



# MINORITY CAUCUS

## PARLIAMENT OF GHANA

Parliament House – Accra (Ghana)

29<sup>th</sup> July, 2025.

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **THE BLACK VOLTA GOLD PROJECT AND MATTERS ARISING: PURELY BUSINESS OR STATE CAPTURE?**

The Minority Caucus has noted with concern, the current litigation between Mr Ibrahim Mahama's Engineers & Planners Limited and Azumah Resources Limited, concerning the Black Volta Gold Project.

While we are aware that the dispute is the subject of legal proceedings in Ghana and the UK, we are obligated, as a vigilant Opposition in Parliament, to comment on the issue.

After all, the extraction of our mineral resources in Ghana, is a matter of public interest. Furthermore, transparent transactions by the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) are also a matter of public interest, as Ghana is a shareholder in the Bank.

As such, we in the NPP Caucus will exercise our constitutional mandate, in speaking up on behalf of the people, and acting as a foil against totalitarianism and excess by the Executive.

Indeed, many voices in the media space have already been raised in alarm, querying the nature of the agreement between Mr Ibrahim Mahama's Engineers and Planners, and Azumah Resources.

As the matter is still before the courts, our focus is not to rehash the legalities or illegalities of the Black Volta Gold Project agreement, but to draw the attention of the public to the broader picture.

To this end, we wish to point out that the Black Volta Gold Project, is merely the latest in a pattern of political patronage backing Mr Ibrahim Mahama, the President's brother, in his business affairs.

While E&P denies political patronage by the NDC Government, the Ghanaian public is not deceived. And the evidence is irrefutable.

#### **1. THE EXTON CUBIC BAUXITE SAGA 2016.**

To begin with, we all remember that at the end of President Mahama's first term, he granted his brother Ibrahim's company, Exton Cubic, three mining leases on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2016, when he had only a week to exit power after losing the 2016 presidential election.

After much public outcry and subsequent legal battles, the Supreme Court cancelled the mining leases granted Ibrahim Mahama to mine bauxite in the Nyinahini Forest, in the Atwima Mponua District of the Ashanti Region.

The three mining leases granted illegally to Ibrahim Mahama by his brother, amounted to an estimated 60% of Ghana's entire Bauxite reserves. 60%, bequeathed to ONE relative by the departing President.

The Supreme Court, in its decision in 2019, held that the grant of the three (3) mining leases in favour of Exton Cubic was in violation of the Constitution, and section 12 of the Minerals and Mining Act (Act 703).

Therefore, the Supreme Court declared the leases void and invalid, for failure to comply with mandatory statutory provisions of the Minerals and Mining Act and Article 268 of the 1992 Constitution, which requires such mining leases to be approved by Parliament.

## **2. STATE CAPTURE BY STEALTH: 2025.**

Ever since President Mahama began his second stint as the President of Ghana in January 2025, the system has been set up to facilitate his brother Ibrahim's mining activities, with former E&P employees placed in strategic positions in the mining regulatory sector.

E&P's former spokesperson, Sammy Gyamfi, is now the CEO of GOLDBOD, the gold purchasing regulator. The top executives of the Minerals Commission are also former employees of E&P, and still regard Ibrahim Mahama as their boss.

Other former employees of E&P are strategically positioned in various high offices in Ghana's extractive sector.

This is state capture of the worst kind, engineered and planned by the “engineers and planners” of the NDC Government. They are once again, scheming to hand over the country's resources to the President's brother, as the President did in 2016. But this time, it's more subtle and refined.

This is far more audacious than anything the NDC complained about, while in Opposition. Indeed, if the previous Government had done anything close to this, all hell would have broken loose. Fact.

Though Engineers and Planners have not as yet paid any money to Azumah Resources, they claim that the Ghana Minerals Commission has given them (E&P) the go-ahead to take over the mine.

Why would the Ghana Minerals Commission give such a firm directive in E&P's favour, when the acquisition is being disputed in the Courts? Could it be because the top Executives of the Minerals Commission are ex-employees of Ibrahim Mahama's E&P?

On 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2025, the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, issued a (legally non-binding) ultimatum to the two feuding parties to settle their dispute. Failing that, the Minister said “a decision would be taken in the best interest of the nation.”

With what authority did the Minister make that statement with such certainty, in a legal battle involving two private companies? Was he speaking on behalf of the President?

E&P's Ibrahim Mahama is known to be a major financier of the ruling NDC party. It's obvious the sector Minister's “decision” would be in E&P's favour.

