

# TOGBE AFEDE

## He Says Squandering State Funds Now An Acceptable Phenomenon



**Togbe Afede XIV**

**T**he Agbogbomefia and Paramount Chief of the Asogli State, Togbe Afede XIV, has bemoaned the plundering of the nation's resources by its duty-bearers and thus called on them to consider the nation's present economic status and avoid excessive spending to protect the

public purse. He said although the founding fathers and the present constitution directed leadership to secure progress and development, the high living cost and sinking economy had become the nation's portion. Addressing the grand durbar of the

Asogli Yam Festival last Saturday, Togbe Afede, who is also an investment accountant, said the nation would require truthful leadership to consolidate the tenets of governance. He called on leaders to avoid what he called, "deceit but admit the

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## Why Russian Regrouping In Kharkov Will Speed Up Battle Of Donbass

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### CLOGSAG Shoots Down Minister's Defense Of GHC1.1m 'Ghosts' Payment



**John Ampontuah Kumah, Deputy Minister for Finance**

**T**he Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana (CLOGSAG) has described as untenable the explanation by a Deputy Minister for Finance on the payment of over GHC1.1 million as salaries to some 3 individuals described as 'ghosts' by the Auditor General. According to CLOGSAG, [John Kumah](#) Ampontuah's attribution of the

*Cont. on page 2*

## Planting For Food And Jobs Seed Trade Association Chases Govt Over GHS 207 Million Debt

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**THE SOCIALIST  
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*presents*

**21st  
September**

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*Theme:*

**The Myth of the  
Big six and the  
real Founder's day**

*Speakers:*

1. Professor Raymond Atuguba
2. Kwesi Pratt Jnr

*Chairperson:*

Professor Akua Britwum

*Dr Kwame Nkrumah  
Founder of the Modern  
Republic of Ghana*



Wed. 21st September, 2022



SMG Headquarters, Dzowulu  
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2:00pm - 6:00 pm



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# The INSIGHT

## — EDITORIAL

### THE LOOMING DEBT CRISIS

**D**ata released by the Bank of Ghana recently indicated that Ghana's debt was now over \$40 billion, which is almost double what was bequeathed to this administration.

What is worrying about the country's rising debt level is that no stop-gap measures appears to be put in place to halt the phenomenon. Instead, floatation of new bonds domestically and abroad appears to be the order of the day which has far-reaching repercussions for the nation in terms of its debt sustainability.

Already, the unbridled government borrowing is giving many financial analysts headache since that appears to be the only leeway or succor in government raising needed capital for infrastructural projects.

Paradoxically, political watchers are worried that the present managers of the economy who in recent past complained about borrowing are themselves doing worse.

Reality of governance, has undoubtedly dawned, and it is important that a new paradigm shift is charted since the rate of borrowing is not sustainable in the long run. The attempt by some official spokespersons to score political points using economic indicators which clearly do not make sense and also address the looming debt crisis because of their obvious contradictions and deficiencies is the most worrying.

The time to domesticate the economy to grow and eat what the country needs and quicken the industrial pace to lessen imports is now more than important to the nation's survival.

## CLOGSAG Shoots Down Minister's Defense Of GHC1.1m 'Ghosts' Payment

*from front page*

payment to a payroll mishap cannot be justified.

In a statement signed by the Executive Secretary of CLOGSAG, Isaac Bampoe Addo, the association said the 3 individuals whose identity was given by the deputy minister as staff of the Ghana Revenue Authority seconded to the ministry of finance should not have received the said payment in the first place.

"CLOGSAG finds the Minister's excuse untenable since seconded staff from the GRA are already on the GRA payroll, thus there was no need to make an effort to pay them again outside the nominal roll of Ministry of Finance," parts of the statement said.

The association noted that the explanation by the minister rather raises further questions about whether due processes were followed in the secondment of the three persons from GRA to the ministry of finance.

"Was their secondment approved by the Office of the Head of Civil, as required by the Civil Service Act?" they questioned.

The association emphasised that it is waiting for further details on the matter as there is a need for truthfulness in such a situation.

The Auditor General's report for 2021 captured three persons as having received in excess of GHC1.1 million as salaries on the books of the ministry of finance while their records as employees of the ministry could not be traced.

"We noted that, three persons were paid a total of GHC1,112,895.96 as salaries for the period January 2020 to December 2021, but we could not trace their personal files and names on the nominal roll of the Ministry," the report said.

However, the Deputy Minister for Finance and Economic Planning, John Ampontuah Kumah, in a recent Facebook post disclosed that the state has



**John Ampontuah Kumah, Deputy Minister for Finance**

recovered the amount of GH¢1,112,896.00 from the three individuals.

