

## Alan Kyerematen Loves God - Rev. Ampiah-Kwofi



IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva (left) meets with Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo (Photo: @KGeorgieva/Twitter). Ghana has approached the G20 to restructure its external debts, the majority of which are held by private lenders. The process is necessary to unlock a \$3 billion IMF bailout that will see severe austerity measures imposed on the Ghanaian people



Alan Kyerematen

The General Overseer of the Global Revival Ministries, Rev. Dr. Robert Ampiah-Kwofi has described the immediate past Minister for Trade and Industry, Hon. Alan Kyerematen as a man with integrity who loves God at a Thanksgiving service in Accra. According to the revered

*Cont. on page 2*

### As Chinese Businessman Allegedly Blocks Wetlands

### McCarthy Hill Residents Hail Pentecost Church For Averting Flooding

*...Call On Weija Gbawe Assembly To Act*



Some concerned residents of McCarthy Hill South in the Weija Gbawe Municipality of the Greater Accra region have praised the Sampson Okyere Temple Pentecost

*Cont. on page 9*

# GHANA

## Who Is Responsible For The Crippling Debt Crisis?

Asks Tanupriya Singh

On Wednesday, January 18, 26 civil society and aid organizations penned an open letter calling on international creditors to cancel Ghana's debt. Ghana's public debt stood at over 467 billion cedis (\$46.7 billion) by the end

of September, 2022, of which 42% was domestic debt. In December, Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta announced that interest payments on debt were taking up between 70 to 100% of the government's revenue, and that the ratio of the country's public debt to its GDP had

exceeded 100%.

Based on the World Bank's International Debt Statistics, 64% of Ghana's [scheduled foreign currency external debt service](#), which includes principal and interest amounts, between 2023 and 2029 is to private lenders. 20% of the debt is to

*Cont. on page 3*

### Santoe Land Dispute: Man Appeals To IGP To Intervene Over Alleged Harassment By Police Inspector

*page 5*

# The INSIGHT

## — EDITORIAL

### HANDS OFF OUR FORESTS!

**T**he continued degradation of the country's lands, forests and ecosystem is very worrying.

This is in spite of warning from environmentalists about the dangers associated with continued deterioration of the country's natural reserve due to exploitation of natural resources.

Some months ago, a group of professors renewed the warning to government about attempts to allow the forest to be exploited for its bauxite.

The warning was as a result of the fact that most river bodies generate their source of water from the Atiwa Forest reserve.

That warning has not been heeded and there are clear indications that the engineers will soon enter the forest.

There are also some forests which are facing similar such threats.

The World Bank recently cautioned Ghana against the continuous wanton degradation of its land, forest and other natural resources warning that the country risked not achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15, which is protecting the ecosystem to promote biodiversity.

It is the hope of this paper that somebody somewhere would see wisdom in taking steps to stop the land degradation and reverse the trend by embarking on reforestation to win back degraded lands and forests.

There is clearly the need, in the face of the facts presented, for the government to hands off the Atiwa forest and other natural resource.

# Alan Kyerematen Loves God - Rev. Ampiah-Kwofi



**Alan Kyerematen**

#### *from front page*

man of God, Alan Kyerematen's unblemished integrity makes him a rare industry player in a politically tainted system. Addressing thousands of congregants in Accra, Rev Ampiah Kwofi heaped kind words on the former Trade and Industry Minister. "I am struck by the fact that Alan Kyerematen has served under former President John Agyekum Kufuor and H.E President Nana Akufo Addo, he has served under different leadership and yet I haven't heard bad things about him. And if your enemies have nothing against you, then you are a man of integrity", Rev. Ampiah Kwofi told the stakeholders present. Hon Alan Kyerematen made a name for himself as the longest serving Trade and Industry Minister with over 10 years of experience in the industrial space. He has accounted for such projects like 1D1F and other industrialization

based projects.

Mr Kyerematen has declared his intention to contest in the upcoming NPP Presidential Primaries slated for the last quarter of 2023. Special guests present at the thanksgiving service are the Deputy Minister for Finance, Hon. Abena Osei Asare, Subin MP Eugene Boakye Antwi, MP for Ngelehshi Amanfrom Sylvester Tetteh, former minister for Tourism, Arts and culture Catherine Afeku, prophet salifu Amoako, Prophet Isaac Owusu Bempah, the founder and leader of Glorious Word Power Ministry International and other dignitaries.

## THE INSIGHT

**ACTING EDITOR** - **BENJAMIN AKUFFO**  
(0244669960)  
benjaminakuffo65@yahoo.com

**Secretary** - **Gifty Agyemang**

**Design and Graphics** - **Godwin K. Attah**

**Production Manager** - **Kweku Menz**

### **PUBLISHERS**

**Militant Publications Limited**  
P. O. Box NT 272  
Accra-Newtown, Accra  
Tel: 0244379344/0242836930  
Email: theinsightonline20@gmail.com  
LONDON CONTACT  
5A Wesminster Bridge Road, London SE 1- 7XW  
Tel: 0171-6201430  
E-mail: prattc22@aol.com



# GHANA: Who Is Responsible For The Crippling Debt Crisis?

from front page

multilateral institutions and 6% to other governments. Notably, while mainstream reporting on Ghana's debt scenario tends to emphasize China as the country's "biggest bilateral creditor," only 10% of Accra's external debt service is owed to Beijing.

Approximately \$13 billion of Ghana's external debt is held in the form of Eurobonds by major asset management corporations including BlackRock, Abdn, and Amundi (UK) Limited. "Ghana's lenders, particularly private lenders, lent at high-interest rates because of the supposed risk of lending to Ghana," the open letter read.

"The interest rate on Ghana's Eurobonds is between 7% and 11%. That risk has materialized... Given that they lent seeking high returns, it is only right that following these economic shocks, private lenders willingly accept losses and swiftly agree to significant debt cancellation for Ghana."

## A weak debt relief infrastructure

In early December, the government announced a domestic debt exchange program under which existing bonds would be exchanged for new ones with a longer period of maturity.

On December 19, the Ghanaian Finance Ministry announced that it was suspending debt service payments on the majority of its external debt, including commercial and bilateral loans. The country was expected to default on the first such payment, a \$41 million interest payment due on a \$1 billion Eurobond, on January 18.

On January 16, the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) managing director, Kristalina Georgieva, confirmed that Ghana was seeking to restructure its debt under the Common Framework

initiative of the G20 countries, becoming the fourth country to do so following Chad, Ethiopia, and Zambia.

The Common Framework was one of two debt treatment schemes announced by the G20 in 2020, the first being the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), under which debt payments were to be temporarily suspended, giving poor countries space to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking to *Peoples Dispatch*, Tim Jones, the head of policy at Debt Justice, explained: "At the start, the DSSI was meant to lead to a suspension of debt to government lenders, to private lenders, and also determine how to do the same for multilateral institutions. However, multilateral institutions and private lenders both refused to take part."

"So in the end only government lenders suspended payments, which meant that only 23% of debt payments were actually suspended for countries which had applied for the scheme. However, even if the scheme had worked as intended, the problem was that it was just a debt suspension, with the debts still due to be paid years later." While the DSSI ended in 2021 with very limited success, the Common Framework had the opportunity to provide a broader debt cancellation, involving private creditors alongside bilateral lenders in the process to ensure that countries' debts became sustainable.

"But very little was done to outline the details of how that would work. While the G20 stated that government and private lenders would be included in the scheme, however, multilateral lenders were excluded," Jones said.

"They did not give any new mechanisms to countries to negotiate a reduction in their debt owed to private creditors,

leaving it to the debtor governments to say 'If you want debt cancellation from governments, you have to negotiate the same deal from private creditors.' But they did not offer any tools to help indebted countries to do that."

Chad became the first country to reach an agreement under the Common Framework in November 2022, after the process had been delayed and blocked for nearly two years by Swiss commodity trading and mining company Glencore, which held nearly the entirety of Chad's debt to private creditors, itself comprising one-third of the country's external debt.

Even after the delays, the agreement did not yield any meaningful debt relief for Chad, merely a postponement of payments.

On January 19, an official from the Paris Club told Reuters that all members of the G20 were in favor of restructuring Ghana's debt, and that members of the Paris Club were ready to take the initial steps towards forming a creditor committee.

It is possible that Ghana might enter these debt negotiations with a relatively strong position compared to Chad, given that, similar to Zambia, it has suspended its debt payments. Advocacy groups have demanded that the G20 guarantee that Ghana will be "politically and financially supported to remain in default on any creditor which does not accept the necessary restructuring." Importantly, they have highlighted that Ghana's foreign currency bonds are governed by English law, which means that the UK parliament can take the necessary steps to provide legal safeguards for Ghana and rein in private lenders. As this process plays out at the international level, the necessity of debt cancellation for Ghana is underscored by the fact that living



conditions for millions of people in the country have steadily worsened.

