

## P.C. Appiah-Ofori Calls For Vote Of No Confidence In Akufo-Addo

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Paul Collins Appiah Ofori

### Rising Cost Of Goods... Hassan Ayariga Blasts Traders For Arbitrary Price Increases



The founder and leader of the All People's Congress (APC), Dr. Hassan Ayariga has blamed the trading community for irregular price variability in Ghana. He has condemned the way and manner prices of commodities have

*Cont. on page 2*

# MAHAMA

## He Says Bawumia, Ofori-Atta Responsible For Economic Catastrophe

Former President John Dramani Mahama has accused Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia and embattled Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta of being responsible for the country's economic meltdown which has resulted in hardship for a large section of the citizenry.

According to him the abysmal performance of the two who are at the helm of the country's economic management is what has resulted in the unprecedented economic cataclysm.

The former president has thus, reiterated his calls for Ken Ofori-Atta to

be relieved of his post as Finance Minister and Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia of his role as Chairman of the Economic Management Team by President Nana Akufo-Addo.

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# The INSIGHT

## — EDITORIAL

### PUT THEM TO USE

**N**othing can justify the continued neglect of eight mobile health vans left to rot under the mercy of the weather.

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 health needs and 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 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 supreme.

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.

## Rising Cost Of Goods... Hassan Ayariga Blasts Traders For Arbitrary Price Increases

*from front page*

been arbitrarily manipulated by traders making life awful for the masses.

The prices of some key commodities in the country have been on the rise, and the cost of food has increased astronomically.

Traders blamed the situation on international market prices, hike in petroleum products and the Cedi depreciation.

Already, Ghanaians are bearing the brunt of the tensions on the prices of fuel.

Hassan Ayariga speaking in an interview with Onua TV last Thursday October 27, took a swipe at businesses and traders for hoarding and stocking their wares to sell at high prices whenever there is a fuel hike. He stressed that even though the government has failed, he believes the citizens are also taking advantage of the economic situation to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor.

“If you look at the economic situation, the prices of goods and services in the market, the rate at which the vendors and traders are manipulating the prices of goods and services is alarming.

“People are taking advantage of the failure of the government to increase prices of goods and services which are not even proportionate to the dollar,” he said.

“Go to the market and you will be shocked at the rate at which people have increased the prices of their goods, and when you ask them they say the dollar but it is not everything that we use the dollar to buy,” he quizzed.

The founder of APC insisted that it is the citizenry that are destroying the country not the government as



perceived by many and stressing the need for the business community to be careful about price volatility.

He has urged the government to initiate a price guarantee system to help control the price of goods and services in the market as well as to bar people from outrageously increasing prices of commodities.

Mr. Hassan Ayariga equally lauded the Majority side in parliament for demanding the removal of the finance minister, Ken Ofori-Atta and minister of state at the ministry of finance, Charles Adu-Boahen. He maintained that the economic team has failed hence the need for President Akufo-Addo to relieve them of their duties with immediate effect.

Source -- Onua FM/ 3news.com/ Ghana.

## THE INSIGHT

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# P.C. Appiah-Ofori Calls For Vote Of No Confidence In Akufo-Addo

A former Member of Parliament (MP) for Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa, Paul Collins Appiah Ofori has asked the Majority group calling for the head of the Finance Minister to let him be. According to him, the vituperations of the legislators should be directed towards President Akufo-Addo rather than his cousin, the Finance Minister.

He has asked Parliament to “leave Ken Ofori-Atta alone and pass a vote of no confidence on Akufo-Addo.” The vociferous ex legislator speaking on Onua TV with Captain Smart following the pronouncement of the Majority MPs for the ousting of the minister and his deputy noted that it is the president that makes the appointment

and for him to watch Ken Ofori-Atta for things to get to this level is unpardonable, hence his call for Akufo-Addo's removal.

Several calls came for the resignation or sacking of the Finance minister when things started getting worse.

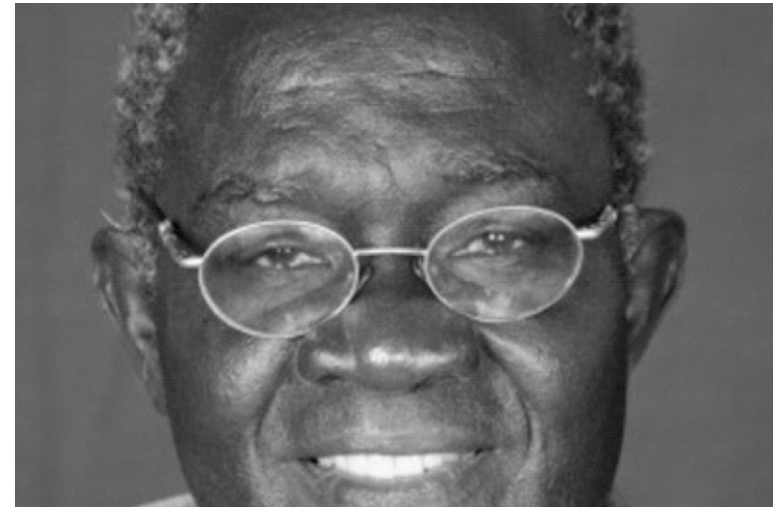
Those who called for reshuffle or sacking of the minister were described by the President as hungry people who are seeking for jobs.

But in Parliament Tuesday, October 25, 2022, some 80 Majority MPs in a media briefing asked the President to sack Ken Ofori-Atta and his Deputy, Adu Boahen to relieve Ghanaians from the

economic misfortunes currently confronting the country.

