



**LAND RIGHTS
DEFENDERS**

PRESS KIT

2025 – 2026

Defending Ancestral Land Rights Across Ghana and the Global South



Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu — Founder & Executive Director

ORGANIZATION	STATUS	HEADQUARTERS	CONTACT
Land Rights Defenders Inc.	501(c)(3) Nonprofit	Columbus, Ohio 43206, USA	info@landrightsdefenders.org

About Land Rights Defenders Inc.

Land Rights Defenders Inc. (LRDI) is a 501(c)(3) Indigenous-led nonprofit organization headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, USA. Founded in Ghana and officially incorporated in **April 2023 in the State of Ohio**, LRDI was established by Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu following his flight from persecution in Ghana, where he was granted **humanitarian protection by the US Department of Homeland Security** under the UN Convention Against Torture.

LRDI operates at the intersection of law, advocacy, and cultural preservation. The organization provides direct legal assistance to Indigenous communities facing land grabs, displacement, and institutional injustice, while simultaneously building global awareness through media engagement, policy advocacy, and community education.

MISSION	VISION	VALUES
To secure the protection of Indigenous land rights through direct legal action, capacity building, education, and advocacy.	A world where Indigenous communities have full, secure, and recognized rights to their ancestral lands and cultural heritage.	Justice · Integrity · Community · Accountability · Cultural Preservation · Transparency

Our Story

The organization's founding is rooted in a land rights struggle spanning generations — one that traces its origins to a royal land grant from the late 1600s and its modern crisis to the systematic encroachment that began in 1981. The Benimasi-Boadi community of Ghana's Ashanti Region holds ancestral land originally granted by King Osei Tutu I — founder of the Ashanti Empire — to his consort Oheneyere Yaa Huahi Achama Tutuwaa.

This land — the eternal resting place of Queen Yaa Huahi Achama Tutuwaa, a living repository of sacred water bodies (Bokro, Chuwaa, Adampaasuo, Pankrono, and Subin), ancient medicinal forests, and centuries of Ashanti cultural memory — has been under systematic encroachment by powerful traditional and institutional actors, including Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and elements within the Kumasi Traditional Council.

Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu, a direct descendant of this royal lineage and a seventh-generation heir of the Ashanti Empire, was arbitrarily arrested, subjected to six days of torture in police custody, and forced to flee Ghana under the UN Convention Against Torture. From the United States, he established Land Rights Defenders Inc. to pursue justice through international legal channels, global advocacy, and media engagement.

Our Three Core Programs

1

Legal Advocacy & Direct Representation

LRDI provides direct legal support to Indigenous communities facing land grabs, unlawful dispossession, and institutional abuse. The organization has filed Special Procedure complaints to the UN Human Rights Council, submitted spatial data to UNEP-WCMC to enforce Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), and supported the Benimasi-Boadi community in multiple court proceedings — securing two landmark victories in the Kumasi Circuit Court and the High Court of Ghana.

2

Education & Community Capacity Building

LRDI conducts educational workshops on land rights law, leadership training, and sustainable development for Indigenous communities. The organization's 'Art Meets Activism' campaign fuses artistic expression with advocacy to amplify the voices of communities facing forced displacement and land grabs globally.

3

Global Advocacy & Policy Engagement

LRDI engages international human rights mechanisms including the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the UN Human Rights Council, UNEP, and the OHCHR. The organization advocates for the enforcement of Ghana's Land Act 2020 (Act 1036) and for the integration of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) into national and international land governance frameworks.

Leadership



Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu

Founder & Executive Director

A seventh-generation descendant of the Ashanti Empire and court-recognized representative of the Huahi Achama Tutuwaa Royal Family, Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu founded LRDI after fleeing persecution in Ghana and being granted humanitarian protection by the US Department of Homeland Security. He has spoken before the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in 2024 and 2025, submitted formal contributions to the OHCHR, and has been featured in the International Business Times, USA Today, IPS News, Fairplanet, Native News Online, Lazo Magazine, Alliance Magazine, Capital B News, and Resilience.org.

Board of Directors

LRDI is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors committed to transparency, accountability, and mission-driven leadership. Board members bring expertise in law, nonprofit management, Indigenous rights advocacy, and international development.

Legal & Advocacy Team

LRDI works with a network of legal professionals, human rights advocates, and community organizers across Ghana, the United States, and internationally to advance its mission through litigation, policy submissions, and grassroots mobilization.

International Advocacy & UN Engagement

Land Rights Defenders Inc. has established a significant presence in international human rights and environmental governance forums, making formal contributions to United Nations mechanisms and submitting expert evidence to OHCHR working groups.

<p>April 2025</p>	<p>UNPFII — 24th Session, New York</p> <p>LRDI delivered a formal oral statement at the 24th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York, advocating for the rights of the Benimasi-Boadi Indigenous community and calling for international accountability for land rights violations in Ghana's Ashanti Region.</p>
<p>April 2024</p>	<p>UNPFII — 23rd Session, New York</p> <p>LRDI made its first formal intervention at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, presenting the case of the Benimasi-Boadi community to the international community and calling for the enforcement of FPIC and UNDRIP in Ghana.</p>
<p>2024</p>	<p>OHCHR — Working Group on Enforced Disappearances</p> <p>LRDI submitted a written contribution to the OHCHR Working Group on Enforced Disappearances' thematic study on disappearances in the context of land defense, documenting patterns of coercion, threats, and state-actor involvement in Ghana's Ashanti Region.</p>
<p>2024</p>	<p>OHCHR — Expert Meeting on Enhancing Capacity of Land Rights Defenders</p> <p>LRDI submitted a formal expert contribution to the OHCHR expert meeting on enhancing the international protection capacity of land rights defenders, presenting the Benimasi-Boadi case as a documented example of systematic persecution.</p>
<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>UNEP-WCMC — Spatial Data Submission</p> <p>LRDI submitted spatial data and a formal case study to the United Nations Environment Programme through UNEP-WCMC, advocating for the enforcement of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for the Benimasi-Boadi Indigenous Community Conserved Area.</p>
<p>2024</p>	<p>UN Human Rights Council — Special Procedure Complaint</p> <p>LRDI filed a Special Procedure complaint to the UN Human Rights Council seeking redress for victims of human rights violations by the Ghana Police Service and local authorities in the Benimasi-Boadi case.</p>