"Kindly note that the funds paid were recovered when the attention of the Ministry was drawn to this anomaly," [John Kumah](#) said. Explaining the circumstances leading to the recipients of the payment being tagged as ghosts, which he described as an anomaly, the deputy minister said the situation was due to a payroll misunderstanding.

"The three ghost names are personnel seconded from GRA, for whom there was some misunderstanding about which payroll they belonged for the period of the secondment. The amounts paid have been recovered from the GRA as indicated and the ministry will in due time share more details," he wrote.

## THE INSIGHT

**ACTING EDITOR** - **BENJAMIN AKUFFO**  
(0244669960)  
benjaminakuffo65@yahoo.com

**Secretary** - **Gifty Agyemang**

**Design and Graphics** - **Godwin K. Attah**

**Production Manager** - **Kweku Menz**

### PUBLISHERS

**Militant Publications Limited**  
P. O. Box NT 272

Accra-Newtown, Accra

Tel: 0244379344/0242836930

Email: theinsightonline20@gmail.com

LONDON CONTACT

5A Wesminster Bridge Road, London SE 1- 7XW

Tel: 0171-6201430

E-mail: prattc22@aol.com

# TOGBE AFEDE

## He Says Squandering State Funds Now An Acceptable Phenomenon

from front page

reality and show concern for the plight of the people.

“Those who fought for our independence thought we were going to rule ourselves, but the dream of self-governance has eluded us. We have not been able to deliver as our people wanted.”

The traditional ruler, also the executive chairman of World Trade Centre, Accra, lamented how political leadership continued to be institutionalised as an avenue for personal gain. He said: “Leaders are concerned about politics and not development. They are only concerned about how to secure and retain power, and not the development of the nation. The money outlook is affecting leadership and has made governance a matter of life and death.

“Everyone is seeking to rob the nation's resources, and those who steal the nation's wealth cannot bring development. It is very challenging, and we must fight against it.

“Stealing the nation's money has become part of us. People do not take national projects seriously.”

Togbe mentioned the payment of gratuitous emoluments and the present procurement regimes, all which he said milked the nation and should be reconsidered.

He said the citizenry had a greater role to play in realising the needed development and called for the commitment to unity and hard work, which he said was, “very important.” The Agbogbomefia wondered why Ghana has inadequate infrastructural development despite its rich natural resources.

According to him, the country has a huge debt stock and there is too little to show for the country's borrowing.

[Togbe Afede](#) noted that Ghana's weak economic fundamentals have been exposed by [COVID-19](#) and the Russia-Ukraine war. “Our economic problems predate [COVID-19](#) and the

Russia-Ukraine war. We are lucky to have so much – 30 per cent of all mineral resources in the world, so much of the world's arable lands, yet we cultivate so little to the world's output, and we remain poor, and the worst part is that we are so much indebted,” a worried Togbe Afede said.

“More worrying is the fact that, with a lot of debt, we cannot tell what that has done for us. So we still lack a lot of the basic facilities; poor roads. From Accra to Ho and Ho to Aflao, we know how bad the road is. Many of these roads used to be very good. If they were good and are now bad, then it means that we have retrogressed as a country,” he added.

Togbe Afede said, the theme for the festival, “Let's eschew greed and corruption,” would help deliberate on the nation's current disposition.

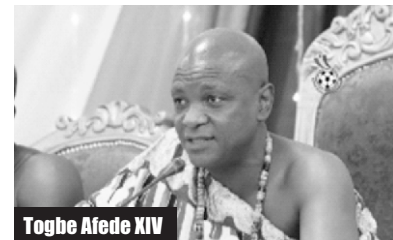
An anti-corruption day celebration, youth empowerment forum, and a summit of chiefs, counts among a novelty

introduced as the festival returned from a three-year break.

Mr John Dramani Mahama, former President, who graced the durbar, commended Togbe Afede for rebranding the festival and giving it an international appeal.

There was a display of Asogli culture at the festival, and the festival brought together the various divisions in a mega procession that emptied the Ho community into Jubilee Park. Togbe Adzi Lakle Howusu, Awafiaga, (warrior division) of Asogli State, in a welcome address, recounted the struggles to establish the State, and appealed to all to study history in order to help sustain peace and unity.

Sugandh Rajaram, Indian High Commissioner, congratulated the “friendly people of Asogli,” and commended the chiefs for enforcing peace and unity. He said agricultural and rural activities remained common grounds for both Ghana and



India and assured the traditional rulers that technology exchanges would continue for mutual benefits in the areas of education, renewable energy and water supply among others. This year's yam festival of the Chiefs and people of Asogli State was under the distinguished patronage of [Togbe Afede XIV](#). The festival started on August 6, 2022, and ended on Sunday, September 11. The one-month festival seeks to highlight unity, reconciliation, stocktaking and development and is also a platform for the annual reunion with the ancestors and the re-affirmation of allegiance by all chiefs and their subjects in the Asogli State to the Agbogbome Stool. The Yam festival was under the theme “Let's Eschew Greed, Unite for Peace, Development and Prosperity”.

## Planting For Food And Jobs

# Seed Trade Association Chases Govt Over GHS 207 Million Debt

The National Seed Trade Association of Ghana (NASTAG) has called on the government, as a matter of urgency, to settle debts owed to its members for the supply of seeds for the 2021 cropping season. According to NASTAG, the government owes its members GH¢207million for seeds supplied for the 2021 cropping season under the flagship Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) initiative. Mr Kwabena Adu-Gyamfi, the President of NASTAG, in a statement signed and issued in Accra, and copied to the Ghana News Agency, expressed frustration over the government's failure to settle the debt to its members 14 months after the seeds were supplied.

The statement warned that the government's efforts to revamp Ghana's agricultural sector and address the recent deepening economic challenges associated with food price volatility, inflation, unstable currency, and growing household food insecurity, would suffer a major setback if the agriculture sector was not prioritized.

It said despite the debt owed its members; Seed suppliers had shown good faith as they continue to supply certified seeds to farmers for the 2022 cropping season. “This gesture should be reciprocated by the government by the payment of the outstanding debt of seed

supplied in 2021,” it urged.

The statement also noted that with inputs for production such as fertilizer and agro-chemicals, currently imported, with escalating prices daily, production for smallholder seed farmers would only be difficult, adding that, the value of GH¢207million seeds supplied in 2021 had been eroded by over 70 percent on account of inflation over the last year.

It warned that the food security situation might get worse as most of these out growers were likely to abandon their fields.

Over 40,000 smallholder farmers are directly or indirectly affected

by the undue delayed payment and stand a high chance of affecting over 700,000 other smallholder farmers who depend on the local seed producers for seed and sponsorship to produce their grains.

The Statement warned that the current increasing food prices could get worse in the coming months and next year if something imminent was not done about the payment of the debt owed to NASTAG members. “The northern sector is at the peak of its season while the southern sector is entering the minor rainfall season. With immediate payments, farmers could still produce enough of various seeds for the 2023 planting season

and reduce the food prices in the country,” the statement said. “As indicated, many seed producers are smallholder farmers, who produce seeds and at the same time, invest in out-growers. As their investments are locked up with the government, all their fields and that of their out-grower farmers are currently under stress with no money to purchase the requisite inputs, fertilizer, agrochemicals, etc. This would have a direct effect on the availability of seeds for production in 2023,” it added.

Source -- GNA





# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Okinawa Governor Poll Results Hamper Plans To Expand US Military Presence In Japan



In a major setback to plans for expanding US military presence in Japan, Denny Tamaki, the anti-US base governor of Okinawa, has won a second term in office, continuing his platform against US military bases in the prefecture. In the gubernatorial election held last Sunday, September 11, Tamaki won with a clear majority by defeating Japan's ruling party candidate Atsushi Sakima.

As per the final results released on Monday, Tamaki, supported by a coalition of opposition groups and local movements, secured 339,767 votes, nearly 51% of the total votes polled. Tamaki defeated his nearest rival Sakima for the second time, with a margin of nearly 10%. Local conservative politician Mikio Shimoji, also a former parliamentarian and minister, stood a distant third with around 8% votes.

Tamaki, who has been serving as Okinawa's governor since 2018, was supported by a coalition that included the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) and the Japanese Communist

Party (JCP), along with the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Reiwa Shinsengumi (Reiwa), and local groups like Okinawa Social Mass Party (OSMP) and Okinawa Whirlwind.

Tamaki's platform highlighted his long-standing opposition to the relocation of the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, one of the many US bases in the region, from Ginowan to Henoko Bay in Nago, both cities in Okinawa. The relocation plan has been especially controversial for Okinawans who have long opposed expansion or relocation of US military bases in the island.

Sakima, who served as the mayor of Ginowan, was supported by Japan's ruling conservative coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Komeito. Unlike in the 2018 election, when he lost against Tamaki for the first time, Sakima was upfront about his support for the relocation this time and closely aligned with the ruling coalition.

The election results are widely seen as a strong statement against the Futenma base relocation in the region. "The result suggests that the thoughts of people in the prefecture haven't changed even a millimeter,"

proclaimed Tamaki in his victory speech on Monday.

This was also echoed by Tamaki's allies. In a statement responding to Tamaki's re-election, JCP chairman Kazuo Shii said that the result "shows the unwavering will of the people of Okinawa."

While conceding his defeat, Sakima admitted that his calls for Okinawans to oppose the base relocation "did not gain support," and that his campaign will "strive to gain the understanding of the Okinawa people." However, the ruling LDP has dismissed the impact that the results will have. Hiroshi Moriyama, the election committee chairman of the LDP, tried to downplay the importance of the results, although admitting Okinawan opposition to the base relocation. "Since it is a local government election, there will be no direct impact on national politics," he said, adding that the Kishida government still intends to continue with the base relocation. Even though a prefectural governor's powers are limited, Tamaki can still affect the relocation plan and the

construction activities at Henoko Bay. During his campaign, Tamaki promised to cut short the construction period at Henoko Bay and also ensure that the land used by the Futenma base is returned to Okinawa by 2030.

The CDP, JCP, and other opposition groups have also called on the Kishida government to halt the relocation plans. "The Futenma base should be immediately closed and removed," said Shii, adding that "The Kishida administration should take the result seriously and give up once and for all the construction of new bases."

"It is time for the LDP-Komeito government to change its heavy-handed method of pushing the construction of the unnecessary Henoko base," said Taro Yamamoto, legislator and leader of Reiwa Shinsengumi. Yamamoto also criticized the government's attempts to link budgetary allocations for Okinawa to the base relocation.

Since the election of anti-base candidate Takeshi Onaga as governor in 2014, elections in the prefecture have witnessed major

victories for the anti-base bloc, with three successive governor victories and four out of the six directly elected members to the National Diet being anti-base advocates. This trend was even more evident when 72% of Okinawans voted against the base relocation plans in a 2019 referendum.

Okinawa has a long history of hosting a large number of US foreign bases in Japan. After Japan's defeat in the Second World War, the prefecture was under US military control until 1972. Okinawa was then handed back to Japan but the legacy of US control continues till today. For an island that contributes to around 1.2% of Japan's population, it hosts over 70% of the US military personnel in the country. Around two-thirds of US military infrastructure is also based there. With the ruling LDP-Komeito's long-standing attempts to undermine Japan's pacifist constitution, and the rising tensions between China and the US, extensive US foreign bases in the neighborhood, especially in Okinawa, have been a source of major concern for the island's residents who faced the brunt of

### On 10th Anniversary Of Baldia Factory Fire In Pakistan, Activists Demand Social Security For All Workers

On the tenth anniversary of the industrial fire that killed at least 260 workers in a garment factory in Pakistan, scores of political workers, rights activists, and family members of the deceased have carried out a rally and sit-in protest outside the site of the factory in Karachi's Baldia town.

The rally was organized by the Association of the Affectees of Baldia Factory Fire, Home-based Women Workers Federation, and National Trade Union Federation (NTUF). The participants lit candles and clay lamps in commemoration of the deceased workers and displayed their pictures. They demanded a safe working environment and social security for all workers and the implementation of labor laws.

As many as 260 people were killed and over 50 were injured in the fire at a readymade garment manufacturing factory owned by Ali Enterprises in Baldia on September 11, 2012. Speaking on the occasion, NTUF General Secretary Nasir Manzoor stressed that 10 years after the tragedy, factories and workplaces in Pakistan still lacked health and safety measures. "Even today, laborers are being used as fuel for making money in factories across the country," he said. Manzoor said that "Millions of workers associated with the textile and garment industry are deprived of basic labor rights like unionization, minimum wage, social security, and pension," *The Express Tribune* reported. Union leaders have been

repeatedly demanding safety measures for workers at the workplace as a basic right and not a privilege. "The owners of the factory, who were actually responsible for the tragedy, were given a clean chit by the government, while the German brand for which the factory produced products, did not even express condolence or regret, let alone apologizing to the victims' families," chairperson of the Association of the Affectees of Baldia Factory Fire, Saeeda Khatoon, said. Zehra Khan, general secretary of the Home-based Women Workers Federation, noted that the Sindh labor department has not done much to implement labor laws in factories in the province.

"Due to the recent floods, more than 50% of cotton crop has been damaged and that this would soon result in creating a crisis in the textile industry rendering a large number of textile and garment workers jobless," Khan said. In October 2021, the first ever [code of practice for the textile and garment industry](#) was adopted at the International Labour Organization (ILO) after negotiations between governments, employers and unions. The International Labour Conference, held in Geneva in June 2022, added [health and safety to the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work](#). "This means that all ILO member states commit to respect and promote the fundamental right to a safe and



healthy working environment, whether or not they have ratified the relevant ILO Conventions," IndustriALL Global had noted at that time. Similarly, IndustriALL, UNI Global Unions and several brands have also created an [International Accord](#) to ensure workplace safety in the garment sector. While such agreements have laid the framework for better treatment of workers in the garment sector, a lot more needs to be done before workers in countries such as Pakistan are able to access these rights.

## A-G Report: Decline In Investment Returns Of Ghana Petroleum Funds' Disturbing

**T**he general decline in the financial returns of the Ghana Petroleum Fund has been described as worrying. This is according to the 2021 Auditor-General's Report which indicated a decline in investments from about \$17.5 million in 2020 to \$14.19 million in 2021. "The total returns of \$14.19 million on the Funds invested represent a 19.15% reduction from that of 2020 (\$17.55 million) even though the Funds invested continue to increase over

the years. There is a risk that a continuous decline in the returns on the investment will affect the future value of the Funds," the report noted. As part of its recommendations on the decline, the A-G's report called for a review of the investment mix for the Ghana Stabilisation Fund and the Ghana Heritage Fund to enhance potential return on investments. Despite the decline in returns of the Ghana Petroleum Fund, the report however noted an

improvement in operational efficiency. It also stated that a total amount of \$2.57 million remained outstanding from surface rentals as of December 31 2021. "We noted that a total amount of \$2.57 million (2020: \$2.11 million) was still outstanding from surface rentals as of 31 December 2021". Meanwhile, some eight defaulting companies including Swiss African Oil Company, Britannia –U and GOSCO Limited are indebted to the



*File photo of rigmen on an oil rig*

Government of Ghana. It explained that the failure of the companies to honour their debt obligations has since impacted funds made available to the GPF.

To further address this, the Auditor-General called for stringent moves to recover the outstanding debt from the eight defaulting companies.

## SIM Card Re-Registration: NCA Withdraws Order For Blockage Of Unregistered SIMs



**T**he National Communications Authority (NCA) has reportedly withdrawn its order for telecommunication companies (telcos) to limit call and data services to persons who have not re-registered their SIM cards. According to citinewaroom.com report, the withdrawal of the order was due to the public backlash after network service providers started implementation. It added that since the withdrawal of the order the network operators (telcos) have stopped

blocking services to unregistered SIM cards. The NCA on September 5, 2022 announced that persons who have not registered their SIM cards will be barred from receiving certain services, including all outgoing voice calls and data services. The NCA in a statement explained the move forms part of punitive actions ahead of the SIM re-registration deadline which takes effect on September 30, 2022. The NCA, however, reiterated that persons who fail to register their SIM cards before the September 30 deadline

would have their numbers blocked permanently. This decision of the NCA led to sector minister, the Minister for Communication and Digitalisation, Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, being berated by the majority of Ghanaians with some even threatening suits. The Civil society group, the Peoples Project, led by musician and politician, Kwame Asare-Obeng, popularly called A-Plus, filed a suit seeking an injunction against the NCA enforcing its 30 September 2022 deadline of blocking all unregistered SIM cards in the country. The Minority Caucus of the Parliament of Ghana has also indicated that it will summon the NCA and the Ministry of Communications to answer questions on the blocking of unregistered SIM CARDS.

## Some Chiefs Are Benefiting From Galamsey Proceeds - Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu Alleges



*Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu is the Majority Leader in Parliament*

**T**he Majority Leader in Parliament, [Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu](#), has alleged that some chiefs are benefiting from the proceeds of galamsey in parts of the country. He argued that all chiefs who are in these mining areas are in the know about the various galamsey activities going on within their catchment areas. According to him, the leadership of these illegal activities often pay homage to the chiefs before they proceed to mine, insisting that none of the traditional leaders can deny knowledge of galamsey activities in their areas. Speaking in an interview with Oyerepa TV, the Suame legislator charged the government to ensure that it cuts off Common Funds to the MMDAs where galamsey is

thriving. He also wants the government to involve the chiefs in such areas to curb the menace. "The chiefs cannot say they don't know about the galamsey activities in their areas because they benefit from proceeds of the galamsey activities. "The galamseers often pay homage to them before proceeding to engage in such an activities, so I am suggesting that if we can deal with galamsey, then we must involve the chiefs. "Government should also cut off Common Funds to MMDAs where galamsey is thriving," he told the host, Kwesi Parker-Wilson. The Suame MP expressed confidence that such revolutionary approaches would cushion the government in its quest to deal with the longstanding menace.



# Why Russian Regrouping In Kharkov Will Speed Up Battle Of Donbass

By M. K. Bhadrakumar

The *New York Times* has disclosed that the US shared vital intelligence with the Ukrainian military and took part in the preparation of the latter's current "counteroffensive" near Kharkov. No matter the Joe Biden Administration's motivations in publicizing its role in what Western media is celebrating as a success story — presumably, with an eye on domestic politics in America — it could be factually correct. The media leak puts the dramatic happenings in the past 3-4 days in proper perspective.

There are two ways of looking at the surge by the Ukrainian military: one, Kiev has inflicted a heavy defeat on the Russians and forced them to retreat, or, the American intelligence finally got wind of the unobtrusive thinning out of the Russian frontline in Kharkov that had been going on in the recent weeks as part of a larger re-deployment of military formations, and shared the intelligence with Kiev, who of course gleefully acted on it. The *New York Times* report effectively confirms the latter reading of the situation, which has been the stuff of hearsay and whispers so far.

Indeed, there has been hardly any fighting as such in Kharkov region during this Ukrainian surge, and the Russian focus was, unsurprisingly, to pull out the residual forces in the frontline under the cover of heavy artillery fire. The Russian operation ensured that there was no significant casualty. The new frontline that was being steadily put together in the recent weeks (or months) along the Oskol River has crystallized. The withdrawal from the Balakleysko-Izyum direction stemmed from the Russian military command's appraisal that no useful purpose would be served by maintaining such a frontline. In March, when Russian forces gained control of Izyum, the assumption was

that it would help mount an operation from the north toward Sloviansk city in the Kramatorsk district of the Donetsk region. But as it turned out through the past four months, Russians apparently gave up that idea altogether.

Make no mistake, the battle for Donbass still remains the number one priority for the Russian special military operation. The re-deployment from the Balakleysko-Izyum direction will now significantly strengthen the offensive in Donbass instead of weakening it, as some Western journalists are speculating. The confusion arises out of the ancient legend of Izyum being the "gateway" to the Donbass and the Black Sea. Whereas, today, with modern communication, Russian supply lines to the Donbass can be sustained even without such a "gateway" from the north.

Second, Izyum itself is in a heavily wooded region — some call it Sherwood Forest — to its west where the Ukrainian forces had fortified themselves and the Russian presence had come under attack even previously also. Simply put, continued occupation of Izyum would only be a drain on manpower. That said, the optics of the happenings in the Balakleysko-Izyum direction have triggered a wave of criticism within Russia itself about inept mishandling by the military command, and some of it was even directed at President Putin himself. The military command comes under pressure to show "results" in the Donbass campaign. Suffice to say, there might be some rethink too on the Russian strategy so far to depend on militia groups to do the heavy lifting rather than regular troops from its armed forces.

In reality, Kharkov Region has been largely a sideshow so far. The fact that there are no plans to hold any referendum in Kharkov — unlike in Kherson and Zaporozhia in the south in early September (which now stands postponed) — speaks for itself.



**Firefighters in Kharkov in March. Photo: Diego Herrera/Xinhua. Make no mistake, the battle for Donbass still remains the number one priority for the Russian special military operation**

To be sure, last week's happenings in the Balakleysko-Izyum direction will come as a big morale booster for the Ukrainian armed forces. This will have implications for the future. For one thing, Kiev will have no inclination whatsoever for peace talks. The thundering statement by Ukraine's Minister of Defense Oleksiy Reznikov on Sunday sets the threshold of belligerence, "Kyiv is ready for negotiations after the vacation [by Russia] of all territories of Ukraine — within the limits of December 1, 1991. There are no more options for 'February 24' for Ukraine." That is to say, the plans of the command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are to completely "liberate" all "occupied" territories, including Donbass and Crimea, and nothing less! Interestingly, Reznikov was reacting to a statement by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to the effect that Moscow does not reject negotiations with Ukraine, but further delay in peace talks by Kiev will complicate the possibility of reaching an agreement. According to the Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council Danilov, Kiev is already considering options for accepting the surrender of Russia, as well as dividing it into several nice little states! Such a level of madness and war hysteria will make things

extremely difficult for the Biden Administration to carry forward the incipient signs of moderation and realism that were straining to surface in the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's rhetoric during his visit to Kiev last Friday. Blinken reacted cautiously when asked by the traveling media party about the Ukrainian "counteroffensive." He said, "Yes, we did get a comprehensive update on the counteroffensive... it's very early but we're seeing clear and real progress on the ground, particularly in the area around Kherson but also some interesting developments in the Donbass in the east. But again, early days."

Earlier in Kiev, Blinken did not respond to President Zelensky's bottom line during their joint media appearance that he regarded the US support to be "a guarantee of the possibility of returning our territories, our lands."

General Mark Milley, US chairman, Chiefs of Staff, also was noticeably circumspect about the Ukrainian counteroffensive in his remarks on Saturday in an interview with the National Public Radio. The general said it remains to be seen what is happening in the next few weeks. "It is a very, very difficult task that the Ukrainians are undertaking — combining their offense with maneuver," the general said.

While the regrouping of troops in the Kharkov region will enable the Russian forces to concentrate their attention on establishing full control over the territory of the Donetsk, it is not as if the military command has turned its back on Kharkov.

The Russian Ministry of Defense on Monday stated that Russian Aerospace Forces, missile troops and artillery "continued to launch high-precision attacks" at the Ukrainian units and reserve forces in Kharkov region. The Ukrainian forces that used to be in well-fortified positions in that heavily wooded region have now stepped out into the open and are being targeted for intense air, missile and artillery strikes.

The Russian MOD stated on Saturday that more than 2,000 Ukrainian fighters were killed near Balakleya and Izyum in the previous three days alone. For sure, a few thousand more troops would have suffered injuries too. Considering that a 15,000-strong Ukrainian force is estimated to be involved in the entire Kharkov operation, that is a very heavy loss. Over time, Kiev may have little to celebrate about.

**MK Bhadrakumar is a former diplomat. He was India's ambassador to Uzbekistan and Turkey. The views are personal.**



**THE SOCIALIST  
MOVEMENT OF GHANA**

***PRESENTS***

**THE PLACARD PARADE  
AT THE KWAME NKRUMAH  
MAUSOLEUM**

**THE REAL FOUNDER'S DAY**

**DATE: TUESDAY 20TH SEPT. 2022**

**VENUE: KWAME NKRUMAH MEMORIAL**

**PARK @ MAUSOLEUM**

**TIME: 8:00AM - 12:00 NOON**



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**TEL:**

**0549342342 / 0249652640 / 0244994355**



# Fear And Misinformation Dominate Discourses Of Brazilian Right Ahead Of Presidential Election

By Zoe Alexandra

**B**razil is less than a month away from historic elections. Over 156 million Brazilians will go to the polls on October 2 to cast their vote for the president of the republic, State governors, 27 senators, 513 federal deputies, and State and district deputies. The elections take place amid an acute political, economic, and social crisis in the country. The past several years have seen a dramatic increase in hunger, homelessness, unemployment, and the prices of basic commodities. The currency, the Real, has tumbled. Above all, the colossal number of deaths due to COVID-19 continues to cast a shadow on the lives of millions.

Despite this moment of national crisis, the far-right candidate in the elections, President Jair Bolsonaro, has dedicated much of his campaign to sowing divisive, angry, and hateful rhetoric.

This messaging was on display in the massive right-wing protests organized by Bolsonaro supporters in Brasília, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro on September 7, the 200th anniversary of Brazil's independence from Portugal. In response to a call made by Bolsonaro himself, tens of thousands of his supporters took to the streets donning green and yellow clothing and Brazilian flags.

More than a celebration of the country's independence, the mobilizations were focused on mobilizing support for Bolsonaro as well as for other right-wing congressional candidates in the upcoming elections. The mobilization in Rio de Janeiro is already being investigated by the Public Prosecutor's office for having used public funds meant for the celebration of Independence Day for political campaigning. In addition, Bolsonaro and his allies have been criticized for their speeches that contained not only open calls for violence and misinformation that has already been debunked, but also threats to subvert the democratic order and break electoral law.

**"Military intervention, NOW!"**

Bolsonaro's supporters for the past several years have been calling for the Armed Forces of Brazil to intervene against "corrupt" institutions, largely of the judicial branch, to "save" Brazil. The September 7 rallies saw thousands of people raise slogans and hold banners demanding "MILITARY INTERVENTION NOW!" and "purge of the STF [Supreme Federal Court]!"

Where does this call for a military 'self-coup' come from?

Despite having won the presidential elections in October 2018, Bolsonaro alleged that he was robbed of a first



**Bolsonaro supporters on September 7 in São Paulo. Photo: Junior Lima. In the lead-up to the general elections in Brazil, the far-right has intensified its campaign of hysteria and fear-mongering instead of providing concrete solutions to the crises affecting the people**

round victory because Brazil's electronic voting system allowed for the manipulation of results. Since then, his criticisms of the electronic voting system have only intensified and he has time and again demanded a return to paper ballots. It is important to note that both the allegations of fraud and about the electronic voting system have been debunked.

The problem for Bolsonaro is that the electoral system is under the power of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE). The TSE is part of the judicial branch and is composed of seven ministers, three of whom are from Brazil's Supreme Federal Court (STF). Bolsonaro has tried to pressure the TSE and STF to enact his desired changes, but they have defended the current system. In response, he has called for and attempted to disband the current TSE and STF.

