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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 2012

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EARTH: Gold, Lead and Death in Nigeria

Alexandria, VA – Throughout the Zamfara region in northwestern Nigeria, children are dying at an alarming rate. What exactly could be causing such an epidemic? The answer lies in the unique geology.

Lead-rich gold ores permeate the area, and mining them provides critical income for many families in need. Families get by on small-scale artisanal level mining, which, in turn, exposes them to lead poisoning. With the rising value of gold, villagers must weigh the socioeconomic impacts against the lethal health repercussions.

How will heavy metal poisoning impact future generations in Nigeria? Is there a way to safely mine this unique ore so that denizens can continue to make a living? What about the geology makes this particular deposit so dangerous? Read the rest of the story online at http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/gold-lead-and-death-nigeria.

Read this story and more in the March issue of EARTH Magazine, available online now at www.earthmagazine.org/. Discover what role mercury played in the Permian extinction; "core the air" as scientists test today's atmosphere to reveal modern climate secrets; and, explore the asteroid Vesta all in this month's issue of EARTH.

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Keep up to date with the latest happenings in Earth, energy and environment news with EARTH magazine online at http://www.earthmagazine.org/. Published by the American Geosciences Institute, EARTH is your source for the science behind the headlines.

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