## Ghana goes to the IMF... again

By December 2022, Ghana's consumer inflation had soared to 54.1%, the highest in over 20 years. According to figures published by the country's statistics office on January 11, the prices of housing, electricity, water, and gas and other fuels rose by 82.3% year-on-year by the end of last year.

Meanwhile, the cedi, which had lost 54.2% of its value against the US dollar by November, was termed the year's "worst performing currency." These conditions sparked repeated protests in 2022, alongside trade unions struggles against a drastic decline in wages in real value terms.

In an interview with *Peoples Dispatch*, Kwesi Pratt Junior, the general secretary of the Socialist Movement of Ghana (SMG), said, "Why is Ghana's economy in such dire straits? For one, while Ghana is heavily endowed with natural resources such as gold [being the 6th largest producer in the world], these resources are not owned by our people or exploited for our benefit."

"The other part of the problem is that the US dollar has become the currency of preference in international trade. The US owns the dollar, its debt is in dollars, so all it has to do is reprint more dollars. Our [Ghana's] debt is in dollars too, how are we supposed to pay?"

In July 2022, the government announced that it would approach the IMF for a bailout, in what would be Ghana's 18th arrangement with the institution, in a stark departure from its earlier vocal opposition to seeking assistance from the IMF.

On December 12, the IMF announced that a staff-level agreement had been reached with Ghana's government for a three-year, \$3 billion dollar arrangement under an Extended Credit Facility (ECF).

"The Ghanaian authorities have committed to a wide-ranging economic reform program," the Fund said in a statement, adding that the "fiscal strategy relies on front loaded measures to increase domestic resource mobilization and streamline expenditure..." Such language of "structural reforms" is indicative of one thing—more austerity, similar to Ghana's previous engagements with the IMF and their disastrous impacts, and the signs of which are already visible in the country's 2023 national budget.

By the second quarter of 2022, Ghana's unemployment rate stood at 13.9%. In a country where the civil service is the largest employer, the government has now implemented a hiring freeze in the public sector. Tax measures including a 2.5% increase in the Value Added Tax (VAT) rate, which disproportionately impacts poor people, have been announced.

cont. page 8





# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Five Memphis Cops Arrested And Charged With The Murder Of Tyre Nichols



Memphis skateboarders hold a demonstration in honor of police brutality victim Tyre Nichols, who was an avid skateboarder (Screenshot via: WREG News Channel 3). Memphis police quickly fired and arrested officers in anticipation of the release of the footage of brutal beating of Nichols, which resulted in his death

Five police officers from Memphis, Tennessee who murdered the 29-year-old Black father Tyre Nichols, were last Monday arrested and charged with second-degree murder. Nichols was brutally beaten for three minutes by Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin III, Desmond Mills Jr., and Justin Smith following a traffic stop on January 7. He succumbed to his wounds three days later, in the hospital. An autopsy found that he had suffered excessive internal bleeding as a result of the beating. His death provoked mass outrage in Memphis and throughout the country, and many have been demanding accountability for those responsible. Although police violence is prevalent in the US (2022 recorded 1,176 police killings, more than any year in US history), it is extremely rare for police to be held accountable for these crimes. From 2013 to 2022, [98%](#) of police murders did not result in officers being

charged for a crime. So why did the Memphis Police Department (MPD) fire all five officers less than a month later, on January 20, and arrest these same officers the following week? It could be a result of the massive backlash to Nichols' murder although many cases of police violence receive a similar response with far fewer results. Breonna Taylor's murder had sparked massive protests yet the officers responsible were never charged by the state of Kentucky. The only charges were against Brett Hankinson for "[shooting into Taylors neighbors apartment](#)" while carrying out her murder. Also notable is how quickly MPD repudiated its own officers. MPD Chief Cerelyn Davis said the murder was "a failing of basic humanity." In the US, cases of police violence are often met with the "blue wall of silence," in which police officers refuse to denounce the crimes of their own, as if honor-bound to indifference.

