

Construction Industry Facing Imminent Collapse Over...

ECONOMIC CRISIS



President Nana Akufo-Addo

The construction, and real estate industry in the country is gradually collapsing under the current economic hardship, Mr. Simon Sawyer Tetteh, Managing Director of Sawyer-Nanor and Sons Company

Limited (SNS) has said. Mr. Tetteh, in an interview with the Ghana News Agency (GNA) in Tema on the effect of the economic meltdown on the industry, said most construction companies were

either downsizing their workforce or shutting down completely as they could no longer cope with the repercussions of frequent and inconsistent price hikes | building materials.

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**We Can't Wait
For 2024, Akufo-Addo
Must Resign Now
– Martin Kpebu**



Martin Kpebu

Private legal practitioner, Martin Kpebu has called on President Akufo-Addo to step down for a new successor to lead the nation to economic recovery.

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About His Chances Of
Being Elected Greater
Accra Chairman** *page 3*



The INSIGHT

— EDITORIAL

TACKLING NON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Health experts have now identified Non Communicable Diseases (NCD) such as diabetes, stroke, hypertension and cancer as the main cause of morbidity and mortality in our public and private hospitals now.

Until recently, communicable diseases such as dysentery, typhoid fever, cholera among many others which are occasioned by untidy environment and lack of personal hygiene have been our bane.

Obviously, the growing cases of morbidity associated with NCDs are clear indications that these lifestyle diseases have become highly ingrained in our daily practices which need to be worked on.

It is regrettable that seeming improvement in general living conditions of some of the people considered part of the so-called growing Middle Class in the Ghanaian society has brought in its wake a deterioration of the health conditions of the majority of the people. It is even alarming especially as the health sector claims it concentrates higher percentage of its national budget to tackling diabetes and hypertension.

According to the Ghana Health Service records hypertension and diabetes, two preventable diseases attributable to lifestyle of the people are due to excessive drinking of alcohol, lack of exercises, and eating non-healthy diets.

This means that if the majority of the people could adopt healthy lifestyles such as exercising, drinking lots of water and eating well, there will be improvement in the health of the people and these NCDs could be reduced if not prevented.

We Can't Wait For 2024, Akufo-Addo Must Resign Now – Martin Kpebu

from front page

The lawyer, who has recently been consistent in criticizing the ruling government in its failure to rescue Ghanaians from economic hardship, hinted on calling for the president's impeachment if he doesn't resign. He explained that framers of the constitution were sage enough to include resignation as captured in Article 66 before spelling out the procedure for impeachment in Article 69.

The legal practitioner thus suggested that both the president and his vice step aside since they can not deliver on their mandate

Martin Kpebu, speaking on Angel FM therefore declared that “he [President Akufo-Addo] should have resigned in August [2022] when the economy fell apart. He has overstayed his welcome. The [1992] Constitution in Article 66 allows for his resignation, the vice president can equally resign as well if he feels things are not going well...”

“As we have started calling for his resignation, the president can just announce to Ghanaians that he has heard our cries, and therefore, he is resigning. If we say we are waiting for 2024, we will die looking at how we have suffered...why should we wait another two years, No!”

He emphasized that it is the poor performance of the president that has brought the country to this point.

He alleged that as President Akufo-Addo and his Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta borrow, their families get enriched while Ghana suffers the consequences thereof. Ghanaians are not suffering because of COVID 19 or the Russia-Ukraine War according to Mr. Kpebu.

Martin Kpebu noted that the



Martin Kpebu

President's address on the state of Ghana's economy did no good as he should have begun his address by accepting he is the cause of the mess and beg for forgiveness but once that did not occur, everything he said did not augur well for Ghanaians. Touching on his Kume Preko protest, he announced that it shall start the at 7:00 am at Obra Spot to the Independence Square with Police protection.

Source: angelonline.com.gh

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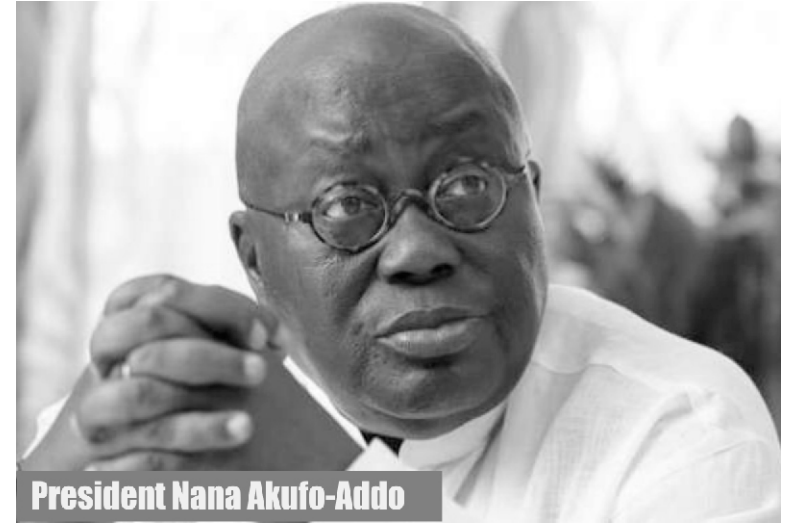
Construction Industry Facing Imminent Collapse Over... ECONOMIC CRISIS

