

# CG Abubakar Audi upped the ante in the war against illegal mining and smuggling of crude oil



**L**eadership positions are more often than not platforms to express yourselves. They offer the people you serve, the opportunity to know the real you and your ability to rise above challenges and make a difference. Many people thrust into positions of leadership have seemingly been overwhelmed by the challenges they face and ended up leaving the problems unsolved. Others have even created more with either their buck-passing or wrong approaches which have ended up destroying the little gains their predecessors have achieved. As Ahmed Abubakar Audi marks the first anniversary of the creation of the CG's Marshall - the Mining Marshalls, there is no doubt that the creation has become one of the major achievements of his tenure.

Before we delve into the impact of the Mining Marshalls, it is only pertinent to note the contributions of the Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in other sectors where he had established specialized teams to tackle pressing national challenges. First was the creation of the CG's Special Intelligence Squad which has destroyed over 260 illegal refineries, arrested over 700 suspects and convicted more than 200

since its inception. There is no doubt that the Special Intelligence Squad has played a major role, collaborating with other security agencies in curbing the antics of smugglers of crude oil as well as those who operate illegal refineries in the Niger Delta.

Under Ahmed Audi's leadership, the NSCDC also established a formidable Female Special Squad which is essentially targeted at containing abduction of students and attack on schools. According to reports, the Female Special Squad, which comprises of only female Defenders even up to the drivers has thwarted over fifty attacks on schools. Perhaps in a bid to build on the achievements these have recorded was one of the facts that led to the evolution of the CG's Mining Marshalls. As disclosed during the inauguration of the Marshalls in March last year, it was set out to tackle the menace of illegal mining and economic sabotage across the nation. Its men were drawn from the 36 States and FCT Commands of NSCDC, and were to be deployed to tackle activities of illegal miners in over 1,975 illegal mining sites across the country.

Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, speaking during the inauguration of the Marshalls in Abuja, decried the menace of illegal mining in Nigeria, saying the creation of Mining Marshalls was a good move to enhance the capacity of the officers and men to appropriately discharge the Corps' statutory duties in the protection of critical national assets and infrastructure.

A year later, not a few people have come to shower accolades on Audi for the initiative as well as the determination that has led to the Marshalls recording outstanding successes. Speaking at the event to mark the first anniversary of the Mining Marshalls, Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, outlined the achievements of the Mining Marshalls, noting that their ranks had grown from 2,220 officers to 2,670 within a year. "The corps has arrested 327 individuals involved in illegal mining, with cases being prosecuted in various courts nationwide. Additionally, over 98 mining sites previously occupied by illegal operators have been reclaimed, allowing legitimate license holders to resume operations," Alake stated. He emphasized that these recoveries would "increase government revenue through improved royalties and strengthen the solid minerals sector's contribution to the economy".

To further bolster the Mining Marshalls' operations, the Minister disclosed plans to deploy satellite technology for enhanced surveillance and adopt non-kinetic approaches

to foster collaboration between the government and artisanal miners.

“The success of the Mining Marshals proves the effectiveness of our strategy in combating illegal mining, and the corps will continue playing a critical role in safeguarding Nigeria's solid minerals sector,” he added.

### Major Achievements and Future Plans

The first major clearance operation was carried out at Mining Lease 19325, owned by North South Extractive Industries Limited, in Jagula, Yagba East LGA, Kogi State. Over 3,000 illegal miners had taken control of the site, preventing the rightful owners—who obtained the license in 2016—from accessing it. The Mining Marshals

national coverage, the Mining Marshals are set to play an even greater role in reshaping Nigeria's solid minerals sector in the coming years.

In a recent development and in a bid to up its ante the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has granted operational licenses to 50 newly registered Private Guard Companies (PGCs), urging strict compliance with industry regulations. Speaking during the license presentation ceremony in Abuja, NSCDC Commandant-General, Dr. Ahmed Audi, reminded operators that adherence to the rules is non-negotiable. He emphasized that relocating any company's head office or branch without prior notification to the corps could result in license revocation. “This task is familiar to many of



successfully evicted the illegal miners and have since maintained security at the site. Similar operations were conducted at: Ganan Mining Limited (ML 56757) – Kuje, FCT; Jinloys Nigeria Limited (QL 22284) – Uru Lopaukwu, Abia State; Orbit Exploration & Natural Products Ltd (ML 772) – Ankpa, Kogi State

### Expanding Nationwide Operations

In the past year, the Mining Marshals identified 457 suspected illegal mining sites and significantly improved intelligence gathering. Alake assured that “the corps' operations will be expanded across all 36 states and the FCT to secure Nigeria's solid minerals industry and protect national assets.”

Assistant Commandant John Attah, leader of the Mining Marshals, reaffirmed their commitment to safeguarding Nigeria's mineral resources. “Since our deployment, we have been working tirelessly to combat illegal mining, provide security at mining sites, and restore confidence for both local and foreign investors. We remain committed to executing our mandate with professionalism and patriotism,” Attah said. With strengthened enforcement strategies and growing

you. The guidelines require at least one company director to have a background in the security or intelligence sector,” Audi stated. He stressed that PGCs must recognize NSCDC as their regulatory authority, with mandatory license renewal at least three months before expiry to avoid penalties. He further warned that operational licenses are non-transferable and prohibited the use of firearms, military-style ranks, or uniforms similar to conventional security agencies. Audi cautioned against the intimidation of citizens and advised operators to maintain transparency, especially in declaring the number of personnel employed. “Guard welfare is critical. Well-paid guards are less likely to compromise and more loyal,” he noted. The NSCDC boss also encouraged the firms to support national security by sharing credible intelligence with the corps. Also speaking, Chris Adigun, President of the Association of Licensed Security Practitioners of Nigeria (ALSPN), urged the new operators to align with the association to strengthen their relationship with the government. “Don't just collect the license—add value to your company, the industry, and to Nigeria. Your role in crime prevention and national safety is vital,” Adigun said.