

Surcharge Public Officers Who Mismanage State Funds -- CHRAJ Tells Auditor-General



Joseph Whittal, Commissioner of CHRAJ

Ongoing Trials Of Murdered
J. B. Danquah And Major Mahama

**Save The Nation
President Petitions
Chief Justice**



Kwadwo Atta Apeakorang

Kwadwo Atta Apeakorang, Founder and President of Save the Nation for Future Leaders (SNFL) has called on the Chief Justice, Kwasi Anin Yeboah and the Judicial Council to work towards building the image of the judiciary which he believes is being battered as a result of some of its actions and inactions.

Cont. on page 2

MAHAMA

He Says Ghana's Public Purse Cannot Be Found Under Akufo-Addo

Former president, John Dramani Mahama has questioned the whereabouts of Ghana's public purse under the stewardship of

President Nana Akufo-Addo. According to him the fight against corruption has waned under President Akufo-Addo's watch such

that protecting the public purse to sustain the economy is longer in his lexicon as the purse can no longer be found under his administration.

Cont. on page 3

Manufacturing Consent: How The United States Has Penetrated South African Media page 9

The INSIGHT

— EDITORIAL

PUT THEM TO USE!

Over the years every government that has taken over the reins of power has promised to create jobs and make youth unemployment a thing of the past.

Most of these promises often turn out to be a mirage.

For example the Kufuor administration once asked the teeming unemployed, especially the youth to queue for a national register to be compiled and jobs provided them. It later turned out to be a false hope.

Currently, there is rising youth unemployment with its attendant consequences and dangers to the peace, security, and stability of the nation.

The Insight is of the strong opinion that the government needs to endeavour activate the many dormant factories that have been shut down for one reason or the other.

The citizens need jobs and cannot afford to wait any longer, when there are already existing factories that need little or no funding to get them running. Perhaps it is time to speed up efforts to address the youth unemployment.

Ongoing Trials Of Murdered J. B. Danquah And Major Mahama Save The Nation President Petitions Chief Justice

from front page

In a petition addressed to the Chief Justice, Mr. Apeakorang apart from highlighting his own personal concerns about the justice system also raised issues about the ongoing trials of murdered Member of Parliament for Abuakwa North, J. B. Danquah Adu and Major Mahama, which cases he believes have dragged unduly and thus fit into public perception about the judiciary vis-à-vis recent comments expressed by former president John Mahama. This is the full text of his petition;

5th September, 2022

The Chief Justice

Judicial Service of Ghana

P.O. Box GP 196

Accra

Your Lordship,

RE: IMAGE OF GHANA'S JUDICIARY BROKEN

I have been following trends in the judicial service of Ghana for a few years now and I can boldly attest to the issues former president John Dramani Mahama raised concerning the judiciary. In the petitions and letters I have personally written to you and your outfit, I have asked for changes to be made regarding settlement of disputes and the overall justice administration in Ghana. However, none of my letters has received the attention it should.

Two cases I have made references to, regarding the changes the judicial service must effect, are the trials of the murder of Late Joseph Boakye Danquah-Adu, former Member of Parliament for Abuakwa North Constituency, and the lynching of Late Major Adams Mahama. These two crimes tested the potency of our laws but we failed in many respects. This has led to many citizens losing confidence in the judicial process of the country. I am a victim of such unfair judicial system where aspects of a case involving me have been contrived with the help of the judicial staff handling the case. Now that, former president John Dramani Mahama has brought the delicate issue to the fore, it should not be taken as politics as usual but given much attention. I therefore plead that, you institute a body to investigate some of the deliberating issues citizens have raised and we believe that citizens will gain



Kwadwo Atta Apeakorang

confidence in the judiciary again.

May the Almighty God bless us and make us strong.

Your faithfully,

Kwadwo Atta Apeakorang

(Founder & President)

Save the Nation for Future Leaders

0244-222-166

Cc: Minister of Justice and Attorney General

P.O. Box M60

Accra

THE INSIGHT

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MAHAMA; He Says Ghana's Public Purse Cannot Be Found Under Akufo-Addo

from front page

During his inauguration in 2017, President Akufo-Addo in his speech promised to ensure that the country's public purse is given the utmost protection and effective utilization. However, more than five years into his presidency, former president John Mahama believes the country's resources have rather depleted under the leadership of President Akufo-Addo. Speaking at a gathering of chiefs and people in the Volta Region, the former president said, "This government, the NPP government has completely

lost control of the fight against corruption. President Akufo-Addo in his inaugural address promised to protect the public purse." He continued, "Today even, that public purse cannot be found. The revelations in the Auditor-General's report for 2021 is simply a microcosm of the real extent of the seeming institutionalisation of corruption under this administration."

He further chastised the Akufo-Addo administration for

superintending over corruption in the highest order without probable solutions to tackle the menace.

John Mahama however reiterated that the next National Democratic Congress government will work with a lean but effective government in order to cut down expenditure and save resources.

"As I said recently, I want to assure all Ghanaians that the next NDC administration, as I've recently said will revisit the matter of article 71 emoluments, especially the

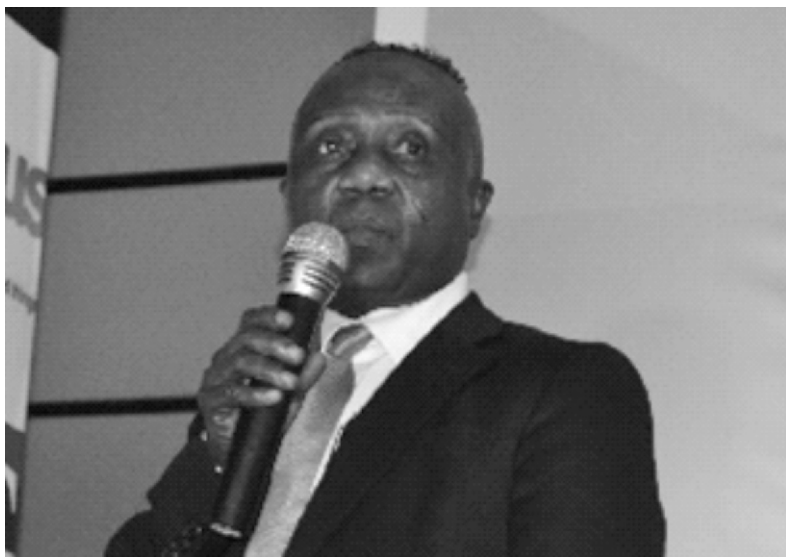


issue of ex-gratia payments and the size of government to cut down on expenditure as a way of protecting our scarce resources", John Mahama hinted.

Meanwhile, the 2021 audit report published by the

Auditor General has revealed that an amount of GH¢17.4 billion in financial irregularities were flagged due to a number of corrupt practices and financial malfeasance in the public sector.

Cedi Not Third Strongest Currency In Africa - Dr. John Kwakye Tells John Kumah



Dr. John Kwakye

Dr. John Kwabena Kwakye, Director of Research, Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana, has indicated clearly that the Ghana Cedi is not the third strongest currency in Africa, as the managers of the economy want Ghanaians to believe.

According to him, the Cedi can be best described as having a high value which is different from the strength of the

currency.

In a series of tweets, Dr. Kwakye noted that the Cedi was artificially valued highly when in 2007, under President John Agyekum Kufuor, the redenomination exercise paired the one cedi to one dollar.

He said since the redenomination if you compare how high the cedi has moved - from 10,000 to 100,000 cedis to the dollar - it explains how weak the Ghana

currency is. Adding, the managers of the economy cannot create an artificial strength for the cedi unlike the value of the cedi.

"The cedi is not the third strongest in Africa. It is the currency with the third highest value. They are two different things. Just because a currency has a high value doesn't mean it is strong. The value can be artificially defined through redenomination.

"Let it be made clear that you can create an artificially high-value currency through redenomination. But you can't create an artificially strong currency. Your currency is as strong as your economy is," Dr. John K. Kwakye tweeted.

On the redenomination, he explained, "Let it be made clear that the GHC [Ghana Cedi] was given an artificial high value when it was

redenominated in 2007. Since then, the exchange rate in old cedi terms has moved from 10,000 to 100,000 to the dollar. That tells you how weak the currency is."

"However, over time the test will be to what extent the currency maintains its value vs the \$ [dollar]. Since 2007 when Ghana made its new cedi artificially equal to the \$, in old cedi terms the exchange rate has moved from 10,000 to 100,000. How can you call the cedi a strong currency?" he questioned.

Dr. Kwakye's comment comes after Dr. John Kumah, a deputy Finance Minister, debunked claims that the Ghana cedi is the weakest currency in Africa.

He said, such a claim is mere propaganda meant to undermine the government's fiscal measures in halting the free fall of the cedi against the dollar.

"I've heard all the propaganda, they said Ghana cedi is the

worst in Africa and all kinds of things. Look, don't believe that propaganda. I just returned from Tunisia on a programme, and Tunisia has the second strongest currency in Africa.

"Ghana is third actually according to any global ranking of currencies. I am talking about the strength of currencies in Africa. The Libyan Dinar, followed by Tunisian Dinar and the Ghana cedi is the third strongest currency in Africa. But maybe they were talking about the rate of depreciation.

"I just saw what is happening in Nigeria and they are equally complaining that their Naira is not just four hundred and something to the dollar, but sometimes it's even 700 depending on where ... sometimes they can't even find the dollar. So this is a global situation," John Kumah told Joy News in an interview.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Massive Protests Take Place In London Over Police Killing Of Young Rapper

Progressive sections in London and across the UK have protested the killing of 24-year-old rapper, Chris Kaba in a police shooting. On Saturday, September 10, thousands, including activists from Stand Up To Racism, Black Lives Matter, Black African Caribbean and Asian Lawyers for Justice, and 4Front Project, marched in London demanding justice in the case. Kaba was an aspiring rapper who went by the name of 'Madix' and was part of the British hip hop collective, Drill Group 67. He was shot to death by police in Streatham Hill in South London on September 5.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has started a homicide investigation against the police officials involved in the shooting. Friends and relatives

of Kaba have demanded that the Metropolitan Police release the footage from the body cams of the officers involved in the shooting.

On September 5, an unarmed Kaba was pursued by police officers as he was driving an Audi that was reportedly linked to a firearms incident. Kaba was killed by a single shot fired by the police that went in through the driver's side of the car.

Kaba and his partner, Kim Alleyne, were expecting their first child. His family has demanded that authorities immediately suspend the Metropolitan Police officers who are involved in the case. On Sunday, protesters marched from Parliament Square to

Scotland Yard, the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police, in London, carrying placards that read "Black Lives Matter", "Justice for Chris Kaba" and "Abolish the Metropolitan Police." Delia Mattis from Black Lives Matter said on Saturday, "Black people don't have a history of violence against the police. The police have a history of violence against black people," *Socialist Worker* reported.

On September 8, Stand Up To Racism stated, "where tensions are high, there is serious economic and social deprivation and a growing trend of racist treatment and policies in this country,



The march which demanded justice for Chris Kaba in London. (Photo: via Socialist Worker). 24-year-old Chris Kaba was shot to death by the Metropolitan Police in South London on September 5. His family and rights organizations have demanded action against the officers who killed him

we must demand to know why?"

Morning Star reported that the authorities had pressured the organizers to cancel Saturday's protest in

London in the wake of the death of Queen Elizabeth II. However, the organizers did not succumb to the pressure and continued with the protest seeking justice for the young rapper.

Hundreds Protest Across Occupied West Bank For Release Of Terminally Ill Palestinian Prisoner



(Photo: WAFA) Nasser Abu Hmeid (49), a former member of Palestinian resistance group Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, is serving multiple life sentences and has already spent 30 years inside Israeli prison

Hundreds of Palestinians have demonstrated in front of the office of the Red Cross in Nablus in the occupied West Bank to demand the immediate release of Nasser Abu Hmeid (49) from Israeli prison, *Wafa* news agency has [reported](#).

The protesters carried banners demanding international pressure on Israel to release Hmeid from

prison so that he can spend his last days with his family. Hmeid is serving multiple life sentences and has been in Israeli prison since 2002. He is suffering from cancer and has been in a coma since earlier this year. He is currently admitted to Israel's Ramla prison clinic.

Similar protests were organized at various other places in the occupied West Bank, including Ramallah and Jericho, during the weekend.

The protesters claimed that Hmeid has not been getting adequate medical support for months and may die at any moment. They accused the Israeli prison authorities of deliberately neglecting the health of the Palestinian prisoner. Hmeid's mother also participated in a protest for his release in [Ramallah on Saturday](#), where she told media persons that Hmeid wishes to spend his last days with his family, *Quds News Network* [reported](#).

A resident of the Amari refugee camp in Ramallah, Hmeid was arrested in 2002 for his affiliation with Palestinian resistance group Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, which is Fatah's armed wing.

Four of his brothers were also arrested in 2002. All five siblings are serving life terms in Israeli prisons. Hmeid is serving seven life sentences with an additional 50 years in jail, *Wafa* [reported](#). He has already spent 30 years in prison.

The treatment of Palestinian prisoners inside Israeli prisons is a major issue for the Palestinian national movement. According to Addameer, there are currently over 4,500 Palestinians in Israeli prisons, including over 700 ['administrative detainees'](#). They face [inhuman treatment](#) inside the prisons, with human rights groups accusing Israeli authorities of using torture, physical abuse, and solitary confinement, among other forms of illegal treatment, against Palestinian prisoners. Due to such treatment and denial of

basic amenities, a [large number](#) of Palestinian prisoners regularly fall sick and die in prison. According to the Palestinian Prisoners' Society, at least 73 Palestinian prisoners have [died](#) due to medical negligence inside Israeli prisons since 1967. The total number of Palestinians to have died inside Israeli prisons is much higher, according to various [sources](#). Palestinian prisoners often organize mass or individual protest actions, such as hunger strikes, to oppose Israeli prison atrocities. Palestinian prisoner Musa Abu Mhaimid (40), who died in a hospital on September 3, was the latest victim of Israel's medical negligence. Hmeid is also admitted in the same Ramla prison clinic in which Mhaimid died. The Ramla prison is [infamous](#) as a "slaughterhouse" among Palestinian prisoners.

Menzgold Customers Demonstrate Over 4-Year Locked-Up Cash

Members of the Coalition of Aggrieved

Customers of Menzgold have embarked on a demonstration in protest against their locked-up funds.

The coalition which presented a petition to President Akufo-Addo at the Jubilee House on Monday, September 12, 2022 said their action marked four years since the government closed down the operations of the gold dealership firm, Menzgold.

The spokesperson of the group, Fred Forson who spoke in an interview before the demonstration said all efforts to retrieve their monies have proven futile.

"We will converge at 9 am at the Customs traffic light. From there, we will do a walk through the Ministries to the Black Stars Square. There, we shall have a press briefing. At

11 am, we will present our petition. It is exactly four years since Menzgold was collapsed and for four years, we have done whatever we could but it appears there are no results. So this time around, we want to petition the president for a presidential intervention," Citinewsroom quoted Fred Forson.

On September 2018, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) directed gold trading firm Menzgold Ghana Limited to shut down its investment operations with immediate effect for contravening the Securities Industry Act, 2016 (Act 929). The SEC order also warned Menzgold to halt advertising of their investment business and desist from creating new contracts with depositors.

According to a letter addressed

to the Menzgold CEO, Nana Appiah Mensah by the SEC investigations conducted by the regulator, they found out that Menzgold's business which involves the purchase/deposit of gold from the public and contracts issued with guaranteed returns with clients is a capital market activity which cannot be conducted without a valid license issued by the SEC.

Menzgold, however, adhered to this direction. Meanwhile, the Finance Minister has said the government won't pay Menzgold customers' locked up cash.

According to him, people who invested their monies in Menzgold did that at their own peril.

"As we try to clean up the financial services center, I know the SEC has come



down hard, strong and justifiably on Menzgold. But the issue with a company of Menzgold...it's become an issue of greed as a people and our own behaviour when we are so clear as educated as we might be that when we went there, there was no license.

"I think it is not in the place of government to fund or get

your money back for you. It was an obvious trap that you went into. Maybe we as an industry should also push the whole issue of education and empowerment so that people do not fall prey to that," the finance minister said at a ceremony to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Blame Telcos For Blockage Of Registered SIM Cards, Not Us – NCA



The National Communication Authority (NCA) has said that it is not responsible for the blockage of SIM cards that have been fully registered by their owners.

According to the NCA, the Telecommunication companies (telcos) are to be blamed for the mess up since it is their responsibility to block some call and data services to unregistered SIM cards.

The Director of Legal Affairs at the NCA, Dr. Poku Adusei, who made the remarks in a JoyNews interview, added that his outfit is working with the telcos to ensure that the anomaly is rectified.

"For such persons (people with registered SIM cards that have been blocked), it is an error to

have their SIM cards blocked and anytime these come to our attention we are able to communicate with the network operators because it is not in the purview of NCA for any blockage to take place. It is rather the telecom operators," he said.

"The telcos were implementing the policy that if the person has not registered, there should be certain categorization so that in a day or two, those persons will not be able to make calls and it did not mean that if you have registered fully that should apply to you," he added. Meanwhile, some Ghanaians including the members of the opposition National Democratic Congress, have

berated the Minister for Communication and Digitalisation, [Ursula Owusu-Ekuful](#), and the NCA over the decision to block some call and data services to Ghanaians who have not registered their SIM cards. Speaking in an interview with Woezor TV, [Sammy Gyamfi](#) said that the action of [Ursula Owusu-Ekuful](#) is unacceptable since there are no laws backing the sanction she is currently implementing.

"Before you can impose sanctions on anybody, the essence for which you are imposing the sanctions must be clearly defined in written law and the punishment for same clearly defined. "So, what law gives the Minister of Communication and the NCA (National Communication Authority) the authority and the right to restrict some cards of persons who have not re-registered their SIM cards or have not registered their SIM cards?" he questioned. He added that the action of the minister is making a lot of Ghanaians lose their businesses. He, therefore, urged the minister to apologise to the people of Ghanaians and reverse her 'senseless' order.

Surcharge Public Officers Who Mismanage State Funds -- CHRAJ Tells Auditor-General

The Commissioner of Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Joseph Whittal, has reiterated calls for the Auditor-General to surcharge public officers who misappropriate or mismanage state funds. According to him, that will be the surest means to achieve proper accountability from the work of the Auditor-General.

Speaking to journalists after swearing in of a six-member audit committee last Friday September 8, 2022, he said "It is not enough to enable citizens through civil society and others to go to the street for you to perform your duty."

"It is not about reporting; it is about actual



Joseph Whittal, Commissioner of CHRAJ

recoveries. Ghanaians want surcharges, and he should listen to the voice of Ghanaians," Whittal added.

The Auditor-General's report highlighted several misappropriations of funds by public offices in the country. Some Civil Society Organizations took to the streets to demand that the Auditor-General surcharges persons and offices who were found guilty.

