

## Those Who Approved The 2023 Budget Are As Guilty As Those That Drafted Them -- Coalition Bites Minority



**Kyeretwie Opoku**



**Osei Kofi Acquah**

Osei Kofi Acquah, General Secretary of the Coalition of National Youth Organizers has rejected the 2023 budget statement presented in Parliament by Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta describing it as the most hopeless and incompetent

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**Prof. Gatsi Says Debt Exchange Programme Is Govt's Admission Of Failure** *page 5*



**Professor John Gatsi**



**William Ato Essien, founder of now-defunct Capital bank**

# COLONIALISM

## Kyeretwie Opoku Speaks On Why Africa Must Unite The Continent

Comrade Kyeretwie Opoku, Convener of the Socialist Movement of Ghana (SMG) has called on the peoples of West Africa especially the working class to come together and unite the continent in a

bid to tackle endemic poverty, conflict, underdevelopment and the continuing threats posed by colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism in particular. In his opening address at the West

African People For A New World conference held over the weekend at Winneba in Central Region of Ghana, Comrade Opoku discussed the necessity of building working

*Cont. on pages 6&7*

**Charge Of Misappropriating Depositors' Funds... Ato Essien Pleads Guilty, Convicted On Own Plea**

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# The INSIGHT

## — EDITORIAL

### DEAL WITH THEM

**T**he Auditor General's Report released recently about tax irregularities, payroll fraud and other malpractices at the government ministries, departments and agencies including the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies is most disheartening.

Some of these irregularities have always attracted media attention because of how the nation often loses moneys which could have been used to address some developmental challenges.

For instance the issue of payroll fraud has been a major concern over the years necessitating the introduction of the electronic payment system for public sector workers.

The Controller General's Department also in a bid to stop these malpractices introduced the verification system for government workers before salaries are paid.

It is therefore most surprising that we continue to record cases of payroll fraud despite all these stopgap measures introduced over the years.

Clearly, the identification and prosecution of these individuals behind this fraudulent practice most of who are public servants is long overdue.

Institutions such as the Economic and Organized Crime Office and the Financial Intelligence Centre need to team up with other state agencies such as the Office of the Special Prosecutor and that of the Auditor General to ensure the prosecution of these criminal gangs and thieves instead of the existing arrangement of reporting and surcharging offenders if this nation-wrecking practice is to grind to a halt.

There is no denying the fact that the 'soft' handling of these 'thieves' behind the 'ghost names' is what has emboldened them and made their exorcism difficult.

# GLOBAL NEWS

Presented By SPUTNIK International

## Kremlin Says Russian Troops Withdrawal From Ukraine Before Year-End Impossible

**“**This is out of the question," Peskov said, commenting on the possibility of the withdrawal of Russian troops

from Ukraine before the end of year.

The spokesman added that there can be no progress reached on the conclusion of peace without taking into account the new realities in Ukraine.

"The Ukrainian side needs to take into account these realities that have developed over all this time. Actually, these are the realities that occurred because of that line, because of the policy that the leadership of Ukraine and the Ukrainian regime of today have been pursuing for probably the last 15 or even 20 years. And these realities say that new subjects have appeared in Russia, and they appeared as a result of the referendum that took place there. Without taking into account these new realities, any kind of progress is impossible," Peskov said.



MOSCOW (Sputnik) - The possibility for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine before the end of the year is "out of the question," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday.

Russia launched its [special military operation](#) in Ukraine on February 24, after the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics appealed for help in defending themselves against Ukrainian provocations. In response to Russia's operation, Western countries have rolled out a comprehensive sanctions campaign against Moscow and have been supplying weapons to Ukraine.

## US-Africa Summit Can't Disrupt Cooperation Between Russia & Continent, Foreign Ministry Says

By Petr Baryshnikov

**T**he US-Africa Summit will be held in Washington DC from 13 to 15 December.

According to the White House, the forum, which involves 49 delegations from African countries and one from the African Union, will be dedicated to strengthening ties between the United States and the region's states to advance common interests.

Moscow does not believe that the [US-Africa Summit](#) will hamper cooperation between Russia and Africa, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov told the media.

"Such summits have been held by the Chinese, the Turks, the European Union and some other

countries. I think that this is all routine; it has been adopted by many countries. We .

