



VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

1 The Fund for Peace (FFP) has continued to promote and advance the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) and remained active within the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) during the 2025 reporting period. Throughout the year, FFP continued to participate in the monthly NGO Pillar meetings, VPI discussions, corporate and government verification meetings, and dialogue with companies, governments, and civil society.

FFP President and Executive Director Paul Turner and Ghana In-Country Working Group (Ghana ICWG) Co-Chair Christopher Nyarko represented FFP at the 2025 VPI Annual Plenary in London from March 18 to 21, 2025. During the Plenary, they hosted a roundtable presentation on Ghana ICWG activities and practical country-level implementation of the Voluntary Principles. Christopher Nyarko also participated in an official Plenary panel on the role of artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in fueling organized crime, where panelists shared insights and reform strategies from Ghana, Mozambique, and other African contexts. Mr. Nyarko addressed illegal ASM in Ghana, emphasizing accountability for illegal miners alongside incentives for formalization. Mr. Turner served as part of a verification panel for Anglo American at the Plenary as well.

FFP's Human Rights and Business Roundtable (HRBRT), which helped catalyze the creation of the VPI, continued to support dialogue and best practices at the intersection of security, business, and human rights. FFP continued to co-chair the Ghana In-Country Working Group (ICWG) throughout the year. Senior Advisor Perin Arkun supported the ICWG's activities as the FFP staff representative from headquarters.

2 FFP continued to support transparency on VPSHR-related work through public communications, annual reporting, the FFP website, and the dedicated Ghana VPSHR website. In 2025, public updates highlighted the Ghana ICWG's government engagement, coordination meetings, illegal mining discussions, and the Blue Water Guards training.

These public updates include:

- **May 15, 2025:** Public update on the Ghana ICWG meeting with the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah, and the role of the VPSHR in the extractives industry.
- **June 4, 2025:** Public update on the April quarterly coordination meeting in Accra, including discussion of ASM-related security challenges and the need for community engagement and collective action.
- **June 19, 2025:** Public update on the May regional training program for the Blue Water Guards on the Voluntary Principles curriculum and human rights risks in the mining sector.



- **December 19, 2025:** Public update on a high-level VPI delegation to Mozambique focused on transition to full VPI membership, National Action Planning processes, civil society engagement, and private sector/extractives security engagement.

3 FFP convened five HRBRT sessions in 2025, averaging approximately 25 to 30 participants per session. Freeport-McMoRan continued as a dues-paying corporate member. Other participating companies and stakeholders included Rio Tinto, Chevron, ENI, Glencore, and others. Additionally, FFP continued to consult and advise corporate pillar partners such as Shell and TotalEnergies in 2025.

Date	Session	Speakers
March 6, 2025	Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence and Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the Mining Sector	Haajarah Ahmed (ICMM); Salil Tripathi (IHRB); Emily Holland (Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; Georgetown Law)
May 28, 2025	AI, Data Privacy, and Digital Infrastructure in Conflict Settings	Luisa Franco Machado (EquiLabs); Faris Natour (Article One Advisors)
July 23, 2025	Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence in Fragile Contexts	Andrea Vaccari (Freeport-McMoRan); Luke Wilde (twentyfifty); Alice Kasznar (twentyfifty)
October 8, 2025	Meeting the Moment: Ensuring Protections for Industry, Governments, and Migrant Workers Across Borders	Gladys Cisneros (International Labour Organization); Neill Wilkins (Ethical Impact; formerly IHRB); Dr. William Arrocha (Middlebury Institute of International Studies)
December 10, 2025	Operating in Conflict Economies: Insights from Current Crises	Emily Holland (Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; Georgetown Law); Jonathan Drimmer (Steptoe LLP); Claude Voillat (TrustWorks)

The sessions supported cross-pillar dialogue, peer learning, and practical exchange on identifying, preventing, and responding to human rights and security risks in fragile and conflict-affected environments. FFP also plans to explore HRBRT membership and engagement in additional sectors (e.g., agribusiness, construction, technology, and renewable energy) to expand and diversify membership in 2026.

FFP engaged in dialogue and consultations with DCAF, AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont throughout 2025 focusing on conflict prevention and resilience building in mining-affected communities in Ghana. These series of discussions culminated in the implementation of a pilot project aimed at strengthening the Ghana ICWG's role in conflict prevention and community engagement by supporting the contextualization of analytical tools and best practices. This was done in coordination with companies to improve the implementation of the VPs on the ground, as well as community relations and engagement in Ghana's mining regions.

