex, Barite, Cassirite, Chalcopryrite, Clay, Columbite, Coal, Dolomite/Marble, Feldspar, Galena, Iron-ore, Limestone, Fluorite, Mica, Salt,	22 November 2023: Nasarawa Assembly Moves to Tackle Illegal Mining 20 February 2024: Police arrest 109 illegal miners in Nasarawa, burst kidnappers' den 27 April 2024: Four Chinese Arrested for Illegal Mining in Nasarawa 19 June 2024: Nasarawa shuts mining firm over infraction

		Sapphire, Talc, Tantalite, Tourmaline Quartz, Lithium, Wolframite, & Zircon	8 July 2024: Female miners seek end to sexual harassment, GBV in Nasarawa 21 June 2024: Nasarawa communities disown lithium mining firm, allege illegal operation 22 July 2024: Nasarawa lawmakers urge police to flush out illegal miners 26 July 2024: Govt officials, traditional rulers aiding, abetting illegal mining in Nasarawa – Lawmakers
27	Niger	Gold, Lead, Zinc, Clay, Lithium, Kyanite, Wolframite, Gemstones, Baryte, Marble, Manganese & Talc	5 March 2019: Niger tops states with illegal mining in Nigeria, five others follow 25 September 2019: 109 Arrested for armed robbery, illegal mining in Niger 25 July 2020: 5 drown as villagers flee from bandits in Niger: 3 women and 2 Children. (Gurmana river in Shiroro LGA in Nigeria) 1 April 2021: BREAKING: Five soldiers, NSCDC officer gunned down in Niger. (in Allawa, Manta, Gurmana, Bassa and Kokki Communities in Shiroro LGA) 2 October 2021: Boko Haram takes over 500 communities in Niger, threatens to take over one of Nigeria's biggest power stations. (Communities under the siege of the terrorist are - Manta, Gurmana, Sassa Kokki, Allawa, Kurebe, Kushaka, Kwati and Chukumba) 24 January 2022: Bandits Kill One, Abduct 15 Others in Niger State.(Batagari village in Maikujeri District of Rafi LGA. 1 July 2022: Soldiers, 10 Policemen, Others Killed In Gunmen Attacks. Death toll of the attack by bandits on a mining state at Ajata-Aboki community in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State last Wednesday in broad daylight has risen to 48 (including 30 soldiers). – 4 July 2022: Banditry: Niger govt orders suspension of mining activities in three LGAs 30 June, 2022: Gunmen kidnap four Chinese workers in central Nigeria. Armed fighters attacked the mine in Shiroro region of Niger state. Gunmen invaded a mining site at Ajata Aboki village in Niger state's Shiroro area. killing three soldiers, seven mobile policemen and six civilians working at the site. 5 July 2022: Governor Bello Orders suspension of mining activities in Niger State 30 June 2022: Scores, including 37 security personnel, feared killed as bandits attack mining site in Niger State 25 May 2023: Illegal mining: Chinese ambassador in talks with Niger govt to prevent litigation 24 January 2023: Many feared dead as multiple explosions rock Niger community (in Galadiman, Kogo area near Shiroro Dam Nigeria State) 26 September 2023: Terrorism Funding: After WikiTimes' Investigation, Niger Govt Profiles Miners 16 September, 2023: INVESTIGATION: Inside Secret Details of How Chinese-allied Miners Bribed Dogo Gide Terror Group to Access Mining Sites in Niger State 18 May 2024: Niger arrests five for illegal mining 5 June 2024: tragic rockslide killed 1 and trapped buried over 50 miners at a gold mining site in Farin Doki, Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State 4 June 2024: 2 Dead and 30 trapped as mining site collapses in Galkogo village in Galadima Kogo community in Shiroro Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger state

			5 June 2024: 14 miners still trapped under Niger rock – Police 6 June 2024: Six Niger miners rescued, 43 remain trapped 7 June 2024: EFCC arrests 11 for illegal mining in Ilorin Lately Shiroro local council where the mining site is situated has been under heavy banditry attack. Lately Shiroro local council where the mining site is situated has been under heavy banditry attack. A village called Adogo Mallam was attacked on Sunday, 2nd June 2024 where 6 persons were kidnapped, while yesterday 3rd June, Tunga Kawo communities located 3 kilometers away from Erena of Shiroro local council was attacked, over 20 persons were kidnapped with hundreds of cows rustled. 14 June 2024: Three die in fresh Niger mine collapse 16 June 2024: Nigerian govt to revoke firm's license after illegal mining activities killed three in Niger 11 July 2024: Buried beyond recovery: Sad story of Niger collapsed mine victims 13 July 2024: Nine victims of Niger mining collapse buried, others remain trapped
28	Ogun	Bitumen, Clay, Feldspar, Gemstone, Kaolin, Limestone, Gypsum, Silica Sand/Quartz, Mica, & Phosphate	29 January 2018: Ogun state govt. set to go hard on illegal miners 22 June 2024: Ogun gov creates new agencies, bans monarchs from mining deals 11 June 2024: Abiodun warns Ogun monarchs against allocating land for illegal 23 June 2024 Abiodun bars monarchs from signing mining agreements 2 July 2024: Ogun Govt warns against illegal mining, vows stiff sanctions 11 July 2024: FG Seals Mining Company Over Illegal Activities In Ogun
29	Ondo	Bitumen, Clay, Coal, Dimension Stones, Feldspar, Gemstone, Silica/Glass-Sand, Granite, Gypsum, Kaolin, Limestone, Bentonite, Clay & Oil/Gas	14 December 2019: INVESTIGATION: Osun, Ondo-Southwest states where illegal mining, untapped resources scoop Nigeria's economy 8 February 2021 Amotekun arrests illegal gold miners in Ondo 12 June 2020: Task force arrests 500 illegal miners in Ondo 11 May 2020: Ondo govt intercepts illegal miners trying to sneak into the state 8 February 2021: Fifteen illegal gold miners, five robbery suspects arrested in Ondo 15 February 2021: Nigeria: Illegal Miners, Not Herdsmen, Killed Ondo Farmer - Amotekun 17 February 2022: Amotekun arrests four persons for illegal mining in Ondo 21 February 2021: Youths storm Owo forest in search of gold 24 February 2021: Court remands 15 for alleged illegal mining in Ondo 17 December 2021: Makinde Meets Traditional Rulers, Others, Warns Land Grabbers, Illegal Miners 23 August 2023: Alake faces illegal mining heavyweights as FG battles revenue crisis 9 November 2023: Ondo govt uncovers illegal mining sites, decries degradation of environment 6 February 2024: Ondo Assembly asks security operatives to work with traditional rulers to curb illegal mining

			12 March 2024: Ondo residents want mining stopped, lament destruction of properties 28 May 2024: Ogun Community Protests Against Activities Of Illegal Miners / 11 July 2024: Ondo Moves Against Illegal Miners, To End Epileptic Power Supply In Ile Oluji, Other Community
30	Osun	Columbite, Gold, Mica, Clay, Granite, Feldspar, Talc, Tantalite & Tourmaline	18 November 2017: NSCDC parades 34 illegal miners in Osun 8 November 2019: Two Killed in Osun as Hausa, Yoruba laborers Clash at mining site 9 November 2019: Unknown gunmen allegedly kill security guard at mining site in Osun 4 May 2020: 17 Chinese, 10 locals arrested over illegal mining in Osun 28 April 2020: Osun govt inaugurates JTF to combat illegal mining, kidnapping 12 November 2020: Harvest of death, rape, drug abuse in Osun mining communities 15 March 2021: Youth chase Chinese miners out of mining sites in Ilesha, Iponda: Youths in Ijesaland have chased Chinese miners out of mining sites in Ilesha and Iponda communities in Osun state. 6 April 2021: Gunmen attack mining site in Osun, abduct Chinese expatriates: kills 2 8 April 2021: Chinese expatriates abducted at Osun mining site regain freedom 21 April 2021: Mining pollution: Osun vows to go after defaulters 30 March 2022: Illegal mining polluting rivers in Osun 15 December 2021: Osun NSCDC warns against illegal mining, arrests two suspects - June 13, 2022: Illegal mining: Stakeholders urge FG to tackle heavy pollution of Osun River 11 March 2023: Osun lost billions of Naira through illegal mining – Adeleke 16 April 2024: FG Suspends Mining Activities Within OAU, Environs
31	Oyo	Aqua Marine, Cassiterite, Clay, Dolomite, Gemstone, Gold, Kaolin, Marble, Sillimanite, Feldspar, Tourmaline, Talc, Mica, & Tantalite	11 November 2023: Oyo State Government Seals Illegal Mining Sites 17 January 2024: 3 killed and 77 injured in a massive blast in southern Ibadan in Oyo state Nigeria 29 January 2024: Court remands 41 for allegedly mining Oyo govt's gold 24 February 2024: Oyo: Makinde orders closure of factory used for illegal mining, four suspects arrested 13 Feb 2024: Oyo Govt Probes Monarchs, Firms Over Illegal Mining 13 May 2024: Two Chinese, 30 others arrested by Oyo govt for illegal mining 14 May 2024: Community market to remain closed over illegal mining, Oyo govt says 29 May 2024: EFCC arrests seven illegal miners, two others for N1.2m bribe 22 July 2024: EFCC arrests 10 suspected illegal miners in Oyo 25 July 2024: Oyo to enforce executive order against illegal mining
32	Plateau	Barite, Bauxite, Bentonite, Bismuth, Cassiterite (Tin Ore),	15 December 2016: NSCDC parades three illegal miners

		Clay, Coal, Emerald, Fluoride, Gemstone - Topaz, Amethyst, Sapphire, Zircon, Ruby, Zircon sand, Quartz, Aquamarine, Beryl, Coltan, Granite, Iron-ore, Silica Sand, Kaolin, Lead, Zinc, Marble, Molybdenite, Pyrochlore, Salt, Tantalite/Columbite, Rutile, Tourmaline, Mica, Amethyst, Ruby, Gold, Coltan, Beryl, Garnet, Emerald, & Wolfram	15 February 2017: Security chiefs suspend mining activities in Jos. The face-off between miners from the communities of Jos South and Bassa Local Government Areas in Plateau State that resulted in the death of 10 persons 22 March 2017: 7 die as mining site collapses in Plateau 2 Feb 2017: Six Killed as Illegal Miners Clash in Plateau 8 April 2018: Police confirm 2 dead in Plateau mining collapse 27 August 2019: Plateau water board raises the alarm over illegal mining activities at Dam site. 27 August 2019: Forty four persons suspected to be illegal miners have already been arrested by the National Security and Civil Defence Corps. 10 April 2021: How Eight Miners Were Killed At Mining Site By Gunmen In Shawalan Kuru, Jos South Plateau State. 23 January 2022: Gunmen attack mining site in plateau, kill four persons - in Dong village, Jos LGA of plateau state 2022: Gunmen Attack Plateau Communities, Kill Five. - Gunmen have attacked Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, killing three women and two men in the attack. Three women were killed at Mararaban Tipper in Nzhwerenvi village; a man was killed at Kpara village, while another man was ambushed and attacked on Gero road from tin mining site 16 February 2022: Gunmen attack plateau miners, kill two at Yelwa- Zangam community 24 April 2023: Gunmen killed no fewer than seven persons in two separate attacks that occurred in Wereng and Helping communities of Riyom and Barkin Ladi local government areas respectively. 26 April 2023: Gunmen kill six miners in Plateau, Turu community in Jos South LGA 23 June 2023: Gunmen reportedly kill three in Plateau community: Gunmen reportedly killed three persons at a mining site in Riyom local government area of Plateau State - July 2023: 5 Die, 8 Injured In Plateau Mine Collapse Disaster 2 October 2023: 33 persons killed in Plateau mining collapses in two months 26 January 2024: Plateau killings caused by land grabbing for illegal mining – Ex-lawmaker 13 February 2024: Address Illegal Mining Affecting Local Communities, Animals In Jos Wildlife Park, RDI Urges Plateau Govt 22 February 2024: In Jos, Continued Violence is Driving More Women and Children to Illegal Mining 7 April 2024: How illegal rock blasting, mining endanger Nigerians 19 April 2024: Gunmen have killed 18 people in four communities of Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State. 21 May 2024: Gunmen kill some 40 people in an attack in north-central Nigeria - Wase district in Plateau state. 13 July 2024: Jos Building collapse: Gov Muftwang orders immediate closure of affected school, arrest of artisanal miners
33	Rivers	Clay, Glass-Sand, Kaolin, Lignite, Marble & Oil/Gas	14 July 2024: Rivers clamps down on illegal mining sites 28 July 2024: NAF Airstrikes Blow Off Illegal Mining Sites In Abia, Rivers
34	Sokoto	Clay, Flakes, Gold, Granite, Gypsum, Kaolin, Laterite,	21 November 2021: How Illegal Sand Miners Make Fortunes In Sokoto Communities

		Limestone, Phosphate, Potash, Silica Sand & Salt	12 May 2012: Sokoto Govt Crushing Illegal Miners 21 Nov 2021: How illegal sand miners make fortunes in Sokoto communities 2022: Sokoto Secures 35 Mining Licenses
35	Taraba	Lead, Zinc, Sapphire, Phosphate, Barite & Clay	24 June 2023: Taraba: Gov. Kefas Seeks Support of Traditional Rulers against Insecurity, Illegal Mining 22 August 2023: Taraba Arraigns 11 Foreigners Engaged In Illegal Mining 30 August 2023: Taskforce Arrests 3500 Illegal Miners in Taraba State 14 September 2023: Taraba Govt Laments Involvement Of Over 20,000 Residents In Illegal Mining 18 August 2023: Mobile Court Seals Off Illegal Mining Site In Taraba 22 November 2023: Again, taskforce raids illegal mining site in Taraba 20 July 2024: Executive Order: Taraba Govt taskforce sets mining camp ablaze
36	Yobe	Diatomite, Silica Sand, Gypsum, Clay, Soda Ash & Tintomite	1 July 2021: NMGS vows to end illegal mining, indiscriminate borehole drilling in Yobe 18 June 2022: Yobe govt talks tough against illegal mining, vows to sanction unlicensed miners 6 January 2024: Illegal Miners On The Prowl In North East Despite Ban
37	Zamfara	Barite, Feldspar, Gold, Lead, Zinc, Clay, Iron Ore, Lithium, Manganese, Wolframite, Tourmaline, & Garnet	- Nov 2016: Gunmen kill 36 Nigerian miners in Zamfara state. Mining camp in the Maru district of Zamfara state. Another 40 people were kidnapped by gunmen in Maru Local Government Area of the state . - Nov 2016: Zamfara killing spree continues, '25' killed in fresh attack, while many others were injured during the attack... the incident occurred at Dole, Tudun Bugaje and Kwangwami communities in Zurmi Local Government Area. 19 March 2016: Police Confirm 9 killed in Village attack in Zamfara – Fanteka village in Dagara district. 13 April 2018: 26 Feared Dead As Gunmen Attack Mining Site In Zamfara State. The incident occurred in Kuru-kuru village in Anka LGA of Zamfara State, and neighboring Jarkuka village. 7 April 2019: FG suspends all mining activities in Zamfara, orders foreigners to vacate sites 23 July 2019: Why killings continue in Zamfara despite mining ban — Nigerian Military 21 April 2020: Police raid Zamfara illegal mining sites, raise alarm over continuous activities by foreigners 26 May 2020: Zamfara monarchs given two weeks to end illegal mining in their domains 26 August 2020: Illegal miners root cause of insecurity in Zamfara- Gov. Bello 31 August 2020: Zamfara govt pledges to prosecute illegal miners 10 August 2020: Zamfara police arrests suspected bandits engaged in illegal mining 22 September 2020: Gunmen Attack Zamfara Village, Kidnap 42 Persons 2 March 2021: Insecurity: FG declares Zamfara 'no fly zone' bans mining activities 23 April 2021: Police uncover four illegal mining sites, arrest 18 illegal miners in Zamfara

		□ April 2021: Federal government has placed a ban on all Mining activities in Zamfara to curb the activities of armed bandits, which many identify as one of the root causes of Insecurity in the state. □ 25 June 2021: illegal miners escape as NSCDC recovers 14 bags of precious stones in Zamfara □ 7 November 2021: Bandits kill six, abduct women, children in fresh attack on Zamfara community – Rijiya village in Gusau □ 13 November 2021: Bandits Attack Zamfara Community, Kill Nine, Rustle Livestock in Tungar Ruwa village in Anka LGA of Zamfara □ 27 December 2021: Seven killed, 33 women abducted as bandits attack 15 Zamfara communities on Christmas day. Attacked 15 communities in Gusau. □ 9 February 2022: NSCDC Arrest 10 Illegal Miners, Intercept 10 Bags Of Precious Stones, Others In Zamfara □ 25 May 2023: Gunmen kill 27 persons on Zamfara mining site, steal over 150 motorbikes in Yar Nasarawa mining site in Maru LGA in Zamfara. □ 24 September 2023: Banditry: Zamfara Gov Bans Illegal Mining, Orders Security Agents to Shoot Violators □ 9 December 2023: JUST-IN: 3 Killed, District Head, 50 Others Abducted In Bagega, a mining village in Zamfara state. □ 8 December 2023: Three artisanal miners die, 11 in Dan Kamfani, Anka Local Government of Zamfara State mining accident □ 9 December 2023: Three die, 11 injured in Zamfara mining pit collapse □ 18 January 2024: Banditry: Gov Lawal bars traditional rulers from issuing mining permits in Zamfara □ 14 February 2024: NSCDC arrests 42 suspected bandits from Zamfara □ 23 July 2024: Illegal mining heightening N'West insecurity – COAS
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Part Three: Natural Resource Governance for Mining in Nigeria: Institutional, Legal, and Regulatory Framework

“... exploitation of human or natural resources in any form whatsoever for reasons, other than the good of the community, shall be prevented”

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Section 17(2)(d)

Nigeria’s solid mineral legal and regulatory framework sets the tone for its governance. Collectively these laws, policies and institutions influence the trajectory of the development of the sector and the wellbeing of the communities from which they are exploitation. In order to understand the role governance plays in mining related insecurity in Nigeria, it is important to understand its legal and regulatory framework.

3.1 Laws and Institutions Governing Solid Minerals in Nigeria

The fundamental law governing minerals in Nigeria is the nation’s constitution which vests control of all minerals in the Federal Government.⁴⁹ This in turn implies that there is no private ownership of solid minerals in Nigeria. Furthermore, the National Assembly has the exclusive power to make laws with respect to mining in Nigeria.⁵⁰ Effectively, the Constitution gives the Federal Government exclusive power over solid minerals and mining concerns in the country. Furthermore, it forbids the exploitation of any mineral for any reason except for the good of the community.⁵¹

Other laws have been enacted to give expression to these constitutional mandates. Of particular importance is the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act (NMMA) of 2007, which reiterates that ownership of all mineral resources rests in the Federal Government, held in trust for the Nigerian people.⁵²

The Act establishes a licensing regime that encourages private sector participation while mandating environmental and social safeguards. The NMMA 2007 establishes the Ministry and its departments (Mines Inspectorate Department, Mines Environmental and Compliance Department, Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Department) and the Mining Cadastral Office to

⁴⁹ CONSTITUTION OF NIGERIA (1999), S 44(3) (“[T]he entire property in and control of all minerals, mineral oils and natural gas in under or upon any land in Nigeria or in, under or upon the territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria shall vest in the Government of the Federation and shall be managed in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.”).

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Section 17(2)(d)

⁵² Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2007). Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act, 2007 (No. 20). Section 1

oversee the industry.⁵³ In keeping with the constitutional imperative of protecting the interests of the community, it requires Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for mining operations to mitigate ecological harm. It also requires Community Development Agreements (CDAs) for large-scale projects to ensure host communities benefit from mining activities. It also creates fiscal incentives (Tax reliefs, duty exemptions, and repatriation rights) to attract investment to aid the development of the sector.

Following the enactment of the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act, 2007, the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Regulations (2011) was introduced to translate legislative intent into enforceable procedures. These regulations serve as the technical and administrative backbone of Nigeria's solid mineral governance, ensuring that the sector operates with clarity, accountability, and consistency.

The 2011 Regulations provide detailed guidance on:

- Licensing procedures for exploration, mining, and quarrying
- Operational standards for safety, reporting, and record-keeping
- Environmental compliance, including mandatory Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)
- Community engagement, particularly the implementation of Community Development Agreements (CDAs)
- Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for regulatory agencies

The Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) Policy: This policy serves as a framework for formalizing and regulating the activities of small-scale miners, who make up a significant portion of the country's mining workforce but often operate outside legal structures. The policy seeks to integrate ASM into the formal economy by providing guidelines for licensing, environmental management, health and safety standards, and access to finance and technology. By doing so, it aims to reduce the negative impacts of informal mining—such as environmental degradation, child labor, unsafe working conditions, and revenue losses—while enhancing the sector's contribution to local livelihoods and national development. In the broader context of solid mineral governance, the ASM Policy is intended to curb illegal mining, foster community development, and create a pathway for artisanal miners to transition into more sustainable and productive operations under state oversight.

National Policy on Solid Minerals Development The policy provides the overarching framework for the sustainable management of the country's mineral resources, with the goal of diversifying the economy beyond oil dependence and positioning mining as a driver of inclusive growth. The policy sets out strategies for improving geological data, strengthening regulatory institutions, attracting private investment, formalizing artisanal and small-scale mining, and ensuring environmental sustainability. It emphasizes transparency, accountability, and community participation as essential elements of sectoral governance, while also outlining measures to

⁵³ Ibid. Section 16

increase value addition through local processing and beneficiation. By articulating a clear vision for resource management, the policy seeks to maximize the solid minerals sector's contribution to revenue generation, job creation, infrastructure development, and poverty reduction, while safeguarding host communities and ecosystems from the adverse impacts of mining.

Key Institutions

State Mineral Resources and Environmental Management Committees.(MIREMCOs): Since the Minerals and Mining Act vests exclusive ownership and control of all minerals and the Exclusive Economic Zone in the Federal Government, the Act, mindful of the need for collaboration in the governance of the sector by States and other key bodies, offers a viable platform for legitimate participation of states in mining issues in Nigeria through the establishment of State Mineral Resources and Environmental Management Committees.(MIREMCOs)⁵⁴

The functions of the Committee as outlined by the Act are: considering and advising the Minister on issues pertaining to returns of necessary reports having a bearing on grant of mining titles;⁵⁵ considering issues relating to compensation and making necessary recommendations to the Minister of Mines and Steel Development;⁵⁶ discussing, considering and advising the Minister of Mines and Steel Development on matters pertaining to pollution and degradation of any land on which any mineral is being extracted;⁵⁷ considering other matters pertaining to mineral resource development within the particular State as may be referred to them from time to time by the Minister of Mines and Steel Development;⁵⁸ advising the Departments established in accordance with the provisions of the Minerals and Mining Act 2007 for the supervision of mineral exploitation and the implementation of social and environmental protection measures;⁵⁹ advising the Local Government and communities on implementation of programs on environmental protection and sustainable management of mineral resources;⁶⁰ rendering advice and other necessary assistance needed by mineral title holders in their interaction with State and Local Governments, communities, civil institutions and other stakeholders;⁶¹ advising the Minister in resolution of conflicts between, stakeholders;⁶² and advising the Minister of Mines and Steel Development on matters relating to implementation of the Minerals and Mining Act 2007.⁶³

In spite of its importance in creating synergy in the governance of solid minerals, MIREMCOs have had very limited success due to the lack of political will to implement it, and the NMMA's failure to provide directions for its fiscal support.

