

GHANA INSTITUTE OF FORESTERS (GIF)

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OUR REF:

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COMMUNIQUE ON THE INVASION OF FORESTRY COMMISSION OFFICES BY ARMED THUGS

The Ghana Institute of Foresters (GIF), the professional body mandated to protect the integrity and professionalism of Ghana's forestry sector, expresses in the strongest possible terms its outrage, dismay, and condemnation of the unlawful and barbaric invasion of Forestry Commission District Offices by armed operatives purportedly from National Security on 28th July, 2025.

Reports reaching us from our district forest offices confirm that armed men stormed and forcefully entered Forestry Commission District Offices at **Nkawie, Bekwai and Offinso**, disrupting official work, intimidating staff, and unlawfully accessing files, equipment, and sensitive records. At Offinso, the armed men demanded keys for the Registry and the official vehicle. Prior to these, similar incidents took place in Tapa and Goaso where seized truckloads of illegal lumber were forcefully taken away from the premises of the Forestry Commission at night by armed men. The manner of the invasions—**armed operatives barging into peaceful offices, locking out staff, seizing equipment, and issuing verbal threats**—is nothing short of **barbaric**. It is an insult to the public service, a disgrace to Ghana's democratic credentials, and an affront to institutional professionalism.

The Forestry Commission is a statutory body established by **Act 571 (1999)**, with a clear legal mandate to **regulate, conserve and manage** the country's forest and wildlife resources. The Commission's duties include the regulation of entry, control of land use activities in forest reserves, and supervision of forest operations in accordance with both national laws and international agreements.

The Commission is not a political appendage or a sub-unit of any security service. No security agency, no matter how powerful, has the right to unilaterally invade the Commission's offices without due legal procedure. This unlawful intrusion constitutes an assault on the authority of the Forestry Commission, a blatant disregard for the rule of law, and a worrying erosion of institutional independence in Ghana.

The Ghana Institute of Foresters demands to know:

- a) Who empowered these individuals with arms and vehicles for these unauthorized operations?
- b) What will be done to these individuals who have been captured on videos and photos undertaking these illegal operations?

The context of these invasions cannot be separated from the troubling increase in illegal and even **"legalized illegal"** mining activities within forest reserves. It is a well-known fact that both **illegal mining (Galamsey)** and so-called **"permitted" mining** are happening within protected forests, often without the proper consent of the Forestry Commission and Environmental Protection Agency.

We remind the public and all stakeholders that the forest reserves are **inalienable national assets**. The opening of forest reserves to mining is in direct contravention of the core values of the Forestry Commission and the spirit of Ghana's forest protection laws. The current Government promised to repeal **L.I. 2462**, which controversially provides for mining in forest reserves. It is troubling that the government has only amended the L.I. after winning the elections. GIF is deeply concerned that while foresters work tirelessly to protect these lands, their efforts are undermined by political and commercial interests.

These troubling developments must not be normalized. There is the danger that should some foreign operatives invade our offices under the guise of 'National Security', officials will tamely submit because this is what National Security is perceived to do. The Ghana Institute of Foresters categorically condemns these lawless acts and views them as a calculated attempt to intimidate and destabilize the lawful operations of the Forestry Commission.

The Ghana Institute of Foresters calls on:

- The Police and other Security Agencies to investigate these unlawful operations and bring the perpetrators to book.
- The **Minister of Lands and Natural Resources** to, beyond the public statement, follow up to ensure that investigations are completed and perpetrators dealt with, to restore confidence in our forestry officers that they can discharge their lawful duties without fear or favour.
- The **Forestry Commission** to collaborate with the security agencies to ensure that its staffs are protected and not intimidated in the discharge of their duties, and that the perpetrators are identified and prosecuted.

Ghana is not a lawless nation. We should not watch on while public officers are harassed, and our laws trampled on by faceless individuals. **Enough is enough.**

Signed

DR. ABUKARI. NANTOGMAH. ATTAH ESQ
President Ghana Institute of Foresters (GIF)

CC:

- His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Ghana
- The Chief of Staff, Office of the President
- The Minister for Lands and Natural Resources
- The Speaker of Parliament
- The Inspector General of Police
- The National Security Coordinator
- The Board Chairman, Forestry Commission
- The Ag. Chief Executive, Forestry Commission
- All Media Houses