

Guinea landslide kills three illegal miners

CONAKRY - Two women and a man who slipped past security in northeastern Guinea to pan for gold in the region's mines died in a landslide, following a week of heavy rains.



Photo: News Ghana

Guinea's soils are rich in gold, diamonds and bauxite, but it remains one of the world's poorest countries, driving so-called "artisanal" miners to search for minerals alone or in small groups with little safety equipment.

Alfamadi Kamara, who oversees security of the mines in the Boure Boukaria area near the city of Siguiri, told *AFP* they discovered the dead after they entered the premises unnoticed.

"We were taken by surprise by these illegal gold prospectors," he said by phone. "They took advantage of the moment we were having breakfast to get inside, and here are the consequences."

The bodies of the three victims, all in their 30s and 40s, were handed over to their families, according to a doctor at a hospital in nearby Kintinian.

The toll could yet rise, the doctor said on condition of anonymity, with three more people badly injured and others still missing.

Illegal miners are regularly expelled from extraction sites owned by multinational firms in the Siguiri area, who risk their lives to unearth enough precious metal or minerals to sell on to dealers.

Accidents similar to Thursday's have killed dozens of people in the past five years in the area.

Source: *AFP*

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