COCOBOD Trial: Is Honyenuga, Retired Supreme Court Judge Ready For A Comeback?

Justice [Clemence Jackson Honyenuga](#), the judge in the highly politicized trial of former COCOBOD Chief Executive, Dr Stephen Opuni and businessman Seidu Agongo, shocked many when he announced in an open court that he will continue to preside over the case, even after retirement. Per the curriculum vitae submitted to [Parliament's](#) Appointments Committee during his vetting, the judge turned 70 on September 4, 2022, which is the retirement age for superior court judges according to Article 145(2) (a) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

Justice Honyenuga, in July, was categorical that he will be back on the case, even as a retiree, after the legal break in October.

The judge has been presiding over the case at the High Court for over four years. The trial actually started in March 2018 after the state pressed 27 charges against the accused, including Agricult Ghana Ltd, signed by Chief State Attorney Evelyn Keelson on behalf of the then Attorney General Madam Gloria Akuffo. This was after the uncle of the Chief State Attorney, the then Senior Minister Yaw Osafo Marfo ordered the CID of the Ghana police to take over the case from the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO).

Justice Honyenuga has on a number of occasions appeared to be antagonistic towards the first accused, Dr. Opuni, giving cause to the lawyers to cite him for exhibiting "hatred and bias" towards their client.

HALLUCINATION

For instance, Justice Honyenuga, in December 2021, whilst delivering his ruling on an application for his recusal asserted: "I think that the first accused must have been hallucinating when DW1 gave evidence because no such thing

happened as the first accused has stated in paragraph 17 in his affidavit in support," the judge said whilst reading his written ruling. He also accused Dr. Opuni of spewing lies. "Further, the averment in paragraph 11 is the imagination of the first accused and a blatant lie calculated to throw dust in the eyes of everyone." Dr. Opuni, Justice Honyenuga said, "must learn to speak the truth because his ocular observation is different from the majority of us who were in the courtroom."

MOST DISGUSTING

Justice Honyenuga further ruled that claims by Dr. Opuni that he the judge had said that the evidence of the accused's witness cannot exonerate him is "most disgusting" and an effort to underrate his "intelligence and integrity". Meanwhile, the case has been cited by analysts as a politically motivated trial, which has seen several, albeit unsuccessful, applications asking for the recusal of the trial judge for being hostile against Dr. Opuni. His insistence to sit on the case, empowered by the numerous times the Chief Justice had rejected petitions to remove him from the case has left tongues wagging, after other identical applications against other judges were granted. But as Justice Honyenuga was expected to retire on September 4, it appears the Chief Justice wants him to stay on a bit longer.

"In pursuance to Article 144 (11) of the constitution, 1992, the Chief Justice has granted me a limited time to conclude this case. In the circumstances, this court shall in addition [to Monday, Wednesday and Thursday] sits on Tuesdays at 11 am for early disposal of this four-year-old case. In view of the pending vacation the case is adjourned to October 3, 2022, at 10:am for continuation," Justice Clemence Honyenuga announced in court on July 28,

2022, a clear month to his retirement.

The announcement has left many wondering if the court is willing to dispense justice as the trial judge with the support of the Chief Justice is setting a timeline to finish a criminal case.

Justice Honyenuga was handed the case, then as an Appeal's Court judge, sitting with additional responsibility as a high court judge, before his dramatic elevation to the Supreme Court by President Nana Akufo-Addo in 2020 after endorsing the president's re-election bid at a durbar he the judge presided over in his capacity as a chief.

STATE CLOSED CASE

The state in March 2021 closed its case after calling seven witnesses. It however failed to call a single farmer, as the end user, to testify to the efficacy or otherwise of Lithovit liquid fertilizer, which is at the centre of the trial after it was applied on their farms.

The First prosecution witness was Dr. Franklin Manu Amoah, a former Executive Director of Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), followed by a soil scientist at CRIG, Mr. Alfred Arthur. The Third witness Dr. Yaw Adu-Ampomah who is a former Deputy Chief Executive at COCOBOD is facing a suspended perjury charge. Dr. Felicia Ansah-Amprofi, who is the National Director of the Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate was called as the Fourth witness. A scientist at the Chemistry Department of the University of Ghana, Dr. Emmanuel Osei-Twum who is the Fifth prosecution witness told the court under cross-examination that the challenged scientific report of the University tendered through him by the prosecution was doctored. The Sixth witness was Mr. Peter Osei Amoako who is the current Director of Finance at COCOBOD. The last and Seventh witness was Chief



Justice Clemence Jackson Honyenuga

Inspector Thomas Mercer Prempeh.

SUBMISSION OF NO CASE

After the state has closed its case, the accused persons then filed for submission of no case in April 2021.

But Justice Clemence Honyenuga in an 89-page ruling dismissed the applications on the submission of no case by counsel for the accused persons and ordered the three to open their defence because a prima facie has been established against them.