Procedures

4. FFP supported VPI implementation, reporting, and peer learning through annual reporting, NGO Pillar engagement, Plenary participation, HRBRT programming, and Ghana ICWG activities. At the 2025 Annual Plenary, Paul Turner and Christopher Nyarko presented the Ghana ICWG's activities, while Christopher Nyarko's official ASM panel contribution supported peer learning on illegal mining, organized crime, rule of law, community security, and ASM formalization. In addition, Paul Turner participated in an Implementation Review session for Anglo American at the 2025 Plenary. FFP proactively reaches out to participants who have identified issues and challenges during the implementation/verification review process to offer its support, including follow-up engagement with companies such as Gemfields that have expressed interest. FFP also uses the HRBRT and Ghana ICWG as practical learning platforms, bringing together companies, governments, civil society, and experts to compare approaches to prevention, mitigation, and accountability.

Promotion of the Voluntary Principles

5. FFP promoted the VPSHR through direct engagement with companies, civil society, government stakeholders, and actors connected to the extractives sector. FFP's HRBRT addressed topics directly relevant to VPSHR implementation, including due diligence, conflict sensitivity, responsible security, and rights-respecting business practice. FFP's 2025 Plenary engagement further connected the VPSHR to illegal ASM, organized crime, accountability, formalization, conflict prevention, and community engagement. Public communications on Ghana ICWG activities also helped demonstrate how the VPs can be applied to real security and human rights risks in Ghana. During 2025, FFP participated regularly in VPI-led ICWG quarterly meetings to share best practices and lessons learned, while also gaining insights from other working groups, thereby contributing to broader awareness and understanding of the Voluntary Principles among stakeholders.

6. Through the Ghana ICWG, FFP engaged local communities, civil society organizations, government representatives, and companies. The ICWG is co-led by FFP, WANEP-Ghana, and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), and operates as a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for human rights, peace and security discussions, ensuring continued awareness raising for the VPs through national, regional, and community-level sensitization efforts.

The Ghana ICWG held two coordination meetings in 2025. Both meetings were held in Accra on April 29 and May 27, 2025, respectively. On April 29, ICWG members also met with the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah, who agreed to be a champion for the VPSHR in Ghana. The April coordination meeting brought together all three pillars. WANEP-Ghana presented conflict resolution mechanisms, mining companies discussed security incidents at concessions in early 2025, and participants emphasized collective action, inclusive



community engagement, conflict prevention, and sustainable responses to galamsey. The ICWG's second coordination meeting was held jointly with the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA) where a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) session on responsible security practices in the extractives sector was the primary focus of the convening. The joint session explored the possibility of co-creating a responsible security practice program in Ghana, with potential for replication in other jurisdictions.

The NGO Pillar meeting held on December 22, 2025, engaged and facilitated the participation of new NGO Pillar members representing mining-affected communities, and introduced them to the VPs and ICWG activities.

The Minerals Commission also briefed ICWG members on the Blue Water Guards initiative, launched in March 2025 by the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources to support efforts to address galamsey-related pollution of rivers and other water bodies. The initiative aims to equip 2,000 Ghanaian youth to monitor river health, identify illegal mining activity, and work with local communities and traditional authorities to support the protection and restoration of affected water bodies. The first phase trained 400 young men and women at the Ghana Navy Riverine Command under the auspices of the Minerals Commission. To complement this effort, the Ghana ICWG conducted a regional VPSHR training in late May 2025 for 21 Blue Water Guards, using its Voluntary Principles curriculum. The training was delivered by Albert Yelyang of WANEP-Ghana and Christopher Nyarko of FFP, both Ghana ICWG co-chairs, and introduced participants to foundational human rights principles, the Voluntary Principles, and human rights and security risks associated with the mining sector.

The Ghana ICWG expanded its NGO Pillar membership by identifying and recruiting the following seven new NGOs/CSOs in 2025:

- Centre for Social Impact Studies (CeSIS) - Obuasi, Ghana
- African Center for Energy Policy (ACEP) - Accra, Ghana
- Northern Patriots in Research and Advocacy (NORPRA) - Bolgatanga-Upper East Region
- Peace for Life Ghana - Walewale, Ghana
- Kasa Initiative Ghana - Accra, Ghana
- Coastal Zone Mining Association (CZMA) - Accra, Ghana
- Women in Mining Ghana - Accra

7 FFP encouraged adoption and implementation of the VPSHR through engagement with VPI members, non-member companies, government stakeholders, and civil society. In Ghana, ICWG engagement with MLNR and the Minerals Commission supported integration of VPSHR considerations into responses to illegal mining and related security concerns. In December 2025, FFP supported a VPI high-level delegation to Mozambique, including discussions on full VPI membership, National Action Planning, civil society participation, and private sector security in the extractives sector. HRBRT programming also promoted responsible business and human rights practices by enabling companies and other stakeholders to discuss due diligence, conflict sensitivity, and rights respecting security arrangements.

