



• Participants in the function

Punish large-scale mining companies for violating laws

— MP for Manso Nkwanta

By Daniel Kenu,
MANSO NKWANTA

THE Member of Parliament (MP) for Manso Nkwanta, Professor Joseph Albert Quarm, has appealed to the Minerals Commission and the government to revoke the licences of large-scale miners who have abused and misused their rights by subletting portions of their concessions to individuals to indulge in illegal mining.

He alleged that apart from individuals, some large-scale miners, as well as mining groups were deeply involved in illegal mining activities, and it was time the government took a second look at the law and possibly reviewed it.

Prof. Quarm was contributing to a discussion during a Town Hall meeting organised by the Media Coalition Against Galamsey and the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) at Manso Nkwanta, in the Amansie West District in the Ashanti Region yesterday.

The event dubbed: "Red Friday; Say No to Galamsey," was the first in a series of meetings held between anti-galamsey campaigners and

some small-scale miners in mining areas in the Ashanti Region.

Prof. Quarm said some large-scale mining companies could not escape blame for contributing to the galamsey menace, and, therefore, they should equally be held liable and responsible.

Prof. Quarm, who has also been at the forefront of the fight against galamsey, said it was time for the policy of giving concessions to expatriates to be reviewed to provide opportunities to locals to compete favourably for mining concessions.

Currently, only 10 per cent of Ghanaians own large-scale concessions.

Stay away from galamsey

For his part, the Convener of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey, Mr Kenneth Edem Ashigbey, warned district chief executives (DCEs) to stay away from illegal mining activities otherwise they would be exposed.

He also said such DCEs would be reported to the appropriate authorities



• Mr Kenneth Ashigbey — The Convener of the Media Coalition against galamsey speaking at the Town Hall meeting

for the necessary sanctions to be meted out to them.

He said it was strange that DCEs who were heads of the district security councils were mostly either unaware or pretended to be unaware of illegal mining activities in their jurisdictions.

Mr Ashigbey assured the small-scale miners that the Media Coalition

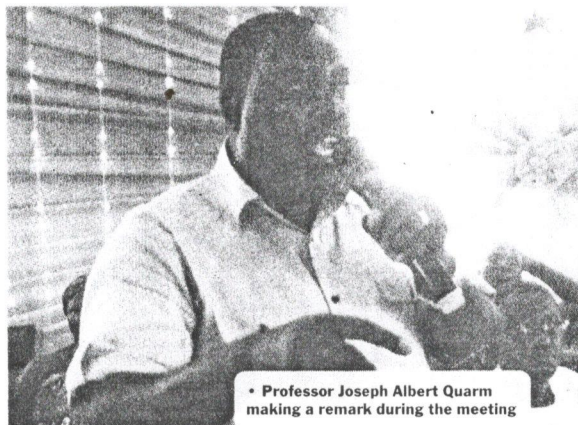
Against Galamsey was not against mining but it was against the way some illegal miners were destroying the environment.

He said the fight was to safeguard the future of the country, adding that the coalition was considering a collaboration with the small-scale miners in the intended reclaiming exercise.

The chiefs and immigration officials, who attended the Town Hall meeting, raised issues and pointed out some of the factors responsible for the current state of illegal mining and its devastating effects on the environment.

Much as some of the participants agreed with the coalition and its partners, they believed the policy banning galamsey should have been more systematic and thought through to ensure that those who degraded the environment were made to reclaim the land.

A divisional chief of Manso Nkwanta, Nana Danso Poku, said, for instance, that the reclamation of the land would be an extra cost to the government.



• Professor Joseph Albert Quarm making a remark during the meeting

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