The judge in arriving at that decision expunged, in his closet, as many as 18 evidential documents that were tendered in an open court without any objection. According to counsel for the accused persons these 18 exhibits exonerate their clients.

The judge however acquitted Seidu Agongo and Agricult Ghana Ltd on the charges of money laundering which is count 22, 23 and 24 on the charge sheet.

OPUNI OPENS DEFENCE

The first accused person, Dr. Stephen Opuni following the Supreme Court's decision on a reviewed application opened his defence in December 2021, and has since called seven (7) witnesses including three

farmers.

The First defence witness was former Director of Finance at COCOBOD, Mr. Charles Tetteh Dodoo. Then Assin Fosu-based cocoa farmer Samuel Torbi and Amo Amankwaa a cocoa farmer from Berekum as the Second and Third witnesses respectively. A former Board Chairman of COCOBOD Ambassador Daniel Ohene Agyekum was the Fourth witness followed by a retired District Cocoa Officer of CHED Samuel Adigler as the Fifth witness. Then the 2017 National Best Farmer Philip Kweku Agyemang. Currently in the witness box is the Seventh defence witness Peter Okyere Boateng who retired from COCOBOD in 2017 as the Deputy Executive Director of Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) of COCOBOD.

Dr. Stephen Opuni, Seidu Agongo and Agricult Ghana Ltd are currently facing 24 combined charges: Abetment of crime, defrauding by false pretence, contravention of the Public Procurement Act, willfully causing financial loss to the state, manufacturing fertilizer without registration, selling misbranded fertilizer and selling adulterated fertilizer.

Source: angelonline.com.gh

Manufacturing Consent: How The United States Has Penetrated South African Media

By Ajit Singh And Roscoe Palm

In recent weeks, South African public discourse has been focused on concerns about alleged Chinese influence in the country's media landscape. However, these conversations have tended to overlook the already existing spheres of influence within South African media. Politically motivated sponsorship of prominent South African media outlets by the United States dates back decades to the apartheid era. According to internal U.S. government documents, the aim of these operations was "to counter the strong Marxist campaigns" in the country. This funding was circulated by the National Endowment for Democracy, an organization created by the Reagan administration in order to re-brand U.S. covert operations that were previously carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency. Today, as Washington becomes fixated on combating Beijing's influence around the world, the National Endowment for Democracy and its private sector partners continue to penetrate large swathes of the South African media ecosystem. This web of influence has caught major publications, including *Mail & Guardian* newspaper and *amaBhungane* Centre for Investigative Journalism. Washington combats Marxism in apartheid-era South Africa. For decades, progress in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa was stymied by Washington viewing the situation through the lens of the Cold War. Despite the atrocities committed by the apartheid regime against the Black majority of South Africa and surrounding countries, the regime was regarded as a strategic bulwark against the spread of socialism and Soviet influence on the continent. At the tail end of the Cold War, while the United States was aiding apartheid South Africa in its war against the independence struggles in neighbouring Angola and Namibia, officials in Washington simultaneously orchestrated a propaganda campaign in South African media which they claimed would educate the Black population about democracy. An [internal communication](#) from

1986 outlines how the U.S. government funneled hundreds of thousands of dollars to South Africa and recruited local media outlets and journalists to "create awareness of (and hopefully adherence to) democratic ideals and principles among the black communities." A biweekly feature titled "How Democracy Works" was produced in collaboration with Drum Publications and published in *City Press*, which was chosen for being "the largest circulation newspaper among blacks in South Africa." The document outlines various South African writers and editors recruited to contribute to the series, including Percy Qoboza, then editor of *City Press*, Raymond Louw, and Denis Beckett, editor of *Frontline* (it is not clear whether these individuals were aware of the U.S. government's role in the project). An excerpt from a 1986 U.S. government grant to South Africa states: It is hoped that a concrete discussion of democratic values will help counter the strong Marxist campaigns now being used to coerce South African blacks in the black townships, pointing the way to democratic forms of government being desirable and achievable goals in South Africa. "There are no other systematic methods being used in South Africa to generate awareness of democratic principles on a large scale," the document noted. "Wide propagation of democratic principles can, however, be achieved by publishing material regularly over a period of time in a popular black publication." Rather than a gesture of solidarity, this campaign was an example of what was referred to in Washington as "public diplomacy"—U.S. government-sponsored efforts to influence public opinion abroad in ways favorable to its interests. In this case, U.S. officials explicitly laid out their intention to influence South African media to shape

narratives in a manner that supported their anti-communist Cold War foreign policy. "It is hoped that a concrete discussion of democratic values will help to counter the strong Marxist campaigns now being used to coerce South African blacks in the black townships," the document states, "pointing the way to democratic forms of government being desirable and achievable goals in South Africa." Rebranding covert operations with the National Endowment for Democracy U.S. government funding for the *City Press* campaign—along with contemporaneous [funding](#) for the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, the *Peoples Express* community newspaper, and *Frontline* magazine—was distributed through a then recently created organization called the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Although branded as a "non-governmental" and "independent, non-profit foundation", the NED was founded by the U.S. government in 1983 under the Reagan administration. According to its founders, the NED was created as a funding vehicle to take over the covert support of political groups around the world which had previously been carried by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and had developed a tainted reputation. "It would be terrible for democratic groups around the world to be seen as subsidized by the CIA," [said](#) Carl Gershman, who served as president of the NED from its founding until 2021. "We saw that in the 60's, and that's why it has been discontinued. We have not had the capability of doing this, and that's why the endowment was created." "A lot of what we [the NED] do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA," [said](#) the organization's co-founder Allen Weinstein. As the NED was financing its



