



Senate Advances Bill to Establish Nigeria Mines Rangers Service: Will It Address Illegal Mining or Become Another Avenue for Corruption?

Description

The Nigerian Senate has passed the second reading of a bill aimed at creating the Nigeria Mines Rangers Service (NMRS), a specialised security agency tasked with securing mining sites, curbing illegal mining activities, and enforcing environmental compliance.

The bill, sponsored by Senator Onawo Ogoshi (PDP, Nasarawa South), was referred to the Senate Committee on Solid Minerals for further deliberation, with a report expected in one week.

Senator Ogoshi, while leading the debate on the bill, emphasised the urgent need for a security outfit specifically designed to monitor the mining sector.

According to him, the NMRS would collaborate with other government agencies to combat illegal mining, stimulate job creation, and promote sustainable mining practices, all of which could contribute significantly to economic growth and diversification.

However, despite widespread support for the bill, concerns linger. Notably, Nigeria loses an estimated \$15.9 billion annually to illegal mining, as highlighted by Senator Orji Kalu (APC, Abia North).

Kalu suggested that arming the NMRS could enhance its effectiveness, but this raises questions about the outfit's ability to succeed where the Nigerian Army has struggled.

A Critical Look: Can NMRS Succeed Where the Nigerian Army Has Failed?

As the debate intensifies, some Nigerians are questioning whether the NMRS will be truly capable of addressing the deeply entrenched illegal mining operations that even the Nigerian Army has yet to eliminate.

How can a newly established agency curb the menace when the military, equipped with advanced training and resources, has so far been unable to stop illegal mining activities across the country?

If the NMRS is to be armed, will their arsenal be more powerful than that of the Nigerian Army, which has yet to fully combat these crimes?

Senator Binos Yaro (PDP, Adamawa South) supports the bill, arguing that the NMRS could patrol mining areas to ensure security and prevent exploitation.

Meanwhile, Senate Chief Whip Tahir Monguno underscored the need for revitalising the neglected mining sector, viewing the establishment of NMRS as a step toward curbing illegal mining and diversifying Nigeria's economy beyond oil dependence.

Despite these optimistic projections, Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin also echoed the need for targeted security interventions in mining areas, especially to combat the rising influence of bandits who often take control of mining operations.

He warned of the risks involved if proper oversight is not established, citing a notorious bandit recently discovered to be involved in illegal mining operations.

The Big Question: Will the NMRS Curb Illegal Mining or Become Another Corruption Avenue?

As the bill progresses, public concerns revolve around whether the NMRS will be genuinely empowered to make a difference or if it will become another avenue for mismanagement and corruption.

With the Nigerian Army yet to fully address the challenges in the mining sector, many are skeptical about the potential success of this new security outfit.

Could the NMRS become yet another bureaucratic project that drains public funds without delivering results?

The success of the NMRS depends on its structure, its ability to function independently, and its capacity to resist external political influences.

For now, while the idea is promising, there remains skepticism about whether it will be the solution Nigeria needs to secure its vast mineral resources or simply another ineffective layer of government spending.

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