

MINORITY

Vows To Resist 2023 Budget; Says It's Draconian And Austere



Haruna Iddrisu, Minority Leader

The opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) Minority in Parliament has vowed to resist the 2023 Budget presented in parliament yesterday by

Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta. According to the Minority Leader, Haruna Iddrisu, the NDC will resist all policies, programmes and initiatives it feels are "draconian" in the 2023

budget presented by Ken Ofori-Atta, the embattled finance minister. The minority in a statement however emphasized the need for

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Tension Brews Between France And Mali

...As Bamako Puts An End To Activities Of NGOs Supported By The French Govt

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Traditional Medicine Practitioners Promise To Partner Govt Grow Ghana's Economy



The Ghana Federation of Traditional Medicine Practitioners Associations (GHAFTRAM) has assured government of their readiness to partner it grow the economy through the development and export of traditional or herbal medicine and a

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Flash Back: Why I Don't Take Salary Or Per Diem – Ken Ofori-Atta Speaks

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The INSIGHT

— EDITORIAL

CLOSE THEM DOWN!

Few months after the Ghana Standards Authority in collaboration with the Criminal Investigation Department of the Ghana Police Service closed down a gas cylinder manufacturing plants in Accra and other areas for operating illegally it has now emerged the some others are operating with bravado.

This development is indeed worrying. Indeed, there are several of these gas plants littered across every nook and cranny of the country and the worry is the danger their operations pose to residents especially in residential areas apart from operating illegally.

Over the years the country has recorded a huge number of domestic fires, which had claimed several lives and property and it is upon this basis that such illegal cylinder manufacturing companies need not be allowed to operate.

Often, these stations are closed down only to be seen a couple of days later, operating brisk business, a clear indication that something has gone amidst.

There is therefore, the need for the state regulatory agencies to ensure that standards are adhered to and especially safety issues not compromised upon.

Again, the is the need for the regulators to ensure that those gas plants and filling stations that operate in residential areas and are sited close to, or sandwiched between houses are stopped from such dangerous operations.

Those that are operating illegally need to be closed down now.

Traditional Medicine Practitioners Promise To Partner Govt Grow Ghana's Economy



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reduction in imported orthodox medicine.

The federation said its members when supported by government have the capacity through traditional medicine to beef up the national stock and reduce demand for imported foreign medicine. Professor Samuel Ato Duncan, President of Ghana Federation of Traditional Medicine Practitioners Associations (GHAFTRAM) who gave the assurance said the traditional medicine sector has the potential to bring in more foreign exchange to address Ghana's economic challenges when well structured and supported.

"There is the need to find another commodity that can bring in forex. Ghana can rake in billion of dollars from traditional medicine if the sector is well structured and supported.

"This will help provide jobs, stabilise the Cedi and grow the economy," he said. Professor Duncan said this when he and other executive members of the Association were sworn into office.

He said GHAFTRAM under his tenure would be pursuing a "Green Gold" herbal medicine agenda to make Ghanaian herbal medicine more valuable and internationally recognised. Professor Duncan said they would be partnering with countries and institutions that had made progress in the herbal medicine sector to learn from them to develop Ghana's sector. He added that they would be constituting research committees to enhance scientific research and production of herbal medicine products. Dr Anastasia Yirenkyi, Director of Traditional and Alternative Medicines

Department, Ministry of Health, urged practitioners to keep up with high standards in their production.

She said the sector was a key component of the country's healthcare structure, which needed to be enhanced for maximum health and economic benefits.

Mr Albert Kwabena Dwumfour, President of Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), said the GJA would be partnering the GHAFTRAM to reposition it.

In all, 22 executives were sworn into office as to President, First and Second Vice Presidents, General Secretary, First and Second Deputy General Secretaries and a Treasurer.

The rest were: Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, National Organiser and Deputy National Organiser, National Coordinators and two deputies, and three patrons.

THE INSIGHT

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Vows To Resist 2023 Budget; Says It's Draconian And Austere

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"drastic cuts in non-essential Government expenditures and more prudent use of scarce national resources.

"We have also demanded greater transparency and accountability in public financial management." "We wish to assure the Ghanaian people that we stand with them in these difficult times, and we will not relent in our efforts to hold the managers of the economy to account," the Minority further added in their statement.

The warning by the Minority comes at a time the government announced in the budget presentation of a proposal to raise the Value Added Tax (VAT) by 2.5 percent and also the scrapping of all limits on transfers through Mobile Money Transactions.

