

Two feared dead as mining pit collapses in Ebonyi

Grace Egbo August 18, 2025



A mining pit at the Ajirija lead mining site in Ihietutu Community, Ishiagu, Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi has collapsed and killed two persons, leaving several others critically wounded.

According to sources, the pit was allegedly being managed by Mrs Lovelyn Victor, an indigene of Ihietutu, but owned by Chief Henry Ahanaotu, owner of Greenfields Mining Company, who was said to have parcelled out and subletted to unlicensed petty miners operating without professional supervision.

An indigene of the community, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity, alleged that the incident was one in a series of unreported tragedies at the site.

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He recalled that a similar incident earlier in the year also claimed two lives and left several others injured, yet no sanctions were imposed on the site owner or the illegal operators.

"Unfortunately, these incidents and deaths only end with the police, if at all.

"There has never been any punishment for the site owner or the illegal miners who put lives at risk," the source lamented.

Reacting, the owner described the incident as unfortunate, but explained that he had subletted the lease to the operators as a means of empowering the youths of the community.

He maintained that Mrs Victor was an established miner with over four excavators and other heavy equipment.

"Mine pit collapse is a regular occurrence anywhere mining is carried out.

"Even Royal Salt, touted as the biggest mining firm in Nigeria, has had incidents of pit collapse with attendant deaths.

"The incident happened last weekend.

"We are yet to visit the scene to inspect and know why it occurred.

"I have also called the Federal Mines Officer to brief him.

"But as for carrying out operations based on safety principles, she does it well.

"She is also in partnership with other operators in the site. All we are doing is to help empower the youth," Ahanaotu said.

Mr Joshua Ukandu, spokesperson of the Nigeria Police Force, Ebonyi Command, confirmed the incident.

He said a report from the Divisional Police Officer, Ivo Division, indicated that five persons were involved in the accident, contrary to the six reported by community members.

"Five persons were actually involved in the unfortunate incident. The first victim died on the spot, while another died in hospital. The remaining three have been treated and discharged," Ukandu said.

Meanwhile, Mrs Sylvia Ogbuinya, Chairperson of the Federation of Women Miners, Ebonyi Chapter, condemned the tragedy and urged a full police investigation.

She noted that the operator of the collapsed pit was not a registered member of the federation and extended condolences to the bereaved families.

"We carry out regular training and workshops for our members to bring them up to speed with modern safety standards in mining operations to safeguard lives.

"I have checked, and the affected operator is not a registered member of the federation. We wonder if she adheres to normal safety principles and regular environmental impact assessments to mitigate risks," Ogbuinya said.

Some indigenes of Ihietutu, who also spoke to our correspondent, called on state and federal mining authorities to check the activities of unlicensed and illegal miners in the area.

"These illegal miners are only concerned with profit and do not comply with regulatory standards, thereby endangering lives and the ecosystem.

"Collapsed pits resulting in deaths have become a regular occurrence in our community, putting families in constant agony. We are appealing to relevant authorities to enforce laws against illegal and unlicensed mining here," they said.