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## THE INSIGHT

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# Those Who Approved The 2023 Budget Are As Guilty As Those That Drafted Them -- Coalition Bites Minority

from front page

budget in the country's history. Osei Kofi Acquah who is also the National Youth Organizer of the Convention People's Party (CPP) in a statement condemning the budget also descended heavily on the Minority National Democratic Congress (NDC) for aiding in its passage.

The conditions that have been given by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and surprisingly taken by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) deserves only one thing a REVOLT! Which one of those countries who manipulate the IMF will tell their finance minister to tax its citizens higher after admitting they are not in normal times and go on to admit that they are in crisis? Indeed even he Ken Ofori Atta

codenamed the Economic recovery PC-PEG, which is Post Covid Economic Recovery. Who Recovers by doing Twice the things that gave them injuries in the first place. This Budget is the most incompetent and insensitive budget ever drafted since the independence of this country. A budget that kills investor confidence especially domestic investors by giving them non-negotiable haircuts! A Budget that seeks to batter a precious extractive mineral like Gold whose prices are determined by first the weight and the carat for Oil, when Thailand can batter \*Rice for oil!\* Yes Thailand and Iran drafted a batter trade policy that saw Thailand trading rice for oil, but of course this lazy government which has no intention of deep thinking

to get us a better deal will accept anything.

A budget that puts Tax on value added products when one of the key promises and indeed monies have been committed to a supposed industrialization! Plan dubbed \*One district one factory?\*

A Country that seeks to aggressively mobilize domestic revenue, but in the same vein has refused to increase the earnings of citizens even though inflation is all time high, utility prices are up and food can now be afforded by the privilege?

A government who is seeking to aggressively mobilize domestic revenue through draconian taxes but has no intention of recruiting able bodied young men and women into its public service?



**Osei Kofi Acquah**

How does such a government expect them to pay those taxes when they are unemployed!? This Budget is going to promote appreciable corruption, crime and all sorts of illegality and vices by hungry and desperate to make a living citizens. We have no masters nor PHD in economics, but this harsh IMF

conditionalities branded as a Budget for the people of the republic of Ghana is unacceptable and history will never forgive those who \*proposed it, and those who accepted it!\* Our Cocoa is now harvested with a syndicated loan, our Bauxite is supposed to be collateralized for a Sino Hydro deal to fix our roads, which the evidence stares us in the face, our timber is fetching us nothing, Our oil fields seems to have dried off over night, we don't see the FX generated by the sale of our diamonds etc and now we want to give a non-renewable precious mineral like Gold for an oil!?

Who is in charge? Who thought them Economics!? And still NPP communicators have the effectonry to defend this!? And what about those supposed opposition members of Parliament who have all shameless approved the Budget? The NPP may have caused all these self-inflicted Economic hardships and pains but more disappointing is the NDC especially their members of parliaments who did not intercede on behalf of the Ghanaian in a hang Parliament where they have the numbers, voice and deciding power! God save Ghana  
Signed  
Osei Kofi Acquah  
General Secretary Coalition of National Youth Organizers  
National Youth Organizer CPP

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية  
People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Embassy of Algeria  
Accra

سفارة الجزائر  
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-Dining tables and chairs....	02	- Wooden shelf.....	-
- Office furniture.....	-	- Kitchen appliances.....	-

Interested parties are invited to present their bids in a sealed envelope within 15 days of the publication of this notice to the premises of the Embassy located at: **22, Josif Broz Tito Avenue, Cantonments – Accra.**



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Colombia Announces Release Of Protesters Imprisoned During 2021 National Strike

Colombian President Gustavo Petro has announced that hundreds of young protesters who were imprisoned during [the national strike in 2021](#) would be declared “guardians of peace” and released before the end-of-year celebrations. “I announce that hundreds of young people arrested for participating in a protest will be declared guardians of peace before Christmas Eve in Colombia,” said President Petro, during a meeting with the Community Action Boards in the city of Pasto, the capital of the Nariño department. President Petro added that his government “does not agree with keeping the young people, social leaders, and activists, who simply expressed themselves, imprisoned in jails, when they

have every right to spend their Christmas with their families.” The head of state stressed that “the right to protest is a democratic right, the right to express oneself and to mobilize are democratic rights. Governments that order their police to kill, imprison, torture and detain young people are not democratic governments, and this is the government of change.” The freedom of the protesters, who allegedly committed crimes during the nationwide protests in 2021, has been one of the primary concerns of the Petro government. The government had earlier tried to include an article that granted pardon to those who had committed crimes in the midst of social mobilizations in the “Total Peace Law” passed in early November. Nevertheless,

the government was forced to withdraw that article in the face of fierce opposition from right-wing voices. With this announcement, the Petro government seems to have found an easier way to grant freedom to the protesters without having to process a bill in Congress, which could again have been rejected. Last year, Colombia witnessed a series of nationwide protests against a neoliberal tax reform bill, presented by the far-right government of former President Iván Duque, which deepened austerity policies in the country. In response, the Duque government unleashed unprecedented levels of police and military repression against protesters. Colombian human rights organization, the Institute of Development and Peace Studies



*Hundreds of thousands of Colombians took to the streets across the country in rejection of a neoliberal tax reform bill presented by the far-right government of former President Iván Duque. (Photo: Congreso de los Pueblos/Twitter). Colombian President Gustavo Petro said that the protesters would be declared “guardians of peace”. According to human rights organization INDEPAZ, 2,005 people were arbitrarily arrested during the 2021 national strike*

(INDEPAZ), in its annual [report on violence in 2021](#), reported that during the national strike, between April 28 and June 30, 2021, 79 people were killed, at least 44 of them at the hands of security forces, 90 suffered eye injuries, 35 were sexual

assaulted, 833 reported violent interventions, 661 suffered physical violence, and 2,005 were arbitrarily arrested. The institute said that in total 4,687 cases of police violence had been registered.

### A Decade After The Tazreen Garment Factory Fire In Bangladesh, Workers Cry Out For Justice

November 24 marked the tenth anniversary of one of Bangladesh's deadliest industrial accidents – the fire at the Tazreen Fashion Limited garment factory in Ashulia district, on the outskirts of Dhaka. Scores of relatives of the victims, injured workers, and a number of labour organizations gathered in front of the former premises of the factory to pay homage to the victims of the fire. As many as 112 garment workers lost their lives in the fire and over 176 were injured. The rally was organized by the Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati. The demonstrating workers laid wreaths at the graves of the victims at Jurain Graveyard in Dhaka and pointed out that the victims' families are yet to get [justice or adequate compensation](#). According to union leaders who spoke at the rally, the families of the victims, who are living in inhumane conditions, have been denied justice due to lengthy legal proceedings and a broader culture of indemnity. Throughout these years, unions like the Garment Workers Trade Union and the Textile Garment Workers Federation have complained that [no compensation or proper treatment and rehabilitation](#) have been offered to the injured. Some workers,

such as Mohammad Asaduzzaman from Bagora, who almost [lost his leg](#), never received proper treatment following the fire. Shahidul Islam Sabuj, the general secretary of the Workers Unity Forum, [said](#) that it is the state's fault that justice has been delayed for so long. One of the largest international alliances of garment labor unions, the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) said that even today there are brands operating in Bangladesh that have [failed to learn any lessons from the preventable deaths](#) at Tazreen Fashion and [Rana Plaza](#).

**Accord on Fire and Building Safety** International brands and owners have for years overlooked the dangers that garment workers face. Labor unions such as the Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati and the Textile Garments Workers' Federation have long been campaigning for safety improvements in the workplace. The massive fire in Ashulia was the outcome of a short-circuit at the nine-story garment factory on November 24, 2012. Families of the victims, some of

whom [escaped by jumping](#) from the windows of the third and fourth floors after finding themselves trapped, have since been demanding compensation, relocation, and arrangements for the long-term treatment of those left injured. Initially, after three years of struggle by workers, an agreement was reached between major brands and global trade unions in the form of the Tazreen Claims Administration Trust, in November 2015. The Trust has disbursed compensation of around [\\$2.5 million](#) to victims and their families and has been involved in making appointments with doctors for the treatment of injured workers. However, every November 24, when workers mark the anniversary of the fire, they claim that justice still remains a far-fetched dream. The funds released have either not been enough or have not reached the worst-affected, follow-up appointments with doctors have not taken place, and no one has been held responsible for the tragedy. In September 2021, some brands signed

an [International Accord](#) with garment trade unions in Bangladesh, governed by a Steering Committee comprising representatives of unions and brands. This agreement was meant to act as a binding legal system for building health and safety provisions and for the prevention of fire accidents in Bangladesh's textile and garment industry. It offers a supportive window for a large number of marginalized workers to raise their safety concerns in a timely manner, but many brands have refused to sign it. Tazreen Fashion used to produce garments for popular brands and retailers such as Walmart, Sears, Disney, KIK, C&A, and Edinburgh Woollen Mill. The major brands connected to the Tazreen fire have as yet [failed to sign the International Accord](#). “It is a disgrace that while 186 [brands have signed this agreement](#), some laggards, most notably several brands which have first-hand experience with workers dying in their factories, have failed to commit to protecting the

safety of the workers in their supply chain,” [Kamrul Hasan](#) from Akota Garment Workers Federation said in a statement released by the CCC. President of the National Garment Workers Federation, Amin Amirul Haque, however, suggested in a [November 24 statement put out by CCC](#) that a lot has changed after the tragic incidents at Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza. Unions now have some leverage, through the mechanism of the Accord, and some lip-service is paid to health and safety violations. Still, the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic conditions of workers in Bangladesh mean that workers are still vulnerable to economic pressures. “Unfortunately,” he adds, “the state of the right to organize and collective bargaining has remained unchanged. Bangladesh is also still far away from achieving living wages and gender equality.”



# Jomoro NDC Case: Petitioner Files Appeal Against Ruling

The petitioner in the Jomoro parliamentary election case has appealed the ruling of the Sekondi High Court at the court of appeal after the case against the Member of Parliament for the Jomoro Constituency, Dorcas Affo-Toffey, was dismissed last month. He said the court erred when it held that by Article 48 of the Ivorian Nationality Code, the 1st respondent's letter to the Ivorian authorities, dated January 24, 2019, was evidence of the loss of her Ivorian nationality. The Sekondi High Court, presided over by Justice Dr. Richmond Osei Hwere,

dismissed the case on November 21, 2022. Joshua Emuah Kofie, the petitioner, had petitioned the court to challenge the eligibility of the MP to contest as a representative of the people in the constituency on the ticket of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) on grounds that she had multiple nationalities, including American and Ivorian citizenships, which is against the 1992 Constitution. The Sekondi High Court, presided over by Justice Dr. Richmond Osei Hwere, dismissed the case on the grounds that the MP was

eligible to contest as she lost her Ivorian citizenship at the same time she acquired her Ghanaian citizenship. In regards to her American citizenship, the MP denied having American citizenship. However, the petitioner has prayed to the court of appeal to overturn the ruling. According to a newspaper report, the petitioner is dissatisfied with the ruling, as it was against the weight of the evidence and there was also an error of law. He indicated that Article 48 and title "V" of the code make express provision for declaration, not the letter.



*Dorcas Affo-Toffey, Member of parliament for Jomoro*

"There was no evidence of any such declaration having been made by the 1st respondent."

"When 1st respondent, on her own showing and

from the evidence adduced, had been a Ghanaian from birth and could not now be taking on Ghanaian nationality," he added.

## Prof. Gatsi Says Debt Exchange Programme Is Govt's Admission Of Failure

Dean of Business School at the University of Cape Coast, Professor John Gatsi, has said that the announcement of a debt exchange programme by the government indicates its failure to properly steer the affairs of the economy.

In his view, the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP) was voted into power to deflate the country's high debt but the problem, since they took office remains unsolved.

Professor Gatsi stated that the debt exchange programme rolled out by government will cause more harm than good to Ghanaians amidst the current economic crisis.

Speaking on TV3's Ghana Tonight programme on Monday, he said, "If the Finance Minister is saying because of that we need to do something, then that is an admission of failure." "We voted them to power to solve this problem and this problem has not been solved



**Professor John Gatsi**

and that is failure on the part of government and to use this draconian approach to deal with this issue, I am sure it will do more harm than good," he added. Government on Monday, December 5, 2022, rolled out a debt restructuring programme to restore its capacity to service its high-rising debt. Under this programme, all domestic bondholders have been

charged to exchange their instruments for new ones. Existing domestic bonds as of December 1, 2022, will be exchanged for a set of four new bonds maturing in 2027, 2029, and 2037. The annual coupons on all of these bonds will be set at 0% in 2023, 5% in 2024 and 10% from 2025 until maturity. Government targets GH¢137 billion of domestic bonds

## US-Africa Summit Can't Disrupt Cooperation Between Russia & Continent, Foreign Ministry Says

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will now hold the second such summit. This is a very useful format. The important thing is the basis these relations are built on. We are building them on the basis of equality and mutual respect, and how other countries, especially western countries, will do the work – I think the Africans will figure it out," the diplomat said.

He also noted that Russia is "interested" in how US-Africa Summit progresses, its "substantive content, discussions and the final document", so Moscow "will be watching closely". Previously, in an interview with Sputnik, experts [described the forthcoming US-Africa Summit as a desperate attempt to counter growing Chinese influence in Africa, with](#)

[Beijing being the continent's largest trading partner and direct investor.](#)

Cooperation between Russia and Africa has also become more active in recent years. In 2019, the first Russia-Africa forum took place in Sochi; the second one is scheduled for July 2023. Oleg Ozerov, Ambassador at Large of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [expressed his hope that the summit will bring Russian-African relations "to a different level of interaction", noting that "most African countries perceive Russia as an ally against Western neocolonial domination"](#)

# Charge Of Misappropriating Depositors' Funds... Ato Essien Pleads Guilty, Convicted On Own Plea

Founder of now-defunct Capital Bank, William Ato Essien has pleaded guilty to charges of misappropriation of depositors' funds and other counts of stealing, abetment to stealing, conspiracy to steal and money laundering among others. This was after the court accepted the terms of agreement reached between lawyers of Mr. Essien and the prosecution to pay a total of GH¢90 million as refund to the state.

He was subsequently convicted on his own plea pursuant to the agreement by the parties. Prosecution, represented by the Deputy Attorney General, Alfred Tuah-Yeboah explained, having been asked by the judge how both parties arrived at the GH¢90 million amount.

According to him, investigations conducted by the state showed that some 65 million and GH¢35 million belonging to Capital Bank were used by another company; Capital African Group to acquire shares in Capital Bank.

Upon realising this through its investigations, the prosecution said the share acquisition was reversed and the money was retained by Capital Bank. These amounts formed part of some GH¢192 million the accused persons have been charged with

and therefore, the share acquisition was revoked and the amount retained. The prosecution further noted that the total amount from these two transactions is GH¢100 million and therefore the outstanding amount out of GH¢192 million currently stands at GH¢92 million. Ato Essien is standing trial with the Managing Director (MD) of the defunct bank, Fitzgerald Odonkor, and the MD of MC Management Services, a company said to be owned by Essien, Tettey Nettey.

The prosecution has accused the three persons of engaging in various illegal acts that led to the dissipation of a chunk of the GH¢620 million liquidity support given to the Capital Bank by the BoG between June 2015 and November 2016.

## Court initially rejected GH¢90 million repayment:

The Accra High Court had, prior to this, rejected an amount of GH¢90million by [William Ato Essien](#), after lawyers of same had informed the judge; Justice Eric Kyei

Baffour, in the last sitting that the accused person had agreed to pay GH¢90 million as restitution to the state.

The move by Essien was pursuant to Section 35 of the Courts Act, 1993 (Act 459) which allows an accused person to plead guilty and pay restitution to the state in cases in which there had been financial loss to the state. This was rejected by the judge on the basis that, the money which was obtained by Mr.

Essien in 2015 was done when the cedi to dollar exchange rate was GH¢3.79 pesewas and therefore it will be a shortchange for the state if the monies were refunded using the same rate rather than the current GH¢13 with interest. According to the judge, if he accepted the agreement in its current form, it meant people who had committed crimes would be made to profit from it.

The judge also ruled that the case did not fall under Section 35 of Act 459 because the monies involved did not belong to the state but rather to depositors and shareholders of the defunct Capital Bank. The court also wondered why Essien wasted the time to go



*William Ato Essien, founder of now-defunct Capital bank*

through three years of trial and only agree to pay the money a day before the judgment. The judge, therefore, adjourned the trial to December 13, 2022 for the prosecution and Essien to come back with a better deal and also convince the court whether the trial was one that fell under Section 35 of Act 459.

## Background

Capital Bank was one of the first banks that collapsed after a massive clean-up of financial institutions by the BoG started in 2017.

On August 14, 2017, its licence and that of UT Bank were revoked by the BoG, after the BoG had declared them

insolvent.

The BoG allowed the state-owned bank, the GCB Bank, to acquire the two banks in order to protect depositors' funds and also enable them to stay afloat.

The hurricane that swept through the banking sector due to the collapse of the two banks further heightened in August 2018 when the central bank collapsed five other indigenous banks and merged them into one entity — Consolidated Bank, Ghana.

# Togbe Afede Slams BoG's Use Of High Interest Rates To Tame Inflation

The Paramount Chief of the Asogli Traditional Area, [Togbe Afede XIV](#), has stated that it is wrong for the [Bank of Ghana](#) to adopt the measure of raising interest rates to tame inflationary pressures. Making a case for his submission, [Togbe Afede XIV](#) compared Ghana's minimum wage to that of the United Kingdom which is GBP9.50 an hour or GBP76 for an 8-hour workday while the wage in Ghana is GH¢14.88 per day, less than GBP1.

In an opinion piece, [Togbe Afede](#)

[XIV](#) wrote, "it is also wrong for BoG to persist in trying to tame inflation in Ghana using high-interest rates as could be successfully done in a rich country like the UK."

"These high interest rates made it difficult for businesses to borrow to invest in the real sectors of the economy to achieve the value-addition we crave. It also perpetuated our import dependence, while making it difficult for local entrepreneurs to borrow, invest and increase local

ownership of the economy," he noted.

He further accused the BoG officials of inadvertently frustrating efforts aimed at restructuring the Ghanaian economy.

"[Bank of Ghana](#) officials have inadvertently frustrated the restructuring of the economy, which they themselves have identified as the solution to our balance of payments deficit and currency depreciation problems." "It is difficult to see how policy rate increases can fight cost-

pushed inflation resulting from food or crude oil price increases or increased taxes on petroleum products. Sadly, even at the height of the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, when income levels had fallen world-wide, and stimulus packages were being implemented everywhere to boost economic activity, BoG still ensured that we suffer under strangulating high interest rates," the economist added.

While indicating that [Bank of Ghana](#)'s monetary policy

decisions have not helped in improving economic policy measures over the years, [Togbe Afede XIV](#) said it has succeeded in maintaining a growth-stifling 'high inflation – high interest rate' environment adding that "it has also created the most profitable banking sector in Africa, if not the world, all with disastrous consequences for the cedi."



# The Night Football Lost A Friend And Ally

By Siddhanth Aney

While Argentina and the Netherlands fought it out on the pitch, a friend and colleague fought a far more critical battle. Grant Wahl, a veteran sports writer covering his eighth men's world cup, collapsed while covering the game at the Lusail Stadium in Doha. After efforts to revive him in the press box he was moved to a hospital here but his family and agent confirmed Wahl did not recover. He was 48.

Wahl wrote on Monday that he felt unwell and had received treatment at the medical clinic in the main media center. "My body finally broke down on me," he said. "Three weeks of little sleep, high stress and lots of work can do that to you."

But such is the nature of football, and the gig economy, that the show must go on. On Friday, Wahl was seated in the media tribune, located in the upper-most tier of the massive 88,000-seater stadium when he collapsed as the game went into extra time. Journalists seated around him immediately started to remove the chairs at the media desks to make room and called for medical attention. The *Times of India*'s senior sports writer Siddharth Saxena was seated in the row behind. "Down below, on the pitch, the game was so intense that at first, we thought a fight had broken out among some journalists," he told *NewsClick*. "But then they began calling frantically for medical staff, who arrived quite quickly and began helping however they could. I could see two sets of medics administering chest compressions, etc. This went on for quite some time. The stadium design also made it very difficult for them to figure out how to evacuate him. By the time they finally managed to get him out, via the upper



**Grant Wahl (1974-2022).** Grant Wahl, a veteran sports writer and perhaps the most well-known football journalist from the US, collapsed while covering the game at the Lusail Stadium in Doha . He passed away at the age of 48

exit, it had already been about 40 minutes. That's the thing with preparing for such emergencies; you only really know when the situation arises for real."

