NAIRAMETRICS · GHANA

Ghana chases $4.14m unpaid oil surface rentals

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Ghana's Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) is pressing for recovery of $4.14 million in unpaid surface rentals owed by upstream petroleum companies operating in the country, according to its 2026 semi-annual report. The committee has recommended that authorities impose tougher enforcement measures against operators who have defaulted on these payments.

Surface rentals are annual fees levied on petroleum licence holders based on the acreage of their exploration or production blocks. Failure to collect them in full represents a breach of licence obligations and signals weaknesses in regulatory compliance monitoring. PIAC, the statutory body mandated to oversee management of Ghana's petroleum revenues and ensure accountability in the upstream sector, identified the shortfall as part of its broader review of how oil revenues are being tracked and remitted.

The recommendation for stricter action against defaulters suggests PIAC believes existing enforcement mechanisms have been insufficient to compel timely payment. The report does not name specific companies involved in the defaults, nor does it detail the number of operators or blocks affected. However, the scale of the outstanding amount — $4.14 million — points to multiple licence holders across Ghana's upstream acreage.

Ghana's upstream sector includes producing assets such as the Jubilee and TEN fields in the deepwater Tano Basin, as well as a range of exploration blocks at varying stages of activity. The country has in recent years worked to tighten fiscal governance

of its oil revenues, with PIAC serving as a key watchdog institution under the Petroleum Revenue Management Act. Persistent shortfalls in surface rental collections, if unaddressed, can undermine the credibility of Ghana's upstream fiscal framework and create precedent for wider non-compliance.

The semi-annual report's publication places pressure on the Ghana Upstream Petroleum Chamber and the Petroleum Commission to follow up with defaulting operators. Enforcement measures available under Ghanaian petroleum law include suspension of licences, financial penalties, and in extreme cases revocation of petroleum agreements. Whether authorities will escalate to such measures remains to be seen, but PIAC's public recommendation increases the political cost of inaction.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is a regulatory compliance and revenue governance story with no named project, contract, or procurement action. Norwegian service companies should monitor whether enforcement escalates to licence suspensions or revocations, which could affect activity levels on affected blocks. No supplier outreach is warranted at this stage.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Monitor whether any licence suspensions resulting from non-payment affect drilling programmes on blocks where rigs or well services are contracted.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Track enforcement outcomes on producing assets; licence complications at fields with subsea infrastructure could affect maintenance and modification scopes.
- **Service:** Operators under regulatory pressure may defer discretionary spending; service companies active in Ghana should assess counterparty risk on existing work orders.

Original source: Nairametrics →

Saga Advisory

General: info@saga-advisory.com · saga-advisory.com

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN