



Social Network

From Me To You

Regina Nanaaba, Accra — February 13 was your birthday girl. Happy birthday with much love from all your friends. May God grant you peace and love and may all expectations this year come to pass speedily. Bless and enjoy your day. — *Your friends.*

O. P. and P. K — Your birthday was few days back bro, and it has always been special and memorable to have you here. Years ago, God gave dad and mum a perfect time for us to be born and here we are today celebrating this special day together again. We thank the good Lord for how far He has brought us.

May we be blessings to our family and the world at large. Happy birthday to us — *Guess who?*

Funeral announcements

Theresa Baidoe-Ansah

The burial service for Theresa Baidoe-Ansah (Nee Stork) takes place at the Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Cathedral, Takoradi, today. The body will be laid-in-state from 6:30a.m. to 10a.m. Funeral rites follow at the Takoradi Sports Club after burial. Memorial and Thanksgiving service at the same church on February 16, 2020 at 9a.m. Final funeral rites follow at the church grounds.

She was the wife of Mr Joe Baidoe-Ansah, former Minister of Trade and MP for Effia-Kwesimintsim/Kwesimintsim.

Regina Adzo Hukporti-Agboba

The funeral of Mad. Regina Adzo Hukporti-Agboba, 82, will take place at Klikor-Ablorgame on Saturday, February 22, 2020 from 8am. Interment follows at the Klikor-Ablorgame cemetery. Final funeral rites will be at the same place.

Memorial and Thanksgiving Service will be at the Christ Embassy Church Auditorium on Sunday, February 23, 2020. She was the mother of C/Supt. Dr. Frank K. Hukporti, the Director of Bands of the Ghana Police Service.

Nana Kofi Obiri Egyir II

Burial service for Nana Kofi Obiri Egyir II, MOV, aka Godfried Ernest Birikorang Awuku, Sanaaheh of Oguaa Traditional Area, takes place at the Cape Coast Stadium, Abura, today to be followed by reception at the same venue after his interment.

He was the husband of Mrs Margaret Awuku and father of Madam Beatrice Awuku, Mr G.E.B. Awuku, Rita, George, Michael, Sammy, Gloria and Nana Awuku, Mrs Glenda B.B. Acquaye, Mr Anthony Awuku, Mrs Margaret Pearl Amamoo, Mr Alexander Awuku and Dr Mrs Aimee Okai.

Stopping 'galamsey': why not a local offensive against a local problem?

COULD it be that the solution to the hydra-headed 'galamsey' menace lies in the hands of local administrations? If President Nana Akufo-Addo has sworn to stop galamsey at all costs, what about the local administrations in the galamsey areas?

What is the commitment of the leaders in the affected areas to the anti-galamsey offensive?

Since President Nana Akufo-Addo memorably put his presidency on the line in his determination to stop galamsey, shouldn't the people heading the galamsey districts also be required to put their job on the line? This is an argument being canvassed, and I think it makes sense.

However, this, of course raises the obvious question, that if the local assemblies could do it why haven't they?

Maybe it's because they had no compelling reason to see it as a fight needing their personal commitment;

because nobody had threatened them that they would be sacked if they were not able to stop the illegal mining.

'Galamsey' a coinage for illegal mining used to be a word usually uttered in jest, but in recent times it has become a word synonymous with distress, all the anti-social outcomes associated with gold-fever; the mad rush to dig for gold regardless of the devastation caused to the community and the environment.

It seems that every blessed day the 'g' word is in the headlines, because of the staggering recalcitrance of the galamseyers. They apparently believe that illegal gold mining is the only way they can earn a living, regardless of the dangers they themselves encounter. Arrests and even tragic death underground have become regular news items.

But, as indicated, an idea that seems extremely practical has come to my attention and I see it as a possible feasible strategy in the 'g' fight. I heard it last Sunday, February 9, on Radio Ghana. The report is abridged as follows:

The Director of Research and Policy at the Artisanal and Small Scale Mining Africa Network, ASMAN, Edward Akuoko, has expressed cynicism about the Government's strategy on fighting illegal mining.

He said there is a need to put the District Chief Executives (DCEs) in charge of the fight against galamsey.

In an interview with Radio Ghana, Mr Akuoko said the Government should allocate all the resources needed in the fight to the district assemblies as the fight should be done at the local level.

The current strategy adopted by the Government will not succeed as long as mining remains a source of livelihood. Therefore, the Inter Ministerial Committee should focus on the alternative livelihood project which is to offer alternative sources of income for illegal miners, Mr Akuoko noted.

The work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining and that of Operation Vanguard, a military and police task force, have also come under scrutiny.

In another interview, with 3FM, Mr Akuoko expressed concern about the effectiveness of the strategy being used by the teams: "You have Galamstop and Vanguard team stationed at Tarkwa. If there is an infraction in Enchi, the response time will be problematic. By the time Galamstop moves from Tarkwa to Enchi, the various road blocks by the police will inform them and they will flee."

In Mr Akuoko's opinion, it wasn't enough for the President to put his job on the line. "I think that what the President failed to do was to caution his appointees like the various DCEs, the regional ministers and the minister involved, Prof Frimpong-Boateng, to also put their jobs on the line," he said.

Mr Akuoko is not the only person suggesting a new approach to the fight. A report in the *Daily Graphic* on Thursday, February 13, quotes the Special Advisor to the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Mr Benjamin Aryee, as saying that there is the need for the Government to take a "holistic look at the approach it adopted in the fight against illegal mining if the desired impact is to be made."

In his opinion, the Government should have incorporated the Ghana National Association of Small-Scale Miners in its strategy, "instead of the wholesale ban on all forms of small-scale mining."

Thus maybe it is opportune for me to revisit another possible angle to the discussion, what I wrote in 2017:

The DCEs should be assigned the direct, committed and sustained responsibility of protecting the water bodies, farmlands and the environment in their areas for the benefit of their people.

THE ABRIDGED 2017 COLUMN: There is a question that has been agitating my mind for some time. Perhaps it's a naive one, but I will pose it just the same: why are they not being exposed, the dealers who buy the gold for which the illegal miners risk so much?

Again, who are the people, or agencies, behind the scenes who evidently guarantee a ready market for those with illegal gold to sell?

Little wonder the meaning of 'galamsey', or illegal small-scale mining, is said to be a corruption of the expression 'gather them and sell'.

On July 10, 2017, at a meeting with traditional rulers in Accra, President Nana Akufo-Addo declared his determination to win the war against galamsey, even if it costs him a second term in office.

Why not also deal with the clients of the galamseyers?

Why is it that we only ever hear of the galamseyers, but never do we hear of measures against the destination of their gold?

Regarding other illegal activities, such as bribery and prostitution, both ends face penalties. With bribery both the giver and the taker are liable for prosecution in court; just as prostitutes and their clients are.

If it means 'naming and shaming' the buyers as part of decisive strategies to stop galamsey, why not? (Column of July 21, 2017, **The missing link in the galamsey war equation**)

Evidently, there is the need for a serious rethink of the approach to the galamsey fight, especially in view of the recent, mind-boggling reports of the alleged disappearance of hundreds of excavators seized from some illegal gold miners.

Mr Akuoko's proposal, which I believe also represents the position of his organisation, the ASMAN, seems to make pragmatic sense.

After all, the District Chief Executives are the officials on the ground in the galamsey areas and they know what is going on there — including foreigners pitching camp there to mine for gold illegally, with the connivance of local people.

The DCEs should be assigned the direct, committed and sustained responsibility of protecting the water bodies, farmlands and the environment in their areas for the benefit of their people.

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