

## Violent Pressure Used for Evictions in Guinea to Extend AngloGold Ashanti's Operations

Guinean civil society calls on AngloGold Ashanti to suspend evictions: the State exerted pressure by military violence and the company took advantage of this intimidation, contrary to national law and international standards.

*Conakry, Guinea – 18 August 2016* – Société AngloGold Ashanti de Guinée S.A. (SAG) is a subsidiary of the South African mining company AngloGold Ashanti Ltd. that is 15% owned by the Guinean state. This month, SAG plans to move 19 households to a new location, the first phase in the involuntary resettlement of approximately 377 households in the area it calls “Area One,” located in District Kintinian 2 in the Rural Commune of Kintinian in Siguiri Prefecture, nearly 770 km from Conakry in the northeast of the country. The Center for International Commerce for Development (*Centre de Commerce International pour le Développement*, or CECIDE) and Equal Rights for All (*Même Droits pour Tous*, or MDT) contend that this action should not begin until certain conditions that are necessary to respect human rights and maintain social harmony in the area have been secured.

“The villagers didn’t freely consent to be relocated – they were intimidated,” explains Frédéric Foromo Loua, attorney and President of the NGO MDT. “In November 2015, the Guinean government sent a force of 210 soldiers sent to Kintinian. Officially, their mission was to evict foreign miners who were conducting unauthorized, semi-industrial gold mining. In fact, however, this force attacked the residents of Kintinian, bludgeoning people and firing at them with tear gas and live ammunition. The soldiers shot one woman in the chest and arrested large numbers of residents. Unsurprisingly, the affected people of Area One did not feel free to refuse, or to negotiate the terms of the relocation agreements or the levels of compensation proposed by the mining company.

According to one household head, “We were really afraid that they’d use force against us if we refused to give up our lands. The army is capable of attacking us again. That’s why we signed this agreement, despite the fact that we really didn’t want to. The military, gendarmes, and police steal from us here. They’ve taken motorcycles, telephones, large sums of money, motorized pumps, and other things, too.”

Other residents claimed to have signed agreements under threat of arrest. “The former Prefect called me to his house late one night. I was so afraid – he told me that he had been directed by the government to arrest me if I continued to oppose the cession of Area One. He also told me that no one could oppose the cession of Area One to SAG, that it was an irreversible decision, and that I had to submit, whether willingly or by force. But if I were to stop opposing the decision to give SAG access to the area, he wouldn’t arrest me. I didn’t have any choice, so I agreed.”

Many household heads say that they didn’t know the content of the agreements until after they signed. According to Aboubacar Diallo, program coordinator with the NGO CECIDE, “Despite the requirement to consult affected communities, which is guaranteed under Guinean law and the voluntary standards that AngloGold claims to observe in Guinea, the villages of Kintinian and Sétiguia were excluded from consultations. The consultations were limited to a few villages

neighboring the mining zone. Even worse, the people of Kintinian never saw the Resettlement and Compensation Action Plan (the *Plan d'action pour les relocalisations et les compensations*, or PARC) that was prepared for Area One. This document that the residents never saw was referenced several times in the relocation agreements that people signed under pressure.”

Mr. Diallo added, “Under threat of violence and unaware of the terms of the relocation agreements, the residents of Kintinian accepted compensation that was inadequate for them to live a better life, which renders them vulnerable to the abuses of mining. The plots of land that are allotted to them under the relocation agreement are inferior to those they have been living on, and they are receiving way below market value in compensation for their lost land. Without adequate compensation, there’s a real risk that they won’t be able to live off the new land they have been given. And according to the relocation agreements, any disagreement between with the company must be settled according to a grievance procedure described in a document called the PARC, which people haven’t seen and which is in the company’s control.”

To avoid these consequences and protect the rights of the affected households, CECIDE and MDT demand that SAG and the Guinean government suspend all activities furthering the resettlement until:

1. SAG has made available to the affected communities a complete copy of the PARC, including all annexes updated since 2013, as well as a summary of the PARC, translated into language that is accessible to the affected communities;
2. CECIDE and MDT have completed an independent fact-finding inquiry – with full cooperation from AngloGold Ashanti – about the issues of community consultations, consent to the resettlement agreements, and adequacy of compensation measures;
3. Based on this inquiry, the affected community – with the assistance of independent legal counsel – and the company have freely agreed on a constructive, rights-based roadmap, with the facilitation of a mediator chosen jointly by the two parties. This roadmap should address community consent, indemnification and a fixed timeline defining all deadlines moving families (i.e., which households will be moved, and on what dates).

Full text of the NGO declaration: <http://bit.ly/2bInPuq>

### **About the NGOs**

The Center for International Commerce for Development (*Centre de Commerce International pour le Développement*, or CECIDE) is a Guinean NGO created in October 2000 and made up of actors engaged in reflection and concerted action on issues of development ; this is accomplished by promoting, protecting and taking into account the fundamental social and economic rights of vulnerable and marginalized peoples.

Equal Rights for All (*Mêmes Droits pour Tous* or MDT) is a Guinean NGO for the defense and promotion of human rights, which was founded in 2004 by Guinean lawyers and young legal professions with the aim of combating human rights violations in Guinea.

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