

Ebonyi mining pit collapse kills three, injures four



By Jeff Agbodo

ABAKALIKI—At least three people have died and four others injured following the collapse of a mining pit in Enyim Agalegu community, Ikwo Local Government Area, Ebonyi State.

The incident occurred over the weekend at a pit reportedly under the mining lease of First Patriots Limited (formerly Royal Salt), where mining activities had been ongoing for several years.



Oboke Chukwuma Collins, National Chairman of Enyim Agalegu Edukwu Opeke Federated Union, said he received a distress call at about 4 p.m. on Saturday and immediately mobilized community members for rescue operations. “We evacuated overburden from three lifeless bodies and rescued four injured victims,” he said.

Collins noted that the community had previously requested the company and the Ebonyi State Ministry of Solid Minerals to release part of the pit for controlled local mining, following completion of work at the main site. He lamented that the latest tragedy brings the total number of deaths at the site in recent times to five.

The Commissioner for Solid Minerals Development, Chidi Onyia, described the incident as unfortunate and extended condolences to the families of the deceased. He attributed recurring accidents in mining communities to illegal mining and greed, emphasizing that the government was unaware the site had been abandoned.

Onyia explained that the ministry cannot authorize local access to the leased site and revealed that company officials had warned the community that the pit was dangerous. He urged prioritization of lives over monetary gain.

Ifeanyi Nwakpu, lawmaker representing Ikwo North Constituency, confirmed that the three deceased were recovered and taken to a mortuary, while the four injured victims are receiving hospital treatment.

