

'We'll fight until country returns to responsible mining'

By **Salomey Appiah-Adjei**, ACCRA

THE Media Coalition against Illegal mining has stated that it will expose all those behind the menace, as part of its fight, until Ghana returns to responsible ways of mining.

"We shall expose those behind this canker in the newspapers, radio, television and social media with pictures of their negative activities and their faces until we reach a stage where mining is done responsibly," the convener of the Steering Committee of the coalition, Mr Kenneth Ashigbey, said at a news conference in Accra yesterday to brief the media on the campaign so far.

Mr Ashigbey, who is also the Managing Director of the Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL), recounted the achievements and challenges of the coalition since its inception in April this year.

"The pen is mightier"

He reiterated the objectives of the coalition to name, shame and push for jail terms for offenders and indicated that not even the threats to the lives of media personnel from faceless individuals and the death of Major Maxwell Adam Mahama would deter members of the coalition from continuing the campaign.

"Those who are threatening us must know that the pen is mightier than the sword, and they cannot touch our souls, at best they will attempt to touch our flesh," he said.

He added that the death of Major Mahama was an

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impetus for the coalition and Ghanaians as a whole to intensify the fight against galamsey.

He said what was more worrisome was that Ghanaians were behind the canker which was destroying water bodies and depleting the forests.

Mr Ashigbey asked for state security for the media and others engaged in the fight.

Achievements

On the achievements and challenges of the campaign, he said some excavators had been evacuated from some mining sites following the campaigns and some arrests have been made.

Mr Ashigbey said the immediate past Chief Justice, Mrs Georgina Theodora Wood, had set up 14 courts to deal with galamsey cases and urged the media to find out how those courts were being utilised.

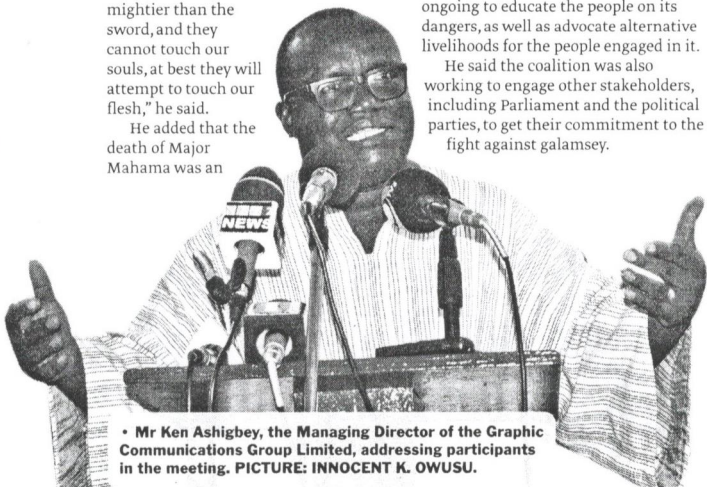
He said among other personalities, the steering committee of the coalition had also met with President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, who he said assured it of the government's commitment to stop galamsey.

Way forward

On the challenges of the campaign, Mr Ashigbey expressed concern about the prosecution of cases and urged the police to do due diligence with the investigations into galamsey cases to get enough evidence for prosecution.

On the way forward, he said town hall meetings would be held in the various communities where galamsey was ongoing to educate the people on its dangers, as well as advocate alternative livelihoods for the people engaged in it.

He said the coalition was also working to engage other stakeholders, including Parliament and the political parties, to get their commitment to the fight against galamsey.



• Mr Ken Ashigbey, the Managing Director of the Graphic Communications Group Limited, addressing participants in the meeting. PICTURE: INNOCENT K. OWUSU.