⁵⁴ Minerals and Mining Act 2007, Cap M12, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, S.19.

⁵⁵ Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004, S.19(3)(a).

⁵⁶ Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004; 19 (3)(b) & S.108.

⁵⁷ Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004, S.19(3)(c).

⁵⁸ Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004, S.19(3)(d).

⁵⁹ Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004, S.19 (3)(e).

⁶⁰ Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004, S.19 (3)(f).

⁶¹ Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004, S.19 (3)(g).

⁶² Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004, S.19 (3)(h).

⁶³ Minerals and Mining Act, Cap M121 LFN 2004, S.19 (3)(i).

Federal Executive Council: The Mining Act recognizes the Federal Executive Council's role in relation to payment of royalty in respect of mining activities. Specifically, the Act subjects the discretionary power of the Minister of Mines and Steel Development to defer payment of royalty on minerals for a specific period to the approval of the Federal Executive Council. The Council also receives an annual report from the Solid Minerals Development Board through the Minister of Mines and Steel Development.

Senate Committee on Solid Minerals: The Senate Committee on solid minerals was established pursuant to Order XIII rule 98 (50) of the Senate Standing Orders 2007 (as amended) and is appointed at the commencement of the life of the Senate. The jurisdiction of the Committee covers explosives; geological surveys and investigation; exploration mines, minerals and quarry (other than petroleum); and consideration and appropriation of annual budget estimates of related institutions.

House of Representatives Committee on Solid Mineral Development: The House Committee on Solid Mineral Development covers the following areas: geological surveys and minerals investigations; exploration, mines, minerals and quarrying; investments in mining activities; explosives; Nigerian Mining Corporation; Coal Corporation of Nigeria; Bitumen projects; Miferugui-Nimba Iron Ore; Uranium project (Guinea and Niger); Bauxite Ore, Guinea; Nigeria Mining and Geo-Science Society; Association of African Geological Surveyors; Commission of Geological Map of the World; International Geological Sciences; International Geological Congress; Commonwealth Committee for Mineral Resources and Geology; Nigerian Uranium Mining Company; and annual budget estimates.

Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission's Solid Minerals Committee: Established by s.153 (1)(n) of the Constitution, the Commission is empowered and tasked with the responsibility of monitoring the accruals to and disbursement of revenue from the Federation Account; periodically reviewing the revenue allocation formulae and principles in operation to ensure conformity with changing realities; advising the Federal and State Governments on fiscal efficiency and methods by which their revenue can be increased; and discharging such other functions as are conferred on the Commission by this Constitution or any Act of the National Assembly.

Significantly, the Commission has a Solid Minerals Committee. The primary responsibility of the Solid Minerals Committee is to ensure that the Federal Government of Nigeria and all its beneficiary governments get equitable deals from foreign partners and all those entities involved in the exploitation of crude oil and solid minerals in Nigeria both onshore and offshore.

The Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI): As Nigeria's implementing body of the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), NEITI conducts regular

audits and independent reports that track revenues, licensing processes, production figures, and environmental and social impacts in the sector. Through these disclosures, NEITI exposes inefficiencies, revenue leakages, and governance gaps that undermine the sector's contribution to national development. It also provides government, civil society, and host communities with reliable data to demand accountability from operators and regulators, while advising policymakers on reforms needed to curb illegal mining, strengthen institutional oversight, and ensure that resource extraction translates into tangible benefits for citizens. In this way, NEITI functions as a watchdog and policy driver, advancing good governance in Nigeria's solid mineral industry.

While this study does not state all laws and institutions that constitute solid mineral governance frameworks in Nigeria, it has outlined the most consequential.

3.2 Gaps and Challenges in the Regulatory Framework

The most pressing issues in Nigeria's mining governance is implementation. The enforcement of extant laws and regulations is often hampered by inadequate resources, lack of political will, and corruption. The result is widespread unregulated and illegal mining activities, undermining the potential benefits of the sector.

This oversight failure aggravates environmental degradation, social conflicts, and safety hazards for miners. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in the sector, particularly in the allocation of mining licenses and revenue distribution engenders the distrust of stakeholders, especially mining host communities, who often feel marginalized and deprived of the benefits derived from resource extraction in their areas.

Moreover, the existing regulatory framework does not adequately address the environmental impacts of mining, particularly in ASM operations. There is a pressing need for stricter enforcement of environmental regulations and rehabilitation obligations for mining sites to mitigate the adverse effects of mining on local ecosystems.

The lack of host community participation in decision-making processes regarding mining operations exacerbates these challenges. Many local communities are excluded from discussions about resource management, leading to conflicts and resentment as they feel sidelined in decisions that directly affect their livelihoods and environment.

Other notable gaps include:

1. Unclear policies on land tenure and inconsistent policies between federal and state governments, particularly on royalties and taxes
2. Lack of reliable geological data and enforceable regulations

3. Weak human capital and community insecurity
4. The act is very federal government-centric, with powers and ownership of mineral rights resting with the federal government, leaving grassroots level governance vulnerable.

3.3 Mapping Stakeholders within the Mining Framework

To understand the landscape of stakeholders involved in Nigeria's mining governance, it is essential to map out the various actors and their roles. Key government entities include the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development (MMSD), the Nigerian Mining Corporation (NMC), and the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI). Regulatory bodies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state mining and environmental agencies also play critical roles in overseeing mining activities and ensuring compliance with environmental standards. The private sector includes a range of mining companies, from large multinational corporations to informal artisanal miners.

Mining host communities are vital stakeholders and are often represented by community leaders and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) advocating for community rights and sustainable practices. A critical platform of members of these communities however is the Federation of Nigerian Mining Host communities. Civil society organizations, such as Global Rights, CISLAC, BudgIT and Transparency International, contribute to advocacy efforts aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in the mining sector. International bodies, including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), also engage in initiatives to support sustainable mining practices and governance reforms.

Miners and mining associations, including Miners Association of Nigeria, informal miner groups, mining companies, international mineral commodities traders, etc.

A collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders, including government entities, local communities, civil society organizations, and the private sector, is essential for promoting sustainable mining practices and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits derived from Nigeria's rich mineral resources. By strengthening the regulatory framework and fostering transparency and accountability, Nigeria can harness its mineral wealth to drive sustainable development and improve the livelihoods of its citizens.

Part Four: Linkages between Illegal Mining and Endemic Insecurity in Nigeria: Exploring Patterns

For decades, Nigeria has faced multidimensional insecurity, much of which has escalated into violence and mass atrocities, resulting in high fatality rates as well as widespread destruction of property and livelihoods. A recent report on the cost of insecurity revealed over 8,000 fatalities from more than 4,000 incidents across the country in 2023 alone.⁶⁴ Although these conflicts are driven by multiple factors, a common thread is the struggle over economic resources, particularly land, water, and mineral resources.⁶⁵

While mineral resource deposits and their exploitation offer immense opportunities for economic growth and societal transformation, resource-driven conflicts - often centered on land and, by extension, mineral deposits-remain prevalent across central and northern Nigeria, and are mirrored by clashes involving pastoralists, farmers, communities, and oil companies in the South-South and Southeast regions.⁶⁶ These conflicts are highly complex, shaped by deep-rooted historical and socio-economic dynamics, which make them both intractable and difficult to address.⁶⁷

In recent years, Nigeria's struggle with terrorism - particularly the persistent insurgency of Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the Northeast, alongside the spread of violent extremist groups and banditry across the North - has further complicated governance of the solid mineral sector, which is already highly prone to conflict. Terrorist groups have increasingly targeted mining areas as alternative revenue streams, extorting operators, taxing artisanal miners, or directly controlling access to mineral deposits to finance their activities. This has intensified insecurity in mineral-rich regions such as Zamfara, Niger, and parts of Kaduna, where illegal mining is intertwined with armed violence, abductions, and mass displacement. The entanglement of terrorism with resource exploitation not only undermines state authority and regulatory oversight but also deepens community vulnerability, fosters criminal networks, and escalates violent competition over land and mineral wealth. As a result, Nigeria's solid mineral sector- rather than serving as a driver of economic growth - has increasingly become both a victim and a catalyst of the country's broader insecurity.

⁶⁴ Ogunyemi, Ifedayo. 2024. [Insecurity: Over 8,000 people killed in Nigeria in 2023—Investigation. January 7.](#)

⁶⁵ Ikelegbe, A. 2005. "The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria." *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 208-234. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156920906775768291>

⁶⁶ Conroy, Stone. 2014. "Land conflicts and lethal violence in Nigeria: Patterns, mapping and evolution (2006-2014)." IFRA-Nigeria Working Papers Series 38. IFRA-Nigeria.

⁶⁷ Gausset, Quentin, Michael Whyte, and Torben Birsch-Thomsen. 2005. *Beyond territory and scarcity: Exploring conflicts over natural resource management*. Nordic Africa Institute.

4.1 Dynamics and Patterns

Opportunistic Markets

While Nigeria is not a major mining destination, there is a wide appetite for the nation's minerals in international markets, including China and the United Arab Emirates. Most minerals harnessed in Nigeria are smuggled out through the nation's porous borders without being beneficiated.

The lack of infrastructure – particularly, energy and transportation disincentivize large mining companies from investing in Nigeria. Filling the gap, artisanal miners meet international demand through informal channels. Of particular interest are precious stones including sapphires and emeralds, and metals such as gold, lead columbite, and more recently, lithium. The illicit export of these minerals which are crudely mined, not beneficiated, have no taxes or royalties paid on them, means that they are sold a lot cheaper than what is obtainable in international formal markets. The buyers therefore aid the illicit nature of these transactions, even when they are aware that these minerals are being sourced from organized criminal groups.

Chinese buyers have been reported to supply mercury to miners in exchange for gold nuggets in Niger, Zamfara and Osun states. They were also implicated in the Zamfara gold mining related lead poisoning that resulted in the death of more than 700, when villagers confirmed that Chinese middlemen and gave them grinding machines that they aided the spread of lead in homesteads.⁶⁸

Unkind Tenants

Pollution from mining activities, combined with the persistent failure to adequately compensate host communities for land appropriated for extraction, has become a major driver of violence in Nigeria. Mining operations often leave behind degraded farmlands, contaminated water sources, and health hazards, stripping communities of their primary sources of livelihood without providing fair restitution or alternative means of survival. This perceived injustice fuels deep resentment toward both the state and mining companies, with communities frequently accusing them of exploitation and neglect. In many cases, frustration has escalated into violent protests, attacks on mining sites, or clashes with security forces, while armed groups and illegal miners exploit these grievances to entrench their presence. The cycle of dispossession, environmental harm, and lack of compensation thus transforms mining zones into hotspots of conflict, where resource wealth generates not development, but distrust and violence.

⁶⁸ Daily Trust. (2010, July 3). Zamfara lead poisoning: The Chinese connection. Daily Trust. <https://dailytrust.com/zamfara-lead-poisoning-the-chinese-connection/>

For instance, Royal Salt's host community in Ishiagu Enyigba community in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State has been up in arms with the company for more than a decade with occasional skirmishes that have required the intervention of state security agents to quell.⁶⁹

The Gold Standard of Terror Financing

On another trajectory, the military offensives that weakened Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Northeast of Nigeria inadvertently drove many of their fighters and splinter factions toward the country's Central and Northwestern regions, where state presence is weaker and vast stretches of mineral-rich land remain poorly regulated. In these areas, displaced terror groups found both sanctuary and opportunity: the thriving but largely informal mining economy provided a ready source of revenue through extortion of artisanal miners, illegal taxation of mining sites, and direct involvement in illicit mineral extraction. This shift not only allowed them to sustain their operations after losing territorial control in the Northeast but also entrenched their presence in regions such as Zamfara and Niger, where gold and other valuable minerals are abundant. By embedding themselves in local mining economies, these groups have transformed natural resource exploitation into a key pillar of their financing model, blurring the line between terrorism, organized crime, and illegal mining, and further destabilizing communities already struggling with poverty and violence.

