



PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY OF GHANA

Monday, 23rd February 2026

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY OF GHANA (PSG) TO THE PRESIDENT, PARLIAMENT, AND CABINET OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Your Excellency the President of the Republic,
Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members of Parliament,
Honourable Members of Cabinet,

GALAMSEY, CHILDREN'S HEALTH, AND THE FUTURE OF GHANA

The Paediatric Society of Ghana has issued an urgent warning that **illegal mining (galamsey) poses a severe threat to children's health and brain development**, with irreversible consequences for Ghana's future. The organisation calls on government leaders to treat this as a national emergency requiring immediate action.

How Galamsey Harms Children

Children drown in open pits left by galamsey activities. Illegal mining releases toxic substances (mercury, lead, arsenic, and cyanide) into water sources, soil, and the food chain. Pregnant women and young children are exposed through contaminated drinking water, fish, crops, and household dust. These toxins easily cross the placenta and enter breast milk, affecting children during their most critical developmental stages.

Scientific evidence shows that toxic exposure causes:

- Permanent brain damage with no safe exposure level
- Reduced IQ and learning capacity
- Speech delays and behavioral disorders
- Anaemia, stunted growth, and weakened immune systems
- Kidney and liver damage
- Increased risk of chronic disease later in life

National Impact

The damage extends far beyond individual health. Children exposed to mining toxins experience poor academic performance and higher dropout rates, leading to reduced adult productivity and earnings. Even unborn babies are not spared from heavy metal poisoning.

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The World Health Organization estimates that lead exposure alone costs low and middle-income countries hundreds of billions of dollars annually in lost economic productivity. Ghana faces mounting healthcare costs for dialysis, cancer treatment, and disability support, straining the health system and national finances.

Key Recommendations

The Paediatric Society of Ghana urges the government to:

- Declare galamsey a child health emergency
- Protect and monitor all water sources serving pregnant women, children, and schools
- Screen for heavy metals in high-risk districts nationwide
- Enforce zero tolerance against illegal mining
- Establish long-term child development monitoring programmes
- Include child health impact assessments in all mining and environmental policies

Conclusion

The society emphasises that **strong human capital, not natural resources alone, determines a nation's success**. Galamsey creates a destructive cycle: it damages the environment, undermines health and productivity, and weakens Ghana's capacity to manage resources responsibly. Protecting children from galamsey is framed as a moral, medical, and economic imperative essential to Ghana's long-term development and competitiveness.

Yours sincerely,

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President

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