### **3. GOLD FIELDS DAMANG MINES.**

On April 16<sup>th</sup> 2025, the NDC Government suddenly announced that it had refused a routine lease extension for the Damang Mines, (run by Abosso Gold Fields, a subsidiary of Gold Fields Ghana Limited), and was taking over the operational control of the mine.

Prior to this, the President's brother's firm, Engineers and Planners Limited, had allegedly suffered huge financial losses, due to a suspension of its mining services at the Damang Mines. (This was the subject of a libel lawsuit filed by E&P against Bright Simmons.)

Was this intervention made by the State, on behalf of the President's brother? Many observers think so.

In fact, in its statement after the notice of rejection to Gold Fields Damang Mines, the Government stressed that it was committed to “honouring existing valid service contracts”, and re-emphasized that “valid contracts would be honoured under state stewardship”.

Among the reasons given by the Government for the takeover, was Regulation 189 of the Minerals and Mining Act (Licensing) Regulation, 2012 (L.I. 2176). It stipulates that an application to extend a mining lease must include a comprehensive technical report, and a programme of mining operations, which the Government said was absent from Gold Field Limited's application.

The Government's statement was emphatic, that “without declared reserves, the Minerals Commission cannot recommend the extension of the lease.”

Furthermore, the Government pointed out that Gold Fields Limited had not allocated any budget for exploration at the Damang Mine over the past two years. This lack of investment raised doubts about the company's commitment to the long-term viability of the mine.

### **4. SO WHY THE SUDDEN CHANGE OF MIND?**

In the light of the above, we find it very strange, that the Government would perform a complete U-turn one week later on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2025 and issue a one-year extension of the lease to Gold Fields Damang Mines. What, exactly, changed at the Damang Mines within a week after the Government's purported takeover? If the Damang Mines had fallen short on so many fronts,

why did the Government suddenly go against its own mining regulations, and rescind its decision to refuse a renewal of the lease? What a strange turn of events!

Clearly, the Government had used the hardball threat of the takeover of the Damang mine, to achieve certain objectives, and to coerce Goldfields to fall in line.

And these strong-arm tactics were only applied, after the Presidents brother's Engineers and Planners Limited, had lost a lucrative contract at Damang Mines, with the suspension of mining services imposed by Gold Fields Limited.

These are just a few of several examples of the political patronage enjoyed by Mr Ibrahim Mahama, President John Mahama's brother, and his Engineers & Planners company. In Ghana, this backing by the Presidency is no secret, but well known by the public.

## **5. PRESIDENT MAHAMA SAYS THE TIME HAS COME FOR (NDC) GHANAIS TO OWN GOLD MINES.**

On 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2025, the day after his brother announced that E&P had (belatedly) secured a \$100m facility from the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development, President Mahama declared, "Ghana must take greater control of its resources. "The time has come for Ghanaians to own gold mine to produce gold for export and ensure that the wealth generated benefits the nation directly."

While this may sound like an invitation to ALL Ghanaians, it really is limited only to the President's brother, and other financiers of the NDC party.

It clearly does not include gold mining entrepreneurs like Bernard Antwi-Boasiako, aka Chairman Wontumi, whose mines have been shut down on the orders of the Presidency.

This purely political persecution of a miner who employs hundreds of Ghanaians, renders the President's words hollow and hypocritical.

Even as we speak, President Mahama's politics of exclusion has targeted businessmen, civil servants, and judges sympathetic to the NPP. And just few days, the Government announced that it had sacked about 500 men from the security forces.

Even while observing a National Prayer Day, President Mahama was busy persecuting his perceived political foes in the judiciary, civil service, the security services, and in private enterprise.

And with regards to large scale mining, the President dropped us a hint, when he said that the Government would work with Ghanaian companies which possess the necessary equipment, technology, and capital to establish world class mining operations. That description fits E&P to a 'T'.

So, when the President makes lofty speeches about Ghanaians owning their own gold mines, we are not deceived. It is evident that he's referring only to his own brother, and a few others in his inner circle.

Even as we speak, there are plans to hand over more concessions for other minerals, to his brother's E&P. But we will bring you that revelation as it unfolds.

Remember, “Yen aara, asaase ni” means “We, ourselves, this is our land.” The land and its resources belong to ALL Ghanaians, not only those of the ruling political party.

In the interim, we, the Minority Caucus, shall continue to be diligent and vocal, in our exposé of the NDC's state capture.

God bless our homeland Ghana.

**-End-**

**Signed**

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