Many suspect that the reason there was such a quick response by the judiciary and

severe condemnation by fellow officers is because all the officers responsible are Black. In the case of white cops who murder Black people, their crimes largely go under the radar, or they receive minor repercussions, such as paid temporary leave or in extreme cases, firings. This was the case for Daniel Pantaleo, who was videotaped murdering Eric Garner by using a chokehold. Pantaleo was fired from the New York Police Department, but never charged with a crime. When cases receive a lot of attention, right-wing media also often rushes to defend the police officer implicated. This has not been the case with the officers responsible for Nichols' murder. Some also suspect that MPD fears that an uprising could unfold, akin to the one in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd, when the body camera footage of the police killing is released on Friday, January 27. In a January 26 video statement, Chief Davis heavily hinted at the gruesomeness of the video footage. "This incident was heinous, reckless, and inhumane," she said. "And in the vein of transparency, when the video is released in the coming days, you will see this for yourselves. I expect you to feel what the Nichol's family feels. I expect you to feel outraged in the disregard of basic human rights. As our police officers have taken an oath to do the opposite of what transpired on the video."

Other officials have also referenced the contents of the video. Memphis District Attorney Steve Mulroy implied that the officers are shown delaying medical assistance for Nichols. "There was an elapsed period of time" before medical assistance was requested, Mulroy said in response to a question regarding a possible intentional delay. "But I believe if you watch the video, you'll be able to make that judgment for yourself," he continued. Mulroy told *CNN*, "This is serious business, these are extremely serious charges...After everyone sees the video, I don't think they'll have any questions about those charges." According to Mulroy, nearly one hour of footage will be released. David Rausch, director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, [said](#), "I've been policing for more than 30 years. I've devoted my life to this profession...I'm shocked, I'm sickened by what I saw and what we learned through our investigation."

Nichols' family saw the footage on Monday, and [reported](#) through their lawyer that Nichols was pepper sprayed, shocked with a stun gun, and restrained. Chief Davis also heavily implied that MPD was preparing for a major uprising following the release of the video footage. "I expect our citizens to exercise their First Amendment right to

protest, to demand action, and results," she said in her January 26 statement. "But we need to ensure our community is safe in this process. None of this is a calling card for inciting violence or destruction on our community, or against our citizens."

The *New York Times* [reported](#) that the Tennessee Homeland Security Department has already made preparations for protests following the release of the video footage on January 27.

Video footage has played a major role in the uprisings against police violence over the past decade. The massive anti-police brutality protests in 2020 were sparked following the release of video footage of Floyd's gruesome 9 minute and 29 second strangulation by officer Derek Chauvin. The original Minneapolis police press release following Floyd's death was titled, "Man Dies After Medical Incident During Police Interaction." Without the video, shot by young woman bystander Darnella Frazier, this could have been the public's only impression of George Floyd's death. After viewing the video on January 23, Nichols' stepfather, Rodney Wells, said, "no father, mother, should have to witness what I saw today." RowVaughn Wells, Nichols' mother, said, after watching the same footage, "We are going to get justice for Tyre, if that's the last breath I take."

# DDEP Will Wipe Out The Entire Life Savings Of Six Million Ghanaians – Mahama



## Former president, John Dramani Mahama

Former President [John Dramani Mahama](#) believes that the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP) will destroy Ghanaians' life savings and the entire financial sector. According to John Mahama, six million Ghanaians are likely to lose their life savings

if some changes are not made. He made the remarks while speaking on the topic of "Africa's Strategic Priorities and Global Role" at the Chatham House in London. According to him, Ghana would be celebrating its 66th anniversary as a bankrupt

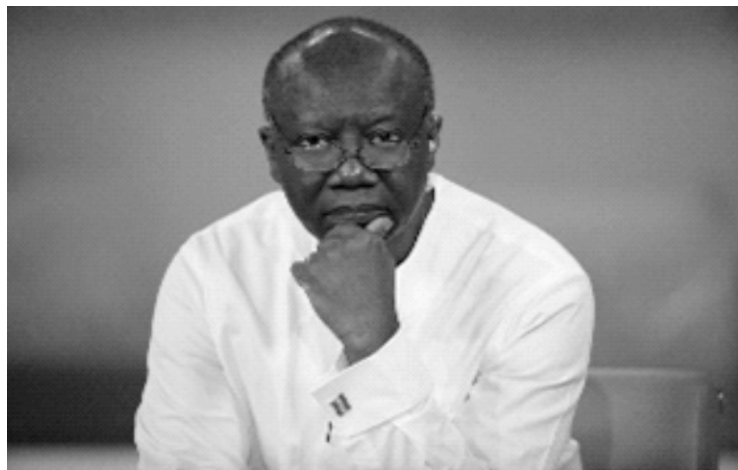
country as a result of the Akufo-Addo-Bawumia administration's bad economic policies. "In a little under six weeks from today, Ghana will mark sixty-six (66) years of nationhood. Far from being an occasion to celebrate independence and the successes and achievements of nationhood, we will mark this day under the yoke of the worst economic situation in decades. "We are currently bankrupt and burdened with national debt we are simply not able to pay. You may have learnt over the past few weeks that the Ghanaian government has defaulted on servicing of both external and domestic debt. "There is currently a huge

