

## 7 die as mining site collapses in Plateau

ISAAC SHOBAYO - JOS

AT least seven illegal miners have been killed while a few others sustained injuries at a mining site in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State, after a section of the mine site collapsed.

**Nigerian Tribune** learnt that collapse of mining sites had been a regular occurrence in virtually all the mining sites across the state. Relatives of victims are reportedly skeptical of reporting such incident to the law-enforcement agencies for fear of being arrested.

It was learnt that the latest incidents occurred in Waduruk village of Jos South Local Government at the weekend, when some group of illegal miners were digging massive mound of earth. It suddenly caved in and buried seven of them alive while some of those on the surface sustained injuries.

A source close to the village told the **Nigerian Tribune** that three of the victims were members of the same family who had been in the mining business for more than two decades, adding that the other four were hired from the neighbouring village to help them in the excavation.

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"There were seven of them inside the pit digging the soil in search of the solid mineral when the earth layer above them caved in and buried all of them. Also in the same village last week, five others were trapped when the overlaying soil collapsed on them. It took

the villagers several hours to dig the layer of soil that covered them. At the end of the rescue efforts, four of them were found dead," the source said.

**Nigerian Tribune** further gathered that unspecified numbers of people had died in the course of carrying out illegal mining in the

state, especially in Jos South and Barkin Ladi local governments.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Terna Tyopev, said the command had not been briefed about the incident.

"I will make inquiry and get back to you," he said.

## Cameroon expelled 2,600 Nigerians fleeing from Boko Haram, says UN

MORE than 2,600 Nigerians who fled into Northern Cameroon to escape Boko Haram jihadists have been forced to go home since the start of the year, the United Nations (UN) said on Tuesday.

Thousands of Nigerians have been displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency which has seen deadly attacks since 2009.

Some 85,000 have sought refuge in Cameroon, but the UN refugee agency said many had been sent back

with officials citing security reasons.

"So far this year, Cameroon has forcefully returned over 2,600 refugees to Nigerian border villages against their will," UNHCR spokesman, Babar Baloch, told reporters in Geneva, Switzerland.

He said UNHCR staff in Nigeria had heard and documented accounts about Cameroon troops forcing refugees to return to Nigeria, "without allowing them time to collect their belongings."

Baloch pointed to a case where refugees were rounded up during a military offensive against Boko Haram insurgents in the Mandara Mountains on the Cameroonian side of the border. They were then taken in trucks to a camp for displaced people in Banki, in Nigeria's Borno State.

"Those returned included a one-year-old child and a nine-month pregnant woman, who gave birth the day after her arrival in Banki," he said.

"During the chaos, families

were separated and some women were forced to leave their children behind in Cameroon, including a child less than three years old," he added.

The UNHCR said it was particularly alarmed to see that the forced returns were continuing unabated after its previous protests and even after the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon signed an agreement with the UN on March 2 to ensure voluntary returns when possible.