



The Benchmark in African Mining and Construction

Port Louis, 21st July

## Banlaw Africa returns to work in Liberia following civil unrest

Banlaw Africa recently restarted work following protests that turned violent at the Tokadeh Mine, in Nimba County in the mountainous north east of Liberia. Protestors, some armed, moved through Arcelor Mittal's Tokadeh Mine vandalizing, looting and burning the facilities of the owner and contractors. A total of 240 expatriate and local staff were held hostage for over 24 hours in the mine site workshop. Roads leading to the site were blocked and bridges were damaged which hampered additional security services reaching the mine. The Liberian Police Support Unit and Emergency Response Unit eventually reached Tokadeh and took control during the morning of July 4th and escorted the expats and local staff back to their respective camps or houses.

The mine restarted production on the 5th July, but Banlaw construction work did not recommence until 15th July, since their offices, stores, laboratory and workshops had been severely damaged and looted.

As reported in [allAfrica](#), President Sirleaf of Liberia has apologized for the riot and physical destruction and has reasserted the message that Investors are safe in Liberia. Arcelor Mittal expressed concern on the impact of confidence and morale of contractors supporting the project who bore the brunt of the incident and have stated that they will engage with all stakeholders to better understand issues and concerns and seek constructive solutions. President Sirleaf also stated that the government would boost security in the region by setting up a police contingent at Yekepa and the Tokadeh mine. A joint-letter of apology from senior members of local communities was also received.

Banlaw Africa remains committed to its clients operating in challenging, emerging markets but takes the safety and security of its staff very seriously. Following the presidential assurance and Arcelor Mittal's agreement to engage with all stakeholders, Banlaw will be able to restore full construction works when damaged and looted items are either repaired or replaced.



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Richard Levack, CEO of Banlaw commented from Yekepa, "We are indeed fortunate that none of our staff were harmed. However, it was a traumatic experience for our fourteen staff who were held hostage. I am personally engaging with Arcelor Mittal to ensure that every step and precaution is taken to avoid a reoccurrence or anything similar. Mining will provide prosperity for Liberia, but it will take time – mines and surrounding infrastructure are not built overnight. Mine owners and contractors certainly have the social responsibility to provide employment and assistance to local communities. We have operated in a number of countries in Africa for many years and have seen this type of development evolve into growing prosperity for the population. We look forward to being part of that prosperity here in Liberia.

#### About Tokadeh – Arcelor Mittal

*Arcelor Mittal, the world's largest steelmaker is developing the Tokadeh Mine in Nimba County and has contracted Banlaw to construct the tailings management facility and associated infrastructure to operate with a new Concentrator facility to process ore which will be hauled 243 kilometres by rail to Buchanan for onward shipment to their various steel mills. Arcelor Mittal is ramping up to ship 15million tonnes of ore per year from Tokadeh.*

#### About Banlaw

*Since 2000, Banlaw Africa has grown rapidly to become one of the leading contract mining, civil engineering and construction companies in sub-Saharan Africa. The group has a registered office in Port Louis, Mauritius, an administrative office in Accra Ghana, and regional operational offices in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire and Monrovia, Liberia.*

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