"Mr. Speaker, we will undertake the following actions, initiatives, and interventions under the seven-point agenda. To aggressively mobilize domestic revenue, we will among others: Increase the VAT rate by 2.5 percent to directly support our

roads and digitalization agenda; Fast-track the implementation of the Unified Property Rate Platform programme in 2023," Ken Ofori-Atta said. Commenting on the announced increase in the VAT, Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, expressed bewilderment over the government's decision to increase the Value Added Tax.

In a Facebook post in reacting to the announcement, the opposition MP wondered how the current event is occurring under the presidency of Nana Akufo-Addo, who led a protest against VAT when it was introduced in 1995.

"Who could ever have imagined or predicted that Nana Akufo-Addo who led the fatal 1995 Kumepreko demonstration against the introduction of VAT under President Rawlings which tragically claimed the lives of Ahunu Ahonga & 5 others would today be increasing VAT by

2.5%," he wondered.

According to the minister for finance, the increment in VAT will allow the government to raise funds to finance projects such as road construction.

"Mr. Speaker, the demand for roads has become the cry of many communities in the country. Unfortunately, with the current economic difficulties and the absence of dedicated source of funding for road construction, it is difficult to meet these demands. In that regard we are proposing the implementation of new revenue measures. The major one is an increase in the VAT rate by 2.5 percentage points," the minister said. In 1995, Nana Akufo-Addo and other members of the New Patriotic Party led what is described as Ghana's largest demonstration in history. Five protesters were killed during a protest against the then-government of Jerry John Rawlings' decision to introduce VAT. Unidentified assailants fired



Haruna Iddrisu, Minority Leader

into the crowd of protestors. Meanwhile, the Minister for Finance, Ken Ofori-Atta has also announced a proposal to review the Electronic Transfer Levy (E-Levy) from its current rate of 1.5 percent to 1.0 percent. In addition to the reduction of the rate, Ofori-Atta also proposed the removal of limits on transfers that will attract the levy. "Review the E-Levy Act and more specifically, reduce the headline rate from 1.5% to one

percent (1%) of the transaction value as well as the removal of the daily threshold," he said. This means that, should the budget be approved, all electronic money transfers will be charged. In other words, the threshold of only accumulative transfers exceeding GH¢100 a day being eligible for E-Levy deductions will be removed. So, if you send just GH¢5, GH¢1 or GH¢50 you will be charged E-Levy.

Flash Back: Why I Don't Take Salary Or Per Diem – Ken Ofori-Atta Speaks



Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta

Finance Minister-designate Ken Ofori-Atta during his vetting after

his reappointment as Finance Minister in 2021 said he has never taken a salary since his assumption of

office back in 2017. He made these comments during his vetting before the Appointments Committee in Parliament. According to him, other entitlements and compensations from which he has not drawn as Minister includes per diem. "I do not take a salary, I do not take a per diem, so those are not the objectives that I come with," he said on Thursday. He was responding to a question posed by North Tongu MP Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa about his relationship with

private firms working closely with many government departments and agencies. The MP was of the view that the situation fuels a certain narrative which insinuates that undue advantage could be given to his cronies. But Mr Ofori-Atta explained that his commitment to improving the state of the country's public sector keeps him going even without financial considerations. The Minister-designate believes the need to see a more vibrant public sector is an innate objective, a call he is not willing to sacrifice at the altar of financial gains. "I suspect

you know that the issue of public service is one that really has been with the family for a long time and I came into it with that aspect," he added. The delay in the Finance Minister-designate's vetting was due to a trip to the United States of America for treatment following complications after he recovered from Covid-19 earlier. In his stead, the 2021 Budget statement of government was presented by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu on March 12.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Peruvian Movements And Unions Mobilize In Defense Of President Pedro Castillo

Tens of thousands of Peruvians last week took to the streets of the capital Lima in support of President Pedro Castillo. They rallied against the third impeachment motion moved against him by the right-wing opposition, which holds a majority in the unicameral parliament. Under the banner of "The Taking of Lima," workers, students, peasants, and Indigenous people from different parts of the country came to the capital to condemn the repeated attempts by the country's right-wing forces to remove President Castillo from power. They gathered at the San Martín Plaza and marched to the Congress of the Republic in defense of democracy, raising anti-coup slogans.