Legal Milestones & Court Victories

<p>November 27, 2024</p>	<p>Circuit Court Landmark Ruling</p> <p>Justice Abdul-Razak Musah of the Kumasi Circuit Court delivered a landmark decision affirming the Huahi Achama Tutuwaa Royal Family's inalienable rights to their ancestral lands, grounded in the concept of Allodial Title (Absolute Ownership) under Section 2 of Ghana's Land Act, 2020 (Act 1036). The court recognized Abusuapanin Odeneho Odehyee Nanaba Kwabena Badu as the legitimate head of the family with authority to administer the lands.</p>
<p>July 2025</p>	<p>GH₵1,000,000 Compensation Guarantee Secured</p> <p>The High Court ordered KNUST to execute an Undertaking to pay GH₵1,000,000 (~\$85,000 USD) as compensation as part of damages should the Royal Family succeed in the main suit. This legally solidifies the financial risk for the defendant and confirms the high valuation of the family's claim prior to trial.</p>
<p>July 24, 2025</p>	<p>Court Order Issued Against Encroachment</p> <p>The High Court issued a formal order against ongoing encroachment of the Benimasi-Boadi ancestral lands. Despite this order, encroachment has continued — including grading of new areas, damage to sacred groves and burial grounds, and removal of community warning signposts. LRDI is preparing a committal of contempt application to enforce the order.</p>
<p>December 9, 2025</p>	<p>Case Management Conference</p> <p>The Case Management Conference took place as scheduled. The defendants did not file their defence, did not contest the claim, and did not comply with earlier court orders. The Court adjourned to March 19, 2026 to assign a definitive trial date.</p>
<p>October 21, 2026</p>	<p>High Court Trial Scheduled</p> <p>The High Court has set October 21, 2026 as the trial date for the main suit against KNUST and the Land Commission. LRDI is preparing extensively for this trial, which represents the final determination of the family's land rights.</p>

Source: GlobalGiving Progress Reports 2024–2025; Ghana Court Records

Media Coverage & Publications

Land Rights Defenders Inc. and its founder Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu have been featured in leading independent media outlets, international news agencies, and specialized publications across the United States, Europe, and globally.

Publication	Date	Headline
International Business Times	Oct 10, 2025	Land Rights Defenders Inc. on Indigenous Wisdom and the Future of Land Rights in Africa
USA Today	Feb 12, 2026	Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu on The Last Guardian of Ashanti and Why Land, Lineage, and Truth Still Matter
IPS News (Inter Press Service)	Oct 28, 2025	Indigenous Communities Are the Frontlines of Climate Action — It's Time COP Listened
Fairplanet	Nov 2025	Roots of Resilience: Indigenous Guardians Protecting Benimasi-Boadi's Biodiversity
Fairplanet	Aug 2024	Facing Land Grabs, Ghana's Benimasi-Boadi People Cry Out for Justice
Capital B News	Dec 2025	U.S. Deportations Are Remaking Daily Life in Ghana
Native News Online	Aug 2024	World's Indigenous Peoples Day Q&A;: Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu, Founder of Land Rights Defenders
Lazo Magazine	Aug 2024	Indigenous Land Rights Are Under Attack. One Man Is Fighting To Change That
Alliance Magazine	Aug 2024	A Call for Philanthropy on the International Day of the World's Indigenous People
Analyst News	2025	The Climate Crisis Won't Be Solved Without Indigenous Leadership
Resilience.org	Nov 19, 2024	Guardians of Heritage: The Fight for Land Rights Defenders

Organizational Facts at a Glance

Legal Name	Land Rights Defenders Inc.
EIN	93-2062096
Tax Status	501(c)(3) Public Charity
Incorporated	April 2023, State of Ohio, USA
Headquarters (USA)	846 Wilson Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43206, United States
Field Office	House No. Plot No. 10 BLK K, Boadi, Kumasi, Ashanti Region, Ghana, West Africa
Primary Focus	Indigenous Land Rights — Ghana's Ashanti Region & Global South
Primary Case	Benimasi-Boadi Indigenous Community, Kumasi, Ghana
Key Legal Win	Kumasi Circuit Court — Allodial Title affirmed, Nov 2024
UN Engagements	UNPFII 2024 & 2025; OHCHR submissions; UNEP-WCMC spatial data
Media Features	11+ international publications (IBT, USA Today, IPS, Fairplanet, etc.)
Partnerships	USAID, Microsoft Tech for Social Impact, Google for Nonprofits, GlobalGiving
Website	landrightsdefenders.org
LinkedIn	linkedin.com/company/landrightsinc

Media Contact

Media & Press Inquiries	General Information
<p>Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu Founder & Executive Director info@landrightsdefenders.org landrightsdefenders.org</p>	<p>Land Rights Defenders Inc. Columbus, Ohio, USA info@landrightsdefenders.org EIN: 93-2062096</p>

