



**2023 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF  
GHANA ON THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON  
SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE**

**SUBMITTED TO THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ASSOCIATION**

**April 2024**

## **A. Commitment to the Voluntary Principles**

### **1. Statement of Commitment or Endorsement of the Voluntary Principles**

The Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, signed on to the Initiative in 2014. It has since published its commitment to the Voluntary Principles (VPs) on the Ministry's website: <https://mlnr.gov.gh/index.php/the-voluntary-principles-on-security-and-human-rights-vps-initiative/>. In addition, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources has assigned two senior officials to coordinate the activities of the In-Country Working Group (ICWG) and the Initiative in Ghana. They are the Director of Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation, Mr. Matthew Ababio, and a Deputy Director of Finance and Administration, Ms. Mercy Ackah (PhD). The Ministry also hosts the permanent Secretariat for the VPs in Ghana and facilitates the meetings of the ICWG. In 2023, the representatives of the Ministry took part in all meetings of the ICWG and field visits to the sites of extractive sector companies.

### **2. Statement of Commitment to Implement National Plan(s) (Where Applicable) And Progress on its Implementation.**

Ghana's National Action Plan (NAP) of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) was approved by the ICWG in 2018 and adopted by the Government through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. The ICWG has since updated the NAP. The main activities executed under the NAP were the completion and submission of a baseline study on security and human rights in the extractive industry to the Secretariat of the Voluntary Principles Association (VPA), finalization of a training manual on VPs, visits to extractive sector companies, and hosting of meetings of the ICWG.

In 2023, the baseline study on security and human rights in the extractive sector was completed and submitted to the Secretariat VPA. The study was undertaken by the Government's ombudsman, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and validated by the ICWG. In addition, the ICWG worked with a consultant to develop a training manual for VPs. The manual will be made available to public security agencies, extractive companies, and private security organizations in 2024.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources facilitated a working visit to AngloGold Ashanti's Iduapriem Mine, Adamus Resources Limited, Ghana National Gas Limited Company, Cardinal Namdini Gold Mine, and Earl International Gold Mine Ltd in 2023. The latter mines are located in the Upper East Region of Ghana and are the country's newest projects. While Earl Mine is in its second year of operation, Cardinal was expected to pour its first gold in the last quarter of 2024. The trip enabled the Co-Chairs of the ICWG to have a first-hand appreciation of the challenges and successes in the implementation of the VPs. Moreover, the new mines will be invited to participate in the meetings of the ICWG in 2024.



**Fig 1.0: The Co-Chairs of ICWG with an official of Ghana National Gas Ltd Company**

### **B. Domestic Policies, Laws, and Regulations**

#### **3. As Related to the Voluntary Principles, Describe Relevant Policies, Legislation, Procedures, and/or Guidelines Relevant To Promoting And Protecting Human Rights, Consistent With International Human Rights Obligations**

The Constitution of Ghana guarantees the fundamental human rights of people in the country and sets up an institution to enforce these rights, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). CHRAJ is a member of the ICWG. The Judicial Service also protects human rights.

Further, the Government coordinates the deployment of public security (military and police) officials to the extractive companies. As part of their training, the military and police are taken through an extensive program on safeguarding the human rights of the civilian population. The government also regulates the activities of private security contractors through the Private Security Regulations of 1992 (L.I 1571). The Regulations also provide for the Ministry of the Interior to license, monitor, and regulate the activities of private security contractors. The Ghana Police

Service also has a unit or department that oversees the day-to-day activities of private security guards. Private security guards are statutorily proscribed from bearing arms.

**4. Within the Context of the Voluntary Principles and in Accordance with National and International Law, Describe how the Government Takes Appropriate Steps to Prevent, Investigate, Punish, And Redress Human Rights Abuses Within Its Territory and/or Jurisdiction by Third Parties, Including Extractive Companies and Public And Private Security Providers**

In Ghana, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) is clothed with power to remedy breaches in human rights in addition to using the forum of the courts. CHRAJ has offices in the operational areas of extractive sector companies and receives complaints from persons whose rights are violated by the companies. It investigates these complaints and prescribes remedial measures, including sanctions.

Furthermore, the CHRAJ organizes training programs on human rights for the police service and judicial service from time to time. In some cases, CHRAJ issues advisory notes on issues relating to human rights.

In addition, the extractive sector regulatory agencies, such as the Minerals Commission, Petroleum Commission, and Environmental Protection Agency regularly monitor the activities of companies to ensure that they do not violate the rights of community members. In the event that companies are found to have violated the rights of community members, the regulatory agencies mete out the required sanctions and take steps to work with the company to address the grievance.

### **C. Promotion and Implementation**

#### **Promotion of the VPI**

**5. Describe how the Government Publicly Communicates its Commitment to The Voluntary Principles (e.g., Speeches, Statements, Publicly Available Reports, Conferences, Presentations and Statements made in Multilateral and Bilateral Forums).**

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources espouses the Government's commitment to the Initiative through speeches presentations, bilateral engagements with companies and other stakeholders, and international forums. It has also published its commitment to the VPSHR on its website: <https://mlnr.gov.gh/index.php/the-voluntary-principles-on-security-and-human-rights-vps-initiative/>.

**6. Describe how the Government Conducts Outreach to, and Awareness-Raising Activities With, NGOs, Extractive Companies, And Governments (e.g., Build Understanding and Support for the Voluntary Principles such as Through In-Country Stakeholder Meetings) To Encourage them to Implement the Voluntary Principles and/or Join The Voluntary Principles Initiative. Suggest Including Country-Specific Examples.**

The Government's assent to the Initiative binds extractive sector companies to the implementation of the VPSHR. To foster the incorporation of the VPs into their work plans, the government encourages companies and its extractive sector agencies to be part of the ICWG. For instance, the Minerals Commission and Petroleum Commission are members of the ICWG. These agencies have direct oversight of the activities of mining and oil/gas companies.

Additionally, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources partners with NGOs and companies to visit the sites of companies to have a better appreciation of the VPs. In 2023, the Ministry visited the operations of 5 companies alongside the two other Co-Chairpersons.

**7. Describe how the Government Promotes the Voluntary Principles within its own Government (Coordination within and among Different Government Agencies and Ministries, as well as with Embassies, etc).**

The Ministry that coordinates the VPs on behalf of the Government is the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. The Ministry invites other sector-relevant Ministries, such as the Ministries of Defence, Interior, Energy, and Justice and the Attorney General's Department to the meetings of the ICWG.

Moreover, the Ministry also invites the country's Development Partners and Embassies, extractive-sector-related parastatals, and public security agencies to the meetings of the ICWG. For instance, the Ghana Armed Forces and Ghana Police Service are represented by senior officials at the meetings of the ICWG. The forum of ICWG is used to promote awareness of VP activities among the previously mentioned institutions.

In some cases, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources may engage bilaterally with another government agency to address an issue related to the implementation of the VPs. As an example, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources engaged with the Petroleum Commission to facilitate the administering of questionnaires when the ICWG's consultant was undertaking the baseline study on security and human rights in the extractive sector.

**Implementation of the VPs- General**

**8. Describe Government Engagement In the VPI, Including when the Government Last Did A Verification Presentation, Points Raised During the Peer Review about the Government, and how the Government has Responded**

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources facilitates the reviewing and sharing of VP-related incidents at the forum of the ICWG. At a meeting of the ICWG in May 2023, the ICWG discussed an incident at Newmont and Earl Int. Mining Ltd.

**9. Describe how the Government Works with Companies, Communities, And Civil Society Organizations on Voluntary Principles Implementation**

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources works closely with companies and NGOs to undertake initiatives that promote the VPs in Ghana through the meetings of the ICWG.

In 2023, the Ministry also liaised with NGOs and companies to visit the sites of five (5) extractive companies, AngloGold Ashanti Iduapriem Limited, Adamus Resources Ltd, Ghana National Gas Company Ltd, Cardinal Namdini Gold Mine Ltd, and Earl International Gold Mining Ltd. The visits enabled the team to exchange ideas on the implementation of VPs.

Further, the Government worked with the Ghana Chamber of Mines to train some police officers on the VPSHR in May 2023 before they were deployed to the mines.

The Government has set up an elaborate network of early warning mechanisms to detect the risks of violence across the country. Further, the NGOs and Government agencies that work in local communities foster stakeholder engagements and bring issues of concern to the attention of the ICWG. Thereafter, the relevant agency takes up the issues and resolves them.

The ICWG also developed a manual to guide the implementation of VPs in Ghana. The manual relied on resources published by the VPA.

Further, mining companies are required to submit monthly reports on security to the Minerals Commission. As part of the reporting template, companies are required to highlight issues relating to the implementation of the VPs and security risks.

#### **10. Describe how the Government Engages with Companies on Issues Related to Company Risk Assessment**

The Government engages directly with companies or their industry associations to assess the security risks confronting their operations and come up with a proportionate response. For instance, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources facilitated the deployment of police personnel to the mines to deter illegal miners after due consultations with the Ghana Chamber of Mines. In the same vein, the Government created a new division of the Police Service, the Marine Police, to protect the operations of the oil and gas companies. This was done after engagements with the oil and gas companies.

In 2023, the Government partnered with the Ghana Chamber of Mines to assess the vulnerability of mining companies to extremist attacks and shared the results with companies. A similar exercise was done for the power and telecommunications sector.

Penultimately, the Government works with NGOs and its agencies to identify risks arising out of the operations of the companies and proactively address them.

Finally, community members are also encouraged to raise their concerns directly with companies, and if they are dissatisfied with the remedial measures, they could escalate it by petitioning the relevant government agency or Ministry or litigating at the courts.

**11. Describe how the Government Engages with Companies around Engagement with Public and Private Security Forces.**

The Government requires public security officers deployed to the mines to undergo a basic training program on human rights, including the VPs. In the mining sector, this training program is usually undertaken with the support of the Ghana Chamber of Mines.

Further, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana Chamber of Mines requires companies to conduct periodic training on the VPs for the police officers on the site. There is a similar practice in the oil/gas industry.

The Government also licenses private security companies and requires companies to engage only licensed private security guards.

In the mining sector, the companies are required to submit reports on the performance of private guards monthly.

As a rule of thumb, the Government tends to deploy the Ghana Armed Forces to handle threats that are beyond the capabilities of private security guards and the police. In essence, the Government follows a three-pronged approach to risk de-escalation: private security guards as the first respondents, police as the next respondents, and the military as the force of last resort.

**D. Lessons and Issues**

**12. To help determine what best practices and lessons learned can be leveraged going forward, provide a summary of issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the government.**

The visits to the sites of companies provided deeper insights into the implementation of VPs. The ICWG intends to continue with this visit to foster deeper collaboration with the companies while offering support in addressing any challenges related to the VPs.

One of the challenges highlighted by the companies was the limited resources available to the police. The police officers deployed to the mines do not have access to riot control gear or non-lethal weapons. As a result, they are constrained in responding effectively to community disturbances. The ICWG has recommended that these officers should be equipped with non-lethal weapons when deployed to the mines.

In 2024, the priorities of the ICWG will include strengthening members' participation and encouraging the adoption of the VPs training manual by public and private security officials as well as companies to enhance the sustainability of the VPs.