from front page

He added: "The construction industry is hit hard by the current economic hardship, so as business people either you are laying off some of your workers or trying to strategize to just break even or sometimes record a complete loss on a project." He stated that the increment in building materials was too astronomical explaining for instance that high tensile iron rods that was being sold at around GHs4,500.00 moved to GHs6,500.00, GHs8,500.00 and now selling at about GHs11,500.00 within a period of four months. He added that cement has moved from below GHs50.00 to between GHs80.00 and GHs85.00 depending on the area it was

being sold within the same period of four months. The MD stated that "for instance, we are doing a project at Abetifi, and I can tell you that within a week, sand that we were buying at GHs1,800.00 moved to GHs2,500.00 and now GHs3,100.00 per 20 cubic trucks." He said chippings also increased over the period from GHs3,000.00 through GHS 4,500 and currently selling at GHs5,500, lamenting that, "these are astronomical increases that you cannot keep as a contractor, it has a huge bearing on the cost of the project." Recently we checked our books, and we realized that the variations alone are over 52

percent of the contract price you can imagine that if you are doing a project and such a huge percentage of cost must be added. He said looking at the enormous difference in the cost of building materials which translates to more than 50 percent of additional cost in variations on a project, most of the works that they were handling had stalled as clients were unable to pay for certificates raised after works. Mr. Tetteh indicated that the implication of that was job loss, and confusion between clients, workers, and contractors as it has become difficult to pay the salaries of workers as clients were yet to fulfill their payment requirements. "I can tell you that a lot of



President Nana Akufo-Addo

construction companies are folding up, or they have downsized the number of workers; at this time laying people off is an exceedingly difficult thing to do, which is not easy for the employer.

increments at the same time, the work itself is not there, we are in very trying and difficult times," he stressed.

Source -- GNA

"Workers are also asking for

Ahead Of NDC Regional Elections...

Michael Tetteh Kwetey Upbeat About His Chances Of Being Elected Greater Accra Chairman

As the internal regional elections of the largest opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) gather momentum, and interested candidates are getting ready to go to battle, come November 13, the race is getting keener and tighter for all contenders and aspirants. Definitely, the Greater Accra Region, where Mr. Joseph Kobina Ade Coker is the incumbent chairman, is one of the regions, which will attract a lot of attention as the former Ningo-Prampam Constituency Chairman of the party, Mr. Michael Tetteh Kwetey, appears to be enjoying massive support from some of the party's delegates and is upbeat about dethroning chairman Ade Coker. According to some of the delegates, the incumbent Chairman has done his part and needs to give way for the dynamic and vibrant Mr. Kwetey who has

been working quietly for the party within the region as well as at the national level preparing the party for the 2024 crucial general elections. This, they believe has won the hearts of members of the NDC in the region, especially the delegates, and are only waiting to endorse him in the upcoming regional conference. "Our incumbent Regional Chairman, Mr. Ade Coker, abandoned the region and all of us immediately after the 2020 general elections. He was outside; I think somewhere in America or London enjoying himself for a long time. He never bothered about the welfare or the state of the party especially being in opposition. He only came back to the country just few months ago when he got the hint that the regional elections were closer. And you expect us to continue voting for such a man as our regional chairman? No! We won't do that this time around. We are going to vote for the person who was and has always been with us and that person is Mr. Michael Tetteh Kwetey", an angry

delegate from the Ashaiman constituency said. Mr. Kwetey who adopted and supported about twenty two (22) NDC parliamentary candidates across the country in the 2020 general elections with thirteen of them winning their parliamentary seats, is highly tipped to win the regional chairmanship position hands down and with a wider margin. According to information available, the decision of the politician cum businessman to contest the chairmanship position is as a result of calls on him from party faithful including bigwigs within the region and from the national level. These calls, backed by some topmost NDC men and women in the region who believe that abandoning the task to Mr Ade Coker will result in dwindling chances of the party in the region said that Mr. Kwetey will be an effective and efficient Chairman who can also mobilize resources as well as logistics for the region to

prepare adequately for the 2024 general elections. Speaking in separate interviews with this writer, some of the delegates in the various constituencies in the region confirmed that the young and effective politician is the man they are going with this time round, because they have found in him to be a man who can deliver the region decisively for the party come 2024. The seemingly fed-up delegates have therefore vowed to show the incumbent chairman the exit, saying "this time round, there should be a change. Enough of this armchair Chairman. It's time for him go and let the party work again in the region". They noted that while the incumbent chairman only come to tell them to vote for him to help the region and the party members, Mr. Kwetey, even long before he nursed the ambition of becoming the regional Chairman, has always

offered various kinds of help to them. "He does not discriminate when offering assistance to us. He has always helped us and the region in terms of finances and resources and we think he will do more when given the opportunity," one of the key opinion leaders in the region who pleaded anonymity said. For the youth in the region, Mr. Kwetey has been an inspiration to them, and therefore accepting to become the regional chairman of the party was good news and that is why they have pledged to leave no stone unturned to make sure he represents the constituency in the next parliament of Ghana. According to them, aside the fact that he is inspirational to them, he has also created employment opportunities for many of them, adding "This is a mark of a good leader and we know he will do more for us when he becomes our next chairman".



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Israel Expropriates More Land To Expand Illegal Settlement In Occupied Palestinian Territories

Israeli officials have issued a military order to seize over 616 dunams (152 acres) of private Palestinian land in the villages of Qaryout and al-Lubban ash-Sharqiya near Nablus in the occupied West Bank in order to expand the illegal Israeli settlement of Eli, Palestinian *Wafa* news agency reported.

Wafa quoted activist Ghassan Daghlas, who monitors settlement activities in the occupied territories, who said the order to appropriate Palestinian land was issued suddenly which left several people complaining about their land being seized overnight by the occupation authorities.

The Eli settlement is located near Nablus in the northern occupied West Bank. It started as a cluster of mobile homes on a hill in the area in 1984 and expanded gradually with the expropriation of more and more Palestinian land. It has now become one of the largest settlements inside the occupied West Bank with a population of [around 5,000](#).

Israeli security forces often prevent local Palestinians from accessing their farms and lands near the settlement. On Monday too, several such cases of Israeli security forces attacking Palestinians were reported in the local

media.

Meanwhile, in occupied East Jerusalem, the Israeli controlled al-Quds Planning and Building committee decided on Monday to build 135 settler units in the Palestinian locality of Sheikh Jarrah.

The people in Sheikh Jarrah have been struggling to save the locality from Israeli aggression for over a year now and '[resisting the occupations attempts](#) to displace Palestinians using force and intimidation. All Israeli construction inside occupied Palestinian territories is illegal according to the fourth Geneva Convention related to occupied territories. It also violates UN Security Council resolution [2234](#), [which specifically calls](#)

Israeli settlement expansion inside the occupied territories "violations of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions."

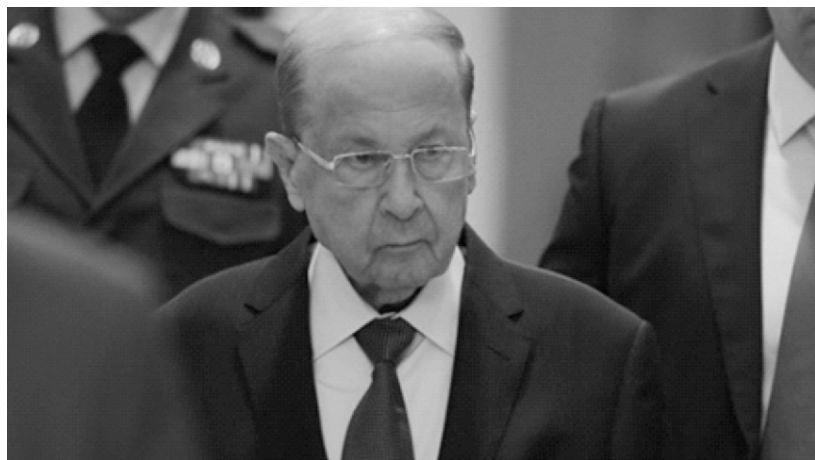
Despite international opposition and UN resolutions, Israel has been expanding its illegal settlements in the occupied territories since 1967. Today, over 700,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements in these territories. These settlements have been built illegally using brutal force to displace Palestinians living in the areas. In the last few years, the rate of expansion of Israeli settlements has increased manifold. Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East



(Photo: via Days of Palestine). Israeli officials issued a military order to seize over 616 dunams (152 acres) of private Palestinian land in the villages of Qaryout and al-Lubban ash-Sharqiya near Nablus in the occupied West Bank

Jerusalem have been forced out from localities such as [Masafer Yatta](#), Sheikh Jarrah, and [Silwan](#), among others, to make way for illegal Israeli settlements. Bedouins living in the [Negev \(al-Naqab\) desert](#) have also been displaced to make way for Israeli settlements.