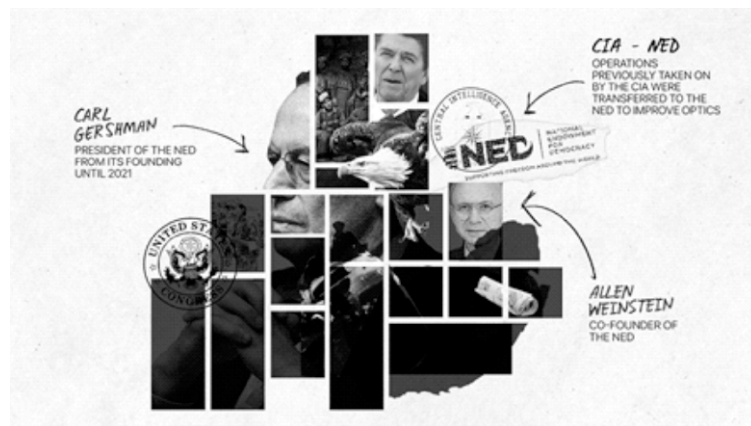
media campaign in South Africa, it was also [funding](#) the mujahideen in Afghanistan, pro-contra organizations in Nicaragua, anti-Soviet trade unions in Eastern Europe, and anti-government groups in Grenada. Over the past four decades, the NED's donation network has expanded into a global empire. With an annual appropriation administered through the U.S. State Department, the NED [issues](#) more than 2000 grants each year to non-governmental organizations in over 100 countries. According to the NED's financial statements, during the decade of 2011–20, the organization issued over \$1.2 billion in grants worldwide. The NED's efforts are amplified by working in concert with aid agencies that have been set up by allied governments along with private foundations, with grant recipients often overlapping between the NED and a network of allied state and private donors. Today, as tensions between the United States and China rise, Washington is intent on contesting Beijing's influence around the world, particularly in the Global South. The U.S. government has ramped up its efforts to influence international media and public opinion. Between 2016 and 2020, the NED issued roughly \$150 million globally in media-related grants, at least \$20 million of which was issued to organizations in sub-Saharan Africa. In December 2021, U.S. President Joe Biden

[announced](#) that his government would be providing \$30 million as "critical seed money" to launch the International Fund for Public Interest Media. The fund connects the U.S. government agencies, including the NED, and the private sector—namely the Luminate foundation of Pierre Omidyar, tech billionaire and financier of U.S. media outlet *The Intercept*—with the stated goal being to eventually provide \$1 billion in global media funding per year, targeting primarily economically vulnerable countries. South Africa in the crosshairs once again In this new Cold War, South Africa is once again in the crosshairs. In recent years, the NED has developed close ties with the Johannesburg-based newspaper *Mail & Guardian*, which describes itself as "the continent's leading independent newspaper." In 2020 and 2021, the NED issued \$355,200 over four grants to the Adamela Trust, *Mail & Guardian's* non-profit foundation through which it receives and administers funding. The NED [detailed](#) that the grants were intended to support the launch of *Mail & Guardian's* weekly pan-African, WhatsApp-based digital publication *The Continent* and the building of

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a regional network of journalists and media outlets. The grants even specified content that *The Continent* will publish—including a “monthly disinformation column” and “quarterly in-depth investigations on the role of public, private, and non-governmental actors' roles in disinformation trends in Africa”—raising concerns about whether Washington is wielding influence over editorial decisions at the outlet to target political adversaries in the region. The concerns about *Mail & Guardian's* proximity to Washington are not new. In the past decade, two of the paper's editors-in-chief have gone on to work for NED-sponsored organizations. In 2015, Chris Roper (editor from 2009-15) left the paper to [become](#) deputy CEO of the data journalism initiative Code For Africa—part of the umbrella network Code For All, which is principally [funded](#) by the NED—and began a fellowship with the NED-sponsored International Center for Journalists. Similarly, Khadija Patel (editor from 2016-20) resigned from the outlet to [chair](#) the NED-sponsored International Press Institute and, in 2021, was [named](#) head of programmes of the aforementioned International Fund for Public Interest Media. Further complicating the picture is *Mail & Guardian's* relationship with long time U.S. government partner Open Society Foundations (OSF), the philanthropic foundation of George Soros. In 2017, OSF [acquired](#) a majority stake in the paper through its Media Development Investment Fund. The OSF, considered to be the largest private funder of media in the world, is an official partner of the NED's Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), whose mandate is to [support](#) “U.S.-sponsored development of independent and sustainable media.” The U.S. government has long worked with OSF founder George Soros to sponsor media organizations in