According to them, “the recent happenings is not pleasing and after consulting our constituents and informing the leadership of Parliament, we want the President to set aside the Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta and the deputy minister of State in charge of Finance Charles Adu Boahen for government business to continue.

“If the president refuses to heed to our call, we will not participate in any business for the government,” Andrews Appiah Kubih said on behalf of the group. Meanwhile, KNUST's Prof. Samuel Adu Gyamfi has cast doubts the minister would be sacked.



**Paul Collins Appiah Ofori**

“I wasn't surprised but the only surprising thing is where the call came from. The biggest repercussion is for the president to sit aloof and remain adamant on all calls for the Finance Minister's sack for the call to come from his own people. It would go down in history against him as President.

“If he [Akufo-Addo] listens I'll be surprised because he has made up his mind not to listen to anything coming from the people because he won't listen,” he asserted on Onua FM's midday bulletin.

# Iran Rejects Accusation Of Selling Weapons To Russia For Use In Ukraine

**EMBASSY OF THE ISLAMIC  
REPUBLIC OF IRAN – ACCRA  
Press Release**

**Of the Embassy of the Islamic  
Republic of Iran in Accra  
Regarding the unbiased and  
unsubstantiated news that Iran  
provided and has sold weapons for  
the purpose of use in war in  
Ukraine**

The Islamic Republic of Iran's position on the Ukraine situation is clear, consistent, and unwavering, which has been pronounced since the start of the conflict. From the beginning, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always emphasized that all UN Members must fully respect the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter as well as applicable international law, including sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity.

As a country that has experienced 8-year imposed war and aggression, Iran opposes any conflict or war anywhere in the world, including in Ukraine.

Iran has consistently advocated for peace and an immediate end to the conflict in Ukraine, and expressed clearly that this crisis has no military solution, and building upon this belief, Iran has urged the parties in the conflict to exercise restraint, avoid escalating tensions, and engage in a meaningful process for settling their disputes through peaceful means while also addressing the root causes of the situation.

At the same time, Iran has also rejected any unilateral sanctions, and/or pressure, as well as any provocative measures against one

side that would only aggravate the situation and make reaching a peaceful resolution more difficult. Similarly, the West's extensive military support and supply of sophisticated weapons could not be intended to bring the war to an end, but rather to escalate the conflict and increase damage and destruction.

Iran supports the ongoing efforts to find a peaceful solution to this conflict, and in this regard, our Foreign Minister contacted his counterparts from both sides on several occasions.

Iran categorically rejects unfounded and unsubstantiated claims that it has transferred unmanned aerial vehicles and weapons for

use in the conflict in Ukraine. Such claims are nothing but a propaganda apparatus launched by certain states to further their political agenda.

Against this backdrop, it is really disappointing that, to pursue their political agenda, these States are trying to launch disinformation campaign against Iran and make misleading interpretations of Security Council Resolution 2231 in order to wrongly establish a link between their baseless allegations against Iran with Resolution 2231.

Reiterating its principled position on the conflict in Ukraine, Iran emphasizes that the issues surrounding the ongoing conflict are completely irrelevant to the Resolution 2231 both in substance and format, and any activity in this

regard falls outside the scope of the Resolution and the Secretariat's mandate.

In conclusion, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue its constructive engagement to help the peaceful resolution of conflict in Ukraine. To this end and to address the concerns raised in this regard, Iran is willing to cooperate constructively in bilateral technical and expert exchanges with Ukrainian experts in order to clarify the unsubstantiated claims made against it. Needless to say that, this is done in good faith and in accordance with Iran's constructive approach to the situation in Ukraine.



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Progressives Intensify Protests As Far-Right Leader Meloni Assumes Premiership In Italy

**P**rogressive sections have carried out a massive mobilization in the Italian city of Bologna highlighting a number of issues, including the climate crisis, the cost of living crisis, persecution of workers, imperialist wars, rise in fascism, and unscientific development. The call for the march was supported by groups like GKN Factory Collective, Fridays for Future, Assembly No Passante Bologna, and Emilia-Romagna Food Sovereignty Network. Activists from trade unions like Si Cobas, members of leftist parties such as Potere al Popolo, the Communist Refoundation Party (PRC), and Italian Communist Party (PCI), as well as youth groups like the Communist Youth Front of Italy (FGCI), Young Communists (GC), and Communist Youth Front (FGC), participated in the march. On October 21, student groups had protested in Rome against the cost of living crisis and the rise of the far-right in the country.

On Sunday, October 23, far-right leader Giorgia Meloni was sworn in as the prime minister of Italy. In the general elections held on September 25, the right-wing coalition led by her party, Brothers of Italy (Fdi), won a massive [victory](#) while every other mainstream political party crumbled. Disenchantment with the prevailing austerity policies, warmongering, and political instability, are among the factors listed by analysts as the reason for the fall of the mainstream political parties. The policies of the erstwhile Mario Draghi-led government had [provoked](#) widespread anger among the working classes, youth, and other sections who regularly staged [protests](#) against his government. Now, with the ascent of a far-right government to power, working class sections have decided to intensify their struggles against austerity, depravity, warmongering and persecution.

Following the mobilization in Bologna on Saturday, Potere al Popolo stated, “We have to stop the government from unscientific development and focus our collective efforts on public transport, non-fossil mobility, ecological re-planning of cities, and in the service of a new balance between humans and nature. To do this, we have to...[combat] the lobby of oil tankers, warmongers, and speculators, which is well represented both in the Draghi government and the new Meloni government. The future is at hand, we just have to go and get it.” Giuliano Granato from Potere al Popolo told *Peoples Dispatch* on October 24, “Giorgia Meloni will move in the path of Polish government: perfectly aligned with Washington and NATO (in line with Draghi government) in foreign affairs and strongly pro-business in economic field – that means a possible stop to the necessary ecological transition. At the same time, the new names of Ministries and newly appointed Ministers

point in the direction of the attempt of construction of a right-wing hegemony in Italian society: national interest instead of popular interests; a crusade against the rights of women, LGBTQIA+, immigrants; historical revisionism in order to clear fascist names and values, attacking whatever smells like 'leftist'.”