The protesters demanded that the president shut down Congress and call for fresh legislative elections. They also called on the president to fulfill his electoral promises of profound social and economic changes and take steps towards drafting a new constitution to replace

the current neoliberal one, which was written and imposed during Alberto Fujimori's dictatorship. The citizens also demanded the resignation of Attorney General Patricia Benavides, who they alleged was colluding with the opposition. She had last month accused him of corruption and criminal organization. On October 12, Benavides [filed a constitutional complaint](#) with parliament, following which opposition parties began collecting signatures to seek a third impeachment motion against Castillo. While the mass media had launched a provocative campaign which claimed they would be violent, the protesters marched peacefully. Police personnel were present on the route to the Congress and stopped them one block before the legislative palace. At the end of the mobilization, however, a small group of demonstrators clashed with the Police, who then repressed the march with tear gas. The march was called for by the National People's Assembly, a

platform of political and social organizations and trade unions. The mobilization took place a day after the president of Congress, José Williams, refused to hold a vote in a plenary session on [a confidence motion](#) presented by President Castillo on November 9. The motion sought approval for a constitutional reform aimed to guarantee the country's political stability and generate favorable governance conditions. The bill repeals the legislation approved by the opposition majority that reduces the powers of the Executive (the President). This confidence vote carries high stakes for both state powers. In the event that Congress denies this vote of confidence, the president's entire cabinet would have to resign. But it would also allow the government to call for a second confidence vote, which if also rejected would empower the President to dissolve Congress and call for new legislative elections. The left-wing government, led by President Castillo, and the opposition-controlled Congress have



"National march in defense of democracy" banner carried by National People's Assembly. Photo: Nuevo Perú. Tens of thousands of Peruvians took to the streets in the capital Lima in rejection of a third vacancy motion being promoted against President Pedro Castillo by the right-wing opposition forces

been at odds since they assumed office in July 2021. Castillo had repeatedly condemned the refusal of the right-wing to accept his electoral victory, and has denounced parliament, the prosecutor's office, and other public institutions for promoting destabilization attempts against his government, and trying to force him and his appointees out of power. In the past 16 months in office, Castillo has had [six investigations](#)

opened against him accusing him of alleged crimes of corruption, criminal organization, influence peddling, accomplice to collusion, personal concealment against the administration of justice, and plagiarism of his master's thesis. He has also [faced and survived two impeachment motions](#). He has been forced to [reshuffle his cabinet three times](#), and has changed over six dozen ministers over disputes and disagreements with the Congress.

Israel Kills Palestinian Youth During Raid At Jenin Refugee Camp

On Monday, November 22, Israeli forces killed a Palestinian youth, Mahmoud al-Saadi (18), and wounded at least four others during a raid at the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, al-Saadi was a student of secondary school. He was shot and killed by Israeli forces while he was on his way to school. In some reports, al-Saadi's age has been recorded as 17 years. Israeli occupation forces were conducting yet another raid in Jenin on Monday. Dozens of armed vehicles stormed the camp in the morning and surrounded a house full of children and other occupants. The Israeli forces fired at them with live bullets and missiles.

While Israeli forces claimed that al-Saadi was killed in crossfire, this was disputed by eyewitnesses who claimed that he was standing on the street when he was shot by Israeli forces in the stomach, *Al-Jazeera* reported. Al-Saadi's funeral procession was attended by thousands of Palestinians who also observed a day of strike in Jenin to mourn his killing. Al-Saadi was the second Palestinian youth killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank in the last two weeks. On November 14, Israeli forces shot and killed a 14-year-old Palestinian girl Fulla Rasmi Mallouh in Ramallah. Israeli forces also attacked and gravely injured another Palestinian child near Hebron on Monday. The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign

Affairs and Expatriates issued a formal [statement](#) condemning the "field execution" of al-Saadi, saying, "this heinous crime committed by the occupation forces is an integral part of the daily series of killings against our people with the cover and approval" of the Israeli government. **Deadliest year for West Bank since 2005** Jenin and other parts of the occupied West Bank have been the target of repeated Israeli raids since March, in which scores of Palestinians, including journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, have been killed. With the increased number of raids and Palestinian resistance against them, the occupied West Bank has recorded the highest number of killings this year since the

UN started collecting annual data in 2005. Israeli forces have killed at least 140 Palestinians, including 30 children, in the West Bank already this year, *Middle East Eye* reported. The total number of Palestinians killed throughout all occupied territories – West Bank, Gaza, and Eastern Jerusalem – this year has reached 203. According to the UN, nearly 9,000 Palestinians have been injured in Israeli aggression in the occupied West Bank alone. On Monday, Israeli forces kidnapped three Palestinian children aged 13 and 14 from Nilin near Ramallah, *Wafa*

news agency [reported](#). According to the ['Palestinian Commission of Detainees Affairs](#), Israel has arrested over 20,000 children from the occupied territories since 2000. The number has crossed 50,000 since 1967. According to the [Defense of Children International-Palestine](#), one of the seven Palestinian human rights groups shut down by Israel earlier this year citing their 'terrorist' connections, Israel has killed 521 Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank between 2000 and November 15 this year.

