

# NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

## Ablakwa Chases Finance Minister Over US\$400M Church Project



**Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, MP for North Tongu,**



**KEN OFORI ATTA, MINISTER OF FINANCE**

**T**he Member of Parliament for North Tongu Constituency, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, has accused the government especially the Minister of Finance, Ken Ofori-Atta of running away from accountability in the alleged disbursement of over

GHC200 million for the US\$400 million National Cathedral project. Reacting to the mid-year budget review presented to parliament by Ken Ofori-Atta on Monday, Mr Ablakwa said the minister for finance engaged in illegality when

he conveniently avoided addressing some issues bordering on accountability. "Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta, did not say a word in the Mid-Year Review about his unconstitutional withdrawals

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## After A Litany Of Failed Promises...

### OPEN LETTER TO VICE PRESIDENT DR MAHMOUD BAWUMIA BY ISSIFU SEIDU KUDUS GBEADESE

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## Corruption

**SP Invites Jubilee House Coordinator For Special Initiatives Over NDA 'Chop-Chop'**



**Special Prosecutor, Kissi Agyabeng**

**T**he Office of the Special Prosecutor has commenced investigations into suspected corruption and corruption-related offenses in respect of a contract awarded by the Northern Development Authority (NDA) to A&Qs Consortium for consultancy services under the Infrastructure for

*cont. on page 2*

## From Invading Iraq To Guaidó's Flop: The CV Of US Coup-Plotter John Bolton



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# The INSIGHT

## EDITORIAL

### PUT THEM TO USE

It has been over five years now and still the mobile health vans that were once the main succour for those in need of medical attention in some remote parts of the country are still under the mercy of the weather.

Clearly, nothing can justify the neglect of the eight mobile health vans left to rot for all these years.

Again, nothing can explain why such a noble policy intended to address health needs of people in rural communities should be scrapped.

It is difficult to understand why political authorities often shelve initiatives meant to tackle the challenges of the people while introducing new ones.

The "Onuador" health vans which were meant to bring healthcare to the doorsteps of Ghanaians and are now in precarious state and this is deeply troubling.

The vans should not be allowed to rot any further considering the huge amount that was spent in procuring them and as such it is incumbent upon the health authorities to take the necessary steps to put them to use.

There is no medal to be won in failing to put the vans to use, neither is there any to be lost in using them and as such the interest of the people whose taxes are used for these ventures should always be paramount.

The huge amount spent in buying the vans should not be allowed to go down the drain and as such everything has to be done to salvage them before it is too late.

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## Ablakwa Chases Finance Minister Over US\$400M Church Project

*from front page*

of some GHC200million from the Consolidated Fund for the infamous National Cathedral project.

"He also made absolutely no effort to address the many illegalities and controversies that have dogged the US\$400million project which his boss, President Nana Akufo-Addo, describes as his priority of priorities," he stated in a Facebook post.

Mr Ablakwa questioned how long the government intends to avoid accounting for the use of state funds for the national cathedral project and the extra cost the state has incurred from undertaking the construction.

"How long will government keep running away from accountability and what is the fate of the stalled project after so many structures including a diplomatic



Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, MP for North Tongu.

KEN OFORI ATTA, MINISTER OF FINANCE

property, a modern luxury apartment complex, judges' bungalows, the Scholarship Secretariat, the Passport Office, Judicial Training Institute and an IT firm have all been demolished with many awaiting compensation?" he questioned.

Mr Ablakwa, on various occasions, has accused the government of engaging in illegal financing of the national cathedral project. According to the MP, the project has been fraught with illegality and coverups.

## Corruption SP Invites Jubilee House Coordinator For Special Initiatives Over NDA 'Chop-Chop'

*from front page*

Poverty Eradication Programme.

A statement by the Special Prosecutor stated that the probe is especially in respect of the quantum of the contract sum.

Information available indicates that the contract sum has jumped from over US\$4 million to a whopping US\$21 million after a new coordinator took over.

The Special Prosecutor has also directed the Controller and Accountant General to immediately freeze payments arising from the contract.

The Coordinator for Special Initiatives at the Jubilee House and several serving officers, including the Chief Executive, relevant past officers of the NDA, and officers of the A&Qs Consortium have all been invited for questioning.

All the invited persons have been placed on bail.

The statement added that all persons deemed culpable by the Special

Prosecutor for corruption and corruption-related offense (s) would be charged and arraigned before the High Court for prosecution.

Source -- [starrfm.com.gh](http://starrfm.com.gh)

## THE INSIGHT

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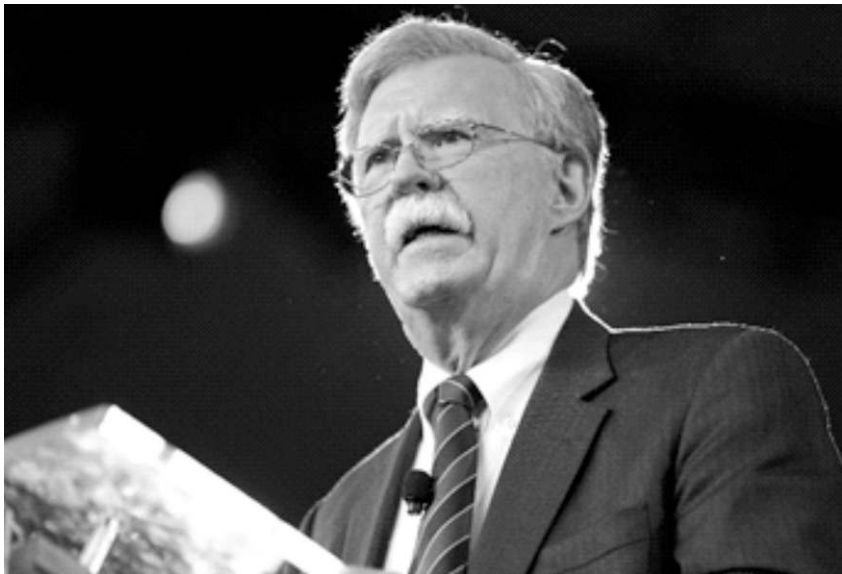
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# From Invading Iraq To Guaidó's Flop: The CV Of US Coup-Plotter John Bolton