Maurizio Acerbo from the leadership of the Communist Refoundation Party (PRC) stated, “The protest in Bologna – ‘for rights, the environment, health, public and common spaces, a beautiful life and for peace’ – marks a further and positive stage in the convergence of movements, from the factory collective of #GKN to #FridaysForFuture. We at the Communist Refoundation and the Popular Union find ourselves in the appeal that convened the demonstration ‘Converge to Rise’ and we are convinced that only from the bottom up a real



*Mobilization in Bologna. Progressive groups, trade unions, and leftist parties staged a mobilization in Bologna highlighting a number of issues, including the climate crisis, the cost of living crisis, persecution of workers, imperialist wars, rise in fascism, and unscientific development*

opposition to this government can be built.”

“The ruling classes of this country, from the far-right to the Democratic Party (PD), are unable to question a model of destructive development that produces land consumption, pollution, inequality and exploitation,” added Acerbo. The Communist Youth Front (FGC) has called for a national mobilization of students on November 18 against the problems in schools, the cost of living crisis, rise of fascism, and warmongering.

### Pashtun Leader Manzoor Pashteen Faces Terrorism And Treason Charges For Speech

**M**anzoor Pashteen, a Pashtun rights activist and one of the leaders of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in Pakistan, has been booked by the Punjab State police on treason and terrorism charges for a speech he made at the Asma Jahangir Conference organized in the provincial capital Lahore. Speaking at the session titled ‘Reluctance to Criminalise Enforced Disappearance and Arbitrary Detentions’, Pashteen reportedly named national and military institutions while holding them responsible for the extrajudicial killings in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) region under a “state of exception.” According to a report in national

daily *Dawn*, the complaint against Pashteen states that he attempted to create resistance among the public toward the armed forces as he accused them of “genocide against Pashtuns.” 28-year-old Pashteen has been among the leading voices raising the Pashtun movement's demands for fair treatment and the acknowledgment of abuses faced by the community at the hands of the state-military nexus in Pakistan's northwestern region. He has been a [vocal opponent](#) of the Pakistani army and its role in the ‘War on Terror’. Pashteen, along with seven others, founded the Mehsud Tahafuz (protection) Movement in 2014, which later became the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement. During his speech on Sunday, [the Pashtun activist](#) also highlighted how [Ali Wazir](#), a Pashtun leader and

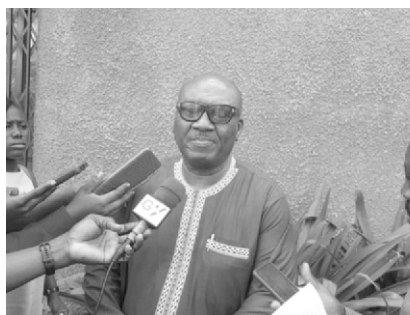
Member of the National Assembly (MNA) of Pakistan, is yet to be released even after over 30 days since his acquittal on September 13. Wazir has been in prison for nearly two years now. The First Information Report (FIR) against Pashteen invokes sections 124A (sedition), 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offense committed in prosecution of common object), and 505 (statements conducive to public mischief) of the Pakistan Penal Code. It also includes Section 11-X (responsibility for creating civil commotion) of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. The conference session where Pashteen spoke was attended by Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, Baloch rights activist Sammi Deen Baloch,

and Akhtar Mengal, former chief minister of Balochistan and chairperson of the Balochistan National Party, among others. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who is the chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, was also in attendance at the conference. Responding to the FIR against him, Pashteen wrote on Twitter, “The voices of the right against oppression cannot be suppressed by FIRs, prisons or propaganda, but the only solution is to give justice.” Mohsin Dawar, MNA from North Waziristan, criticized the charges against Pashteen and called for the FIR against him to be withdrawn. He tweeted, “The FIR filed against Manzoor Pashteen for his speech at the Asma Jahangir Conference is

beyond shameful. Many others have said far more in recent protests than what Manzoor said in his speech. Yet he is being charged with sedition and ATA. The ridiculous FIR should be withdrawn.” Meanwhile, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the “[unjustified sloganeering](#)” against the army and the use of the conference for political interests. He said in a statement, “It is unfortunate that such forums are being used to target state institutions, especially the armed forces, for partisan political interests.” *With inputs from DAWN and The Express Tribune.*



# Lutheran Church Celebrates Reformation Day With Quiz Competition Among Lutheran Schools



**T**he Lutheran church of Ghana has celebrated this year's Reformation Day with a Bible Quiz competition among school pupils drawn from all the branches of the Lutheran Schools across the country. The maiden edition of the bible quiz competition sought to test the knowledge of the school pupils in the scripture as it signaled a departure from the previous Reformation Day celebration which was symbolically organized and celebrated by the

Lutheran Church in remembrance of Martin Luther (the Great Reformer) who led the reformation protestation (protestants) that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church's stringent doctrinal beliefs. This year's celebration which included stakeholders of the church, teachers and parents began with a church service, Quiz competition among Lutheran schools, and awards for Lutheran teachers as well as Reformation