Country Implementation

8 In Ghana, FFP's 2025 ICWG work focused on rule of law challenges linked to illegal ASM and galamsey, including accountability, incentives for formalization, inclusive community engagement, and rights-respecting security responses. ICWG engagement with MLNR, the Minerals Commission, companies, and civil society supported dialogue on reducing human rights risks while addressing illegal mining. The April coordination meeting and May training reinforced rule-of-law approaches to illegal mining and community-facing monitoring. FFP's Mozambique engagement also supported VPI implementation and rule of law objectives through discussion of Mozambique's transition to full VPI membership, National Action Planning, civil society engagement, and private sector security practices in the extractives sector.

9 FFP supported risk identification and monitoring through Ghana ICWG coordination meetings, ad hoc discussions with Working Group members, and wider business and human rights programming. In 2025, the ICWG addressed security incidents at mining concessions, illegal ASM risks, and human rights and security risks facing the Blue Water Guards and affected communities. Stakeholders identified prevention and mitigation measures, including community engagement, coordination with authorities, clear reporting roles, and avoiding direct confrontation by unarmed guards. Overall, FFP integrates human rights into all of its work, whether it be fragility assessments conducted for the European Investment Bank and Islamic Development Bank, or human security early warning and response efforts undertaken in the Niger Delta and with ECOWAS.

10 FFP worked with the Ghana ICWG to strengthen VPSHR related policies, procedures, and guidance. The ICWG's May 2025 VPSHR curriculum training for 21 Blue Water Guards covered foundational human rights principles, the Voluntary Principles, and mining-sector human rights and security risks through interactive, practical sessions. The training also provided an opportunity for participants to raise shared concerns, including weak enforcement of mining laws and safety risks facing unarmed guards when encountering armed illegal miners. A Minerals Commission representative clarified that the Guards are expected to monitor and report illegal activities to security forces rather than directly confront miners and noted ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination with authorities and address their needs. This helped clarify roles, reduce potential security risks, and reinforce rights-respecting approaches to community-facing monitoring.

11 FFP engaged public and private security-related stakeholders through the Ghana ICWG, which provided a forum for government, companies, and civil society to discuss security risks linked to illegal mining and extractives operations. At the April 29, 2025, coordination meeting, mining company representatives discussed security incidents at their concessions, while WANEP-Ghana presented conflict resolution mechanisms and the Minerals Commission briefed members on the Blue Water Guards initiative. This helped strengthen dialogue across the government, corporate, and NGO pillars on practical approaches



to risk mitigation, community engagement, and rights-respecting responses to galamsey-related security challenges. The May 2025 Blue Water Guards training both engaged and further supported public security coordination by clarifying that Guards should monitor and report illegal activity to security forces rather than directly confront miners.

12. FFP supported accountability through dialogue, peer learning, and practical implementation platforms. The Ghana ICWG strengthened multi-stakeholder accountability by convening companies, government representatives, and civil society to address security incidents, illegal mining, community engagement, and implementation challenges. The addition of new NGO Pillar members broadened civil society participation and reinforced collective responsibility across the government, corporate and NGO pillars. The HRBRT discussions allowed companies, civil society, governments, and experts to examine current challenges, compare practices, and consider how to uphold VPSHR values in complex operating environments.

Lessons and Issues

13. Illegal ASM and galamsey continue to pose significant security, rule of law, environmental, and human rights challenges in Ghana. Effective responses require both accountability for illegal activity and incentives to support ASM formalization. The reporting year also reinforced the importance of inclusive community engagement as a core element of conflict prevention and sustainable responses to illegal mining and related security risks. In this context, clear roles, practical training, and coordination are especially important for community facing actors such as the Blue Water Guards, particularly where enforcement responsibilities may be unclear or where illegal miners may be armed.

FFP conducted research on ASM and has begun developing a handbook to capture lessons learned and best practices. We are currently seeking donor support to complete this work and contribute to the broader community of practice operating in the extractives sector and similar contexts.

FFP's HRBRT programming further demonstrated the continued relevance of the VPs to emerging business and human rights issues, including heightened due diligence, Indigenous Peoples' Rights, digital infrastructure and data privacy in conflict settings, migrant worker protections, environmental due diligence, and conflict economies. Looking ahead, FFP will continue supporting VPs implementation through the Ghana ICWG, the HRBRT, engagement with VPI participants and non-member stakeholders, practical trainings, and dialogue. Opportunities include further ICWG engagement on illegal mining and community security, additional training for public and community-facing actors, support for ASM formalization and accountability approaches, continued VPI engagement in countries such as Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mozambique, and HRBRT expansion.