

**Cote d'Ivoire gov't shuts Angovia gold mine after inter-ethnic clashes**  
**By Xinhua**  
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ABIDJAN, July 18 (Xinhua) -- Cote d'Ivoire government has ordered closure of Angovia gold mine where inter-ethnic clashes between the villagers and gold washers left at least three people dead, 10 others injured and many more were left homeless.

Speaking on Wednesday in Angovia, 200 km from Abidjan, the Defence Minister Paul Koffi Koffi said the "government had decided to close down the Angovia gold mine."

"Gold mining should stop in all the 33 villages neighbouring Angovia," the defence minister insisted.

Koffi reminded the local population that for anyone to mine gold, "they need to have a permit or a licence from the government. "

He also termed the payment of a passage fee of 200 FCFA by the gold washers to the villagers as illegal.

"There is no law that authorizes the payment of such a fee," he said while urging the villagers "to immediately" cease demanding for 200 FCFA from those searching for gold.

Violence broke out on July 10 following the killing of a gold washer by villagers after he failed to pay the passage fee to access the site where the search for gold was going on in Angovia village.

The gold washers, majority of whom come from northern Cote d'Ivoire and some other neighbouring countries north of Cote d'Ivoire, attacked the natives of Baoule village to revenge the killing of the young gold washer.

He promised that all those who were involved in the attacks will have to appear in court to answer for their crimes.

Other measures that were announced by the minister included "deployment of security officers to the area until such a time that calm will be restored and organization of reconciliation forums."

A mission from the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI) visited Angovia on Monday and reported that "calm had slowly started returning to the area since some businesses were open."

The objective of the visit was to hold talks with the population and the authorities, give support to the affected families, especially those who lost their loved ones in the tragedy and promote reconciliation through dialogue.