Church Service at the various Lutheran congregation where the school is located. At the end of the quiz competition, Holy Trinity Lutheran School from Kumasi emerged the winner with 49 points and was giving trophy together with other items. Saint Paul's Lutheran School placed second position while, All Saint Lutheran School took the 3rd position with Saint Peter's Lutheran school placing 4th and Trinity Lutheran School taking the 5th position. In an interview with the media, the National Education Board Chairman for Lutheran church of Ghana, Mr. Daniel Amekudzi stated that, 'We think that, as faith-based school, we need to roll out in the schools'. Mr. Amekudzi indicated that the Lutheran Church believes that it is not by their works which can

accomplish anything but rather, it is by the grace of God adding that, it was started by Martin Luther some 500 years ago. The grace of God he mentioned, cannot be brought by anyone and that, there is nothing to be done in terms of works or any other ways to get salvation. Mr. Amekudzi however revealed that, the school children were brought to Accra from all Lutheran school branches across the country to participate in the bible quiz competition. He entreated every Christian especially, Lutheran church members to show love to everyone saying, the church is based on love and that, it is only when they extend love and believe in God and believe that, it is by his grace that they are alive and everything that they do, can

only be done through his grace that they stand the chance to grow the school and the church. Mr. Daniel Amekudzi also called on every Ghanaian to always remember leaders of the nation in prayers so that, God would see us through the difficult time facing the nation. He said that, seeking personal gains at the detriment to your neighbor is not the best and, called on those destroying water bodies through gamamsey activities to desist from that and think twice. "If our forefathers had done such an act, we would not have come to meet these water bodies to benefit from. So, it is important that we protect them".

## Kwame Pianim States Four Reasons Akufo-Addo Must Sack Ofori-Atta Now

**R**enowned economist and statesman Kwame Pianim has insisted that the Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta must, one way or the other, leave office now. His call comes after President Nana Akufo-Addo urged Members of Parliament of his party, the NPP, to hold on with their demand for Ofori-Atta to be sacked over the economic difficulties in the country till the International Monetary Fund bailout negotiation he is leading is completed. But according to Kwame Pianim, replacing Ofori-Atta is very critical to turning around the economy to get Ghanaians out of the current difficulties. The senior statesman, who made these remarks in a TV3 interview, outlined the following reasons as the justification for Ofori-Atta to leave office now.

### Success of the IMF negotiation:

According to Kwame Pianim, the government's current negotiation with the

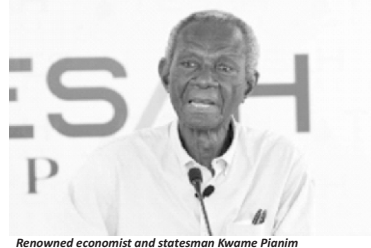
International Monetary Fund for a bailout is not going well because the Fund does not see any seriousness on the side of the government. "What the IMF is waiting for is a bold, credible pronouncement from the president as he did over the COVID-19 (pandemic). And then you need a credible messenger. [Ken Ofori-Atta](#) is not a credible messenger. "Somebody who didn't want you taking this route, how can you say he should lead it?" he questioned

### Save Ghanaians from additional misery

The economist intimated that Ofori-Atta's mismanagement of Ghana's economy is the cause of the hardship in the country and, therefore, he should step down. "The hardship on Ghanaians is unprecedented. So, he Ofori-Atta should save Ghanaians additional misery by stepping down."

### Save the reputation of the NPP

Again, Kwame Pianim said that Ofori-Atta had to go to save the



Renowned economist and statesman Kwame Pianim

New Patriotic Party's reputation as good managers of Ghana's economy. "NPP has a reasonably good reputation as a good manager of the Ghanaian Economy. And it is time that (the current economic meltdown) is stopped so that irreparable damage is not done to the reputation of the NPP as good managers of the economy," he said.

### Save the legacy of Akufo-Addo

Also, the statesman intimated that Ofori-Atta staying in office would make it very difficult to restore Ghana's economy and also risks destroying the legacies of President Akufo-Addo. "If he (Ofori-Atta) does not go and the president doesn't let him go, we risk irreversibly dragging the president's legacy and his presidency into the gutters," he said.

## NPP Is Prepared To Kill For Power' – Asiedu Nketiah Says As He Launches Chairmanship Bid

**J**ohnson Asiedu Nketiah, the General Secretary of the main opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), has said that the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP), is bent on holding on to power at all cost, including killing. The long-serving NDC scribe made the comments when he officially launched his bid for the party's chairmanship ahead of the 2024 presidential polls. He cited the twin cases of the Ayawaso West Wuogon bye-election where state security agents were found complicit in violent attacks on opposition politicians as well as the death of eight persons across the country in the aftermath of the 2020 general elections. "For all their mismanagement and terrible governance, all of us know that the NPP is prepared to kill for power as they demonstrated in Ayawaso West Wuogon attacks and the callous murder of eight souls during the 2020 elections." He continued: "In their arsenal is a deeply partisan electoral commission that believes their singular duty is to rig elections for NPP and emasculate



all other political parties." According to him, to beat the NPP and the EC, the NDC needs to be properly organized and to also elect an untainted crop of leaders. He outlined attributes that the next crop of national leaders should possess; "fearlessness, trustworthiness, proven temperament, selflessness, discipline, accountability, transparency and emotional intelligence and above all the moral courage to stand up to the marauding NPP in 2024." He said these were the qualities he brings to the table in the contest for chairmanship. He is expected to come up against incumbent Samuel Ofose-Ampofo who is seeking reelection. The vote for national executives is scheduled for December this year according to the party's internal election calendar.