*John Bolton. Photo: Gage Skidmore / Wikimedia. In a recent interview with CNN, former US National Security Advisor John Bolton affirmed his role in coups abroad. The hardliner was an architect of the invasion of Iraq, and most recently, played a role in the attempted coup against Venezuelan President Maduro.*

By Tanupriya Singh

On July 12, former US National Security advisor John Bolton, admitted on national television that he had helped orchestrate coups in foreign countries. Bolton was speaking to CNN host Jake Tapper amid the hearings in Congress on the January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol, by supporters of former president Donald Trump. During the exchange, Bolton stated his disagreement with accusations that the riot was a “coup d’etat aimed at the US constitution”, arguing that it was a “once in a lifetime occurrence”. Tapper then stated “One doesn’t have to be brilliant to attempt a coup”. Bolton’s response, in a widely circulated clip, was “I disagree with that. As someone who has helped plan coup d’etats, not here, but you know other places, it takes a lot of work. And that’s not what he [Trump] did.” Citing his expertise “having planned coups”, in Tapper’s words, Bolton declined to go into specifics, only to say “Well I wrote about Venezuela in the book [“The Room Where It Happened”], and it [the coup] turned out not to be successful— *not that we had all that much to do with it*— but I saw what it took for an opposition to try and overturn an illegally elected president and they failed...” The comments shocked people across the world. Not so much in their content given the documented history of US interference across the world— with an estimated 72 attempts to change other countries’ governments between 1947 and 1989— but the unabashed way in which they were made. The chasm between the rhetoric the US empire has pushed

abroad versus the reality of the way it has conducted itself was captured in a speech made by Vice President Kamala Harris to the Pacific Islands Forum on July 13:

“In this region and around the world the US believes it is important to strengthen the international rules-based order. To defend it, to promote it, and to build on it...Principles that importantly state that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states must be respected. Principles that allow all states big and small to conduct their affairs free from aggression and coercion.” Meanwhile, Bolton’s comments drew widespread condemnation, with former Bolivian president and socialist leader Evo Morales stating, “It is proof that the US is the worst enemy of democracy and life.”

## A career of war-mongering and destruction

Before his stint in the Trump administration, Bolton had already had a decades-long career of hardline, right-wing, and hostile politics in the White House— serving under Republican Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush. Under W. Bush, he served as the Under Secretary of Arms Control, and was one of the leading architects of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, peddling the lie that Saddam Hussein was developing chemical weapons. Prior to that, in May 2002, Bolton delivered a speech at the Heritage Foundation, a right-wing think tank, titled “Beyond the Axis of Evil” — declaring that Cuba, Libya, and Syria were “rogue states” alongside

Iran, Iraq, and North Korea on Bush’s so-called “Axis of Evil”. Bolton started claiming that Cuba was developing biological weapons, circulating a draft speech around the State Department. When an analyst disputed his claims, Bolton pushed to have him fired. Bolton also oversaw the removal of Brazilian diplomat José Bustani as the head of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, after threatening his family. In his role, Bustani had been urging that Iraq join the international treaty to ban chemical weapons. In ratifying the Convention, Iraq would have been subjected to inspections which would have proved that there were no weapons of mass destruction. Meanwhile, the War in Afghanistan was in its second year in 2002 when Bush ordered the US to withdraw from the Rome Statute, and Congress passed the American Service-Members’ Protection Act. The President would work to prevent “to the maximum extent possible” any prosecution of US armed forces, and its allies, by the International Criminal Court. The legislation authorized the use of force to ensure international prosecution was not taken forward, which led to it being dubbed the “Hague Invasion Act”. Bolton was then sent to nearly 100 countries to secure bilateral agreements that would protect US citizens from prosecution.

In 2018, Bolton threatened the ICC with sanctions amid news that it was considering prosecuting US forces over allegations of abuse of detainees in Afghanistan. Bolton was rewarded for his crimes by being appointed as the US ambassador to the UN in 2005. During his one-year tenure, he pushed his aggressive policies further, including the imposition of multilateral sanctions on North Korea. Between leaving his UN appointment and joining the Trump administration in 2018, Bolton spent his time calling for

pre-emptive attacks on Iran, especially during the negotiations around the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the 2015 nuclear deal), and repeatedly advocating for a regime change in the country. He also made similar calls for the bombing of North Korea. Once Bolton was back in the White House, provocations against Iran were ratcheted up, especially following the US’ withdrawal from the nuclear deal, and the enforcement of the “maximum pressure” campaign on Tehran.

## The “Troika of Tyranny” and the plot against President Maduro

In a speech at the Miami Dade College in November 2018, Bolton, in his capacity as Trump’s National Security Advisor, declared the US foreign policy stance against Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

“This Troika of Tyranny, this triangle of terror stretching from Havana to Caracas to Managua, is the cause of immense human suffering, the impetus of enormous regional instability, and the genesis of a sordid cradle of communism in the Western Hemisphere...Under President Trump, the United States is taking direct action against all three regimes to defend the rule of law, liberty, and basic human decency in our region.”

“This is not a time to back away...It is a time to increase the pressure, not reduce it”, Bolton would add later, after announcing new sanctions against the three countries. Bolton also welcomed the elections of “like-minded leaders in key countries”— referring to the election of far-right leaders Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and Ivan Duque in Colombia. In December 2018, Venezuela’s democratically-elected President Nicolás Maduro specifically accused Bolton of trying to overthrow the government— “Mr. John Bolton has been assigned, once again, as the chief of a plot to fill Venezuela with violence and to seek a foreign military intervention”.

The President also accused the US of being behind the attempt on his life in August 2018.

In January 2019, the Trump administration launched the coup attempt against Maduro, declaring right-wing politician Juan Guaidó as interim president. The US escalated the pressure in the following months, imposing more comprehensive sanctions, openly calling on the Venezuelan military to abandon Maduro, and threatening a US military invasion. Venezuela’s Central Bank was sanctioned, the assets of the state oil company PDVSA were frozen, and an economic embargo was enforced.

Despite these relentless, illegal, and brutal measures, the coup attempt was ultimately unsuccessful, and Bolton was removed from his position in September. In 2020, he published his book, with an entire chapter dedicated to the events since 2018 titled “Venezuela Libre”. Bolton wrote that Trump had stated that Venezuela was “really part of the United States” and that an invasion would be “cool”. The former president reportedly also pushed for control over Venezuela’s oil once Maduro was ousted. Another major revelation was that the UK was “delighted to cooperate” on steps it could take, including freezing Venezuela’s gold deposits being held in the Bank of England. The UK continues to hold nearly \$2 billion of Venezuelan gold, with the case set to return to the courts this week. On July 14, Venezuela’s National Assembly unanimously voted to condemn Bolton’s comments, with the chamber’s president Jorge Rodríguez declaring that “Venezuela... will never surrender”. He added, “We can never tire of thanking the dignified people and the Venezuelan Armed Forces that repelled the most serious attack the republic has suffered in 150 years”.



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Moroccans Protest Israeli Military Chief's Visit And Deepening Of Morocco-Israel Ties

Moroccan human rights activists and civil society members have protested the visit of the Israeli Military Chief of Staff, Aviv Kochavi which took place last week, decrying the deepening of Morocco-Israel ties following normalization of relations under the Abraham Accords. Kochavi's visit, which was facilitated by Moroccan Defense Minister Abdellatif Loudiyi and Lieutenant General Belkhir El-Farouk, was the first time a high-ranking Israeli military official publicly visited the kingdom.

Groups of protesters led by the National Action Group for Palestine staged a demonstration outside of the parliament building in Rabat on Tuesday, July 19, denouncing the country's decision to welcome the military leader. In a [statement](#), the group declared that "the day of Kohavi's visit is a disgrace, shame, and calamity, which is recorded with ink of insult to the history of Morocco

and betrayal of the positions of the Moroccan people." Referring to the visit as the institutionalization of Zionism, activists held up [banners](#) with the message "to receive the Zionist war criminal Aviv Kochavi is a major crime against the Morocco people, the Palestinian people, and the people of the Umma (wider Islamic community)." The head of the Moroccan Observatory Against Normalization, Ahmed Wehman, [told Anadolu News Agency](#) that Kochavi had "shed the blood of thousands of Lebanese and Arab Palestinians," and that he should be punished in court for his crimes.

Morocco and Israel [established](#) full diplomatic relations in December 2020, in a deal facilitated by the United States under the Abraham

Accords. The [deal](#) also provided US recognition for Moroccan control over the Western Sahara, a disputed region which the Moroccan military occupies while suppressing the Saharawi people who demand independence.

Kochavi's visit, which is predicted to accelerate bilateral [collaboration](#) between the two countries on the military and intelligence fronts, only makes public a relationship that has existed long before normalization. Morocco has [reportedly](#) bought drones and and missile defense weapons from Israel for decades, and was also a [recipient](#) of [Pegasus spyware](#), which was used by the state to target journalists and human rights activists, according to [Amnesty](#)



Photo by Tomer Neuberger/Flash90 (December 2019). Activists demonstrated against Israeli military chief of staff Aviv Kochavi's visit, which comes a month after Israeli military observers participated in a US-led exercise in Morocco

#### International.

In March 2022, Morocco and Israel [established](#) direct military ties. Kochavi's landmark visit came just a month after three Israeli military observers [took part](#) in the US-led African Lion 2022 military exercise. The drill,

which was [praised](#) by the Israeli Defense Ministry as "an additional step in strengthening security relations between the countries", marked the first time that Israel took part in a military exercise in Morocco.

### "I Am Deeply Sorry": Pope Francis Apologizes For The Church's Support Of Canadian Residential Schools



Pope Francis delivering an apology to Indigenous peoples in Canada (Screenshot via Reuters). Pope Francis begins "penitential pilgrimage" by visiting the site of a former residential school and apologizing for the Catholic Church's sponsorship of forced

On Monday July 25, Pope Francis apologized to Indigenous peoples on behalf of the Catholic Church, for the Church's running of residential schools in Canada. On a visit to the former Ermineskin Indian Residential School on the lands of the Cree Nation, the Pope said, "I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed

by so many Christians against the Indigenous peoples." Over 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend such schools from the 19th century to the 1970s, funded by the Canadian government in an attempt to forcibly assimilate Indigenous children to Western Christian culture. Authority figures at residential schools inflicted both physical and sexual abuse against the children.

"This used to be the chapel here," said Harvey Desjarlais, Muskowekwan Residential School survivor, to the [New York Times](#). "This is where we used to pray 10 times a day. They used to call us little savages. 'You little savage.

Your ceremonies, that's paganism.' That's how they spoke to us."

Residential schools received renewed condemnation in 2021 when [hundreds of graves of Indigenous children](#) were discovered on the grounds of such schools. "In the face of this deplorable evil," the Pope said, "The Church kneels before God and implores his forgiveness for the sins of her children." In 2015, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission described the residential school system as "nothing short of cultural genocide," concluding that many children died of malnourishment, disease, or suicide. The longer-lasting effects of forced assimilation are the

extinction of several native languages, along with long-term mental health problems for the Indigenous people who did survive the residential schools. Pope Francis has said that he will take concrete action to rectify the Church's crimes against Indigenous peoples. "An important part of this process will be to conduct a serious investigation into the facts of what took place in the past and to assist the survivors of the residential schools to experience healing from the traumas they suffered," the Pope said. The discovery of mass graves of Indigenous children renewed outrage across Canada towards the system of forced

assimilation. Indigenous groups called for the [cancellation](#) of the patriotic "Canada Day" in 2021, a day after 182 graves were found near the former St. Eugene's Mission School in British Columbia. In August of 2021, protesters [toppled a statue](#) of John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada and the "architect" of residential schools. "Sorry for the ways in which, regrettably, many Christians supported the colonizing mentality of the powers that oppressed the indigenous peoples," the Pope said. "I am sorry."



# After Litany Of Failed Promises...

## OPEN LETTER TO VICE PRESIDENT DR MAHMOUD BAWUMIA BY ISSIFU SEIDU KUDUS GBEADESE



DR MAHMOUD BAWUMIA

It's your Kamara brother from Laribanga. I bring you greetings from the great mountains of Laribanga. I wish you well in your political exploits.

Sir, I just read on your Facebook page where I saw a picture depicting that you came to Savannah Region specifically, to Debre to cut sod for the Debre inland port project to commence. If I were mischievous, I would have asked you a question as to how many inland ports that we can equate to one Ghana card, but because I am a pessimist, and one who knows the value of economic infrastructure, I would allow that question to slide.

Your Excellency, I know how tough it is for you in these times. The case that you have run down the economy with your unrealistic policies, recklessness and conspicuous incompetence, coupled with the fact that your NPP members are using this as a card to foil your Presidential ambition, one should expect this amount of desperation in you. So, it is understood that you want to prove a point and to be seen working when in actual fact, it is business as usual; deception! deception! deception!

Mr. Vice President, I want to remind you and your boss of the outstanding arrears of promises and projects in Savannah Region you either cut sod for or emphatically promised they were going to be executed within some time frame.

To begin with, in 2018, right at the

instance of the Yagbonwura, you, Dr Bawumia, made a promise that the Damongo water project was going to start that same year, but it was going to be preceded with some 10 mechanized boreholes to abate the impact of the acute water shortage in Damongo township. That promise is over 5 years now. If it were a child, he/she would have been preparing for Primary 1 next academic year. Following closely to this, your boss himself, President Nana Akufo-Addo on 29th July, 2020, came to cut sod for the so-called Damongo water project at the Damongo town park. He did so without any contractor on site and no specified timelines were given. The current MP for Damongo Constituency, Hon Samuel Abu Jinapor followed up with plenty promises with different quotations to cover for the deceit. It's been two years now and the people of Damongo are still struggling for water.

The President in the process, indicated among others that his government had secured \$49m from the UK Export Finance and Deutsche Bank AG for the project. He said the project will serve all communities from Yapei Yipala through all the other communities along the Fufulso-Damongo-Sawla road. He assured the people of Damongo and other supposed beneficiary communities that the project was going to start in 2020. It's been two years now, there is no show and we are aware your government is going to camouflage us again once it's getting closer to elections.

As if that was not enough, exactly

two months after the sod cutting for the Damongo Water project, precisely on the 24th September 2020, you, Mr Vice President, came to inaugurate the Savannah Regional House of Chiefs and in the process, you also cut sod for the commencement of work on the so called Savannah Regional House of Chiefs. Mr Vice President, not even a single block has been laid for the said project. While cutting the sod, you indicated that your government within three years of being in office had initiated 785 projects for Savannah Region alone and had at the time completed 630 of them. You people like playing with numbers too much.

Again, at the 45th Gonjaland Youth Congress in Bole, specifically on the 6th of April, 2021, you, Mr Vice President, looked in the faces of the chiefs and people of Gonjaland and promised that the Daboya bridge project was going to commence that year. In fact, you said it was going to start around August of 2021. Interestingly, the following year (2022), you dodged the annual Gonjaland Youth Congress

in Daboya partly because you didn't know what to tell the people of Daboya again after a year had passed without any show of work on the bridge. As part of the competition for deceit between the Vice President, Dr Bawumia and his boss, President Nana Akufo-Addo, the latter on the 3rd of February 2020, promised the good people of the East Gonja and North East Gonja that the 138km Tamale-Salaga-Mankango road was going to be completed in 18 months beginning February 2020. If my maths is right, I think we are in the 30th month the project is still there without any show. In fact, that road is still one of the worst roads during rainy days. Still at the same event in Kpalbe, the President promised the people of North East Gonja the following:

1. A District Hospital at Kpalbe
2. A Senior High School
3. A small town water project

All the above named have seen no show after 30 months. In the midst of this deceit, most projects that H.E John Mahama initiated have been abandoned or executed in a slow pace. The 60

bed Salaga Hospital, the teacher training college in Bole, the Busunu-Daboya road project, the E-block at KPalbe, the Mpaha-Debre road and a host of others. So, Mr Vice President, the people of Gonjaland are not enthused with empty sod cutting any longer when similar others you did in the past have not seen the light of day. As said in the Gonja parlance, "when the cattle that went grazing in the morning have not returned, there is no reason to send more for grazing". We know this is one of your schemes to be seen working so that your ratings will scale up small in your party, but we know you very well. We are tired of the numerous sod cuttings Mr Vice President. Elections are getting closer and has ushered in the well packaged deceits once more. Enough is enough!

Thank you.

**From Issifu Seidu Kudus Gbeadese (Youth Imam). 0244198031**

## I Believe Posterity Will Judge Him Well - Naadu Mills Remembers Late President John Atta Mills

The former First Lady of Ghana, Ernestina Naadu Mills, has broken her silence since the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the passing of her husband, Prof. John Evans Atta Mills, started.