In November 2020, the Katsina State Government stated that illegal mining is a key driver of armed banditry in Katsina and neighboring states in Northwest Nigeria. Mustapha Bello, the state's Commissioner of Rural Development, explained that bandits use weapons to displace rural communities, gaining access to mineral resources.⁷⁰ Similarly, Olugbenga Ajala, chairman of the Association of Licensed Small-Scale Mining Operators of Nigeria (ALSSMON), reported that terrorism financing through illegal mining is a growing and deeply troubling phenomenon in the country.⁷¹

Recently, there has been concrete evidence linking terror groups to mining operations in the Northwest and North-Central parts of the country. For example, in September 2025, a court in Abuja sentenced Mahmud Muhammad Usman, a leader of the Ansaru terrorist group, to 15 years in prison for illegal mining, a crime used to finance the group's terror activities.⁷²

⁶⁹ The Vanguard (2014, January 16) Tension brews in Ebonyi community over alleged marginalisation by salt company. The Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/01/tension-brews-ebonyi-community-alleged-marginalisation-salt-company/>

⁷⁰ The Vanguard (6 November 2020): Illegal mining cause of armed banditry in North West — Katsina govt. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/11/illegal-mining-cause-of-armed-banditry-in-north-west-katsina-govt/>

⁷¹ HumAngle (September 1, 2021): How Illegal Mining Is Contributing To Local Conflicts In Nigeria. <https://humanglemedia.com/how-illegal-mining-is-contributing-to-local-conflicts-in-nigeria/>

⁷² BBC News Pidgin. (2025, September 11). *Court sentence Ansaru terrorist group suspect Mahmud Usman to 15 years in prison for illegal mining.* [https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cx254v1v4jpo#:~:text=Court%20sentence%20Ansaru%20terrorist%20group%20suspect%20to%2015%20years%20for,\(IED\)%20and%20terrorism%20financing.](https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cx254v1v4jpo#:~:text=Court%20sentence%20Ansaru%20terrorist%20group%20suspect%20to%2015%20years%20for,(IED)%20and%20terrorism%20financing.)

In June 30, 2022, terrorists attacked a mining site at Ajata-Aboki near Shiroro, Niger State, taking over the mine, abducting 4 Chinese miners, and engaging the Nigerian security forces in a gun battle. Seven police officers and several civilians were killed, and four Chinese nationals and some mine workers were kidnapped.⁷³

Shikira, a gold mining host community located in Rafi Local Government area of Niger state was overrun by terror groups that completely displaced the community and took over the mines in 2023. Other communities in Rafi overtaken by terrorists include Kurebe, Farina Kuka, Gussau in Shiroro LGA and Madaka, Hanawanka.

Naughty Girls! : Artisanal Mining, Illicit Weapons, and Women

According to a report by ENACT (2020), artisanal or illegal mining in northern Nigeria is driving two alarming trends. The first is the exchange of illegally mined gold for weapons, and the second is the involvement of women and girls in these illicit activities. The illicit flow of weapons financed by mining has fueled violent local conflicts and rural banditry across the region.⁷⁴

Ogbonnaya (2020) highlights the gender dimension of illegal mining and insecurity. A notable feature of these conflicts is the involvement of women and young girls. In the Northwest, particularly Zamfara State, girls are employed as laborers in illegal mining operations, exposing them to severe lead poisoning, sexual harassment, abuse, and even death.⁷⁵ Women and girls in southern Nigeria have also been victims of similar abuse and fatalities linked to illegal mining.⁷⁶ A 2020 study by the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) corroborates this gendered impact, finding that socio-economic disruptions from illegal mining contribute to drug use, alcoholism, and prostitution among women in mining communities.⁷⁷ According to Women in Mining Nigeria (WIMIN), 23.1% of women in mining communities experience sexual violence, compared to 18.7% in non-mining communities.⁷⁸

The second dimension of women's involvement is as couriers of illegally mined gold, which are exchanged for arms (Maurice Ogbonnaya, 2020). Their dual role as laborers exposed to severe

⁷³ Jazeera, A. (2022, June 30). Gunmen kidnap four Chinese workers in central Nigeria. *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/30/gunmen-kidnap-four-chinese-workers-in-northwest-nigeria>

⁷⁴ Maurice Ogbonnaya (2020): Women and girls in illegal mining in northern Nigeria. ENACT Observer (3 December 2020) <https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/women-and-girls-in-illegal-mining-in-northern-nigeria>. Also see: Maurice Ogbonnaya (2020): Illegal mining and rural banditry in North West Nigeria: Responses, successes and challenges. ENACT Policy Brief Issue 19 | November 2020

⁷⁵ The Guardian Newspaper (25 May 2015): Illegal Miners as Killers. <https://guardian.ng/opinion/illegal-miners-as-killers/>

⁷⁶ Punch Newspaper (12th November 2020): Harvest of death, rape, drug abuse in Osun mining communities. <https://punchng.com/harvest-of-death-rape-drug-abuse-in-osun-mining-communities/>

⁷⁷ Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) (2020): Impact of mining on women, youth and others in selected communities in Nigeria, NEITI Occasional Paper Series, Issue 7, October 2020

⁷⁸ BluePrint Newspaper (30 April 2024): 23.1 percent of women in mining communities experience sexual violence – WIMIN. <https://blueprint.ng/23-1-percent-of-women-in-mining-communities-experience-sexual-violence-wimin/>

risks and as participants in illicit mineral trafficking, underscores the intersection of gender, insecurity, and illegal mining in Nigeria.⁷⁹

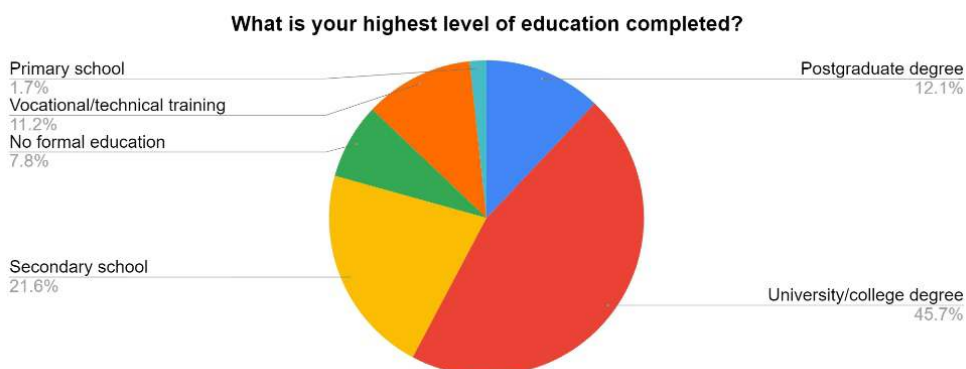
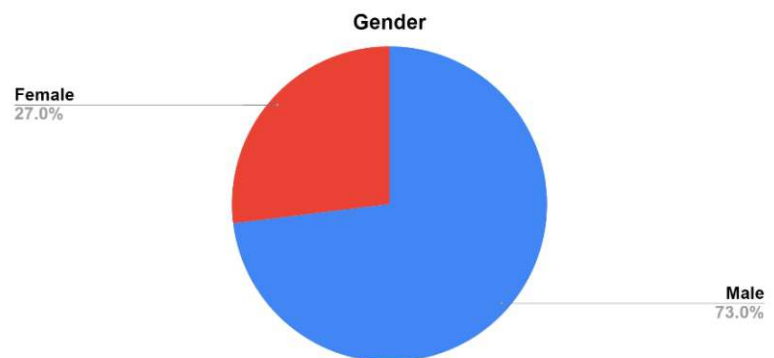
⁷⁹ Maurice Ogbonnaya (2020): Women and girls in illegal mining in northern Nigeria. ENACT Observer (3 December 2020) <https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/women-and-girls-in-illegal-mining-in-northern-nigeria>

Part Five: Data Analysis and Presentation of Field Findings

5.1 Data Analysis

This chapter presents the data analysis of the survey responses from 116 respondents from mining communities across Nigeria. The respondents were administered the questionnaire to gain first hand experience on the impact of artisanal mining in their communities and effort to address the socioeconomic and environmental insecurity caused by artisanal mining.

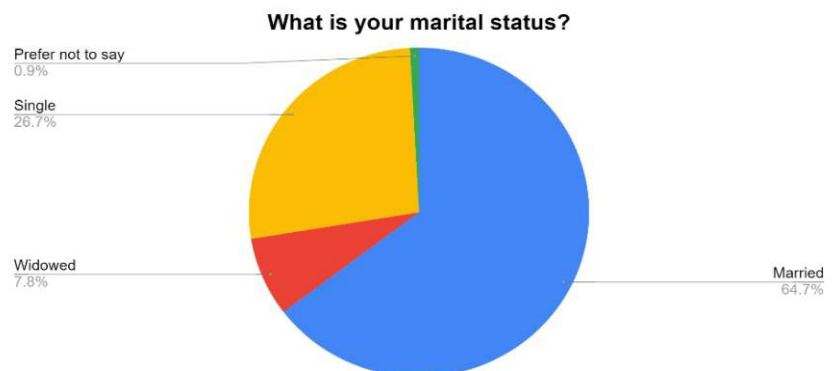
Gender: From the analysis, 73% of the respondents were male adults, while 27% were women. While this can be perceived as gender unbalance, the voices of the surveyed women were further collaborated and amplified in the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and review of media reports and literature that highlight the concerns and perceptions of women.



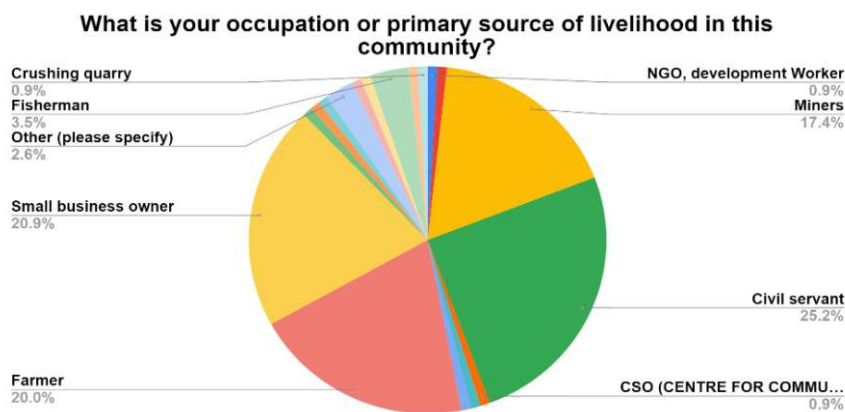
Education: The sampled population are well read, with over 45% of them having university and college degrees. 21.6% of them are secondary school leavers. 12.1 % of

them hold a postgraduate degree, 11.2% have vocational training skills and certification, 1.7% have primary school first school leaving certificate, while 11.2% of them have no formal education.

Marital Status: On their marital status, 64.7% of the sampled respondents are married. This suggests that the majority of the respondents are family oriented and are responsible for providing and managing a family. 26.7% of them are single. While 7.8% are widowed. 0.9% would rather not disclose their marital status.



