

Nigeria considers suspending mining to tackle insecurity

By [Felix Onuah](#)

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Nigeria's government is considering suspending mining in the country because it is being used to finance attacks that have increased insecurity, the justice minister said on Thursday, 21 July.



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An insurgency in the northeast that has festered for more than a decade and rising kidnappings for ransom by armed gangs mainly in the north and northwest are some of the security threats that Nigeria is grappling with. The government considers these acts of terrorism.

Attorney general and justice minister Abubakar Malami told reporters after a meeting of the National Security Council that it was important to target the sources of money used to finance the terrorism.

"The government is looking at what measures to take in terms of addressing, bridging, and blocking the associated sources of funding and indeed ... the possibility or otherwise of suspending, for the time being, mining activities, is being considered as well by the government," he said.

He would not say whether this referred to legal or illegal mining.

Illegal gold mining

Nigeria is not a major mining jurisdiction but illegal gold mining also takes place in northwestern states, including Zamfara, Kaduna and Niger, where armed gangs, known locally as bandits, are rife.

Malami said the government was also looking at possibly restricting the use of motorcycles widely used by citizens and popular among bandits.

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