

MISSION

The Africa Faith and Justice Network, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, seeks to educate and advocate for just relations with Africa and to work in partnership with African peoples as they engage in the struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of crea-



A BRIEF HISTORY

Moved to action by personal experiences in Africa, three Catholic missionary congregations namely the Missionaries of Africa, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), and the Society of African Missions, founded the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) in 1983 to transform United States (U.S.) policy towards Africa and her people. Since that time, membership has grown and remains committed in faith to advocate in Washington, DC for U.S. relations with Africa that foster justice and peace, and to educate the public across the U.S. on the truth about Africa.

Championing Community Rights in Sierra Leone's Gold Mining Sector



Main road leading to the mining town of Baomahun from Bo city

Across Africa, large-scale mining operations often leave local communities empty-handed due to shady deals between governments and investors. These communities frequently lose their land, livelihoods, and homes, only to face unemployment and broken promises. Weak governance and lack of accountability enable corporations to shirk their responsibilities. As a result, communities with the richest mineral deposits are often the poorest, a harsh reality that underscores the need for transparency and accountability in the extractive industry. AFJN has long championed the rights of such communities, amplifying their voices and demanding accountability. The 2025 community stakeholders engagement with FG Gold in Sierra Leone marks a crucial step towards addressing critical human rights and development concerns in the Baomahun community.

FG Gold – Baomahun Gold Project – Sierra Leone



FG Gold's investment in Sierra Leone's Baomahun Gold Project has been touted as one of the largest gold mines currently under development on the African continent and is set to become Sierra Leone's first large-scale commercial gold mine. The company

pledged 1% of gross revenues to a Community Development Fund, promising infrastructure, education, and healthcare improvements. Despite these promises however, reports and interviews with the community indicates that the reality on the ground is quite different. The community isn't seeing the benefits.

Locals have complained about unfulfilled promises, including inadequate compensation for relocated families, lack of access to clean water, and insufficient job opportunities. The situation is dire, with some residents forced to travel long distances for clean water, children walking on dangerous bridges destroyed by heavy duty mining trucks, and an increasing number of community members facing health issues due to environmental degradation resulting from mining and exploration activities. The company's response to these allegations hasn't been satisfactory, leading to growing discontent among locals and workers.



In 2025, AFJN organized a major community event, "Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges", bringing together FG Gold, and the Baomahun community stakeholders together. This face-to-face meeting was the result of two years of advocacy, including community outreach, town halls. Led by AFJN's Sierra Leone Coordinator, Emmanuel Bryma Momoh, the spirited gathering drew over 800 members from the Valunia Chiefdom, and led to the establishment of a Joint Community Company Dialogue Committee. This milestone gathering tackled pressing concerns, highlighting AFJN's commitment to transparency and accountability in the extractive sector, and holding corporations accountable to impacted communities.



Cross-section of participants at the community meeting at Baomahun Court Barray

A groundbreaking community engagement meeting was held in the mining community of Baomahun, Sierra Leone, on October 10, 2025, where FG Gold (a Gold Project that is set to be Sierra Leone's first large scale commercial gold mine), and local stakeholders gathered to discuss several community concerns arising from the company's mining activities and its alleged treatment of locals., facilitated by the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN).



"Our drinking wells once quenched our thirst, now they poison our lives"
Mrs. Kadiatou Blalie , Head of Land owner Family in Kavorma
— Community Advocate, Valunia Chiefdom

The meeting provided a first of its kind safe platform for community members to express their grievances and engage in open dialogue with FG Gold representatives. Community members expressed grievances, citing limited employment opportunities for locals, contamination of community water sources, destruction of roads by FG Gold's heavy-duty trucks which impedes pupils' safe access to school, and limited access to project benefits, leaving the community feeling marginalized.



***“We don’t reject investors. We reject injustice”
Mr. Alfred Mengor — Landholding family, Valunia Chiefdom***

The meeting was attended by several key stakeholders including traditional authorities, landholding families, miners, government officials, women, faith-based organizations, the police, the media, and representatives of FG Gold. The concerns highlighted by community members underscores the need for FG Gold to prioritize community development and ensure that its operations benefit the local population. According to many of the speakers, the company's activities have had a significant negative impact on the community, and it is essential that they take steps to mitigate these negative effects and maximize the benefits for the community.



***“Our gold should not just shine in the markets abroad; it should shine in our schools, our hospitals, and in the eyes of our children.” —
Women’s Leader, Valunia Chiefdom***

The gathering’s concern included facilitating open and constructive dialogue, identifying key human rights and development concerns, and encouraging local ownership and participation in monitoring corporate commitments. According to AFJN Executive Director Dr. Steven Nabieu Rogers, the meeting “was designed to provide a platform for community members to engage with FG Gold representatives and ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed” .



"They call us unskilled, but no one was born knowing how to mine. Give us a chance to learn." — Mr. Smart Adu Youth Leader, Baomahun Town

Key outcomes of the meeting included the recommendation for a formation of a Joint Community-Company Dialogue Committee to monitor commitments and mediate grievances, and the development of a Community Action Plan to outline community priorities and responsibilities. The Committee will provide a platform for ongoing dialogue and collaboration between the community and FG Gold, ensuring that the company's operations are aligned with community needs and expectations.



Evelyn Gyanjihassan, Community Representative Manager for FG Gold

AFJN's commitment to providing technical support and serving as a convener has created a platform for sustainable development and cooperation between FG Gold and the local community. The organization's involvement has helped to build trust and confidence between the parties, creating an environment conducive to constructive dialogue and collaboration.

In response to these concerns, Ms Evelyn Gyanfihassan the community representative manager for FG Gold committed to strengthening its engagement with the community and ensuring that its operations benefit the local population. The company acknowledged the importance of transparency and accountability in its operations and committed to working closely with the community to address their concerns.

Conclusion

AFJN's advocacy efforts in Baomahun, Sierra Leone, have led to significant progress, including the establishment of a Joint Community-Company Dialogue Committee. The community has rallied behind AFJN's initiative, with locals expressing gratitude and urging AFJN to remain engaged. "We thank AFJN for standing with us," said Commander Bobor Baryoh, a community leader, "and we demand they continue to support us in ensuring FG Gold benefits our people." As FG Gold prepares for its first gold pour in 2026, the community is optimistic about the future.



"We thank AFJN for standing with us," said Commander Bobor Baryoh, a community leader, "and we demand they continue to support us in ensuring FG Gold benefits our people."

AFJN's next steps include continued community engagement, implementation of a Community Action Plan, and livelihood support programs. The community's backing underscores AFJN's crucial role in promoting transparency and accountability in Sierra Leone's mining sector. AFJN looks forward to collaborating with FG Gold and the community to forge a future where mining benefits are shared equitably, bringing dignity and hope to the people of Baomahun.

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