

Over 50 local miners die, 100 injured in Taraba mine



Over 50 persons have lost their lives and over 100 injured in the illegal local mining site at Mayo-Sina, near Nguroje, Sardauna local government area of Taraba State.

Despite the rise in number deaths, more persons across the country and neighbouring West African countries are trooping to the area on a daily basis.

They are reportedly making millions of money in the area, which is said to have deposits of diamond and other minerals resources.

Mayo-Sina is perhaps one of the fastest growing settlements in the world, having being discovered only in January this year.

A young man of less than 20 years found a single stone which has earned him N32 million -being the biggest sale, after spending only a few days in Mayo-Sina, popularly known as the 'Blue Village.'

Our correspondent who spent 18 hours at the site on Wednesday and Thursday gathered that the miners perished when the roofs of deep holes and caves they dug and burrowed into collapsed on them.

"You know they continue to burrow into holes like rodents, in search of diamond and other precious stones. When the roof of the cave or surface of the earth fell on them, they suffocated to death before anything could be done," said one of the miners.

Michael Akura, another miner, likened the cause of the deaths of the local miners to "greed."

Akura, 47, said he has seen over 20 persons die, apart from those who died before he arrived at Mayo-Sina to dig for precious stones.

He added that the miners were too eager to make money such that they were not ready to take precautionary measures in spite of the deaths. "Many more will still die," he said.

As Akura explained, another report came that four other miners have been trapped. They were removed but two

of them looked lifeless. Some labourers removed clothes and were fanning them. One of the miners said they were already dead.

Chairman of Sardauna local government council, Dr. David Jedua, said he has written to the state government about the development which he described as illegal mining of minerals.

He said he was going to personally visit the site to see things for himself and discuss with the people there.

He added that he has provided adequate security in the area to ensure that the people maintain law and order in spite of the illegal mining.

Jedua said he has also planned to set up a Quarantine Unit in the site for the people to be tested of the dreaded Ebola virus disease.

The council boss however said it was a welcome development since the mining, though illegal, has drastically reduced hunger and unemployment in the area.

“Coming during my tenure, I see it as one of my achievements or blessings of my administration. The people would have carried arms to terrorise people, but they took to tilling the earth.

“I am finding time to go there and see them eye to eye, discuss with them and see how they are faring, especially in terms of security -before the state government will either give them the go ahead or stop them.

“At the local government level, the best we can do is to provide security for them. I have asked all the security agencies there: Immigration, Customs, Civil Defence and the police, to take statistics of what is happening there especially on the foreigners going there.

“They are to ensure the foreigners have their passports and other necessary papers. You know one has to be very careful in handling miners to prevent them from rioting. All over the world, miners are known to be violent people.

“But for now, we are happy with what they are doing because the local mining has boosted our economy and as well reduced the level of unemployment in the land.

“The youth who were hitherto idle and men and women who had no source of livelihood have now found a source of living. I thank God; it is one of the blessings of my administration,” he said.