After the post-match press conference, Saxena, myself and other colleagues who had been around at the time of the incident asked a FIFA media officer for an update. "He is in a hospital," we were told. "Inshaallah, he will recover but I cannot share any further details." By this time it was already half past two in the morning. We would wake up to confirmation of the worst possible news. Wahl is, perhaps, the most well-known football journalist from the US. He developed an interest in the sport while at college in Princeton and, by the early-2000s, was among the handful of full-time football reporters (at least those writing in English) in the US. He spent 23 years at *Sports Illustrated* and was the first writer to get football on the cover of the magazine otherwise dominated by US sports. I got to know Wahl when I joined the India edition of the magazine in late 2010 and we first met in

2012 while we were both covering the Euros in Poland and Ukraine for our respective editions. At that time I knew little about his work and nothing of him as a person. "Who is this guy," I thought with what I later identified as jealousy. "What does an American know about football that makes him such a hotshot in an industry where otherwise a non-European is a non-entity?" In the world of football journalism, there is often more jealousy – it's a cutthroat multi-billion-dollar industry that feeds on favoritism and opportunism and where racism is systemic – than respect. With Grant (I think I will call him by his first name for this, more personal, part) it was different. Within the first few minutes he showed me how petty my preconceived notions were. Grant was immediately warm, gentle and displayed a wide understanding of not just the sport, but the politics that dominated its uppermost echelons. He would ask questions and was keen to know more about the scene in India. Later I would discover his commitment to ideas of justice and equality. Such as

how he spent far more time covering the women's game, and bringing up issues of inequality there, than most of our even more famous colleagues from Europe. And, though we might not always assess a player or a game in the same way, it was these broader notions of football and what makes the sport unique that gave us much common ground.

As a person Grant was always willing to help. The year Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, the India's men's team's current first-choice goalkeeper, went to play club football for Stabaek in Norway, is one example that comes to mind. Bob Bradley, an American, was head coach of the club at the time. When I told Grant that Sandhu was the first Indian to play top-flight football in Europe he was excited. But rather than fly down to Oslo and do the story himself, he put me in touch with Bradley without a second thought and asked that he give me some time. He also found interesting ways to blend journalism with activism. In Qatar he wore the rainbow flag to the stadium on the first day of the tournament, testing the Supreme Committee's resolve

to welcome everyone. He was briefly denied entry before receiving an apology from security at the Ahmad bin Ali stadium and let in. Going back a bit to 2010, after Russia and Qatar were awarded their respective world cups, he gathered the support of many of his followers and tried to contest as the "people's choice" for the post of FIFA president. Cynics called it a gimmick at worst, or a fool's errand at best. But Grant was able to show, when not a single one of its at the time 208 member associations endorsed his [nomination](#), just how much fear, money and power (synonyms, perhaps), control the game.

For football in the US, losing Grant is a much bigger blow than going out of the tournament itself. "The entire US Soccer family is heartbroken to learn that we have lost Grant Wahl," the US Soccer Federation said on [Twitter](#). "Here in the United States, Grant's passion for soccer and commitment to elevating its profile across our sporting landscape played a major role in helping to drive interest in and respect for our beautiful game. As important, Grant's belief in the power of the game to advance human rights was, and will remain, an inspiration to all."

The last time I saw Grant was a couple of days ago at the Main Media Centre in Doha. He was going up an escalator and I, down. We said hi and that we'd meet up soon. A stark reminder that time isn't always on our side and football is, at the end of the day, just a sport. Those of us left behind can only hope to stay true to our own commitments and beliefs. And send our love and thoughts to his family and close ones. Hope they find peace.

# Ghanaian Architect Of UK's Black History Month Honoured By Prestigious British University

By Kofi Kakraba Pratt

He is an unsung hero of contemporary Pan-Africanism. Self-effacing. Unassuming. But with a steely determination, he has worked hard over the years to project Africa's image. He is widely acknowledged as the brains behind the establishment of the month of October as a celebration of Black culture and history in the UK, known as Black History Month. Akyaaba Addai-Sebo's substantial contribution to Pan-African activism was formally recognised by the University of London's renowned School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), which conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Literature on him in London on December 9. In its citation, SOAS mentioned Addai-Sebo's role in 'developing the recognition of October as Black History Month in the UK and his numerous publications

including Our Story: A Handbook of African History and Contemporary Issues, which he co-edited with Ansel Wong CBE.' The book was published following the first Black History Month in the UK. From 1992 to 1997, Addai-Sebo acted as a Special Peace Envoy for an International Non-Governmental organisation, International Alert, where he facilitated and brokered peace between warring factions first in Liberia and then in Sierra Leone to help bring both wars to an end. Following this period, Addai-Sebo became Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) during its transition to become the African Union (AU). He also conceived and helped to establish the AU's Eminent Persons Advisory Panel (EPAP), which is now known as the Panel of the Wise. Akyaaba was also the Senior Policy Advisor to the former