In a brief statement read on her behalf during a commemorative lecture in honour of the late president, the former First Lady said that beyond all the political vilifications John Atta Mills was battered with, he never lowered his high principles.

She explained that it is for this reason that she knows that posterity will be a good judge of his legacies.

"It has been 10 years of solitude since I lost Fiifi, my husband, friend and confidant. Ours was a rather quiet and private life until a higher national duty came calling. Then suddenly, we found ourselves in public limelight with its accompanying opportunities and challenges. Fiifi was often battered and bruised on the battlefield of politics but he held firm to his personal values of truth, simplicity, honesty and abiding respect



Ernestina Naadu Mills is a former First Lady of Ghana

for all; qualities I loved about him.

"To Fiifi, serving at the highest echelons of government was an opportunity to help change the character of Ghana politics for the better. In this regard, I believe posterity will judge him well. Therein lies my consolation for the many sacrifices he had to make," she said.

The lecture is to be addressed by legal luminary, Tsatsu Tsikata.

# Protests Swell As Heat Wave And Wildfires Rage Across Europe



By Muhammed Shabeer

**W**idespread wildfires and scorching heat waves have put the lives and livelihoods of many people across Europe, especially in the Mediterranean region, in peril. As the raging fires have already scorched more than a hundred thousand acres of land and unbearable heat waves have caused several deaths, destruction to property, and displaced more than 30,000 people, progressive sections across Europe have protested the inability and insensitivity of the states and governments to tackle the crisis. While recognizing that climate change is the driving factor behind the heat waves, rising temperatures and wildfires, leftist groups have questioned the absence of sustainable, concrete policies and initiatives to tackle the crisis. Following the extensive wildfires in the Mediterranean region last year, the governments had assured those affected that sustainable solutions to

the crisis would be found and they would be supported. This remains unfulfilled to this date. Since June this year, numerous blazes have been raging in Greece, Turkey, Albania, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and Cyprus. Fires have also been reported from Britain, Slovenia and Romania. Rising temperatures and smoke have already caused health problems for many people in the affected regions. According to reports, in June, temperatures of 40-43°C were recorded in several parts of Europe, which again touched 40°C in mid July. As of now, Pinhão, Portugal has recorded the region's highest temperature of the season: 47.0 °C on July 14. Following the extreme heat last year, a disastrous spell of unprecedented rains, floods, and a chilling winter were also experienced in Europe, attributed to the worsening climate change crisis. Researchers and experts have already pointed out anthropogenic climate change as the reason for the ongoing catastrophe. Many left-wing groups have also condemned the profiteering by

multinational corporations of the green transition. They argue that multinational corporations have viewed the European Union's Green Deal and the commitment to climate neutrality merely as an opportunity to sell their technology in global markets at huge profits, putting the burden of the green transition on the back of working class households. Following the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) summit held in Glasgow, climate activists and progressives had condemned that the 'official' solutions, such as setting emission caps with vague deadlines, creation of carbon markets, goals to limit the global warming to 1.5 degrees, and climate financing, are insufficient. However, even these goals remain unmet by the key players responsible for the lion's share of emissions and environmental destruction. With the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war, it has become evident that Europe has essentially dumped its climate commitments due to the shortage of Russian gas as a result of the sanctions on Russia. **Left demands action on climate** On July 25, Monday, while addressing a TV debate regarding the wildfires in Greece, Nikos Karathanasopoulos, MP from the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), stated, “we have before us a predetermined and timeless crime regarding the effects of natural phenomena, against the

environment and the life and property of people. In this regard, the anger of the people is justified, which with every fire burns, with floods drowns, and so on.” Karathanasopoulos accused the authorities of not even having a comprehensive plan to prevent wildfires, implement fire controls, and mitigate the consequences. He further stated that commercialization of land for private interests in order to develop them, which arms the hands of arsonists with the permission of the state, is also a reason for the wildfires. He also pointed out that the efforts by the government for relief, recovery, and restoration are not timely or sufficient and are not reaching the targets. On July 19, regarding the fires ravaging the Gironde forest in southwestern France, French Communist Party (PCF) leader and MP Fabien Roussel called on the Minister of the Interior Gerald Darmanin to implement urgent policies to limit the scale and impact of the crisis on the people and the territories and to provide sufficient funds and technology for the departments involved in combating the fire. In the UK, frequent fires and heat waves have stretched firefighters and control staff to the limit, as the country faces record high

temperatures. Underfunding and layoffs have also hampered the ability of the fire fighter brigades to respond to frequent emergencies. Matt Wrack, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), stated that “firefighters are at the forefront of the climate emergency. The demands of the job are increasing but our resources have been under attack by government cuts for over a decade. 11,500 firefighter jobs have been slashed since 2010.” “We have warned of the growing threat for years but our concerns have fallen on deaf ears. The brutal truth is that government ministers and Chief Fire Officers have ignored the warning signs which have been obvious for all to see. They are guilty of criminal complacency,” added Wrack. Marc Botenga, Member of European Parliament (MEP) from the Workers Party of Belgium (PTB/PVDA), had earlier told *Peoples Dispatch* that in order to tackle the climate crisis, “the public should gain control and be able to put the climate over profit, rather than leaving fundamental choices to the market.” He also stated that “the capitalist state intervenes in the economy, but acts in line with its class character as protector of big business and large shareholders. We cannot save the climate under capitalism. The climate and capitalism are incompatible and hence we need a different role for the state.”

## WHO: Biggest Factors Behind Migration Are Climate Change And War

**T**he health of refugees and migrants around the world continues to be put into danger by a lack of focused attention and supportive socioeconomic policies, indicates the World Health Organization's (WHO) first World report on the health of refugees and migrants. One billion people in the world, or 1 in every 8 people, are migrants. Among the people who migrated during the first half of 2021, more than half came from only five countries: the Central African Republic (71,800 people), South Sudan (61,700), the Syrian Arab Republic (38,800), Afghanistan (25,200) and Nigeria (20,300).

Refugees and migrants are likely to experience significantly worse health outcomes than the host population: not so much because of their preceding health status, as much as the bad living and working conditions that await them at destination. The WHO report brings additional confirmation of something that has been problematic for a long time – refugees and migrants are over-exposed to the effects of punitive and austerity-driven policies that many countries have been focusing on. Migration trends around the world continue to grow driven by climate change, war, and other factors. The

report states that anthropogenic climate change is now felt in about 80% of the world's land area, host to 85% of the world's population. Barring radical change, another 200 million people are expected to move by 2050 due to climate events alone. The trends are not limited to international movement. According to the WHO, 76% of the 40.5 million people internally displaced in 2020 were pushed to move by disasters that were directly or indirectly attributable to climate change. The remaining 24% of the internally displaced population in 2020 was forced to migrate due to violence and

conflicts. Climate change leads to displacement in different ways, either by causing hazards that cause injuries or death, or by altering factors like epidemiological patterns of vector-borne diseases, diminishing the availability of food and water, or increasing air pollution. “In some places, it [climate change] may contribute to risks of conflict and violence by intensifying disputes over scarce resources, reducing economic opportunities, and straining public institutions and infrastructure,” adds the report.

In this context, the report suggests, governments should make it their priority to expand mechanisms of social support. Broadening access to health care, as well as education, good jobs, quality housing and other social rights will not only improve the health status of refugees and migrants, but of the overall population as well, bringing us closer to a fairer and more equitable society. *Read more articles from the latest edition of the People's Health Dispatch and subscribe to the newsletter [here](#).* **Source --** [Peoples Health Dispatch](#)



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to 4.1% at the end of 2021. These have contributed to rising cost of living and labour agitations. Interest Payments have been revised upwards from **GH¢37.5 billion** (7.5% of GDP) to **GH¢41.3 billion** (7.0% of revised GDP), mainly on account of inflationary pressures and exchange rate depreciation resulting in higher cost of financing.

35. Mr. Speaker, in the face of these adverse domestic and external headwinds, growth momentum has however been relatively resilient. The Ghana Statistical Service reports that the economy continued to grow, moderately growing at 3.3 percent in the first quarter of 2022. In addition, the Bank of Ghana's updated Composite Index of Economic Activity (CIEA) recorded an annual growth of 15.8 percent in March 2022, compared to 26.3 percent in the corresponding period in 2021, due largely to increased industrial production, increased credit to private sector, exports, and higher tourist arrivals.

In the light of the significant changes in the global environment and our own unique challenges, we have revised our economic growth estimate for 2022 to 3.7 percent, down from 5.8 percent as stated in the 2022 Budget.

## Macroeconomic Performance for January - December 2021

36. Mr. Speaker, at the time of presenting the 2022 Budget in November last year, we provided information on macroeconomic developments for the first nine months of the 2021 fiscal year. We now have received updated information through to end-December 2021 which I now present as follows:

- ▣ Overall Real GDP for 2021 grew strongly by 5.4 percent compared to 0.5 percent recorded in 2020 and the revised 2021 annual target of 5.1 percent.

- ▣ Non-oil GDP growth also increased to 6.9 percent compared to a growth of 1.0 percent recorded in 2020, and the revised 2021 target of 7.0 percent.

- ▣ overall budget deficit of GH¢28,095 million (5.6% of GDP), against a deficit target of GH¢19,730 million (3.9% of

GDP).

- ▣ primary balance for the period was a deficit of GH¢7,618 million (1.5% of GDP), against a deficit target of GH¢672 million (0.1% of GDP).

- ▣ Public-debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 76.6% at the end of 2021

## Macroeconomic Performance for half-year 2022

37. Mr. Speaker, provisional Q1-2022 National Accounts Statistics published by Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) in June 2022 show that the overall real GDP growth for the first quarter of 2022 was 3.3 percent compared to 3.6 percent recorded in the same period in 2021. Non-oil GDP for the first quarter of 2022 grew by 3.7 percent compared with the Q1-2020 growth of 5.3 percent.

## Revision to 2022

### Macroeconomic Framework

38. Mr. Speaker, as I have already indicated, the macroeconomic environment has significantly changed, prompting the revision of the macroeconomic framework. Furthermore, based on the developments for the first six months of 2022 and outlook for the rest of the year, we have accordingly revised the macro-fiscal targets for 2022 as follows:

- ▣ Overall GDP Growth rate of 3.7 percent down from 5.8 percent;

- ▣ Non-Oil GDP Growth rate of to 4.3 percent down from 5.9 percent

- ▣ End period inflation of 28.5 percent up from 8 percent;

- ▣ The overall fiscal deficit of 6.6% of GDP down from 7.4%

- ▣ Primary surplus of 0.4% of GDP up from a surplus of 0.1% of GDP; and

- ▣ The Gross International Reserves of not less than 3 months import cover.

## Revision to the 2022 Fiscal Framework

39. Mr. Speaker, the 2022 fiscal framework has also been revised due to the fiscal performance for the first half of the year, including:

- ▣ Shortfalls in the expected yields from the new 2022 revenue measures.

- ▣ the implementation of the 30% discretionary expenditure cuts and other expenditure measures announced by, Government earlier in the year. The other expenditure measures are:

- o the moratorium on foreign

travels except pre-approved critical and/or statutory travels;

- o 50% cut in fuel coupon allocations for all political appointees and Heads
- o the moratorium on foreign travels except pre-approved critical and/or statutory travels; and

- o 50% cut in fuel coupon allocations for all political appointees and Heads of government institutions, including SOEs, effective 1st April 2022.