Tension Brews Between France And Mali

As Bamako Puts An End To Activities Of NGOs Supported By The French Govt

Mali's transitional government on Monday evening announced that it had decided to ban, with immediate effect, activities carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Malian territory with funding or material and technical support from France. The decision taken by the head of the Malian government also concerns NGOs operating in the humanitarian field. In a communiqué issued by the Malian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colonel Abdoulaye Maïga, the interim Prime Minister, justified this decision by the recent announcement by France to suspend its official development assistance to Mali. The ban is decided "with immediate effect, and concerns all activities carried out by NGOs operating in Mali with funding or

with material or technical support from France, including in the humanitarian field," the statement said. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs had cited the use of the Russian paramilitary group Wagner by the Malian authorities to justify the suspension of its official development assistance. The military in power have denied having called on this company, whose actions have been criticized in several countries. However, Bamako speaks of Russian army instructors deployed in the name of a former collaboration between the two countries. Colonel Abdoulaye Maïga denounced in his communiqué "fanciful allegations" and a "subterfuge intended to

deceive and manipulate national and international public opinion for the purposes of destabilization and isolation of Mali.

A non-event

France has declared that it wants to deprive Mali of official development assistance by invoking a "fallacious motive", the Malian Prime Minister maintains. According to Bamako, the French authorities took this measure in protest against "military cooperation" between Mali and Russia. Paris also spoke of "risks of detour of this aid", according to the Malian authorities. In addition to banning the activities of French-funded NGOs, the Malian junta says it has taken note of France's November 16, 2022 announcement of several measures.



Emmanuel Macron, France President

One of these measures is for the French government to provide funds directly to NGOs for French humanitarian action in Mali. The interim Prime Minister of Mali denounced "fanciful and totally unfounded allegations" on this subject. He said he considered the announcement of these measures as a non-event. "This statement is a subterfuge designed to

deceive and manipulate national and international public opinion in order to destabilize and isolate Mali," he said. Since February 2022, France has notified Mali, through diplomatic channels, of the suspension of its development cooperation.

Government Should Cut Down Size Of Appointees – Professor Agyeman-Duah

A former UN Senior Governance Advisor, Professor Baffour Agyeman-Duah, has called on President Akufo-Addo to cut down the size of the government. Speaking in an interview via zoom on the GTV Breakfast Show on Monday, November 21, 2022, Prof. Baffour said the current number of Ministers in an ailing economy is not helping matters and has therefore asked that they should be reduced. "The President needs to reduce the number of his Ministers to help ease the burden on the Finance Minister and the country's economy", he said. Professor Agyeman-Duah made this statement on the back of the



Professor Baffour Agyeman-Duah, former UN Senior Governance Advisor

Finance Minister's responses when he appeared before the Ad hoc Committee's hearing of a vote of censure filed by the Minority in Parliament for his removal as Minister. According to Professor Baffour Agyeman-Duah, the Finance Minister performed well when he sat to answer questions concerning what has been set as grounds filed for his removal by the Minority in Parliament.

The call to reduce the number of Ministers by the President has been one of the suggested measures by both politicians and Economists as one way to ease the economic woes of Ghana, and the added voice of Professor Baffour Agyeman-Duah points out clearly that, if it is done, it will see the economy having a facelift.

Source -- gbcghanaonline.com

CHRAJ Probe Into Ofori-Atta Case: Emile Short Says Only Akufo-Addo Can Ask Minister To Step Aside

Former Commissioner of the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative (CHRAJ), Emile Short, has said that CHRAJ has no power to ask Finance Minister, [Ken Ofori-Atta](#) to step aside as it looks into a petition filed against him by Tiger Eye PI. The current Commissioner of CHRAJ, Joseph Whittal, disclosed that CHRAJ has received a petition from Tiger Eye PI, the outfit of investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas, to investigate Finance Minister [Ken Ofori-Atta](#). According to Whittal, Ana's outfit wants CHRAJ to investigate Ofori-Atta for the conflict of interest allegation levelled against him for the involvement of his bank, Data Bank, in loans to the government of Ghana. He added that the commission is currently examining the petition to determine whether it has merit. In response, Emile Short stated that the CHRAJ will send the accusation against Ofori-Atta and expect him to respond within 10 days.