# Resign Now Or Face Unprecedented Resistance - NDC Youth Wing To Akufo-Addo

The National Democratic Congress Youth Wing has in a strongly-worded statement, called on President Nana Akufo-Addo to not only sack Ken Ofori-Atta but for him to also resign as Head of State.

Issued under the hand of the National Youth Organiser of the party, George Opare Addo, the group said that Ghanaians have had enough of the performance of this administration that has plunged the country into a lot of hardships. The statement added that many Ghanaians have lost their investments and livelihoods because of the kind of government the president has run in the last six years.

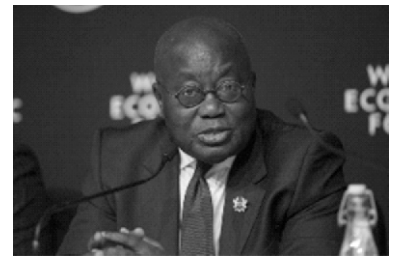
“Over the past six years, you, your

cousin the Finance Minister, your Economic Management Team headed by your incompetent Vice President, as well as your entire Government have pursued economic and fiscal policies that have wreaked havoc on our nation's economy and resulted in untold hardships for the Ghanaian people. “Today, because of your reckless governance, Ghanaian families are unable to put food on the table. People's entire life savings are going down the drain, and our currency, the cedi, is depreciating at a rate never seen in the history of our nation in the past four decades. Yours has been a failure of historic proportions; one that has plunged our nation into its most acute economic downturn in an entire

generation,” the statement said. The NDC Youth Wing, therefore, called for an immediate resignation by the president else they would embark on an unprecedented resistance to his government. “Enough is enough! Ghanaians did not give you the mandate to put us through this level of suffering that has spared no family nor business. The Ghanaian people cannot continue to suffocate under your repressive and destructive misrule. It has become apparent that you lack the fortitude to properly govern this country. We demand that you sack your finance minister and resign now, to stem the suffering that has engulfed our nation and save our country from further

collapse and international ignominy! “If you remain headstrong and refuse to sack the finance minister and resign from office as President, we will confront you with a level of resistance never experienced by any President in the history of our country,” it added. The group further called on the youth of the country to be on standby to picket against the government.

“We are by this medium calling on all young people of this country to picket at Government offices and protest across the country whenever they are called upon by the Leadership of the Youth Wing to do so,” the



statement said.

Already, there has been a call by 80 Members of Parliament from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) for President Nana Akufo-Addo to sack the Minister of Finance, Ken Ofori-Atta, as a way of restoring public confidence in the economy. The president has since met with the MPs and urged them to give the minister some time to complete some pertinent government business, including the completion of an IMF negotiation.

## Details Of Dr Opuni's Medical Condition Discussed In Court As Demanded By Chief State Attorney



Chief State Attorney Evelyn Keelson (L) and Justice Clemence Jackson Honyenuga (R)

Chief State Attorney, Evelyn Keelson, had a field day in court after she was permitted to dissect the medical records of former COCOBOD Chief Executive, Dr. Stephen Opuni, to the utter disbelief of her colleague lawyers in the courtroom.

Evelyn Keelson had earlier put up a spirited defence of her resolve to delve into the health status of an accused person when other lawyers rejected the move because the health issue was not the substantive case of why the parties were in court.

Even though she was cleared to ask questions bordering on Dr. Opuni's health condition, she failed to get the court to reject an excuse notice issued to the former COCOBOD boss.

Dr. Opuni underwent four surgeries on his left eye, specifically his retina, and was given six weeks to rest the left eye to ensure proper healing.

This was brought to the attention of the court on October 11, after the two-month legal vacation, as his counsel, lawyer Samuel Codjoe asked the court for an adjournment.

“My lord, this explains the absence of

the first accused in court. My lord, as a result of his absence due to ill health, we pray that this court adjourns this case till the six weeks' notice,” he said. He also informed the court that his client wants to exercise his right under Article 19 (3), which demands that the trial is conducted in his presence.

But Chief State Attorney Evelyn Keelson, who advocated for a virtual trial of the accused, who is recuperating from a retinal surgery, said that the excuse notice was not binding on the court and also insisted that the medical director who issued the notice be summoned to give “further and better particulars” about the medical records of Dr. Opuni.

The court yielded to the demand of the Chief State Attorney and summoned the medical director, who appeared before the court on October 17.

When he appeared before the court presided over by the retired Supreme Court judge, Justice Clemence Honyenuga, the medical director explained that patients who undergo retinal operations need about six months to completely heal.

“The healing process of epiretinal membrane surgery is between three and six months. Anybody here can check the healing process online,” he told the court.

Early on, the medical director, who is an ophthalmologist (an eye

surgeon) with several decades of experience, told the court the precarious situation Dr. Opuni was facing.

“He was given post-operative advice for the six weeks excuse duty; the first 14 days of the six weeks, he had to stay head down because of the gas Gas tamponade [inserted in the eye because of the surgery to keep the retina in correct position]. A few days after the operation, he developed high intraocular pressure on the operated left eye and severe photophobia.”

According to him, the intraocular pressure was managed with glaucoma medication, and he was advised to wear dark glasses and avoid light. He has to go for weekly checks for the intraocular pressure to be managed.

The court admitted into evidence the medical folder of Dr Opuni as well as two different Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) test results.

The medical expert said if the high pressure was not managed properly, it would lead to Dr Opuni going blind. “The whole eye can become like stone, so for that reason, he was asked to come every week for us to control the eye pressure.”

The trial judge, Justice Clemence Honyenuga (Rtd), felt “constrained” by the compelling expert account of the medical director who issued the excuse notice and therefore

shelved his initial plan of holding a virtual trial, let alone a physical trial.