- ▣ Government support for 15% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) to public servants;

- ▣ upward revision to the average weighted domestic interest rates;

- ▣ upward revision in exchange rate on account of higher depreciation; and
- o revision of the Benchmark Crude oil price from US\$61.2/bbl to US\$94.8 and the Benchmark Crude oil volume from 59.5mn barrels to 58.0mn.

40. Mr. Speaker, accordingly:

- o Total Revenue and Grants have now been revised to GH¢96,842 million (16.4% of GDP) in 2022, down from the 2022 Budget target of GH¢100,517 million (20.0% of GDP) representing 3.7 percent reduction.

- o Total Expenditure (including payments for the clearance of arrears) has been revised downward to GH¢135,742 million (22.9% of GDP) from the original budget projection of GH¢137,529 million (27.4% of GDP).

- o Interest Payments have been revised upwards from GH¢37,447 million (7.5% of GDP) to GH¢41,362 million (7.0% of revised GDP), mainly on account of inflationary pressures and exchange rate depreciation resulting in higher cost of financing.

41. Mr. Speaker, the revisions in Government's fiscal operations results in a fiscal deficit (on cash basis) of GH¢38,900 million (6.6% of revised GDP) up from the 2022 Budget deficit target of GH¢37,012 million (7.4% of GDP). The corresponding Primary balance is a surplus of GH¢2,461 million (0.4% of revised GDP), up from the 2022 Budget estimate of a surplus of GH¢435 million (0.1% of GDP)

42. Although the deficit is expected to be financed from both foreign and domestic

sources, domestic financing will be the key driver while Government works to regain external market access.

43. Mr. Speaker, the following Revenue Measures will be pursued in the remaining half of the year:

- ▣ **eVAT-** The digitalization of our Revenue Mobilization processes remains a key focus; therefore, the GRA is finalizing all relevant processes to facilitate the effective collection of VAT revenue. This includes a proposed amendment of the Value Added Tax Act 870 to enable its electronic collection, effective 1st October 2022.

- ▣ **Property Rate-** It is fundamentally important that, together with the Ministry of Local Government, we continue to assist and support the Assemblies, not only to expand their revenue base, but to do so with optimal efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, the collective efforts of the local government, the Assemblies, and the GRA in launching and end-to-end digitalized process will be realized by August.

- ▣ Extension of **Waiver of Interest & Penalty** to Dec 2022; and

- ▣ Introduction of upfront payment of VAT on importers not registered for VAT with implementation start date of 1st October 2022.

## STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE 2022 BUDGET

44. Mr. Speaker, this Government has kept faith with public sector workers. Not a single public sector employee was laid off as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. Employees received their full salaries, with front line health workers receiving additional incentives. Since 2017, this Government has employed an additional 295,035 Ghanaians in the public sector, with 2020 being the highest, registering 84,181 new employees.

45. In spite of the prevailing global economic upheavals and the resultant fiscal challenges, Government continues to pay salaries of all public sector employees on Government Payroll and has committed to pay a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) of **15 percent**. This ensures that public servants are motivated, and public services nationwide continue uninterrupted.

46. Furthermore, Government is significantly investing in on-going

initiatives and programmes to improve the lives of Ghanaians facilitate economic and job opportunities, promote shared growth and protect the quality of life of Ghanaians. Indeed, Government has prioritised National Security, Food Security, Energy and Road Sector development, Railways Infrastructure education and skills development, among and other flagship programmes.

## National Security

47. Mr. Speaker, the safety of Ghanaians in the face of complex security threats is a major concern to Government and we are using a significant amount of resources to ensure that we keep our people and country safe. Considering what is happening in the West African region, it is important that we prioritise national security, and we have. Whilst it will not be prudent to disclose the full cost of ensuring the security of this state, let me emphasise that it is significant.

48. As a result, the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) is implementing an enhanced surveillance programme for the country's air space and international borders through collaboration with other domestic security agencies. We are also aggressively pursuing the Forward Operating Bases (FOB) programme to improve response time and prevent cross border crimes as well as terrorist infiltration.

49. To further improve internal security, the Ghana Police Service has recruited and trained 5,000 additional officers to put more police in our streets and communities. The Service has also launched the "SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING" campaign, intensified anti-armed robbery operations, and intelligence-led swoops throughout the country.

## Food Security

50. Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia Ukraine War have combined to disrupt supply chains and increased transportation costs which are threatening food security globally. But, what the people of Ghana care to see is what their government is doing about it to ease the impact here. To enable households and farmers cope and support stable food supply, Government has taken the

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following immediate measures:

- ▣ place a temporary ban on grain (maize, rice, and soya) exports;
- ▣ promote the use of organic fertilizers and cultivation of crops such as roots which require less fertilizer;
- ▣ monitor food and input prices to pick early warning signals of potential food crisis in order to take prompt remedial action; and
- ▣ finalise modalities for the haulage of produce from farm gates in food growing areas to the market centres.

## Energy Sector Developments

51. Mr. Speaker, the raft of sanctions imposed on Russia are tightening supply conditions for energy products. In response, Government is closely monitoring the stock of products at all depots. The timely intervention of the Bank of Ghana, through the Special Forex Auction mechanism, is also expected to sustain continuous supply of petroleum products in Ghana.

52. Mr. Speaker, we have seen in this country the damage that disruptions in power supply causes to businesses, large and small, from factories to hairdresser salons. As part of measures to improve transmission and reliability of power supply and expand energy to all Ghanaians, we have, between January to date:

- ▣ completed the Kasoa Bulk Supply Point (BSP) Project which comprises the re-construction of a section of GRIDCO's 161kV Winneba-Mallam transmission lines and tie-in-works;
- ▣ advanced the Volta-Achimota

Lot of the 161KV Volta-Achimota-Mallam Transmission Line Upgrade Project to 85 percent, from 83 percent;

- ▣ connected 58 communities to the national grid as at end June 2022 with several communities at various stages of completion; and
- ▣ commissioned the Solar Irrigation Project at the Ho Technical University on 18th March, 2022 to promote renewable energy systems.