Former Commissioner CHRAJ Emile Short

He, however, indicated that it is only President [Nana Akufo-Addo](#) who has the power to ask Ofori-Atta to temporarily vacate his position as he is being investigated, 3newsroom.com reports. "I don't know exactly what the issue is, but basically, when CHRAJ receives a complaint, it will send to the person against whom the complaint is made and that person has to respond within a specified period, normally ten days. The response will be sent back to the complainant, in this case Anas, for his response. "CHRAJ will not ask the Finance Minister to stay out of office, that is the matter for the President to determine," he is quoted to have said on TV3 news.

H. Kwasi Prempeh Writes On Censure Motion Against Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta

I am told the committee of Parliament investigating certain allegations against a Minister pursuant to a censure motion says it has no "legal jurisdiction" to investigate conflict of interest claims concerning the Minister who is the subject of the investigation. I hear they say only CHRAJ has such jurisdiction in Ghana. Is that so? So, suppose a citizen petitioned the Appointments Committee of Parliament concerning a nominee for ministerial or other public office, alleging conflict of interests on the part of the nominee, would the Appointments Committee rule itself incompetent to investigate or consider those allegations! Or perhaps, it might stay consideration of the nominee and refer the matter to CHRAJ to investigate and give its ruling before Parliament proceeds with the nomination! By the time these lawyers who dominate our Parliament's business, in weight if not in numbers, are done with us, they will have succeeded in turning our Parliament and parliamentary proceedings into a caricature of a court of law. As the Fourth Republic has progressed, we have witnessed a growing judicialization of the work of Parliament and its committees. I have actually heard, more than once, different Speakers of Parliament entertain and grant an objection from the floor of the House that a statement by an MP who had the floor was "hearsay" and thus inadmissible during deliberations in the House. Hearsay rule in Parliament? The name Parliament comes from the French word "parler", meaning "to talk". Being able to speak one's mind freely in

the House is indeed definitional to what it means for one to be a member of Parliament. Because MPs are representatives of their constituents and of We the People, they must be free to speak and vent on our behalf, including conveying our concerns and feelings about all manner of public affairs. To do so effectively, MPs cannot be constrained by courtroom-style rules of evidence or procedural burdens of proof. That is why MPs enjoy a wider scope of free speech privileges when they participate in deliberations of the House than the standard free speech rights ordinary citizens are entitled to. Thus, speech on the floor of Parliament, including in committee, cannot be subject to suit for defamation or on any other ground in a court of law or any other forum outside Parliament. Only Parliament itself, through its standing orders, can regulate speech on the floor of the House as being unparliamentary or in breach of Parliamentary privileges. Coming to this business of the motion of censure, we have just witnessed the lawyerization or judicialization of what is fundamentally a political, not a legal, sanction. A vote of censure is purely a political matter; it carries no legal consequence or liability, whether civil or criminal. It is used to register the collective disapproval or displeasure of the House about the conduct or performance of a Minister. The fact that the Minister who is the target of a censure motion is entitled to be heard in his defense does not convert the censure proceeding into a judicial matter; it is

merely to accord the Minister a fair opportunity to address the legislative body on the matter. At all times, whether the proceeding takes place before a committee or the House as a whole, it remains a political one. That is also why there are no specific stated grounds required to trigger, consider or pass a vote of censure. MPs can choose, individually or collectively, to vote to censure a Minister for reasons that appear sufficient to each of them. As their vote is, like all votes cast in Parliament, a political one, the reason for voting one way or the other on a censure motion cannot be questioned. In fact, it is not clear to me what the committee is supposed to do after these hearings. Is it going to issue a report to say that the Minister is "guilty" or "not guilty"; that the "burden of proof" has been or not been met; that a motion of censure can or cannot proceed on the basis of the "evidence"? What exactly is the committee supposed to report to the House about after undertaking this exercise? The principal safeguard against reckless use of Parliament's censure power is that it must secure the support of at least two-thirds of all MPs in order to pass. But even if it were to pass that appropriately high supermajority threshold, a vote to censure a Minister is not a verdict of legal guilt or liability on the part of the censured Minister. In fact, the President may choose to keep a censured Minister in his or her position, although, having been censured by no fewer than two-thirds of MPs, a decision by the President to keep a censured Minister at post is likely to be politically untenable. In