But when the Chief State Attorney was cleared to cross-examine the medical director, she suggested that once Dr. Opuni was able to visit the clinic every week, he could attend to other duties as well.

“So when he wears his dark glasses, he can attend to duties he is mandated to attend to without any harm,” she asked.

But the medical director explained to her that:

“He wears dark glasses because of photophobia. It can't correlate with the eye, why because his natural lens is on the right eye, but the left is the artificial lens. The capacity of the artificial lens to absorb light is zero. So focusing on bright things cannot be comfortable.

“All the same, the six weeks is not for the photophobia; it is the retina; with the fragility of the retina, anything can happen.”

The medical director, whose facility gets referrals from The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, etc., went on to admonish patients to adhere strictly to post-operative advice.

Nonetheless, the Chief State Attorney asserted: “I am putting it to you that the same way Dr. Opuni can attend to a clinic, he can attend to court in this courtroom and sit quietly with his shades without any damages to his retina.”

But the medical director insisted that the excuse notice was to ensure proper healing “and not for the patient to blame the surgeon or the whole clinic” if something goes wrong.

He further stated that the six weeks' notice was crucial and ought to be observed in every surgery of the retina.

Both counsel for Dr. Opuni and Seidu Agongo, who earlier stated that it was unhealthy to discuss someone's health status in public, and noted that the cross-examination of the medical director had no bearing on the substantive case, declined when they were invited by the judge to take their turn.

Counsel for Dr. Opuni, lawyer Samuel Codjoe had previously advised Evelyn Keelson to be mindful that “no one has a monopoly over good health”.

Meanwhile, Justice Clemence Honyenuga, who is on retirement and has been given limited time to dispose of the case, has adjourned the hearing to November 7.

The former COCOBOD Chief Executive, Dr. Stephen Opuni, and businessman Seidu Agongo as well as Agricult Ghana Limited, have been facing 27 charges, including defrauding by false pretences, willfully causing financial loss to the state, corruption by public officers and contravention of the Public Procurement Act in the purchase of Lithovit liquid fertiliser between 2014 and 2016.

They have pleaded not guilty to the charges and are on a GH¢300,000.00 self-recognition bail each.

Source: [myrepubliconline.com](http://myrepubliconline.com)



# MAHAMA; He Says Bawumia, Ofori-Atta Responsible For Economic Catastrophe

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Things could have been different, and I remain very convinced they could.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to re-state what I have said over the years – we are ever ready and willing to share pragmatic steps that will help put our nation back on track.

Ideally, backroom channels of communications should exist between the ruling party and the opposition to allow for exchange of views on important matters to the benefit of Ghanaians.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case under this government for which reason we in the NDC are compelled mostly to engage the people of Ghana directly on some of the things we believe ought to be done to mitigate the untold suffering of our people and get the economy back on track.

Even though Government has requested for an IMF programme, the lateness of the decision and the extent of economic decay means an early approval of a Fund programme could prove elusive. It may take a couple more months before an agreement is reached on a programme with the Fund.

In the meantime, there is the need to stem the rapid decline in the economy and reduce the unbearable hardships Ghanaians are facing.

It is for this reason, that I intend, today, to dwell more on solutions as the state of the economy and its fallouts are well known to all of us. SAVING GHANA

We have already put out an eleven-point proposal that could have arrested the decline before we got to this critical point.

Many of those proposals outlined in my 'Ghana at the Crossroads' speech are still relevant and can be implemented, even if belatedly, to help address the problems we face. Many months after government reluctantly requested for an IMF programme, it has failed to coordinate and communicate any credible Home-Grown Plan for consideration by the Fund and the Ghanaian people.

When we approached the IMF for a programme in 2015, we did so only after putting together a robust Home-Grown Programme, which the IMF adopted almost entirely, save for minor additions.

Ladies and gentlemen, the immediate causes of the economic disaster we face are the

unacceptably high public debt occasioned by a reckless borrowing binge, and an exceptionally large budget deficit, arising out of over expenditure. These two problems – debt and deficit – have undermined confidence in the economy and created very serious solvency problems for government. This has set us up on a vicious cycle of debt and even more debt.

Tackling these twin challenges would mark the beginning of the much-needed recovery. We note that some discussions are reported to have been negotiated between government and stakeholders on a domestic debt restructuring plan as part of the preconditions to secure an IMF programme.

This simply means that after mismanaging the economy and creating this crisis, Ghanaians and others who have invested their hard-earned money in government bonds and other instruments or executed contracts and supplies awaiting payment, will be asked to forfeit part of the interest due them and a significant part of the principal when it falls due, or arrears owed them.

This is a most unfair and unjust proposition.

It is not fair for innocent people, investors, and business owners to lose their investments, when those who took the decisions and whose incompetence and mismanagement have brought us to this situation, are not only still at post, but are praised and protected by the President.

The President must not only replace the finance minister, he must also reconstitute and take control of the Economic Management Team himself. I have noted the recent draft motion of censure by the Minority against the Minister and the recent rebellion of the Group of 95 Majority members calling for the removal of the Minister. I have also noted the statement by the Majority Leader of a compromise reached that the Minister will leave after he has completed the budget and IMF negotiations.

I think this is untenable. Budget preparation and IMF negotiations are the result of teamwork, not the work of one individual. I fail to see how the absence of the Minister will affect

the preparation of the budget or the negotiations with the Fund. There surely must be persons with the requisite experience to carry on this work. After all what happened to the "We have the men" mantra?

For us in the NDC, our position is that any debt restructuring must not place the absolute burden on only the domestic debt. Restructuring of our debt must cover both domestic and external debt.