Lebanese Political Parties Fail To Elect A New President As Michael Aoun's Term Expires



Michael Aoun. (Photo: Al-Akhbar) Aoun's departure leaves Lebanon without a formal head of state at a time when the country has been embroiled in an unprecedented economic and political crisis for the last three years

Lebanon has been without a formal head of state since Tuesday, November 1, following the resignation of President Michale Aoun. He vacated the presidential Baabda Palace in the capital Beirut on Sunday, October 30.

Aoun addressed thousands of his supporters and members of his Free Patriotic Movement party outside the presidential palace on Sunday and announced that [he has signed a decree accepting the resignation](#) of the caretaker government headed by Prime

Minister Najib Mikati.

Aoun (89) was the leader of the Free Patriotic Movement before being elected as president in 2016. He had also participated in the country's civil war between 1975 and 1990.

As per the post-civil war constitution, the president of Lebanon can only be a Christian, the prime minister Sunni, and the speaker of the parliament Shia. The Lebanese parliament that was elected in May met at least four times since then to elect Aoun's successor. However, it has failed so far. Aoun's six-year term expired on Monday, October 31. The post of the president is crucial for signing bills into laws and approving the new government. Aoun's departure without a designated successor can deepen the political crisis in

the country.

Lebanon has been facing an unprecedented economic and political crisis since 2019. The country has had no formal government for over six months now. Mikati is leading a caretaker government, but has been unable to win the support of the parliament. Reacting to Aoun's announcement of the cabinet's resignation, Mikati called the move "[unconstitutional](#)," hinting that he will continue on in his post and attempt to get the parliament's approval. Lebanon is facing rising poverty, historically high inflation, and a steep decline in the value of its currency, leaving millions without basic amenities like power and little means to

purchase food, fuel or medicine.

The Lebanese are protesting against these conditions and blaming the lack of governance in the country. The protesters accuse the ruling establishment of widespread corruption and nepotism and have demanded an overhaul of the political system.

During his speech on Sunday, Aoun addressed the concerns raised by the protesters, [admitting that](#) "our state, with all its institutions, has become worn out and worthless because of the ruling system which colonizes it."

Negotiating Interest Of Bondholders Is Still A 'Haircut' - NPP Presidential Hopeful To Govt



Executive Director of the Institute for Energy Policies and Research, Kojo Nsafoah Poku

The Executive Director of the Institute for Energy Policies and Research has refuted the explanation given by some government functionaries that principals of bondholders will not be affected by a debt restructuring

exercise the government might undertake, which means that there will be no "haircut on government bonds".

According to Kojo Nsafoah Poku, the government renegotiating the interest of bonds is also a

haircut since the investors will not get yields originally agreed on. "If you leave the person's principal and renegotiate his interest, you're still giving him a haircut. If you elongate his tenure and you don't give the interest over that same tenure, you are giving him a haircut," he explained in a TV3 interview on November 11, 2022. Kwadwo Poku, who has indicated his intention to contest the flagebearship race of the ruling [New Patriotic Party \(NPP\)](#), said that the announcement by President [Nana Akufo-Addo](#) that there would be no "haircut on Government bonds" as part of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) negotiations does no good. "The point is this, if you are looking at options to get yourself to breathe, it really ties the hands of the negotiators because it takes some of the options available to them off the table. For me, my thoughts could have been that in

the president's address, he would have basically stayed out of that statement and let the negotiators negotiate," he said. President [Nana Akufo-Addo](#) refuted suggestions that his government would buy off government bonds at rates lower than their expected returns – "haircut on Government bonds". Addressing the nation on measures being taken by the government to rescue the economy, Akufo-Addo said: "I also want to assure all Ghanaians that no individual or institutional investor, including pension funds, in government treasury bills or instruments will lose their money, as a result of our ongoing IMF negotiations. "There will be no "haircuts", so I urge all of you to ignore the false rumours, just as, in the banking sector clean-up, government ensured that the

4.6 million depositors affected by the exercise did not lose their deposits." He cautioned, "those who make it a habit of publishing falsehoods, which result in panic in the system, I say to them that the relevant state agencies will act against such persons". But the Minister of Information, Kojo Opong Nkrumah, has come out to explain Akufo-Addo's assurances that there will be no haircut covers on principals. "My understanding is that no principals will be touched. No principals will have a haircut. The debt sustainability strategy is yet to be announced in full. "When they are done with the rest of the strategy, and they come out and do a full announcement, we will have clarity on the form that the debt restructuring will take," the information minister said.

As Global Financial Crisis Affects Operations ... Scholarship Secretariat Meets NUGS Assures Students Of Disbursement Of Bursaries



The Ghana Scholarship Secretariat has assured the National Union of Ghana students (NUGS) that it is working assiduously and will soon ensure the disbursement of all bursaries to students.

On Monday, October 31, 2022 the Ghana Scholarship Secretariat had a meeting with the National Union of Ghana Students to address the issue of nonpayment of scholarships home and abroad. The NUGS President, Mr Dennis Appiah Larbi-Ampofo who led the delegation, commended the Registrar of the Scholarship Secretariat on his PhD attainment and further went on to indicate the challenges students on scholarships are facing presently.

"Students studying on the government of Ghana scholarship are crying. For close to a year, a lot of Ghanaian students on local and international scholarships by the Government of Ghana through the Scholarship Secretariat have not received disbursed students' bursaries. This has made it difficult for the students to fund their education due to the challenges confronting them as a result of this situation", the NUGS President added.

Students are receiving notices of ejection from their hostels and apartments and risked being homeless", Mr Appiah Larbi added .

The Scholarship Secretariat admitted to the knowledge of the aforementioned challenges indicating that their operation is affected by the global financial crisis.

However, the Government of Ghana through the Scholarship Secretariat

assured NUGS, that affected students will be attended to in no time, as they are making all necessary financial arrangements to resolve the challenge. "Ghanaian students studying on government scholarship should keep calm, these arrears are not something usual in our operations ever since we took over and I can assure you, we are working around the corner to end it", Dr Kingsley Agyemang assured the students.

" We have commenced payments of fees and in some areas, stipends are also being paid , we have been engaging both the institutions and students to ensure we continue to keep our students in school , let us continue to work as faithful partners and calm your students down as we sail through these challenges together", Dr

John Mahama Mourns With Ofosu-Ampofo Over Mother's Death



John Dramani Mahama, on Thursday, 3rd November 2022 visited Ofosu-Ampofo's family to express his condolences to the National Chairman of NDC, Samuel Ofosu-Ampofo on the passing of his mother, Madam Mary Gyawubea Badu.

The sad demise of Mad. Mary Gyawubea Badu occurred on the Monday 31st October

2022 at Koforidua Regional Hospital. John Dramani Mahama also signed the book of condolence opened by the family to express his felt condolences to the family. He was accompanied by former Chief of Staff, Julius Debrah and Ambassador Victor Smith.

Brace Up; Hard Times Ahead – Ayorkor Botchwey Warns Ghanaians



Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey is the Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, has said austerity measures are inevitable in efforts to stabilize the economy. On the path to full recovery from Ghana's economic crisis, the people are bound to face either IMF conditionality or home-grown tough decisions that will affect the domestic market, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey observed.

"The road back to robust growth, which Ghana and a number of African countries experienced successively in the years before [COVID-19](#) struck, is currently a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea. We have to either impose IMF-guided austerity, potentially leading to labour retrenchment and accompanying social instability, as witnessed in Argentina and elsewhere, or home-grown yet equally tough decisions to satisfy the markets and, hopefully, pave the way back to a functioning economy.

"The harsh sacrifices required, themselves, have become a source of instability and an invitation to malign actors," she said in a statement on the sidelines as Ghana assumes Presidency of the United Nations Security Council.

Already, the Minority in Parliament has signaled an imminent debt restructuring billed to happen in the next 14-days that will possibly affect the investor community as part of the IMF negotiations.

President Akufo-Addo in an address on the economy on Sunday assured Ghanaians that no individual or institutional investor, including pension funds, in government treasury bills or instruments will lose

their money, as a result of the ongoing IMF negotiations. However, in reaction to the remarks by the President, the minority leader Haruna Iddrisu maintained that contrary to assurances by the President that there will be 'No haircuts', investors in government bonds and other pension funds will be adversely affected by the move.

This is the Statement by the Foreign Affairs Minister:

We Are Running Out of Time

By Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Republic of Ghana.

I was told many years ago about a common refrain in newsrooms: "If it bleeds, it leads". In other words, the bloodier an event, the more prominent its place in the newspaper or bulletin. I believe this axiom still holds true today. It explains why the catastrophic sights and sounds – the bleeding – in Ukraine is top of mind for the world. And justifiably so. However, as Ghana assumes the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council in November, the world cannot afford to focus solely on events in Ukraine, its impact on the living conditions of people everywhere notwithstanding. We cannot forget that before the invasion of Ukraine, [COVID-19](#) had exposed the lack of resilience of the economies in which the majority of the global population live. In

fact, the war in Ukraine exacerbated the harsh effects of the downturn many countries were already experiencing, deepening poverty, unemployment and food insecurity.

We cannot forget either that the UN Security Council faced a leadership crisis in finding better ways to respond to threats to international peace and security, as the nature of those threats were, themselves, changing. Africa, for instance, has become the epicentre of terrorism. Meanwhile, in the countries where the UN maintains its signature peacekeeping missions, some of the host countries have chosen, instead, to engage third parties, sometimes in conflict with the operations of UN peacekeepers.

It is clear that the ways in which the Security Council approaches the mandate for international peace and security ought to change, if we are to have sustainable peace, which is a prerequisite for achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030. Right now we are running out of time in transforming the lives of people and saving our planet.

At the UN, Security Council reforms are often seen only in terms of expanding the permanent membership and power of veto to make the council more representative of all of the peoples of the world. Those reforms are important and necessary. But we believe that it is equally important to look at another area of reforms that would enable peace to serve the needs of ordinary people for resilience and a good quality of life. In this we are inspired by the example of the second Secretary-General of the UN, Dag Hammarskjöld, who had an innovative approach to the possibilities of the UN and its Charter, and is credited with the introduction of peacekeeping. The bold act of adopting a General Assembly Resolution on 7 November, 1956, which launched the first peacekeeping operation in history, the UN Emergency Force in the Middle East (UNEF), at a time

when it was urgently needed, should inspire us in our time to act equally boldly because circumstances have changed. Like Hammarskjöld, we must recognize that "the purposes of the Charter (are) fixed and binding, but the working methods of the Organization must be flexible and innovative".

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of Ghana and I are calling on the Council to consider that time has come for another departure from the norm as Hammarskjöld did when UNEF was established.

As my country, Ghana, prepares to preside over two high level debates of the Council, we want to focus, like a laser beam, on the security gap and the need for a new and innovative template for success.

That template should take into account the factors that make peace keeping operations almost permanent, and why individuals and communities become susceptible to radicalization and recruitment as terrorists, driving the new face of threats to international peace and security. In the Sahel and coastal West Africa, the countries that were the most successful in reaching striking distance of the SDGs, especially on poverty reduction and education, now find themselves struggling, as poorer countries rather shoulder the worst impacts of the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, Climate Change and conflict in Europe. High fiscal deficits, escalating debt and downturns in economic activity are pushing us out of the bond markets at a time when inequality soars and unemployment and underemployment of millions is turning frustration into hopelessness. Increasingly, even some among the middle classes in Africa and other developing countries are beginning to lose faith in the democratic systems they fought so hard to establish.

The road back to robust growth, which Ghana and a number of African countries experienced successively in the years before [COVID-19](#) struck, is currently a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea. We have to either

impose IMF-guided austerity, potentially leading to labour retrenchment and accompanying social instability, as witnessed in Argentina and elsewhere, or home-grown yet equally tough decisions to satisfy the markets and, hopefully, pave the way back to a functioning economy. The harsh sacrifices required, themselves, have become a source of instability and an invitation to malign actors.

In the Sahel, climate-induced insecurity, poverty, high illiteracy rates and education that neither teaches skills nor a culture of peace and non-violence (SDG Target 4.7), youth unemployment and the absence of the State in large swathes of territory have created the environment in which terrorists thrive and undermine the effectiveness of the kinetic military operations to root them out.

It is clear that the critical need to fill the security gap brought on by economic and other root causes of conflict should be a priority for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has been insistent on the need for funding the entire peace continuum, including increasing resources for programmatic financing, and for a mechanism for fighting terrorism in Africa.

The Council can no longer turn a blind eye to the accumulating evidence before us. That means ensuring that UN Security Council-mandated peace support missions or counter terrorism have a balanced approach to both the military and civil components, with as much resources devoted to building community resilience, access to good quality education and training, and mitigating climate impacts and reclaiming land and water bodies on which communities depend.

It means standing with other organs of the UN to advocate for a new model of development cooperation that reinforces the capacity of developing countries to deepen their development resilience. I know that these may not make for easy headlines but we must bring attention to, and act on, them as a matter of preventive urgency. It is time for bold thinking and bolder action or we shall simply run out for time, leaving us with neither peace nor development – except bloodier headlines.

Source: starrfm.com.gh

The Wasteland Of British Politics



UK's ex-prime minister, Mary Elizabeth Truss. A significant part of Britain's travails today stems out of the West's sanctions against Russia. According to a *Sunday Telegraph* report, by mid-April, British citizens were already militating against the sanctions due to rising prices, especially fuel prices

By M. K. Bhadrakumar

When an ugly power play marks the end of the career of a phenomenally successful politician, it presents a painful sight. From all accounts in the British press in the most recent weeks, it was clear that the night of the long knives was approaching for Prime Minister Liz Truss.

Enoch Powell, if I remember correctly, once said that the tragedy of most politicians is that they do not know when to quit public life before the sun starts descending westward on their career. Indeed, Truss invited upon herself such an ignominious end to her stunning political career. For, she should have known that in life, it's more important to be aware of one's weaknesses than strengths. But she was fired up by an overvaulting ambition to slip into the shoes of Margaret Thatcher, while it was crystal clear to anyone who watched her [controversial visit to Moscow](#) in February that Truss was perilously close to being exposed as an incompetent politician. Come to think of it, she eagerly sought an invitation from Moscow keenly seeking

media headlines as a tough-talking diplomat even as the storms were gathering over Ukraine.

But then, Truss probably believes that success and competence are not necessarily inter-related and politics is all about packaging and marketing — or, plain luck. She's right in thinking so. Boris Johnson had his uses for her. But Truss ignored the fact that Britain is not only sick but likely terminally ill, and only a politician with a magic wand can navigate the country out of its misery, and that she was not up to the task.

The result is that within a month of her time as prime minister, Truss has proved that Zelensky curse is real. If she wanted to abandon plans to scrap the scheduled increase in corporation tax from 19 to 25 %, it was bad. But when she retracted, that was also bad. The political atmosphere became sulfurous.

Of course, it happened with Truss being a burnt-out case with [Rishi Sunak now a successor](#). Will that make

any difference?

Sunak bears an uncanny resemblance to Barack Obama — a voluble, charismatic, well-educated globalist, who would have acceptability with the country's permanent establishment as someone who can be trusted not to upset the apple cart. But is that all that is needed to steer Britain out of crisis mode?

A significant part of Britain's travails today stems out of the West's sanctions against Russia. According to a *Sunday Telegraph* report, by mid-April, British citizens were already militating against the sanctions due to rising prices, especially fuel prices. The *Guardian* newspaper also reported that there would be inflationary pressure and economy will slow down in the UK following economic measures against Russia. "The shockwaves from the Russian invasion of Ukraine will cut UK living standards by £2,500 per household, lead to more persistent inflationary pressure and slow the economy to a

standstill next year, economists fear," the newspaper wrote in March.

Market confidence has crashed, the value of the pound and government bonds is tanking and the Bank of England is restive, as investors fear that the British economy cannot possibly underwrite a £60 billion hit to public debt. On the other hand, public spending must be cut even at the risk of provoking a broader social explosion. But, how to find tens of billions of pounds of cuts in just three weeks? The sell-off of bonds and the fall in the pound prompted the Bank of England to raise interest rates more quickly than planned, which in turn sent mortgages soaring. The catch is, now that Sunak has been brought in as PM, it will be the outcome of a palace coup and for the wrong reasons, especially his formidable manipulative skill in the corridors of power.

Recently, [Al Jazeera featured a riveting report](#) about the working of inner party democracy within Labour, which shows "how the party's bureaucrats, whose nominal function is to serve the interests of the party, attempted to undermine members supportive of Jeremy Corbyn,... Labour's leader from 2015 to 2020,... the first unequivocally socialist leader of the party since the 1980s, (who) rode a wave of popular discontent against the political establishment, standing on a platform of public ownership of key industries, a strengthened

welfare state, and an end to the austerity measures imposed by the Conservative government at that time."

Both in terms of the class war at home and Britain's war against Russia and China abroad, no serious shift can be expected out of a regime change calibrated by the Deep State. The only silver lining is that Britain's capacity to fuel the Ukraine war has drastically diminished as it fights its own battle for survival. With a 80,000-strong standing army — one-fourth the size of Eritrea's — Britain was anyway punching far above its weight in Ukraine. The right thing to do is for the new UK prime minister to visit Washington without delay and prevail upon President Biden to end this senseless war in Ukraine and lift the sanctions against Russia, which bled the economies of the UK and other European allies. The heart of the matter is that Europe's prosperity was built on the availability of cheap, reliable, energy supplies from Russia in huge volumes. But it will be a dare-devil act — almost suicidal — for Sunak or any British politician to take on the Deep State. Will Sunak be up to it? Left to himself, he never sounded enthusiastic about the Ukraine war or the regime in Kiev. So, will the Deep State take chances? Indeed, that is precisely where the [chances of Ben Wallace, the defense secretary](#), would lie. A dark horse trotting down the path in the wilderness of British politics!

Puerto Rico Contends With Two Storms: Fiona And Colonialism

By Natalia Marques

In mid-September of this year, Hurricane Fiona [hit Puerto Rico](#) as a Category 1 storm. Despite Category 1 being the mildest ranking, the damage was devastating, triggering an island-wide blackout and leaving more than 760,000 without clean water. After nearly a month since the storm, the reality on the ground is [still grim](#). Officials estimate \$172 million in damages to roads, excluding municipal roads, which are the majority. Around 900,000 Puerto Ricans have applied for individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). 59%, or three out of every five such applications have been approved. According to Manuel Laboy, the director of the Central Office of Recovery (COR3), FEMA has not approved any of the public assistance applications submitted by the 78 municipalities, 40 agencies and 57 non-profit organizations. FEMA itself has [challenged](#) this claim.

