

6 Chinese arrested

• For alleged involvement in galamsey

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SEKONDI/TAKORADI

SIX Chinese, who allegedly invaded forest reserves in the Wassa area of the Western Region with their Ghanaian collaborators to undertake illegal mining, popularly known as galamsey, have been arrested.

The Chinese were identified as Wu Chongzi, Qin Gi Fu, Deng Chad, Wen Qihua Wei, Qui Wie Hong and Qui Wei.

They have been placed in police custody at Asankragwa as police prepare to transfer them to Accra.

According to the police, at the time the team arrived at the scene, the Ghanaian collaborators, who were conversant with the terrain, quickly escaped leaving behind the Chinese, who had no option but to surrender.

The six were arrested in the act by the joint team of the police and Volunteers Against Environmental Degradation (VAED).

At the time of the arrest, large tracts of land at Afranse-Asenfi and its surroundings had been destroyed by the illegal miners.

Several heavy earth-moving equipment, chemicals for gold aggregation and power generation plants, among other items, were impounded.

Defiance

Speaking to the *Daily Graphic*, the leader of the VAED, Mr Richard Addo, said, "when we arrived at the scene, we were surprised at the extent of activities being carried out by the Chinese and their Ghanaian counterparts."

He said the team observed that the illegal miners remained defiant of the country's laws and had returned to the

various mining areas to carry out their illicit activities.

As part of their new mode of operations, the illegal miners had moved their operations into the deeper part of the forest where they had created a whole community by mounting large tents to work day and night.

"We have mapped out areas to be covered under the current operations; the areas include all the Wassa areas to Nanako, Jakpa, Hiawa, Bawdie and Wassa Akropong," he said.

The chiefs' plea

Mr Addo said in some of the communities, the chiefs said the youth were becoming uncontrollable since the only job in the areas was illegal mining.

The chiefs wanted employment avenues to be created for the youth to stop them from engaging in galamsey.

The Nifahene of Mbease Nsuta, Nana Kwasi Bre, said, "we the elders are not

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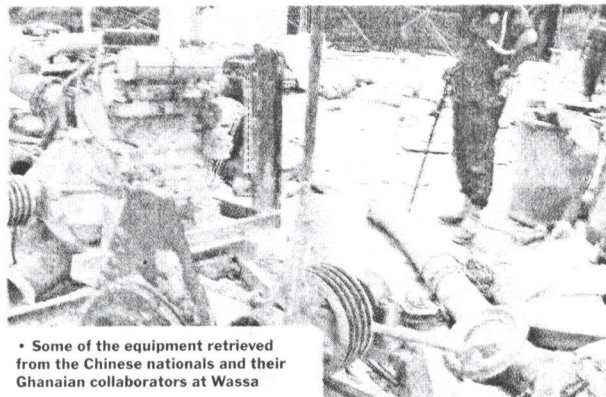
Six Chinese nationals have been arrested for illegal mining in the Western Region while their Ghanaian collaborators, who managed to escape arrest, are being sought by the police.

happy with the level of degradation and we have been speaking to the youth but the problem here is, there are no jobs apart from the mining."

"Through the mining, they are able to take care of their families, pay school fees and meet other social needs; therefore when we speak to them, they ask us what they should do to get the next meal for their dependents," he said.



• The six Chinese nationals who have been arrested in the galamsey business



• Some of the equipment retrieved from the Chinese nationals and their Ghanaian collaborators at Wassa