Ghanaians in the last few years have suffered severe erosion of indigenous capital. The banking sector clean-out led to loss of jobs and erosion of capital of many Ghanaian families and businesses.

Any debt restructuring restricted to cover only domestic creditors would lead to a further erosion of local savings and capital and would also severely weaken the Ghanaian banking sector. BUILDING THE GHANA WE WANT

a) Reducing the public debt, debt service obligations and creating fiscal space  
The biggest problem with our economy today is the huge size of our public debt, estimated to be around GH¢ 522 billion by close of this year. This must immediately be tackled and stopped from growing further.

To achieve this:

1) An immediate moratorium must be placed on all non-concessional borrowing.  
2) Government must actively canvass our bilateral partners for more concessional financing and grants.

3) There must be a stop to Central Bank financing of government above the 5% threshold. The current printing of money to finance Government's deficit is further fueling inflation.

4) Government must stop collateralizing statutory funds for the purpose of taking on more loans. The wanton collateralization has been unhelpful.

It has limited the financial space of the statutory funds, including GETFund, and the District Assemblies Common Fund. Government should de-securitize these funds and add them onto the public debt as

part of the discussions on debt restructuring.

We estimate that if the proceeds due ESLA, GETFund, Road Fund etc., are freed of the burden of collateralization and IPP payments are renegotiated, government would have access to a total of about GH¢ 16 billion in 2023, GH¢ 17.6 billion in 2024 and GH¢ 19.4 billion in 2025 from these funds alone. This would significantly ease the cash-crunch, which has crippled many sectors resulting in government's inability to meet such basic obligations as supplying food to secondary schools and providing textbooks for basic schools.

**EXPENDITURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

ITEM	2023 INDICATIVE (GH¢)	2024 INDICATIVE (GH¢)	2025 INDICATIVE (GH¢)
GETFUND	2,602,792,390	3,009,461,440	3,743,993,613
ROAD FUND	1,949,296,790	2,210,728,337	2,427,680,636
MIIF	1,817,296,790	2,005,210,007	2,329,783,372
ESLA PLC	5,028,665,684	5,715,321,520	6,480,628,825
ENERGY SECTOR IPPs	4,605,709,092	4,533,751,656	4,437,982,034
TOTAL SAVINGS	16,003,903,956	17,614,472,960	19,420,068,034

COCOBOD is currently reeling under a debt of about GH¢ 14 billion and is severely distressed, putting further strain on government finances. The astronomical debt has so crippled COCOBOD and made it impossible for them to pay bills due the licensed buying companies and their suppliers. This debt overhang has affected the Produce Buying Company, which is currently unable to pay the salaries of its workers. Indeed, similar liabilities within other state-owned enterprises amount to a staggering GHS 30 billion and is impacting the public debt.

6) One of the biggest sources of suffering and difficulty for Ghanaians today, is the cost of fuel which has skyrocketed to the highest levels in our history due to the rapidly falling cedi and is affecting everything else on the market.

Something needs to be done about it.

Ghana is making huge windfalls

from the sale of crude oil, royalties, tax payments, surface rentals and others.

Section 4.1 of the 2022 semi-annual PIAC report confirms that an amount of \$731.94 million was realised from Ghana's oil resources in the first half of 2022 alone.

This amount is equivalent to about GH¢ 8.7 billion, surpassing the total projected Petroleum revenues for the whole of the 2022 financial year estimated at GH¢ 6.6 million (refer to paragraph 253 of the 2022 annual budget statement presented to Parliament in November 2021).

The Government can apply some of these huge windfalls to cushion consumers. In addition, other revenue handles have witnessed significant positive out-turns.

For instance, the 2022 Fiscal Data report from the Ministry of Finance reveals that for the first two quarters of the year, the Price Stabilisation & Recovery Levy (PSRL) alone has so far accrued over GH¢ 798 million as compared to a projected target of GH¢ 269.3 million, which is almost 200% of the revenue target.

The Government must therefore apply the PSRL to the intended purpose and cushion petroleum consumers.

b) Cutting cost, reducing waste, and spending wisely  
One other major problem that has brought us to this point is the reckless and frivolous spending of our scarce national resources.

A fundamental principle in economic management is fiscal discipline even in times of crisis. It is simply not possible to live beyond our means and avoid the kind of economic turmoil we are in today.

Rampant over expenditure has reflected in the extraordinarily large budget deficits of the last two years, which is set to persist for a third straight year if urgent cost cutting measures are not taken.

As noted by Dr. Ato Forson in his presentation, government would have to cut expenditure by up to 4% of GDP to create the fiscal space desired to get us out of this economic crisis.

The Minister in his mid-year budget statement announced a

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30% cut in expenditure across board.

It appears that this cut is not working as Government expenditure in the first half of the year appears to have significantly exceeded the target.

The Minister rather than a vague reference to percentage cuts, must be specific in what areas these expenditures are to be cut.

This will give a clear picture of the expenditure reduction and how much will be saved from the directive.

Drastic action must therefore be taken to reverse the cycle and bring public expenditure within acceptable and prudent limits. Let me propose some measures on how government can cut cost.

## SIZE OF GOVERNMENT

A big contributor to the excessive public expenditure is the sheer size of government. President Akufo-Addo has been particularly irresponsible in keeping a needlessly large government.

At a point, we had over 120 ministers in his government with hundreds of political appointees at the Presidency and others attached to ministers and state organisations.

While the President has cut down this number, there is still room for a further reduction including merging some Ministries to reduce expenditure and cut down the number of Ministers to below 65.

