



Thursday, 12th June 2025.

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ENCROACHMENT ON QUARRY SITES: A NATIONAL EMERGENCY REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ACTION**

Accra, Ghana – June 11, 2025 – The Commercial Quarry Operators Association (CoQOA) issues this urgent call in response to the alarming scale of encroachment on quarry lands across the country, particularly in areas such as Buoho, Ablekuma, Nsawam, and Budumburam. These areas are experiencing rising threats to public safety and national development due to unauthorized occupation of quarry lands and buffer zones.

Recent community agitation and media reports have highlighted safety concerns. However, the real danger lies in the rapid encroachment into designated exclusion zones—with structures erected within 10 to 20 meters of active blasting sites, in blatant violation of Regulation 176 of the Minerals and Mining (Explosives) Regulations, 2012 (L.I. 2177). This regulation mandates a minimum 500-meter safety buffer between blasting activities and human settlements. These violations not only endanger lives but have restricted the ability of compliant quarry companies to operate safely, despite adherence to District Assembly-approved development schemes and environmental regulations.

Contrary to public perception, it is not licensed quarry operators violating safety protocols, but rather unauthorized settlers breaching legally protected zones. Some encroachers have gone further to issue threats, incite unrest, and manipulate public sentiment through the media, creating a hostile environment for law-abiding operators and their workers.

CoQOA emphasizes that its members operate under strict compliance with environmental permits, blasting safety guidelines, and stakeholder engagement protocols. Yet, the lack of coordinated enforcement by regulatory authorities has allowed this illegal trend to escalate, endangering communities, threatening jobs, derailing infrastructure projects, and resulting in significant revenue losses to the state.

#### **Appeal to the Media**

CoQOA strongly appeals to media houses to refrain from sensational coverage that fuels fear and misrepresents the facts. Giving unverified platforms to encroachers while vilifying licensed operators

distorts the truth and undermines public confidence. We call on media practitioners to uphold ethical reporting standards that promote balanced, fact-based journalism in the public interest.

### **Urgent Call to Government Authorities**

Should these urgent issues continue to go unaddressed, CoQOA and its members may be compelled to suspend quarry operations nationwide to protect lives, equipment, and lawful concessions from further abuse. We will not allow encroachment, threats, and misinformation to erode the integrity of Ghana's quarry industry.

### **We urge the following institutions to act immediately and decisively:**

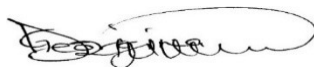
- Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
- Minerals Commission
- Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs (MLGCRA)
- Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)
- Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

### **Recommended Action Points**

- Immediate demolition of all unauthorized structures within protected buffer zones in accordance with the local government Act, 2016, Act 936.
- Prosecute individuals and officials involved in the unlawful sale and occupation of quarry lands.
- Disconnection of all public utility services (water, electricity) supplied to illegal settlers.
- Expedited legal action on all pending encroachment-related cases before the courts.
- Formal government recognition of CoQOA as a strategic partner in safeguarding quarry zones and ensuring regulatory compliance nationwide.

CoQOA remains committed to responsible, safe, and environmentally sound quarry operations that support Ghana's growth. But we will not stand idle while encroachment and misinformation threaten the very survival of our industry and the safety of our workers and communities. The time for action is now.

Signed:



**Georgina Dziwornu**  
**Executive Secretary**

**Commercial Quarry Operators Association – CoQOA**