furtherance of Washington's foreign policy agenda—a relationship that CIMA [credits](#) with playing an important role in facilitating the dissolution of the Soviet Union: The breakthrough [in financing media], though, came with the crumbling of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The idea of promoting democracy rapidly grew into a major focus of diplomatic and developmental efforts, and a free press was seen as integral to the process. Backed by major infusions of funding from the U.S. Congress, USAID began pouring resources into supporting independent media in the newly free nations of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. USAID was joined by the State Department and by allied governments, as well as by private funders, most notably by philanthropist George Soros. Over the past two decades, the NED and OSF have jointly [established](#) the Global Forum for Media Development, an international network that presently consists of over 100 media organizations working in around 50 countries. This public-private partnership appears set to continue with the U.S. fixated on containing China and Soros having recently [declared](#) that Chinese President Xi Jinping is “the greatest threat that open societies face today.” Given the well-documented political partnership that exists between these private foundations and the U.S. government, does their financing compromise the independence of their

grantees in South African media?

Take, for example, the leading anti-corruption watchdog *amaBhungane* Centre for Investigative Journalism, an organization which prides itself on being “fiercely independent” and rejecting “funding from governments or corporates”. Founded in 2010 at *Mail & Guardian* by veteran reporters Sam Sole and Stefaans Brümmer, *amaBhungane* initially [received](#) two-thirds of its funding from the paper and one third from OSF. By 2016 the ratio had reversed, with private foundations accounting for lion's share of funding and *Mail & Guardian* only accounting for 29 percent. That same year *amaBhungane* formally separated from the paper, although the two organizations have continued to work together. From 2016-21, *amaBhungane* has received approximately \$1.4 million from OSF and Luminate. Although *amaBhungane* claims that they “do not take funding to investigate specific stories or themes,” this appears to be contradicted by OSF's financial disclosure. [According to OSF](#), in 2016 “we initiated high-agency work on state capture through our research and advocacy partners” and provided funding to *amaBhungane* and *Daily Maverick* specifically “to commence research on the extent of state capture in

South Africa” and “on the extent to which state-owned enterprises have been captured by vested interests”. More concerning, however, is the revolving door between *amaBhungane* staff and U.S. and Western government-sponsored organizations. In the past decade, three of *amaBhungane's* senior staff have gone on to work for such entities, primarily to monitor public and private actors in Africa:

- Vinayak Bhardawaj, former advocacy coordinator (2012-14), has gone on to work for Africa Check, which is [partnered](#) with the U.S. Embassy in South Africa to “tackle misinformation and disinformation in the media.”
- Karabo Rajuili, former advocacy coordinator (2015-19), has gone on to work for Open Ownership, a corporate ownership watchdog [founded by](#) the U.K. government which focuses on Africa and Asia.
- Chereese Thakur, former advocacy coordinator (2020-22), has subsequently joined the corruption reporting team at the South African office of the German government's [international development agency](#), GIZ.

Beyond this, *amaBhungane's* fellowship program has frequently served as a hub to train U.S. government-affiliated journalists in the region. Since 2015, at least 15 *amaBhungane* fellows have been directly tied to U.S. government programs, including *Voice of America* staff, members of U.S. embassy-partnered media organizations, U.S. State

Department fellows, and employees of the U.S. government-sponsored think tank Freedom House. *amaBhungane* has also led the formation of a regional investigative journalism network, IJ Hub, in partnership with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), an NED-sponsored organization that has formed official partnerships with U.S. embassies in the region. According to organizational [filings](#) for 2021, *amaBhungane* has “incubated” the network, which currently has members in Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Eswatini, Botswana, Zambia, and South Africa. *amaBhungane's* track record demonstrates a frequent willingness to partner with U.S. and Western government-sponsored organizations as well as go on to work for them. If even the most “fiercely independent” of South African media is caught in Washington's web of influence, this raises serious concerns about the vulnerability of the country's media to U.S. penetration. As the new Cold War heats up, the massive financial footprint of U.S. private foundations in South African media—and increasing funding directly from the U.S. government—appears set to continue shaping public discourse in the country. About Ajit Singh Ajit Singh is an investigative journalist with the No Cold War project. He is a contributing author to *Keywords in Radical Philosophy and Education: Common Concepts for Contemporary Movements*. His work has appeared in The Grayzone, Truthout, teleSUR English, NewsClick, and The Hampton Institute. Follow him on Twitter [@ajitxsingh](#).