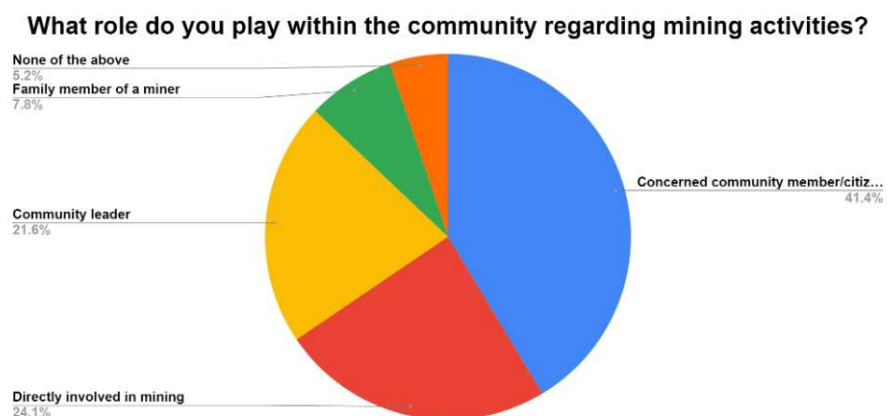
Occupation: The response on the occupational demography is well dispersed across the sample.



25.2% of the sampled respondents from the communities are primarily civil servants, 20.9% of the respondents are small business owners. 20% are farmers, 17.4% are miners, 3.5% are fishermen, 0.9% are primarily into crushing and quarrying, 0.9% work in non-

governmental organizations.

Role in Mining: When asked the roles of the respondents as regards mining, 41.4% of the sample are concerned citizens and community members. 24.1% of the respondents are directly involved in mining. 21.6% of the respondents are community leaders. 7.8% of the samples are family members of miners. 5.2% say they do not play any direct role to mining – somewhat just concerned community members.



Impact of Mining: The respondents were asked about the impact of mining activities on their communities. A majority (51.7%) reported that mining has had a negative impact, while 36.2% acknowledged some positive effects.

Mining-Induced Challenges in Communities: An overwhelming 94.8% of respondents stated that mining activities have triggered a range of challenges, including environmental degradation, health problems, insecurity, and economic deprivation manifested through poverty, poor road networks, lack of basic amenities, and infrastructural decay. Reported cases include the pollution of rivers and wells, respiratory illnesses, miscarriages, drug abuse, deteriorating mental health among children, and heightened community tensions driven by fear of violence. Women highlighted experiences of sexual harassment at mining pits and lamented their exclusion from decision-making processes concerning mining and related social issues. Casualties from mining accidents were also reported.

The influx of foreign and internal migrants has further exacerbated insecurity in host communities. For instance, the ban on mining in states like Zamfara has pushed itinerant miners into Niger, Nasarawa, Osun, and Ondo states, increasing local pressures and tensions. Only 3.4% of respondents indicated that mining in their communities had not caused any of these challenges.

Insights from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), environmentalists, human rights activists, representatives of mining host communities, officials from the Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals, Women in Mining, the Miners Association of Nigeria, and the Federation of Nigerian Mining Host Communities underscored the link between the rise of artisanal or illegal mining and growing insecurity. Data presented by the Federation confirmed that illegal mining is widespread across Nigeria and often leaves a trail of violence. According to CSOs and environmental advocates at the FGDs, mining has done communities “more harm than good.” They noted that mining-induced violence manifests in both direct (violent) and indirect (non-violent) forms, ranging from criminality, banditry, and economic displacement to forced migration, environmental destruction, and adverse health outcomes - psychological, physical, and mental alike.

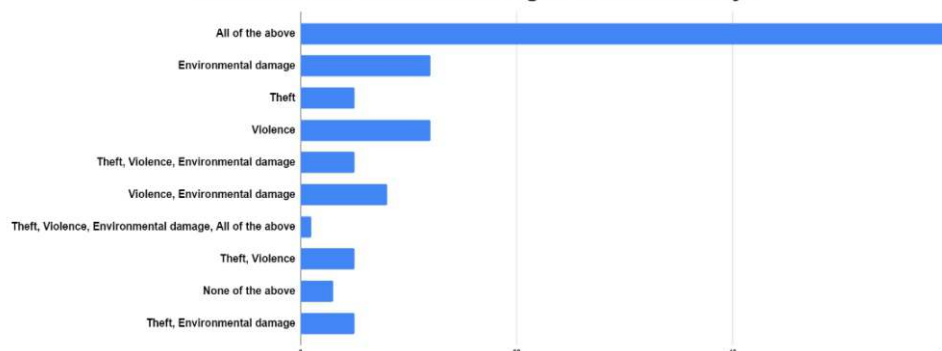
Mining and

Security: Members of sampled communities were asked how mining activities have influenced security dynamics in their areas. A majority,

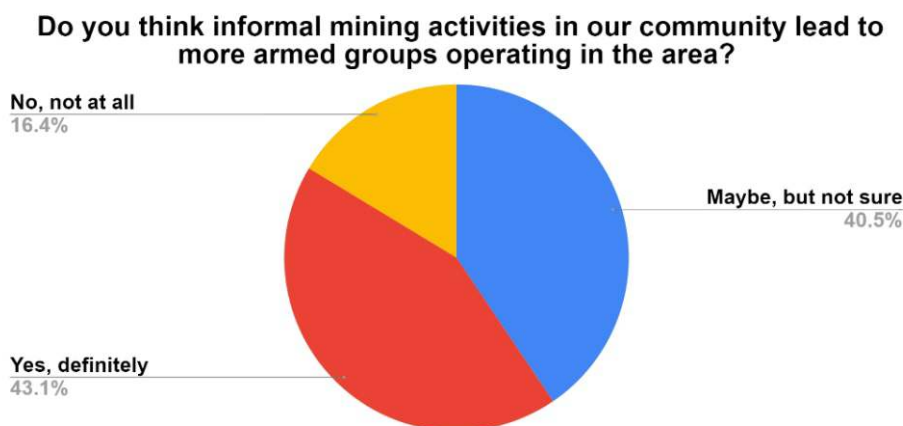
64.7% of respondents, reported that mining has increased insecurity in host communities, while 21.6% stated that mining has decreased insecurity. The latter noted that some mining companies - particularly those owned by state governments - deploy security agents to mining sites to provide protection. Similarly, some foreign mining companies have also been reported to station private security personnel at their sites, though this protection is typically limited to the mining areas rather than the broader communities. Meanwhile, 8.6% of respondents indicated that mining has not produced any significant changes in local security dynamics, and 5.2% remained unsure.

Further, 63.8% of respondents observed a strong connection between rising insecurity and areas of their communities where mining activities are concentrated. Another 30.2% believed such a

Based on your observations, what kinds of security problems get worse because of small-scale or informal mining in our community?

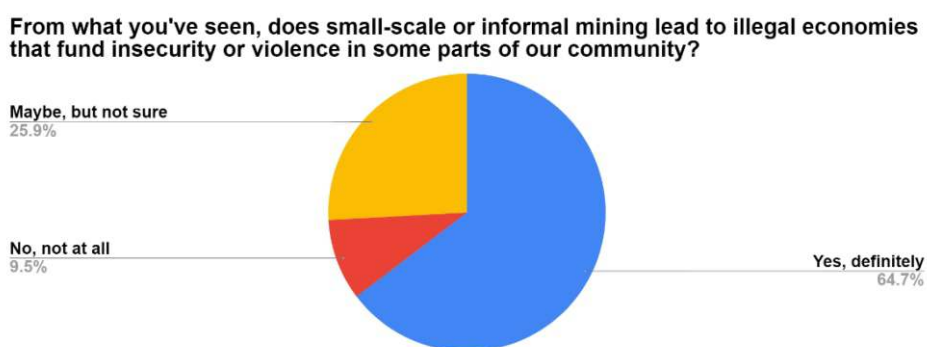


connection might exist, though without sufficient evidence to support their conviction, while 6.0% expressed uncertainty about any link between mining and insecurity.



Illegal mining and armed groups: 43.1% of the community respondents believe that informal mining activities in their communities has led to more armed groups operating in their community. 40.5% of the respondents were rather unsure, while 16.4% of

the community respondents do not agree that informal mining has led to the influx of armed groups into their communities.⁸⁰



Reiterating the response, 64.7% are of the opinion that illegal or informal mining has led to more illegal economies that fund violent insecurities in the communities. 25.9% are not sure of the

causality between informal mining and illegal economics that may be funding violent insecurity in the community, but most likely think it may exist. 9.5% do not agree that illegal or informal mining has led to more illegal economies that fund insecurities in the communities.⁸¹ Mining is a low hanging fruit for terrorist funding.

When asked how informal mining may have aided criminal activities in the communities, 87.7% of the respondents say that informal mining has aided criminal activities as it may be serving as a cover-up for criminal elements, providing financial resources for criminal activities i.e funding

⁸⁰ Vanguard (13 December 2023): [Powerful Nigerians involved in illegal mining, funding banditry, terrorism - Alake](#)

⁸¹ WikiTimes (26 September 2023): [Terrorism Funding: After WikiTimes's Investigation, Niger Govt Profiles Miners](#)

terrorism. Media reports from the government at federal, state and even traditional leaders have attributed the illegal mining activities as sources of terrorist funding.⁸²

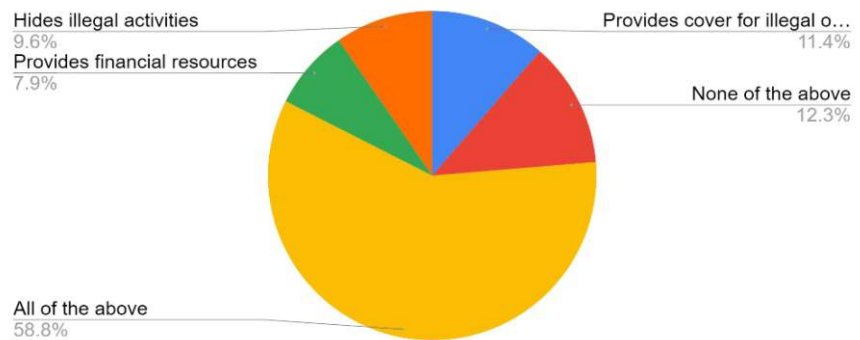
The FDG meeting also reiterated the media reports that foreign mining

companies are also sponsoring bandit and terrorist to displace host communities to allow them easy access to the mining sites, and aid their avoidance to fulfill Community Development Agreement (CDA) and/or carry out mining in more responsible and sustainable ways.⁸³

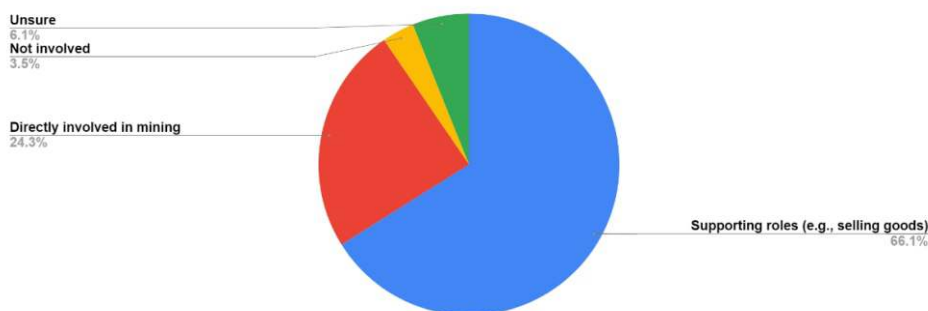
Giving feedback to the FGD meetings, the Federation of Mining Host Community from their observatory noted that a good number of the government Licensed Mining Companies are the ones that engage the illegal miners; they keep the miners in harsh work conditions, do not offer the miners work contracts, offer no safety measure, and then buy the extracted stones/mineral from the miners in very exploitative conditions and prices. The federal government that issues these licenses is very much guilty, hence a regulatory and manpower overhaul in the ministry is needed.

“Wherever there is mining, there is violence. Seems both of them now move together. Wherever there is violence, insecurity increases. Mining activities are spreading at an astronomical level, and this comes along with violent insecurity. This makes mining a very dangerous sector in Nigeria”. – Mrs Tope Olaifa (from the FDG)

How do you think informal mining helps criminals, like those involved in illegal activities, in your community?