“The government still has communities without water and electricity, especially in the central area of the island,” Jocelyn Velázquez told *Peoples Dispatch*. Velázquez is the spokesperson for Puerto Rican popular movement *Jornada Se Acabaron Las Promesas*. “The aid is not arriving as it should,” she added. “The losses, especially in the area of agriculture, have been immense and we have not had the economic conditions for farmers to be able to overcome this process.”

LUMA and the legacy of colonialism

The hurricane has taken 33 lives so far. One of the most recent deaths was of a 75-year-old man who died from injuries related to a fall, which was a result of a lack of lighting in his home. Thousands of families are still without power. Many are arguing that the private

US-Canadian corporation which controls Puerto Rico's electrical grid, LUMA, is at fault.

“It has been 1 month since Hurricane Fiona and 33 people have died in Puerto Rico, according to the Health Dept. Some of those are due to 'indirect' causes like lack of electricity,” [wrote](#) Puerto Rican journalist Bianca Graulau on Twitter. “In case it hasn't been said enough before: reliable electricity is a matter of life or death.” LUMA Energy has been the subject of [island-wide protests](#) due to mismanagement of Puerto Rico's electrical grid. As recently as September, Puerto Ricans took to the streets to demand cancellation of the contract with LUMA.

“We hold the governor, the Financial Oversight Board, the Energy Bureau and the US government accountable for the energy crisis that the island is going through. More than a year ago, it was warned that the LUMA contract would trigger a terrible social, humanitarian and economic crisis. Today, the blackouts and the incapacity of this company are our daily bread,” said Jocelyn Velázquez at the time. The Puerto Rican government's contract with LUMA Energy has its roots in another hurricane. Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017, killing thousands of Puerto Ricans. But even before Maria hit, Puerto Rico's public utility company, PREPA, was already bankrupt. After Maria, Puerto Ricans endured an 11-month-long blackout, eroding trust in the system of public utilities. The sheer amount of destruction to public infrastructure also opened up new, cheap investment opportunities for foreign capitalists to privatize public utilities. It is in this context that PREPA signed a contract with LUMA in 2021. Under the rule of LUMA, power outages have [increased](#) alongside electricity [prices](#).



Posters reading “LUMA go away” and “We occupy our land #Nomorepromises” (Photo: *Jornada Se Acabaron Las Promesas*). The island's recovery from the mid-September storm has been afflicted by the reality of 500 years of colonialism, according to activist

Foreign investors continue to be attracted to opportunities in Puerto Rico, especially in tourism and short-term rentals, displacing Puerto Ricans with skyrocketing rent prices, as recently [showcased](#) in the short doc/music video by Puerto Rican artist Bad Bunny.

“If there is one thing that this disaster has unveiled, it is first the inability of the colonial government of Puerto Rico to cope with a category one hurricane,” said Velázquez. “The inaction and the criminal negligence of the United States government that imposes its laws on us, imposes its system on us and has become an impediment to the recovery of the country.” Many Puerto Ricans point to the centuries of [colonial rule](#) that the island has endured, as the source of its problems. Indeed, despite many waves of pro-independence social movements, Puerto Rico has been under colonial and neocolonial rule for over 500 years.

Puerto Rico became a US territory in 1917, as it remains to this day. Almost half of people in the rest of the United States [do not know](#)

that Puerto Ricans are US citizens. However, despite being citizens, Puerto Ricans cannot vote for US president and have no voting representatives in the US Congress. The island has authority over its internal affairs but the US government has control over foreign relations, communications, commerce, the military, and more. In this sense, Puerto Ricans are US citizens, only in the second class. Puerto Rican authorities began a neoliberal approach to economic matters in the 1970s, which greatly benefited Global North investors who lended money to the island. Over the span of decades, Puerto Rico racked up a debt of \$72 billion dollars, leading to a 2014 debt crisis and resulting in the slow collapse of public infrastructure. In response to the crisis, the US government established a fiscal board to restructure the island's debt through a 2016 law called PROMESA (Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act). In March of 2022, Puerto Rico exited bankruptcy, but at enormous cost to its people. The fiscal board, known on the island as “La Junta,” slashed

public spending for necessary social services such [closing a third of public K-12 schools](#) and slashing pensions. To this day, any public spending that the government of Puerto Rico wants to undertake needs the fiscal board's approval, severely undermining sovereignty. “We are facing the possibility of possible new hurricanes, new storms, new natural phenomena,” continued Velázquez. “We have neither the infrastructure nor the political and organizational capacity from the state to cope with the possibility of any of these. “We are still in the struggle. We continue denouncing and looking for a way to make visible worldwide the crime committed in Puerto Rico, and for other voices to join our call so that colonialism in our island is finally ended. And so that we can be a sovereign and independent nation, able to make decisions about our future and to build a different, new and sovereign country.”