any case, no legal disability or disqualification attaches to a censured Minister; he or she may be nominated or appointed to ministerial office in the future, if a subsequent Parliament approves of the nomination. This further underscores the fact that a censure vote is a political verdict, not a legal one. Parliament is a quintessentially political body. It is not a judicial or quasi-body; not even when it sits in committee to investigate a matter. Yes, a committee of Parliament is clothed with the powers of a High Court, but to have the powers of a court is not the same as being a court or the equivalent of a court. A committee is given the powers of a High Court so as to assist and enable it carry out its investigative mandate effectively--such as by summoning witnesses to appear before it or to produce documents it needs to see. It does not change from a political body to a judicial or quasi-judicial body merely by assuming the powers of a High Court that are necessary for the effective discharge of its legislative or other parliamentary work. The lawyerization and judiciization of the business of Parliament is bad for our democracy. Not only does it improperly narrow the purview or scope of Parliament's remit, it also

shifts power in Parliament unduly in favour of lawyer-MPs and forces certain important issues of public interest and consequence from being fully and properly aired and considered by members of the House. In fact, successive Speakers of Parliament, all of whom have been lawyers, as if that was a required or necessary qualification for the job, have used spurious legalistic rulings from the Speaker's chair to prevent certain public matters from being aired on the floor and the House from exercising its investigative mandate to look into certain matters concerning the Executive. I recall, for example, that when an attempt was made to get Parliament to investigate an allegation of bribery of a Ghanaian president by Nigeria's General Abacha, the process was blocked by the then Speaker of Parliament on some legalistic grounds. Other Speakers have followed this bad precedent to shield the Executive from appropriate parliamentary scrutiny. In short, importing ill-fitting judicial or legalistic rules of procedure and evidence as well as doctrines of preemption or ouster of jurisdiction into the conduct of Parliamentary business totally distorts Parliament's essentially political function and undercuts and weakens its role in the constitutional scheme of checks and balances. We are using legalism in Parliament to subvert the prospect of implanting constitutionalism in our infant democracy.

Tribute In Memory Of Kwao Tordzro By Cuba-Trained Ghanaian Professionals (ESBECANS)

The news of the transition of our emblematic music and history teacher pierced our hearts and revived profound memories of survival melodies we sang to offset loneliness and fight fear in a cherished land faraway beyond the seas. Mr Tordzro's tunes inspired resolute feelings of strength, hope and resilience as we forged a future for ourselves and families. Such was his influence!

Today, as we pay tribute to the memory of our departed Teacher and Comrade, Mr Kwao Tordzro, whom we affectionately called Ironman, we are laden with heavy hearts but we are comforted that the Lord gave us the privilege to meet a teacher, friend, mentor and comrade. As we honour him, we take comfort in the words of Shakespeare: "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

Our solemn duty as a fraternity, in commemoration of the memories we shared, is not only to mourn the painful exit of Kwao Tordzro but to treasure the good moments we shared on the Isle of Youth, Cuba and beyond. For Ironman's good deeds are not easy to forget. They helped forge the successful citizens, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters we have become. His music taught

us to value family and culture in our upbringing and emphasised the virtue of hard work in order to become successful.

Ironman's acquaintance with us began in 1985, when he was drafted by the Ministry of Education, to lead the History and Culture Department of the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Institute on the Isle of Youth as part of the Ghana -Cuba Scholarship Programme. His selection was based on his ideologic, pedagogic and music skills.

He joined his colleagues teachers at the Achimota School where the teachers and students were undergoing orientation in preparation for their deployment to Cuba. The arrival of Ironman changed the atmosphere of the camp tremendously as he plunged into work with great enthusiasm, taking the students through history, politics, singing and cultural performances.

On the 3rd September, 1985 a second batch of 145 Ghanaian students, led by six teachers including Ironman landed on the Isle of Youth, Cuba. Ironman brought a lot of energy, enthusiasm and dynamism in the organization of cultural activities at the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial School in particular and the Isle of Youth

in general.

Borborbor, Takai, a dance from the North, were his favourites. Under his tutelage, some students displayed excellent drumming and dancing skills that left visitors to the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial School (ESBEC # 22) pleasantly surprised.

He led the then Democratic Youth League of Ghana (DYLG) and exposed the members to socialism, communism and capitalism. The two years that Mr. Tordzro spent on the Isle of Youth were so memorable that students who came long after his departure still loved and cherished him.

Ironman endeared himself not only to the students but also to Ghanaian teachers and the Cuban educational authorities because of his dedication to duty, hardwork and above all his deep knowledge of Pan-Africansim. To that effect, Ironman would lead the commemoration of every anniversary of the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU). He was also very instrumental in the cultural exchanges between us and foreign students on the Island, particularly African students.