What roles do women usually have in mining activities in our community?



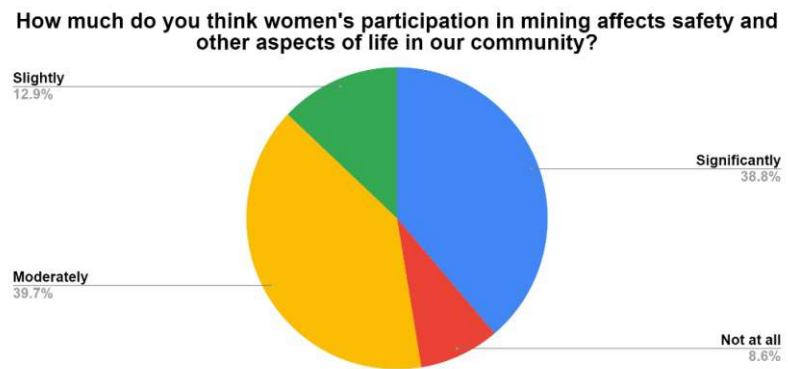
The Role of Women in mining: 24.3% of the respondents say that women are directly involved in mining activities in the communities. 68.1% say that women play more supportive roles to

mining activities i.e providing vendor services to miners i.e selling food, water and drinks to miners. 3.5% say that women are not involved in mining, while 6.1% of the sample are unsure on the involvement of women.

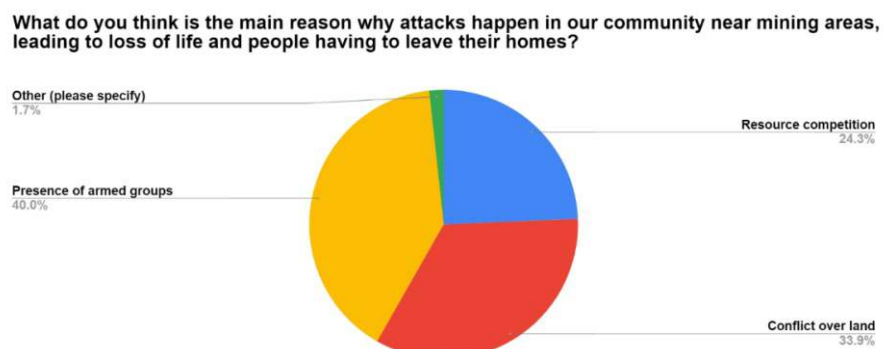
⁸² Punch Newspaper (23 April 2024): [Tinubu blames illegal mining for terrorism funding](#)

⁸³ ADF Magazine (6 February 2024): [Chinese Gold Miners Fuel Insecurity in Nigeria](#)

38.8% of the respondents believe that the role of women in mining has significantly affected the safety and other aspects of community lives. 39.7% of the respondents say the participation of women in mining has affected safety and community lives moderately.



Respondents were asked why they believe mining communities like theirs are attacked and displaced. About 40% attributed the attacks to the presence of armed groups, 33.9% cited land conflicts, 24.3% pointed to competition over resources, and 1.7% mentioned other reasons.

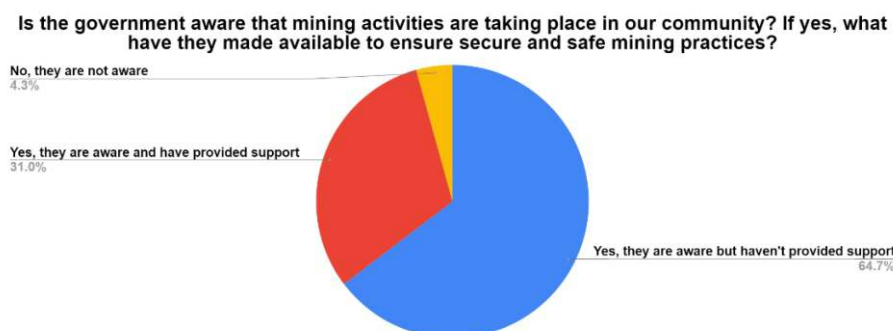


Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) further revealed additional drivers of attacks, conflicts, and displacements in mining communities. These included the poor implementation of Community Development Agreements (CDAs) and the fact that CDAs are often drafted in ways that community members neither fully understand nor find reflective of their development priorities. Participants also pointed to weak or nonexistent consultation of communities in shaping CDAs, as well as the absence of comprehensive state responses to insecurity. The poor enforcement of mining laws and policies was also identified as a gap that fuels violence. Communities themselves were noted to play a role by attracting illegal miners and, in some cases, engaging in illegal mining directly. Furthermore, disputes over who holds the authority to sign CDA agreements have triggered intra-community conflicts and clashes between local leadership groups.

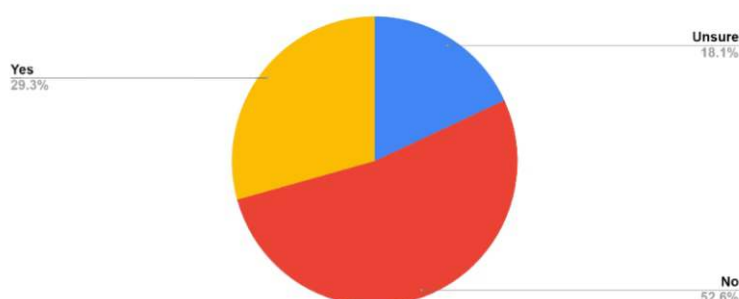
The role of the Government: The respondents were asked if they thought that the government was aware of mining activities in their communities, and if the government is taking actions to ensure secure and safe mining practices. Approximately 64.7% of the respondents say that the government is aware of the mining activities in their communities but are not providing the support needed to ensure safe and secured mining practices. This position also corresponds with feedback from the FDGs that said that though the government, especially the State government

is aware of illegal mining activities, their response to arrest the issue has been rather superficial and not sustainable.

31% of the respondents say that the government is aware of the mining activities, and are providing the needed support, while 4.3% say the government is not aware of the mining activities.



Have the state/federal government made ample surveillance and security provisions to monitor the mining sites in our community?

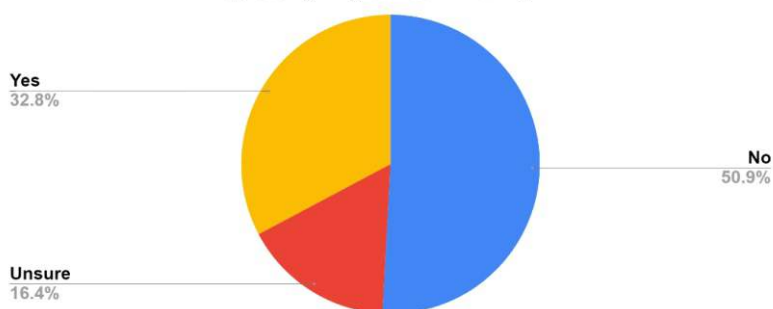


When asked if the government has provided surveillance and security for mining sites in the communities, 52.6% of the sample responded NO. 29.3% of the respondents said that the government has surveillance and security on the sites, while 18.1% were unsure about government provision of security and monitoring.

50.9% of the sampled respondents say they have no dedicated means of communication provided by the government to enable the community and miners to share challenges and problems speedily from their communities.

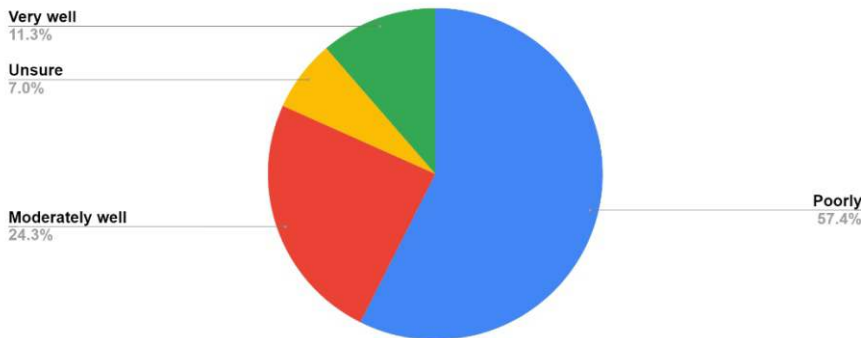
32.8% say such communication channels exist. While 15.4% are not sure if such provision has been made.

Are there means of communication provided by the government to enable communities and miners to share challenges and problems speedily in your community?



Regardless of the provision of a proper communication channel, which more than half of the respondents already say do not exist, 57.4% say the government's communication with the community regarding mining insecurity is very poor. 24.3% rate the government's communication

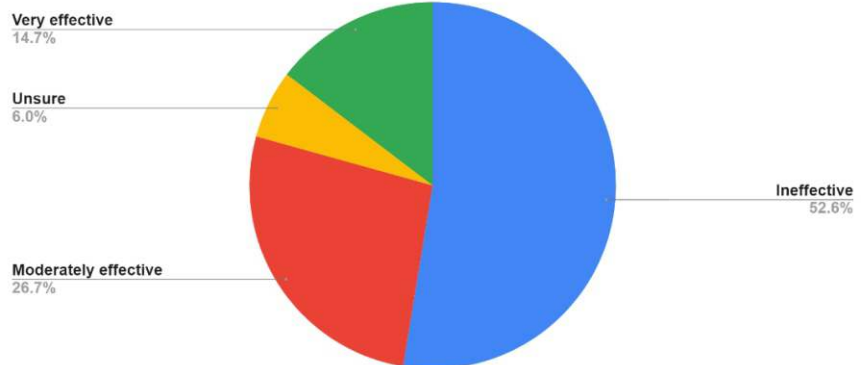
How well do you feel the government communicates with the community regarding mining insecurity?



with the community on mining insecurity to be moderate, while 11.3% rate it to be very well. 7% are unsure of the communication regarding insecurity.

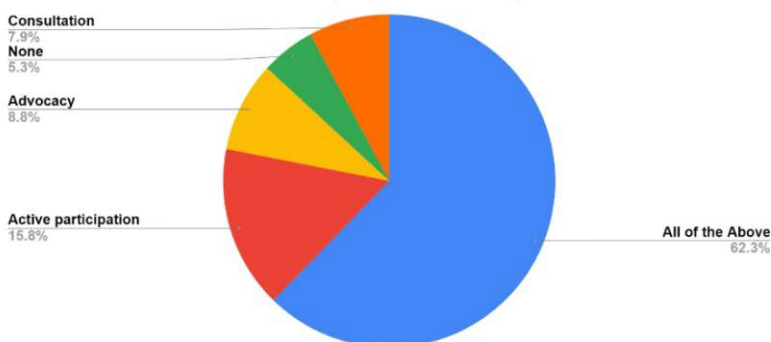
How is the government responding to the challenges and problems that emanate from the mining communities? More than half of the respondents, approximately 52.6% of the respondents, say that the government response has been very ineffective. 26.7% think the government's response is moderately effective, like on average. 14.7% think that the government response to their challenges is very effective, while 6% are unsure on the level of government response.

How effective is the government in responding to challenges and problems from the mining communities and mining sites in your community?



response is moderately effective, like on average. 14.7% think that the government response to their challenges is very effective, while 6% are unsure on the level of government response.

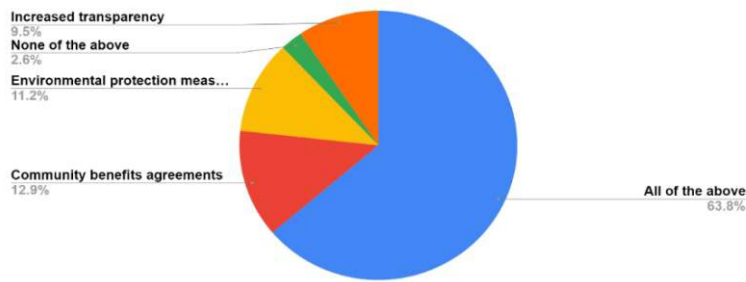
What role do you think community members should play regarding mining insecurity in the community?



