

# **PRESS STATEMENT**

For Immediate Release

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To All Media Agencies

## **Government Should Demonstrate Atewa is out of Bauxite Deal Indeed**

Dr. Gideon Boako, spokesperson for the Vice President, on 19 November called out those he claims to be ‘doubting Thomases NDC’, suggesting that the apparent release of Sinohydro funds has now shamed them.

The Coalition of NGOs and Concerned Citizens Against Mining in Atewa is taking this opportunity to respond to his so-called fourth taunt “that government will destroy Atewa Forest and deprive millions of Ghanaians access to drinking water coming from the Atewa Forest. They have been exposed as available proven bauxite reserves data show that 75% of the total bauxite reserves is within the Nyinahini enclave making Nyinahini the obvious choice over Atewa for any such huge capital investment”.

We would like to thank Dr. Boako for this crucial information, alluding to the exclusion of Atewa, a move that we have been calling for, all along. Thank you for stating it so succinctly. The campaign to remove Atewa Forest from the bauxite agreement has always made this very practical and economically relevant point that bauxite reserves in the Atewa Forest are small compared to other locations, and so Atewa Forest should be excluded from the bauxite deal. We are grateful to Dr. Boako for affirming our position with such clarity and precision. We are happy to observe that the Vice President’s Spokesperson has listened to the voices of reason of Ghanaians, home and abroad, to share this crucial information.

However, if indeed Nyinahini is the obvious choice over Atewa Forest for the bauxite development project, why then do we still see bulldozers in Atewa Forest undertaking stock surveys and assessing the expected damage to tree species from bauxite mining, and all with the participation of Forestry Commission staff? Why did GIADEC, in a recent meeting with the Concerned Citizens of Atewa Forest, make it clear that there are five mountains in Atewa Forest Reserve identified for mining bauxite, and that they would begin in the Asiakwa area?

Although Dr. Boako's statement backs up our point, his words do not convince us in any way that Atewa Forest is excluded from the deal and so our so-called 'taunt' still stands. It was government that included it in the MPSA, even though the reserve is small and, as far as we are aware, it is still

part of that deal. Regardless of what Dr. Boako now says, the threat to the forest and to the source of clean water for 5 million people still stands.

We would also like to point out that the apparent release of the first tranche of Sinohydro funds has absolutely no bearing at all anyway on Dr. Boako point anyway. And further, it has never been a politically motivated concern. Rather it has emanated entirely from our concerns over the future of the Atewa Forest Reserve as a critically important and protected high forest ecosystem and the future of the wildlife, clean water sources and climate change adaptation capacities for over 5 million Ghanaians and the entire global community.

In light of Dr. Boako's changing narrative, we demand that government officially excludes the protected Atewa Forest Reserve from the bauxite agreement and instead increases its protective status to that of a National Park so that there can be no further threats to this critical mountain forest ecosystem from an investment that government now affirms will not be significant.

This is the time to leverage our long-term partnership with China, also the Natural Climate Solution Champion, as appointed by the United Nations, to harness the green investment potential of Atewa Landscape. It is also time to redirect investment and transition Atewa into a living landscape that supports, water services, climate adaptation, biodiversity and fosters well-being and prosperity.

**For Further Feedback**

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