## Power Purchase Agreements Negotiations

53. Mr. Speaker, for balanced, sustainable energy partnerships that provide affordable power for industrial, commercial and residential use, we have kept our promise and successfully renegotiated Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with six Independent Power Producers (IPPs), namely, Karpower, Cenpower, Early Power, Twin City Energy (formerly Amandi), AKSA Energy and Cenit. These renegotiated agreements are expected to have savings estimated at **US\$13.2 billion** over the life of the PPAs through a combination of reduced capacity and energy charges. In other words, we are saving the Ghanaian taxpayer US\$13.2 billion from power contracts signed by the previous administration.

## Road Sector Programme

54. Mr. Speaker, in spite of the revenue-mobilising challenges, the President is determined to fix the roads. Our "Year of Roads" programme is on very much course. Phase I of our Agreement with the Sinohydro Corporation Limited comprising Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contracts for 442 km of roads and two (2) interchanges have gained significant progress including:

- ▣ Tamale Interchange Project

completed and commissioned; ▣ PTC Roundabout Interchange Project at 35 percent completion

- ▣ Upgrading of selected Feeder Roads in Ashanti and Western Regions completed with a lot more to follow; and
- ▣ Sunyani Inner City Road works are at 63 percent completion.

55. Other key road and bridge projects are also progressing steadily including:

- ▣ The La Beach Road Project (Lots 1 & 2), which includes a 3-tier interchange at Nungua, is 34 percent and 50 percent complete respectively as at June 2022;
- ▣ The Phase II of the Obetsebi Lamptey Circle Interchange and the flyover on the Accra-Tema Motorway from the Flower Pot (Spintex road) are 57 percent and 30 percent complete respectively as at June 2022;
- ▣ The Kumasi-Lake Roads and Drainage Extension project, extension of the existing Aboabo drain, and construction of the Chirapatere Bus Terminal is at 92 percent as at end June 2022;
- ▣ Upgrading of Salaga - Ekumdi - Kpandai Road at 70 percent completion;
- ▣ Partial Reconstruction of Bawjiase - Adeiso Road - Lot 1 at 98 percent completion; and
- ▣ Work on the construction of 50 prefabricated bridges to improve connectivity within areas cut off by waterways in all 16 Regions have achieved progress of about 80 percent.

## Road Financing

56. Mr. Speaker, under the Ministry of Roads and Highways (MoRH) Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programme for road infrastructure, the Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Maintain (DBFOM) Accra – Tema Motorway and Extension PPP Project (27.7km) is at the procurement stage. Site works are expected to commence in September 2022.

57. The Government of Ghana has made a strategic decision, in line with the Public Private Partnership Act, 2020 (Act 1039) to procure the Accra-Tema Motorway and Extensions Project through GILF with a mandate to deliver a GILF-

led PPP financing solution, where maximum funds are raised from the market, but majority ownership of the project remains with GILF on behalf of the Ghanaian Government.

- ▣ The draft Concession Agreement (CA) between GILF and MoRH is currently under review by GILF, MoRH, the Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Finance. When completed, the CA is expected to be approved by the PPP Committee, Cabinet and Parliament. The completed road will be tolled to recover the whole life cost of the completed infrastructure as well as pay lenders and provide a return for equity investors. The Government of Ghana shall provide funding through GILF to take equity in the Special Purpose Vehicle to be created by GILF for the project.

## Railways Infrastructure

58. Mr. Speaker, significant investments continue to be made by Government towards the development of a modern railway network. We believe in this because we know that creating an alternative means of transport, especially for goods, will ease the pressures on our roads and future impacts of global crude price hikes on farm produce, for example. Government is within target to complete the construction of the new Tema to Mpakadan Railway line by the end of this year. The project is currently about 92 percent complete. The operationalisation of the project is expected to enhance efficiency at the Tema Port and provide the shortest transportation route between the Southern and Northern parts of Ghana.

## Driving Productivity

59. Mr. Speaker, Government continues to implement key initiatives to enhance productivity, scale up entrepreneurial prospects and build resilient systems. These initiatives underpin economic activities in a modern economy and safeguard our transformation agenda.

## Free SHS Programme

60. Mr. Speaker, we have placed human capital

development at the core of our national transformation efforts since 2017. We have invested **GH¢ 5.3 billion** to enable **1,261,495** Ghanaian children access to secondary education under the Free SHS programme at the end 2021 to improve access to education. Out of the 571,892 registered JHS candidates, 555,353, representing 97.1 percent, were placed into SHS this year. This is significant We are aware of reported challenges in accessing and transporting food for students in SHS and we are fixing it. In response, we have engaged stakeholders and devised a programme that ensures that schools will not be disrupted and our students are well-fed. Government has also recently completed 17 additional projects including classroom blocks, dormitories, staff bungalows and libraries as part of infrastructural expansion in Senior High Schools. To deal with the record increases in student numbers. 61. Mr Speaker, we shall not compromise on President Akufo-Addo's commitment to giving all our children the opportunity to be educated from kindergarten to university, without the ability to pay being a hindrance. Free Secondary and TVET education are not under review. We will continue to fund them and we will continue to improve them

## Ghana School Feeding Programme

62. Mr. Speaker, thanks to tax payers, since January, 3,620,468 pupils in 10,832 public basic schools have been fed with one hot meal every school going day in the first half of the year under the Ghana School Feeding Programme. The programme provides employment for 32,496 caterers. School feeding programme remains an important initiative that keeps our children in school and provides jobs and incomes for several people, mainly women.

## Health Infrastructure

63. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that work has commenced and are at various stages of construction in 87 out of the 111 sites earmarked for

to be cont.