



• Apostle Samuel Yaw Antwi (3rd right) presenting the signed petitions to Mr Ken Ashigbey (2nd left), Convenor for Media Coalition Against Galamsey (MCAG). Looking on are Mr Ernest Asigiri (2nd right), Administrator of GPCP, Mr Ransford Tetteh (left), Secretary of MCAG, and Mr Fred Tettey Amoako (right), Assistant Editor at the Church of Pentecost Headquarters. Picture: MAXWELL OCLOO

Unmask big Ghanaians behind galamsey

• Ashigbey tells media

By **Dominic Moses Awiah,**
ACCRA

THE Managing Director of the Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL), Mr Kenneth Ashigbey, has tasked journalists to investigate and expose the “big Ghanaian men” who are behind illegal mining (galamsey) in the country.

Describing the fight against illegal mining as a “holy war”, he said one of the solutions to dealing with the issue of galamsey was for the media personnel to turn the heat on Ghanaians in high positions “who are the real beneficiaries of the act”.

“These are the people the media men must go after and not just the ordinary people who are in the pit collecting the GH¢50, GH¢100, GH¢200 a day,” Mr Ashigbey said when a team from the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) paid a courtesy call on him in Accra last Friday.

The meeting was for the team, led by the General Secretary of GPCC, Apostle Samuel Yaw Antwi, to present signed petition forms in support of the fight against galamsey to the Media Coalition Against Galamsey.

Thirty-one thousand forms containing the signatures of members of the pentecostal churches were

presented to Mr Ashigbey, who also doubles as the convenor of the Coalition.

The petition will be used as a tool to galvanise the government to take the necessary actions that would halt illegal mining in the country.

Copies of the petition would be presented to the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the Chief Justice, and the country’s legislative body.

Unmask them

Admitting the various roles foreigners play in the galamsey business, Mr Ashigbey said the target should not be limited to ordinary Ghanaians and foreigners “because there are big Ghanaian men who go out of the country and recruit people with the intention to use them in galamsey.”

“It is not the Chinese, neither is it people from Ukraine or Russia or Cote d’Ivoire. Yes, they also are part of the problem because they come and smuggle the gold but the most important people are the big Ghanaian men who go out, recruit and bring them to the country,” he said.

Mr Ashigbey stated that although a lot had been done in the fight against galamsey, a lot more needed to be done to permanently end the menace.

“The government has shown commitment that it is ready to address the problem but we must also stand up and make sure that every effort we are

putting in place towards addressing galamsey bears great fruit,” he added.

Touching on some of the efforts the coalition had made, Mr Ashigbey said since it was launched this year, the coalition had embarked on series of programmes aimed at dealing with galamsey.

“Although little results have been achieved, we have seen a lot more commitment from the government and institutions which prove the country’s readiness to end galamsey once and for all,” he stated.

Mr Ashigbey said the coalition, beginning from July this year, would hold town hall meetings in the regions to throw more light on the galamsey activities.

He commended the leadership of the GPCC for demonstrating their commitment towards the fight against galamsey, and urged churches to use their platform to help address the problem.

Sustainable mining

Mr Ashigbey also stressed the need for the government to recognise the role played by small-scale mining.

“Large-scale mining is owned by foreigners and not the local people. If we are able to do the small-scale mining in a sustainable manner, we can get the revenue needed for development,” he said.

GPCP

The General Secretary of GPCC, Apostle Antwi, said the leadership of the pentecostal church was ready to

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The Managing Director of the Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL), Mr Kenneth Ashigbey, has tasked journalists to turn the heat on “big Ghanaian men” who are behind illegal mining (galamsey) in the country.

support the government and the coalition in the fight against galamsey.

He said when the GPCC heard about the intention of the coalition to collect the signatures of Ghanaians as part of its plans to petition the President, “we were really excited and happy and, therefore, decided to also support this cause.”

“What we are presenting today is the first batch of signatures we collected from some of our churches nationwide. We will collect the rest and bring them to the coalition in the coming weeks,” Apostle Antwi said.

Concerning the galamsey, he said the destruction of the country’s water bodies and the environment should be enough to wake Ghanaians up to aggressively deal with illegal mining.

“We should not sit down and watch our country get destroyed because of the money few people stand to gain. We should all join the fight,” Apostle Antwi added.

Present at the meeting was the Editor of the *Daily Graphic*, Mr Ransford Tetteh, who is also the Secretary to the Steering Committee of the Coalition, and the Administrator of GPCC, Mr Ernest Asigiri.