Undoubtedly, in the absence of our parents in that critical stage of our formation, Ironman

together with other Ghanaian Teachers, were our guardians, protectors and comforters when there was grief. Ironman instilled the values of hard work, resilience, selflessness, a solution-oriented approach to problems and a patriotic spirit, which have become the hallmarks of Cuban Trained Ghanaian Graduates.

Those attributes are most relevant today as we strive to make meaningful contributions to the Ghanaian political and socio-economic fabric, as we serve mother Ghana in various capacities as medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists, biomedical scientists, radiographers, engineers, veterinary doctors, agronomists, accountants, economists, statisticians, architects, business men and women, computer scientists, entrepreneurs, etc.. Thanks to the sense of patriotism, humility and selflessness that Mr. Tordzro and many other guardians inculcated in us, we stand with our heads high as join hands with our compatriots to build a better future for future Ghanaian generations.

Following his return from Cuba in 1987, Iron man began putting his skills as a politician, writer and social commentator to practice. He composed songs

and contributed to political debate. However, his health started to deteriorate about seven years ago. He battled this ailment with courage until 1st November, 2022, when our dear Ironman decided that he had run his race on as many stages as the world could have offered him and decided to take solace in the protection of God and his ancestors.

Iron man , your departure has left a great void in the lives of all ESBECANS. We will always cherish you for molding us and for what you stood for.

Ame si tua dukɔ mekuna o,
Ame si kpa ɖevi vaseɖe tsitsime,
Etoe nye yayra kple ɖutifafa,
Ame si fiaa mo le zãme,
Etoenye mavɔmavɔ me,
Eyata zã hã me ko nami egbe,
Eyata mia fe agbenɔnɔ xo yayra
Kafukafu kple akpedada,
Efo Tɔdzro!
Uu gãwo ɖegbe,
Tɔgbuiwo xo teƑe nyui da ɖe anyi nawò,
Blewuu! blewuu! blewuu!
Descanse en paz, compatriota !
Hasta la Gloria !!!

Govt Deliberately Collapsing NHIS Scheme - Minority Alleges

The minority caucus in [Parliament](#) has accused the government of deliberately trying to collapse Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). According to the minority, the government has been intentionally depriving service providers of the needed funds, which has led to them operating on a cash-and-carry system. Speaking at a press briefing at [Parliament](#), the Ranking Member of the [Parliamentary](#) Select Committee on Health, [Kwabena Mintah Akandoh](#), said that many Ghanaians

are at risk of losing their lives because the NHIS is no longer functioning. He said that health facilities across the country are now demanding cash upfront before rendering services to sick Ghanaians who are on the NHIS. "Under the current economic conditions, more Ghanaians than ever before will require the National Health Insurance Scheme to finance their medical needs. It is, therefore, unconscionable for government to hold on to monies collected in the name of the National Health

Insurance Authority (NHIA), rendering it incapable of meeting its obligations to service providers. "This is going to increase morbidity and mortality across Ghana. As we speak, patients in some hospitals across the country are being asked to make an upfront payment for medical consumables and services. This is likely to increase morbidity in persons with hypertension, diabetes, sickle cell anaemia, HIV and other condition which require regular intake of medical consumables and services. "Unfortunately, there rather



Ranking Member of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Health, Kwabena Mintah Akandoh

seems to be an unwavering effort to collapse the National Health Insurance Scheme by depriving it of funds," he said. He added that the government has only released a little over 6

per cent of the funds it has collected through the National Health Insurance Levy to the NHIA in 2022.

FIRST F. K. BUAH MEMORIAL LECTURES DELIVERED BY COMRADE KWESI PRATT JNR.

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use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation; we stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future....” This must be extremely worrying for all African patriots, anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces and must inform current discourse on the struggle against foreign domination and poverty on the African continent.

We must still be struggling to understand why any self – respecting government in Africa will sign the military pact that the Akuffo-Addo government entered into with the United States of America. An agreement which gives more privileges to US soldiers than Ambassadors and High Commissioners under the Geneva Convention. Under the agreement.

US soldiers can enter Ghana without passports and visas. All they need is their US Army identity cards. They are also not subject to any kind of inspection including customs inspection on arrival or departure from Ghana.

Ghanaians are also estopped from using judicial processes to seek compensation for the loss of lives and property.

The US military is entitled to use Ghana's radio frequencies for free.

And even the President of Ghana is not allowed to set foot on the US military Base without prior approval.

The Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, this is obviously an indication of how far we have moved away from the dreams of the independence movement and its leaders, like Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Nasser,

Modibo Keita, Sekou Toure and George Padmore. These leaders wanted to build a united and prosperous Africa, free from foreign military imposition. An Africa without a bomb Reports that other African countries like Zambia are beginning to copy Ghana's bad example should be frightening for every African. If the current trend should continue, Africa will look like Djibouti which has become contested space where every and any country with some military might has set camp. In August 2017, China opened its base there, which it uses as a supply centre for peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance operation. Japan has its first overseas base at the Ambouli airport which it uses for counter-piracy operations and evacuation of Japanese citizens from the region. Italy's Base Militare Nazionale di Supporto, stations 300 personnel in Djibouti used for counter piracy missions. France's Heron Naval Base in Djibouti is the largest, stationing 2,900 personnel and hosting German and Spanish forces. The US's Camp Lemonnier is the home of the combined Task Force – Horn of Africa. It hosts 4,000 personnel used for operations in Somalia and Yemen. There are credible reports that Saudi Arabia is negotiating with Djibouti to set up a base for supporting its war effort in Yemen.

GHANA: A WARNING SIGN

History teaches us that the current economic conditions in Ghana are the direct result of imperialist meddling. Accounts by Jack Mahoney,

son of a former US Ambassador to Ghana, Philip Agee, a former agent of the Central Intelligence Agency of the USA and many others point in this direction. In September 1961, the then British High Commissioner in Ghana sent a cable to his home government in which he made the case for the overthrow of the Nkrumah government. He insisted that Nkrumah was making the African people too politically conscious and that if he was not removed from power it would be difficult for the British ruling elite to pursue their agenda of neo-colonialism throughout Africa. On February 24, 1966, Western Intelligence Agencies led by the CIA overthrew the Nkrumah Government and set Ghana on path to doom. Since then, more than 400 factories established as part of the import substitution programme of Nkrumah have either been privatized or destroyed. The retrenchment of labour has been carried out on a massive scale, frequent devaluations of the national currency has made the cedi very weak, and the withdrawal of subsidies on social services have greatly limited the people's access to health, education, housing etc. The cumulative effect of these measures is that today, Ghana needs more than 100 percent of total national revenue to cater for debt servicing, debt repayment and public sector emoluments. Food inflation is hovering around 120 percent and the real value of wages and

salaries are less than 15 percent of what they used to be in the mid-1970s. Unfortunately, this is not peculiar to Ghana. All of Africa appears to be in the same situation and we need to get out of it.

RELEVANCE OF F.K. BUAH AND HISTORY

F.K. Buah and history teach us important lessons. First, they teach us that the path to the apparent prosperity of the advance capitalist states is not available to us.

I do not see which people we can go and capture as slaves to work for us free for hundreds of years. I also cannot see which lands we can go and colonize today.

As stated in the final resolution of the 5th Pan African Congress held in Manchester in 1945, United Kingdom, the path forward for Africa can only be a path which leads to the ownership of our resources by US and the exploitation of these resources for the benefit of our people. This ought to be a path which insists on greater international solidarity of all oppressed and exploited people. This must be the path to scientific socialism.

Our generation owes a lot to the scholarship of F.K. Buah and others who made us keenly aware of our history. He taught us about the giant strides made by the African people in the ancient Kingdoms of Songhai, Mali,

Egypt, Dahomey and Anglo. He debunked the nonsense that the African had no history and made us aware of our movement as African people through time and space and gave us hope that we can and must construct a better world. It was also F.K. Buah who stood firmly against the blatant attempt by some historians to rewrite the history of Ghana to deliberately devalue the contributions of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to the liberation of the Gold Coast and Africa from the clutches of classical colonialism. As far as progressive and revolutionary forces are concerned, Nkrumah remains the African of the millennium. He made us proud to be Africans and he taught us that we can aspire to any height. The African people who lived on the shores of the Nile, developed mathematics, they conducted sophisticated medical operations and the pyramids they build are testimonies of a great people who can never be marginalized in the pages of history.

F.K. Buah stands tall as a historian and an educationist whose life inspired many to learn the truth about African especially West African history and to use the knowledge acquired for the transformation of the world. We are all the products of F.K. Buah, the first Headmaster of Tema Secondary School, the historian and author. We are also the children of the 1960's and 1970's who have become the adults of today fully inspired by the dreams and legacy of F.K. Buah.

A very big Salute to F. B. Buah. I thank you all.