94.7% of the respondents believe that the respondents should play a more active role with regards to mining insecurity in their communities. These include consultation, advocacy and active participation in addressing the mining insecurity. 5.3% of the respondents did not respond to the role of the community.

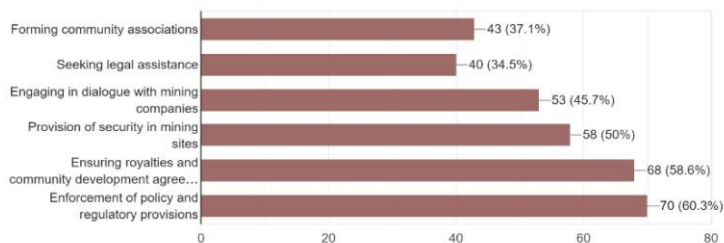
the role of the community.

In your opinion, what are the most effective strategies for improving the relationship between the community and mining companies to addressing the insecurity caused by mining?



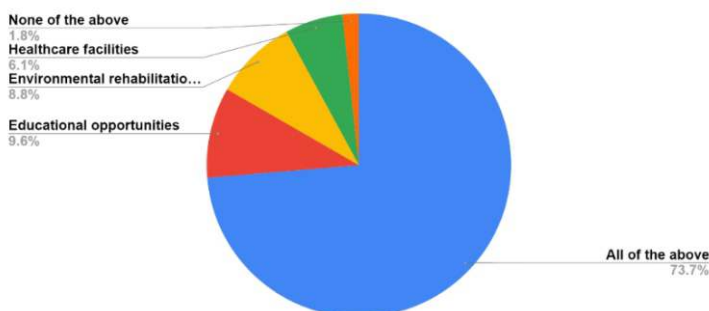
companies and host communities to address insecurities caused by mining.

How do you think the community can better organize to address the challenges posed by mining insecurity? Please select the 3 most relevant solutions.
116 responses



Other recommendations include, formation of associations, providing security for mining sites, engaging in dialogues with mining companies and taking litigate actions and assistance. ,

What support or resources do you think the community needs to mitigate the negative impacts of mining activities?



community members.

Respondent recommendations:

The sampled respondents considered that increased transparency, ensuring environmental protection measures and fulfilling community agreements would be effective strategies for improving the relationship between the mining

In advising the communities on ways to better organize to address the challenges posed by mining insecurity, 60.3% of them recommended the enforcement of policy and regulatory provisions, 58.6% say ensuring royalties and community development agreements are implemented.

To mitigate the negative impact of mining activities, the respondents call for more healthcare facilities, environmental rehabilitation, education and skills opportunities as well as alternative livelihood for the

5.2 Presentation of Field Findings

5.2.1 Field Report from Two (2) Locations in Cross River State

By Samuel Edet (Submitted: 15/05/2024)



The report details findings from a two-day field trip to Ifumkpa and Umai communities in Akamkpa and Biase Local Government Areas. The trip, conducted on May 9-10, 2024, aimed to gather community perspectives on mining activities and their link to community security dynamics. The research team included the principal researcher and two local contacts. Data was collected through observations and a questionnaire survey.

Ifumkpa, Akamkpa

- **Location and Accessibility:** Remote and underdeveloped, accessible via a rugged, muddied terrain.
- **Mining Activities:** Predominantly illicit gold mining which attracts foreign miners.
- **Community Dynamics:** Youths dominate illicit mining but conceal the true nature of activities. There is significant mistrust and fear among community members.
- **Environmental and Security Impact:** Mining has led to severe environmental degradation and increased insecurity. The community chief and youths are in conflict over these issues.
- **Economic Impact:** Mining benefits criminals and armed groups more than the community.
- **Insecurity and Violence:**

- ✖ Illicit miners, causing significant security concerns, have overwhelmed the community.
- ✖ Youths in the community are involved in illicit mining and are in conflict with community leadership.
- ✖ There is a mistrust of external parties due to fear of exposure and loss of their illicit activities.
- ✖ In February 2024, illegal miners clashed with a combined team of Nigerian Army personnel and forest rangers, resulting in arrests.

□ **Casualties:** The report does not specify any casualties directly in Ifumkpa.

Umai, Biase

- **Location and Accessibility:** Rural, with more structured and legal mining activities.
- **Mining Activities:** Operated by AAY Company and Ephraim Keys, with heavy security presence to prevent illicit mining.
- **Community Dynamics:** Mining has led to economic growth but also environmental degradation and gender disparities.
- **Environmental and Security Impact:** Legal mining still results in environmental damage, including landslides. Security is maintained through collaboration with the army.
- **Gender Dynamics:** Women are excluded from mining activities, limited to peripheral roles.
- **Insecurity and Violence:**
 - ✖ The community has a heavy security presence to prevent illicit mining and ensure controlled access to the mining sites.
 - ✖ The presence of soldiers is designed to maintain security and prevent accidents and fatalities at the mining site.
- **Casualties:** The community experienced environmental disasters, such as landslides in 2022 and 2024, resulting in three casualties.

Discussion of Findings

- **Nature of Mining:** Ifumkpa's mining is largely illicit and unregulated, causing significant security concerns. In contrast, Umai has legal, regulated mining operations.
- **Community Response:** Ifumkpa struggles with negative impacts and mistrust, while Umai shows a more collaborative and structured approach.
- **Gender Dynamics:** Both communities exhibit gender disparities in mining activities.

- **Security Dynamics:** Ifumkpa lacks formal security, making it more vulnerable, whereas Umai has a structured security presence to regulate mining.

The report highlights the contrasting realities of mining in rural communities, with significant differences in legality, community response, and security dynamics between Ifumkpa and Umai.

5.2.2 Field Report from Thirteen (13) Locations in Zamfara State

By Adamu Abubakar Kotorkoshi (May 19-28, 2024)

The field research aimed to investigate how mining activities influence security dynamics in Zamfara State, North-West Nigeria, focusing on challenges and concerns faced by affected communities. The research involved interviews and surveys across five Local Government Areas (LGAs).

Activities

- **Scope:** Covered 13 locations in five LGAs in Zamfara State (Anka, Talata Mafara, Bukkuyum, Gummi, and Maru LGAs).
- **Interviews:** Conducted six interviews with community leaders, civil servants, miners, and representatives from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).
- **Survey Responses:** Collected 22 responses via questionnaires from various stakeholders.

General Findings

- **Economic Impact:** Majority of respondents, primarily farmers and small business owners, reported negative impacts on their livelihoods due to mining-related insecurity.
- **Security Dynamics:** Mining activities are strongly linked to increased insecurity, influencing the formation and operation of armed groups.
- **Health and Environmental Challenges:** Communities face multifaceted challenges including health risks, economic instability, and environmental degradation.
- **Government and Corporate Role:** Mining companies lack in developing infrastructure and fulfilling corporate social responsibilities. The government is aware of mining activities but does not provide adequate support or security mechanisms.
- **Informal Mining:** Artisanal mining contributes to criminal financing and lacks proper government monitoring, leading to increased insecurity.
- **Gender Dynamics:** Women are both directly and indirectly involved in mining activities.

- **Communication Issues:** There is a lack of proper communication channels between the government and miners, hindering problem-solving efforts.
- **Community Role:** Respondents believe that community members can actively address mining insecurity through advocacy, consultation, and participation. However, they need support and resources to mitigate negative impacts.

- **Insecurity and Violence**
 - ✖ **Widespread Insecurity:** Mining activities have led to the formation of armed groups and increased criminal activities.
 - ✖ **Government Inaction:** The government does not provide support or security mechanisms to prevent violent conflicts in mining communities.
 - ✖ **Porous Borders:** Poor monitoring and porous borders facilitate illegal mining and associated criminal activities.
- **Casualties:** The report does not specify any direct casualties but highlights the significant impact of insecurity and violence on community well-being and stability.

General Challenges

- **Accessibility:** Difficulty accessing some locations due to insecurity and poor mobile network coverage.



Miner from Sauna community in Maru LGA



Miner from Jabaka community in Maru LGA



Mining site at Gemawa in Talata Mafara LGA



Mining Site at Yar-Galma in Bukkuyum LGA



Mining site along Bingi in Maru LGA



Zamfara Emergency Management Agency



District head of Bagega community-Anka LGA



Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs



Ministry of Environment and Solid Minerals –Zamfara State.



Village head of Sauna community-Talata Mafara LGA



District head of Jabaka community in Maru LGA



District head of Nasarawa Kifi community-Gummi LGA

5.2.3 Field Report On Mining And Endemic Insecurity from Four (4) Locations In Ebonyi State

By Dr. Kelechi Okezie



The field investigation was conducted in four (4) locations across Ebonyi State, including Ikwo (Agalegu), Ivo (Ishiagu), Afikpo (Akpoha), Ohaukwu (Effium), and Ishielu (Nkalagu). These areas are rich in solid minerals and are major hubs for both licensed and artisanal mining activities.

Accessibility: While some urban areas are relatively accessible, many rural mining sites are difficult to reach due to poor road networks and challenging terrain. This impacts the ability to conduct regular monitoring and enforcement of regulations.

Mining Activities

- **Minerals:** Ebonyi State boasts a wealth of solid minerals such as lead, zinc, limestone, marble, copper, kaolin, and granite. These resources attract both licensed mining companies and artisanal miners.
- **Participants:** Licensed mining companies like Patriot are involved in extracting minerals, but a significant portion of the mining activities is carried out by artisanal miners. These miners often operate informally and sell their products to international markets like India and China through middlemen, due to non-functional local buying centers.

Community Dynamics

- **Impact:** Mining activities have profound impacts on local communities. The influx of miners and the environmental degradation caused by mining disrupt traditional livelihoods, leading to social and economic instability.

- Involvement: Community members, including local youths, are heavily involved in mining, either directly or indirectly. This involvement can lead to tensions and conflicts, especially over resource distribution and environmental damage.

Environmental and Security Impact

- Environmental Degradation: The environmental impact of mining is severe. Activities have led to land degradation, deforestation, and soil pollution. Water sources are often contaminated by mining discharges and runoffs, resulting in polluted drinking water and adverse health effects.
- Security: The presence of mining activities has exacerbated insecurity issues. The competition for resources has led to violent conflicts and the formation of armed groups. These groups often clash over control of mining sites and the profits from mining activities.

Economic Impact

- Poverty: Despite the wealth of natural resources, most host communities remain impoverished. The economic benefits of mining are unevenly distributed, and many locals see little improvement in their living conditions.
- Social Amenities: Basic social amenities are lacking in many mining communities. There are few schools, hospitals, or access to clean water, and the road infrastructure is often poor. Women, in particular, suffer from the loss of agricultural lands and are pushed into low-paying menial jobs or even prostitution to survive.

Security Dynamics

- Security Agents: The deployment of armed security agents in mining areas has led to numerous reports of human rights abuses. Community members have reported cases of brutality, intimidation, unlawful detention, and even deaths at the hands of these agents.
- Inter-communal Crisis: Mining activities have intensified existing inter-communal tensions. In Ohaukwu LGA, the discovery of minerals has fueled a three-year conflict between the Ezza and Effium communities.

Health and Environmental Challenges

- Health Issues: The health impacts of mining are significant. Community members suffer from respiratory diseases like pulmonary tract infections and pneumonia, skin diseases, and other health issues due to exposure to harmful minerals like lead and zinc. These exposures can lead to serious conditions such as cancer and infertility.