It is also necessary to trim the large number of political appointees who have sought refuge in the Flagstaff House. This will reflect the necessities of the time and the need for modesty and prudence.

## SECRETARIATS AND AGENCIES

There are also too many agencies created overnight without any functional necessity that must be scrapped or merged for efficiency to ensure savings to the public purse.

Take the Free SHS secretariat as an example.

The Ghana Education Service has adequate capacity to handle the implementation of the policy without the wasteful existence of another secretariat.

Why create and staff a 'One District, One Factory' Secretariat with new project vehicles and other costs when the Ministry of Trade and Industry has an Industrial Development Unit that is well placed to enhance

industrialization in Ghana?

The National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme, National Employment Agency, MASLOC, Ghana Enterprises Agency and many others should be merged into one entity, under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations.

They all have similar and overlapping functions, which the Ministry is mandated to undertake.

The so-called Special Development Initiative Secretariat and the accompanying Development Authorities must be scrapped, and their supposed functions sent back to the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies whose work they have usurped for sloganeering purposes.

Local level infrastructure has always been under the purview of District Assemblies.

All that is required is the timely release of their common funds and any other additional resources and they will be well placed to undertake this function effectively.

The functionaries are already in the districts, they already know their functions which include taking care of the poor and persons with disabilities. Mr. President, give them the funds to develop our communities. The MMDAs are by far better custodians of local economic development. Let us empower them.

## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The budget of the Office of Government Machinery has ballooned over the last six years from a little over GH¢700 million to GH¢ 3.1 billion in 2022.

Expenditure rationalization, to be successful, must first start in the President's office.

Substantial savings of GH¢ 1 billion or more can be made by slashing the budget of the Office of Government Machinery.

## CHECK WASTE AND CORRUPTION

We need to introduce stricter public financial management guidelines and regulations. A tougher sanctions regime must be introduced to check the haemorrhage of over GH¢ 17 billion yearly.

This must be rigorously enforced to curtail the appalling waste and corruption the Auditor General unearths every year.

Everything must be done to win the fight against corruption. It is

quite clear that this government has lost the fight against corruption.

It is a notorious fact that corruption has defeated the Akufo-Addo government. In fact, it is fair to say that there has never really been a fight against corruption under Akufo-Addo. The graft and misapplication of public funds by government appointees call for radical action and not shielding of perpetrators, as we have sadly witnessed in the last few years.

## SUSPENSION OF NON-ESSENTIAL PROJECTS

All non-essential and projects such as the 116 million Euro new Accra International Conference Centre and construction of new embassy buildings for new missions abroad must be suspended for now.

The public funding of the national cathedral, particularly at this time, must stop.

Being a Christian myself, and deeply appreciative of the centrality of God in nation building, I agree with most Ghanaians who believe that the project cannot constitute a top priority of government at this moment, warranting further injection of scarce public funds. Because of the non-transparency of the procurements associated with the project, I believe that the project should be subjected to a value for money audit in other to open the way for believers who wish to contribute to its construction to do so. Similarly, the proposed building of Constituency offices for MPs should be shelved for now until the economy is out of the woods. In the interim, office space can be found within the District Assembly offices or other government buildings for the purpose.

In our current economic state, public funds must go into projects that are necessary and which meet the pressing needs of our people in the communities. Such projects must have tangible and measurable impact on job creation and national development.

If it is not too late, we can pull out of hosting the All-Africa Games as it would severely stretch our already precarious finances by hundreds of millions of cedis.

## PUBLIC PROCUREMENT



And there must be greater transparency in public procurement. As a result, value for money audits and assessment must be made of all projects procured by sole sourcing or restrictive tendering. We should institute a strict and irrevocable precondition for government and parliamentary approval of all public contracts and transactions above an agreed value.

3) Stabilizing the currency, cutting the import bill and job creation. My brothers and sisters, the above remedies represent some of the short to medium term proposals for government to mitigate the total collapse of the Ghanaian economy.

There is, however, the need for broad, long-term economic, governance and structural reforms that will guarantee sustained socio-economic growth for our country and help us avoid some of the mistakes that have led us to this perilous point.

Our governance structure and institutions are in urgent need of reforms to make them more responsive and in tune with the aspirations and hope of the Ghanaian people.

We have known for decades that the economic model and structure we operate cannot deliver the needed development and certainly not at the pace we desire.

We do not stand a credible chance among the comity of nations if there are no fundamental shifts in our economic structure which has remained raw material-producing and heavily import dependent.

## RE-VISIT OPERATION FEED YOURSELF

General Acheampong, despite

the depraved corruption that swallowed him up in later years, was off to a good start in the early part of his regime.

His "Operation Feed yourself" and "Operation feed your Industries" programmes yielded massive results during the period from 1972 through to 1976.

A student of Nkrumah and ardent supporter of Acheampong, Daniel Augustus Larney simply known as Dan Larney of blessed memory formed the GCPP in his attempt to run for President.

The central plank of his economic policy was "Domestication". He was unable to articulate the vision eloquently. But the chickens have come home to roost and today we are faced with the effects of neglect of their diagnosis that was made years ago about the structure of our economy.

We do enormous damage to our currency, the cedi, and our economy, when we spend billions of dollars on the importation of rice, sugar, tomato products, frozen fish, poultry, meat products and vegetable cooking oils.

Yet we have more than the potential to produce here to feed ourselves and even export. It is estimated that forex outlay for food products for which we have a comparative advantage to produce locally amounts to some \$3 billion every year. It is said that out of adversity comes opportunity. Restriction of importation of some of these products, side-by-side with increased local production, is a realistic proposition that we need to begin to consider.

*to be cont.*