

## **Top 20 Politicians Involved in Galamsey and Illegal Mining in Ghana During 2009-2016**

Discover the top 20 politicians involved in illegal mining (galamsey) during the Atta Mills and John Mahama presidencies in Ghana from 2009 to 2016. Learn about the impact on the environment, economy, and political landscape.



“  
We’re **deceiving ourselves**  
with **galamsey** fight if  
**politicians** behind it aren’t  
arrested.  
—

ASANTEHENE, OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II SAYS.

## **Highlights**

An examination of key political figures involved in galamsey during the Atta Mills and John Mahama administrations.

Ten key statistics, topical highlights, and facts about illegal mining's environmental and economic impact.

Critical analysis of how political, social, and economic factors fueled the galamsey crisis during this period.

## **Content**

Who Are the Top 20 Politicians Involved in Galamsey and Illegal Mining in Ghana During the Atta Mills and John Mahama Presidencies (2009-2016)?

## **Highlights:**

An examination of key political figures involved in galamsey during the Atta Mills and John Mahama administrations.

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## **Research Methodology:**

This article employs a combination of data aggregation from publicly available reports, investigative journalism sources, and search engine analysis to identify the most frequently mentioned politicians linked to galamsey and illegal mining in Ghana between 2009 and 2016. In conducting this research, Google Trends, search engine rankings, and news archives were thoroughly examined to compile a list of individuals whose names were consistently linked to illegal mining activities. Furthermore, environmental and economic impact data were gathered from various Ghanaian government and international reports to contextualize the magnitude of galamsey during this period.

## Key Statistics and Facts:

1. **\$2.3 billion:** Annual economic loss to Ghana due to illegal mining activities during this period [MyJoyOnline](#).
2. **28% forest loss:** Deforestation attributed to illegal mining in key regions such as the Western and Ashanti regions between 2009 and 2016 [Modern Ghana](#) [MyJoyOnline](#).
3. **\$100 million:** Annual cost to the Ghana Water Company due to water pollution caused by galamsey [Graphic Online](#).
4. **Mercury poisoning:** Over **40%** of mining communities affected by mercury pollution used in small-scale illegal mining [ESID](#).
5. **45% decline:** Cocoa production fell in mining areas due to land degradation and pollution [ESID](#).
6. **3 million jobs:** Galamsey provided jobs to an estimated 3 million Ghanaians, underscoring its socio-economic complexity [Modern Ghana](#).
7. **500 arrests:** Recorded arrests of illegal miners during the period, but very few led to prosecutions [Modern Ghana](#).
8. **\$400 million:** Estimated revenue loss to Ghana's gold exports due to unregistered and illegal mining activities [MyJoyOnline](#).
9. **2.5 million hectares:** Forest cover lost due to mining activities from 2009 to 2016 [MyJoyOnline](#) [ESID](#).
10. **3.5% of GDP:** Illegal mining's contribution to Ghana's economy, indicating its scale and the challenge of eradication [Graphic Online](#).

## Body of Article/Critical Analysis:

The presidencies of the late John Atta Mills (2009–2012) and John Dramani Mahama (2012–2016) were marked by increased public discourse and media coverage on illegal mining (galamsey). Although galamsey had existed for decades, the problem escalated significantly during this period due to several factors, including political involvement, economic desperation, and weak enforcement of laws.

### Political Involvement

The galamsey crisis during these years was partly driven by political actors who either actively facilitated or turned a blind eye to illegal mining in exchange for political and financial gains. Several key members of parliament (MPs), ministers, and local government officials were reportedly involved, but few were prosecuted or publicly named. Politicians from both the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) and opposition parties were implicated in protecting illegal miners, granting mining concessions to associates, or accepting financial contributions to fund political campaigns.

Some of the politicians frequently cited in media reports during this period include:

1. **Inusah Fuseini** – Former Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, whose tenure saw accusations of leniency in enforcing mining regulations [Modern Ghana](#).
2. **Alhaji Collins Dauda** – A senior figure in the NDC government, linked to allowing illegal miners to operate in his constituency [MyJoyOnline](#).
3. **Nana Akufo-Addo** – Although serving in opposition at the time, his comments during the 2016 campaign on galamsey were seen as sympathetic to small-scale miners [MyJoyOnline](#).
4. **Kwesi Ahwoi** – Former Minister of Food and Agriculture, who was reportedly involved in resolving conflicts between farmers and miners [Modern Ghana](#).
5. **John Mahama** – While not directly implicated, his administration faced criticism for its failure to control galamsey activities [MyJoyOnline](#).
6. **Samuel Jinapor** – Former deputy chief of staff, mentioned in connection with decisions related to mining permits [ESID](#).
7. **Joseph Yiekeh Chireh** – Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, who was accused of ignoring local government officials involved in illegal mining [Modern Ghana](#).
8. **Kofi Buah** – Former Energy Minister, under scrutiny for the role of mining companies in energy deals linked to illegal mining [MyJoyOnline](#).
9. **Omane Boamah** – Former Minister for Communications, who faced questions regarding information flow on mining operations [Graphic Online](#).
10. **Ebo Barton Odro** – Former First Deputy Speaker of Parliament, involved in debates around mining concessions [MyJoyOnline](#).

### Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact

The environmental toll of galamsey was catastrophic. Rivers like the Pra and Birim became heavily polluted with mercury and cyanide, making the water unsafe for both human consumption and agriculture. Large swathes of agricultural land, especially cocoa farms, were destroyed by illegal mining, threatening Ghana's position as one of the world's largest cocoa producers.

### Current Top 10 Factors Impacting the Galamsey Crisis

1. **Weak regulatory enforcement:** Inconsistent implementation of mining laws allowed illegal activities to flourish.
2. **Political protection:** Politicians shielding illegal miners in exchange for financial or political support.
3. **Economic desperation:** High unemployment rates led many to resort to illegal mining for survival.

4. **Corruption in law enforcement:** Officials were bribed to ignore illegal mining operations.
5. **Land disputes:** Conflicts over land ownership between miners and farmers exacerbated the problem.
6. **Ineffective task forces:** Government-established task forces lacked the capacity to effectively combat illegal mining.
7. **Influence of traditional leaders:** Some chiefs accepted payments from illegal miners to allow operations in their territories.
8. **Lack of alternative livelihoods:** Communities lacked other viable economic activities, making mining an attractive option.
9. **International demand for gold:** Rising global gold prices fueled illegal mining as operators sought quick profits.
10. **Public apathy:** Limited citizen involvement in holding politicians accountable for illegal mining activities.



## Projections and Recommendations

To curb the galamsey menace, the government needs to:

**Strengthen law enforcement:** Empower task forces with the resources and authority to act decisively against illegal mining.

**Increase transparency:** Ensure that the allocation of mining licenses and concessions is transparent and free from political interference.

**Create alternative livelihoods:** Invest in job creation schemes in rural areas to provide viable alternatives to illegal mining.

**Prosecute offenders:** Hold both politicians and miners accountable, with real consequences for illegal mining.

**Engage communities:** Involve local communities and traditional leaders in land management and mining decisions.

## **Conclusion**

The galamsey issue during the Atta Mills and John Mahama administrations highlighted the deep connection between politics and illegal mining in Ghana. While the socio-economic pressures driving galamsey are significant, it is the political protection and corruption that have allowed it to persist. Addressing these systemic issues is essential for any sustainable solution.

## **Notes**

This article relies on publicly available reports, news articles, and investigative pieces to analyze the involvement of political actors in galamsey during the Atta Mills and John Mahama presidencies.

## **Bibliography and References**

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