- Pollution: Water sources are frequently contaminated, causing widespread health problems. The air quality is also poor in mining areas due to dust and emissions from mining operations.

Government and Corporate Role

- Government Oversight: The Ministry of Solid Minerals Community Development is responsible for overseeing mining activities and ensuring compliance with community development agreements (CDAs). However, enforcement is often weak.
- Challenges: The government's focus is primarily on licensed miners, who are subject to multiple taxations. The activities of artisanal and illegal miners receive less attention, resulting in a lack of regulation and support for these groups.
- Federal Mines Office: This office is under-resourced, lacking both the personnel and financial support needed to enforce mining laws and regulations effectively.
- Vigilante Group: The state-established local vigilante group has limited influence in rural areas where most mining activities occur. Their presence is mostly felt in urban areas, leaving rural mining communities vulnerable to crime and insecurity.

Informal Mining

- Artisanal Mining: Artisanal mining is widespread and largely unregulated. These miners operate with little oversight, leading to significant environmental damage and increased security risks.
- Arms Procurement: To protect their interests, artisanal miners often acquire arms. This has led to the formation of armed groups that engage in criminal activities, further destabilizing the region.

Gender Dynamics

- Women's Roles: Women in mining communities are often relegated to support roles, such as sorting, loading, washing, and providing ancillary services like selling food and drinks. They have limited opportunities for advancement and often face exploitation.
- Exploitation: Women in these communities are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and gender-based violence. Many cases go unreported due to stigma and fear of retaliation.

Communication Issues

- **Awareness:** There is a lack of awareness among community members about their rights and the mechanisms available for addressing grievances. Many do not know how to report human rights violations or seek redress.
- **CSO Involvement:** Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in raising awareness and building capacity among community members. Their efforts have helped empower communities to better understand their rights and advocate for themselves.
- **Empowerment:** There is a need for greater empowerment and education of community members regarding their rights under the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act (NMMA) 2007 and the 2011 mining regulations.
- **Dialogue:** Increased dialogue and partnership between the government, mining operators, and communities are essential to address insecurity and ensure compliance with CDAs.
- **Training:** Continuous training is needed to help community members understand and address the security challenges associated with mining and to protect their environment.

Insecurity and Violence

- ✖ **Conflict:** Mining activities have led to increased insecurity and violent conflicts. The presence of armed groups and the competition for resources have destabilized many communities.
- ✖ **Incidents:** Specific incidents, such as the killing of a youth by security agents in Ikwo, highlight the volatile nature of the situation. Resource competition and land conflicts often lead to violence and loss of life.

Casualties

- ✖ **Loss of Lives:** There have been numerous casualties due to mining-related violence. Attacks and conflicts over mining resources, such as those in Ameka, have resulted in significant loss of lives and properties. The ongoing conflict between the Ezza and Effium communities is a stark example of the deadly consequences of mining-related disputes.

5.2.4 Field Report on Mining and Endemic Insecurity from Six (6) Locations in Osun State

Location and Accessibility: The survey was conducted in six gold mining communities in Osun State: Idominasi, Idoka, Oora, Odo-Ijesa, Iperindo, and Itagunmodi. These locations are accessible via major roads, including the Osogbo-Ilesa-Ikirun and Ilesa-Ikirun roads. However, security concerns within these communities may affect ease of access and participation in the research.

Mining Activities: The communities are engaged in both licensed and unlicensed gold mining activities. The presence of mining companies has created job opportunities for residents;

however, artisanal and informal mining practices dominate, often leading to environmental degradation and security challenges.

Community Dynamics: The residents of these communities are primarily crop and livestock farmers with deep-rooted ties to their land. Over time, many farmers have lost their agricultural land to mining activities, leading to a reliance on mining for income. Community leaders, local farmers, and civil society organizations (CSOs) participated in the research, although many declined to be recorded due to security concerns.

Environmental and Security Impact: Mining activities have led to significant environmental degradation, including land degradation, water pollution, and deforestation. This has raised concerns among residents about the long-term sustainability of their environment and livelihoods. The increased influx of miners and related activities has also heightened insecurity, as competition for resources can lead to conflicts within and between communities.

Economic Impact: While mining activities provide some economic benefits through job creation, many residents express concerns about economic disparity and instability. The economic benefits do not appear to equitably reach all community members, leading to grievances regarding land loss without compensation and a lack of sustainable development initiatives in mining host communities.

Security Dynamics: Insecurity is prevalent in these communities, largely due to competition over mining resources and the presence of armed groups linked to informal mining activities. Residents reported intimidation, violence, and criminal activities associated with mining, which further destabilizes community safety.

Health and Environmental Challenges: Community members have raised concerns about health impacts associated with mining, including exposure to toxic minerals, respiratory issues, and waterborne diseases due to pollution. The lack of effective environmental regulations exacerbates these health challenges, placing vulnerable populations at risk.

Government and Corporate Role: Government oversight appears to be limited, with a focus on licensed mining companies. However, the enforcement of regulations related to environmental protection and community rights is inadequate. The respondents express a need for more robust government intervention to ensure compliance and accountability among mining operators.

Informal Mining: Informal mining is a significant aspect of the mining landscape in Osun State, often operating outside the purview of government regulation. This sector contributes to insecurity, environmental degradation, and conflicts between local communities and miners.

Gender Dynamics: While both men and women are involved in mining activities, women often face economic marginalization. Their roles may be limited to support activities such as sorting and selling goods, leading to increased vulnerability and gender-based violence within mining contexts.

Communication Issues: Communication between community members, mining operators, and government officials is often lacking, leading to misunderstandings and unaddressed grievances.

The sensitivity of mining activities complicates open dialogue, as many respondents were reluctant to share information for fear of repercussions.

Community Role: The community's involvement in decision-making processes related to mining is minimal. Residents expressed a desire for greater participation and empowerment to advocate for their rights and address challenges associated with mining activities.

Insecurity and Violence: The presence of armed groups and the competition for mining resources have led to increased violence in the communities. Reports of intimidation, conflict, and even fatalities related to mining disputes underscore the urgent need for enhanced security measures.

Casualties: While specific casualty figures were not disclosed due to the sensitivity of the topic, respondents acknowledged instances of violence linked to mining disputes. The impact of insecurity on community safety and cohesion remains a significant concern.



Part Six: Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1 Conclusion

Illegal and unregulated mining in Nigeria are fueling widespread insecurity and undermining the country's socio-economic stability. The nexus between illegal mining and insecurity is complex, and involves government actors, local communities, foreign nationals, and organized crime networks. As these activities proliferate, they drive violence, environmental degradation, and socio-political unrest across the country. The involvement of foreign actors - particularly from China - has further compounded the crisis, with widespread allegations of collusion with political elites, local criminals, and complicity in funding terrorism. This underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to address both the immediate and structural causes of illegal mining and its associated security threats.

This survey on the relationship between illegal mining and insecurity in Nigeria reveals deep-rooted governance failures. Weak regulation, corruption, and inadequate enforcement mechanisms have enabled illegal mining to flourish at the expense of local communities, national security, and environmental sustainability. Organized crime networks and foreign actors exploit Nigeria's mineral wealth while intensifying violence and instability.

The federal government's response has been inconsistent, and, in many ways, has inadvertently contributed to the escalation of conflict. Several factors explain this trend:

- ❑ Weak enforcement of mining regulations: Despite comprehensive laws, enforcement remains inadequate due to corruption, political interference, and limited resources, enabling illegal mining to thrive.
- ❑ Exclusion of local communities: Communities are often left out of decision-making, fueling resentment and conflict as they see little benefit from resource extraction.
- ❑ Contradictions in legal frameworks: The 1999 Constitution vests ownership and control of mineral resources in the federal government, creating tension with state governments unwilling to police resources they do not control.
- ❑ Failure to address root causes: Poverty, unemployment, and poor service delivery continue to drive individuals toward illegal mining.
- ❑ Poor coordination with states: Federal and state governments rarely collaborate effectively, undermining collective responses to insecurity and governance gaps.

State governments, for their part, play a contradictory role. On one hand, some are complicit, offering protection and political cover to sponsors of illegal mining - often politically connected individuals. On the other hand, certain states, such as Zamfara state, have banned all mining activities in response to escalating insecurity. However, state governments frequently contest federal bans, arguing that exclusive federal control over mineral resources under the constitution is unconstitutional and denies them rightful authority. This legal disconnect perpetuates weak regulation, conflict, and governance failures.

Ultimately, while some states enable illegal mining through political patronage, others resist it due to its destabilizing impact. Yet the underlying constitutional and structural issues - rooted in the federal government's exclusive control of mineral resources - remain unresolved.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated, transparent, and inclusive strategy that brings together federal and state governments, local communities, and international partners. Strengthening regulatory frameworks, tackling corruption, resolving constitutional ambiguities, and addressing the root socio-economic drivers of insecurity are critical to ensuring that Nigeria's mineral wealth contributes to development rather than conflict.

6.2 Recommendation

By implementing the following recommendations, Nigeria can begin to address the challenges posed by illegal mining and work toward a more secure, sustainable, and inclusive mining sector that benefits all stakeholders.

- **Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks:** Revise and rigorously enforce mining laws to close loopholes that enable illegal mining. This should include mandatory technical and infrastructural audits of companies applying for licenses, ensuring they demonstrate the capacity and readiness to conduct sustainable mining rather than relying on informal artisanal miners.
- **Enhance Community Engagement:** Involve host communities in decision-making processes related to the approval of mining licenses and ongoing operations. This will help protect community rights, foster trust, and ensure that resource extraction contributes to local development and remediation.
- **Increase Funding for Mining Regulation:** Allocate greater resources to the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development to enhance monitoring and oversight. Investments in advanced ICT tools such as drones and remote monitoring systems should be prioritized to improve efficiency.
- **Strengthen the NSCDC Task Force Against Illegal Mining:** Properly equip and empower the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) task force to combat illegal mining. This task force should integrate law enforcement agencies, regulatory bodies, and local vigilante groups to improve coordination in mining communities.
- **Promote Sustainable Artisanal Mining:** Support the formalization of artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) through legal recognition, training, and access to resources. This will help mitigate the harmful impacts of illegal mining while offering livelihoods within a regulated framework.
- **Implement Comprehensive Environmental Regulations:** Enforce strict environmental standards to address pollution and land degradation caused by mining. Stronger collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Environmental Impact Assessment (ESIA) Department, and NESREA will be essential.

- **Foster International Cooperation:** Strengthen collaboration with international partners to share intelligence and best practices for addressing illegal mining and its links to organized crime and terrorism.
- **Conduct Public Awareness Campaigns and Support Alternative Livelihoods:** Federal, state, and local governments, in partnership with civil society, should launch campaigns to educate communities about the dangers of illegal mining, including its effects on security, health, and the environment. These campaigns must be coupled with concrete support for alternative livelihoods to reduce dependence on illegal mining.
- **Improve Data Collection and Research:** Invest in systematic research and data collection on illegal mining, including its impacts and the demographics of those involved. This evidence base will better inform policy and targeted interventions.
- **Strengthen Law Enforcement Training:** Provide specialized training for law enforcement personnel, including Mining Marshals Corps from the NSCDC, to build the expertise needed to effectively combat illegal mining and its associated security threats.
- **Enhance National Security for Critical Minerals and Promote Climate-Smart Mining:** Establish a strategic framework to safeguard critical mineral resources—such as gold, lithium, and rare earth elements—that are vital for national security and economic development. Deploy specialized security units and intelligence-led monitoring to protect these resources from illegal exploitation and armed group interference. Simultaneously, integrate climate-smart mining practices that minimize environmental degradation, reduce carbon emissions, and promote sustainable land and water management. Incentivize mining companies to adopt renewable energy, efficient water usage, and low-impact extraction technologies, ensuring that mineral development supports both national security and climate resilience goals.



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