London Strategic Policy Unit where he advised on key policy areas surrounding education, social welfare for young people, gender, the traveller community, and for refugees and migrants advancing the ethos that the refugee is a human being first. In 2014, Akyaaba was the Executive Producer of the documentary film, One Humanity, which recounts the global solidarity campaigns to end the apartheid regime in South Africa leading to a free democratic state with Nelson Mandela as its first president in 1994. He is currently an independent consultant on preventive diplomacy and cultural synchrony in international development. In his rousing acceptance speech\*, Addai-Sebo said: 'I accept this Award for our world to respond to the urgency of decolonisation based on history and not on the science and public policy of human classification.' He added: 'Colonialism is a

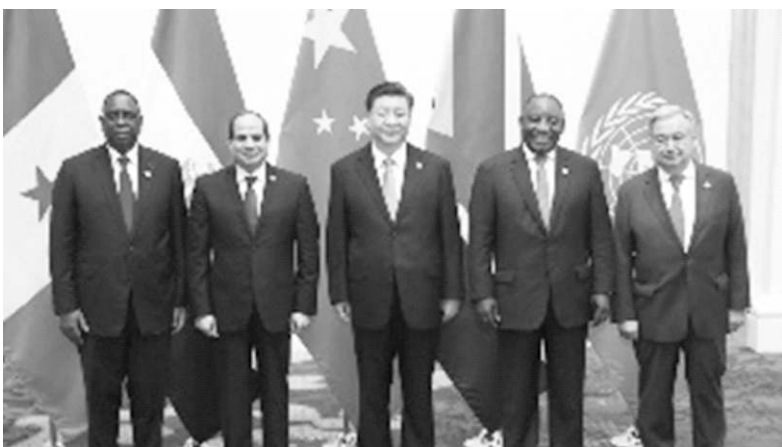


**Akyaaba Addai-Sebo (right) about to receive his honorary degree**

dehumanising construct that has to be deconstructed in all areas of human learning and national life. This is the challenge, I place before SOAS and the university. I appeal to the University through its colleges, faculties, departments, and research institutions to lead the way to reconstruct our common humanity; our common humanity free from the ravages of racism. Racism is what tells the non-white person that he or she is

expendable.' Akyaaba rounded his speech with the refrain: Decolonisation is humanisation, and for Africa to develop in its own image and interest, Africa must decolonise, whipping up the whole auditorium into a massive chorus: 'DECOLONISE TO HUMANISE!!! DECOLONISE TO HUMANISE!!! DECOLONISE TO HUMANISE!!! DECOLONISE TO HUMANISE!!!'

## China-Africa Report: Cooperation Mechanism, Achievements And Future Development



*Macky Sall, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Xi Jinping, Cyril Ramaphosa, António Guterres at 2019 G20 summit*

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), established in 2000, is one of the most important mechanisms for China-Africa cooperation. Since 2000, eight successful FOCAC events have been held, of which the third in 2006, sixth in

2015 and seventh in 2018 were upgraded to summits. Over the 22 years since its establishment, the Forum has grown to become the most important framework for strengthening the China-Africa partnership at all levels, including the political, economic,

cultural, and security fields. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which was established by China in 2013 to improve connectivity and cooperation on a transcontinental scale has become another important platform for China-Africa Cooperation. As of 2022, 52 countries in Africa and the African Union have signed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) cooperation agreements with China, the largest number of countries from any continent in the world. Despite this, FOCAC has faced criticism and negative depiction about the

overall meeting structure. Related criticism has also questioned the true nature of China's involvement in Africa and asked whether it truly gives Africa a seat on the table. More recently, some analysis has been painting a picture of a weakening China-Africa relationship. So, is FOCAC only a high-level closed-door talk among elites with no tangible results? And is China losing interest in Africa and cutting back on its financial commitments? That's what this report aims to answer, in two parts. The first part explains the

meetings, through a comparison of the 2000 summit held in Beijing to the latest in 2021, held in Dakar. The second part explores the economic achievements and challenges faced in the relationship. The report concludes with outlooks for future development, in particular on how China and Africa will further strengthen their mutual cooperation with the ultimate goal of improving lives of both peoples. **The Insight** will publish the report in full in its subsequent edition.