In February 2021, Daniel Silveira, a far-right, Bolsonarist, ex-military policy officer, and federal deputy, was arrested and put in prison after publishing a video with threats against the TSE and the STF and statements defending the AI-5 decree of the last military dictatorship which tore down the constitution. His arrest warrant was issued by Alexandre De Moraes, president of the STF, and upheld in a unanimous vote by the 11 members of the STF. This action further angered Bolsonaro and his supporters, with the president issuing a pardon to get him out of prison. The STF has provoked the ire of Bolsonaro and his supporters for numerous other actions. At the beginning of the pandemic, Bolsonaro attempted to restrict local

government officials from implementing isolation policies with a presidential order, but the STF ruled against it, allowing State governors to have autonomy from the executive to implement stricter COVID-19 policies. The judicial body has also investigated him and his sons for violations of the law, including sharing fake news about the voting system and spreading false information about COVID-19 medication.

**Save Brazil from communism?**

The promise to "save Brazil from communism" is a major talking point of Bolsonaro and the dozens of far-right candidates standing for Congress and local government seats. This rhetoric is far from new. In recent election campaigns in countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, this slogan is often accompanied by "so we don't become like the leftist dictatorships of (insert Venezuela, Nicaragua or Cuba)." In Brazil, Argentina is also widely used as a cautionary tale. Bolsonaro, as well as his colleagues and supporters, describe these countries as lawless, economically devastated and lacking morals, amongst other charges. However, little attention is paid to the current situation in Brazil which has seen tremendous setbacks in the past several years under the governments of neoliberal conservative Michel Temer and far-right neoliberal Bolsonaro. Under Bolsonaro's administration, the program *Bolsa Familia*, recognized internationally by the United Nations and the World Bank for its success in combating poverty

and taking Brazil off of the UN's hunger map, was ended. In its place, his administration implemented significantly less-funded and limited programs, *Auxílio Brasil* and *Alimentar Brasil*.

The results are palpable and devastating. According to the 2nd National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil published in June 2022, 33 million Brazilians are hungry, which is the highest number recorded in the last 30 years. Nearly 125 million people are suffering from some level of food insecurity. This is an increase of 60% since 2018.

The Brazilian currency, the real, has devalued by 37.5%, with USD 1 equivalent to 5.2 reals in 2022, compared to an average of at 1.95 reals to 1 USD in 2012. Over the past 12 months, Brazil has seen over 8% rate of inflation in items of basic consumption. Furthermore, according to a study by the Institute of Teaching and Research (Insper), the real has lost 50% of its purchasing power over the past 10 years.

The homeless population in Brazil has also increased by leaps and bounds in this same period. A study by the Institute of Applied Economic Research showed that this population increased by 140% between September 2012 and March 2020. They estimate that in March 2020, there were 221,000 people living on the streets in the country and that this number would increase. 70% of this population works in some capacity and 67% of them are Black.

Is it really communism that Brazil needs saving from?

**God, homeland, family, freedom**

The slogan "god, homeland, family, freedom" can be heard in almost every speech made by Bolsonaro as well as by Bolsonarist candidates and supporters. The appeal to return to these "traditional values" is one of his key messages, and part of his widespread appeal to more socially conservative sectors of Brazilian society such as Evangelicals and other Christian groups.

The slogan itself has roots in a multitude of far-right, Christian movements in Brazil's history including the fascist Free Brazil Association, the Tradition Family Property movement, Brazilian Integralist Action parties, and others. In 2022, this slogan can be seen as a response to the expansion of the rights of oppressed groups such as women and LGBTQI+ people.

It is often accompanied by diatribes against the right to abortion, the right to same-sex marriage, and the minimal rights and recognition won by transgender people. For Bolsonarists, all these developments mark the 'degradation' of society and a violation of these 'traditional values.'

As elections draw nearer, these messages only intensify and multiply. They fuel fake news campaigns on social media and troll attacks on opponents. Instead of focusing on the real issues facing the Brazilian people and solutions to resolve them, the far-right has appealed to the broad discontent of the population and fed them hatred and fear.

**Movements fight for the excluded**

Meanwhile, people's movements in Brazil have doubled down on their efforts to support and protect vulnerable populations in Brazil that have been most affected by this crisis. The examples are boundless. On Sunday September 11, after a Bolsonaro supporter publicly humiliated a woman by threatening to cut off her food assistance because she supports Lula, the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST) vowed to provide her with food produced by the movement for the next six months. On September 7, movements in Brazil organized the "Cry of the Excluded" to draw attention to the incomplete nature of independence and the historic inequities that exist within the country. This year, movements organized mass food distribution drives and emphasized their demand that the government guarantee access to housing, food, and healthcare for all.

In a symbolic action at the Independence Monument organized by the MST, Popular Youth Uprising, and People's Brazil Movement, militants held up banners reading "For a people's independence" and "Democracy always – #OutBolsonaro". One of the participants, Renata Menezes of the youth of the MST, declared, "It is only possible to be a sovereign country if we direct our destiny towards the well-being of all Brazilian people. We will only be independent if we build a sovereign project for the people in our country."