uproar over a controversial debt restructuring programme under which the middle class of Ghana could be wiped out if plans to have them forfeit proceeds of government bonds on which they rely for investment and sustenance are followed through. "In absolute terms, up to about six (6) million people could be deprived of their life savings and investments. Ghana's banking and financial sector could also be under threat of insolvency if no suitable adjustments are made to the debt restructuring plans," the former President said. He also called for dialogue on the debt exchange programme stressing he was not against it. "I am not opposed to debt restructuring. What has been

the contention is the lack of dialogue and consultation with the debt holders on the domestic side. I know that negotiations are taking place with the bondholders on the external side but not the same treatment on the domestic side. "I have been an advocate for dialogue. Before this whole crisis started, I advised the government and said they should hold a national dialogue on the economy, give us the state of the economy and let everybody understand and after that seek broad consensus behind the economic programme. But this was never done and what we expected will happen, happened."

## Ghana's Public Debt Stock Hits 93.5% Of GDP In November 2022 – BoG Report

The total public debt stock of Ghana was pegged at GH¢575.7 billion recorded at the end of November 2022. The figure, according to the [Bank of Ghana](#)'s January 2023 Summary of Economic and Financial Data, represents about 93.5% of Gross Domestic Product for the period. The data from Central Bank showed that Ghana's public debt stock rose by GH¢108.3 billion between September and November 2021, further depicting an unsustainable debt situation. The report explained the rise in the debt stock can be attributed to government's debt restructuring exercise which has an expiration deadline of January 31, 2023 for participation. The BoG Summary of Economic and Financial Data however pointed out that the external component of the total public debt increased to \$29.2 billion (GH¢382.7 billion) in November 2022 which is equivalent to 62.1 percent of GDP. This was from \$28.4 billion (GH¢271.7 billion) in September 2022 and \$28.3 billion in December 2021. The data also showed that the Ghana Cedi depreciated by about



Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta

37 percent against the US dollar in 2022 – resulting in a significant rise in the cedi component of the external debt. Meanwhile, on the domestic debt front, the figure was pegged at GH¢194.7 billion at the end of December 2022 representing about 31.6 percent of GDP. This figure is also against GH¢195.7 billion which was recorded in September 2022 and GH¢193.1 billion in November 2022. As part of the government's Domestic Debt Exchange Programme, about GH¢170

billion of debt is being restructured for a period of 12 years. It is important to note the BoG report did not provide figures pertaining to the financial sector resolution debt and other liabilities including the energy sector debt. The report further noted that government's fiscal deficit in terms of Gross Domestic Product was pegged at 9.8 percent in November 2022 which is more than the 7.4 percent earlier recorded in September 2022.

## Santoe Land Dispute: Man Appeals To IGP To Intervene Over Alleged Harassment By Police Inspector

Mr Daniel Odei Oklie, a resident of Accra has appealed to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to intervene over what he claims is harassment by one Inspector Francis Aboagye of Adenta Police Station over a piece of land he owns at Santoe. Addressing a press conference, Mr. Odei Oklie said he sold the land to one Mr Kwame Asare who later rejected the land because of some construction of a university. He revealed that even though, he has documents to prove ownership of the land, the police inspector following a complaint made by Kwame Asare, the buyer has been harassing him along with land guards. He said, he explained everything to Mr Kwame and later fell sick, he then travelled for treatment in



Togo only for Mr Kwame to appear in his house with one Inspector Aboagye to harass his wife in his absence. Mr Daniel Oklie explained to the media that, he arrived only for Mr Kwame Asare to attack him on his land with unknown land guards and Inspector Francis Aboagye claiming ownership of the land. Mr Daniel Oklie is thus pleading with the IGP to intervene and to invite both parties to resolve the issue amicably. Attempts by this paper to get Inspector Aboagye respond to the allegations proved futile as at the time of going to press.



# GHANA: Who Is Responsible For The Crippling Debt Crisis?

from page 3

The government has also imposed a “cap on salary adjustment of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to be lower than negotiated base pay increase.” While the government and trade unions have reached an agreement to increase the salaries of all public servants by 30% in 2023, the increase will still not meet the rate of inflation. The Ghana Trades Union Congress has also accused the government of defaulting on its contributions to the pension schemes of over 600,000 public sector workers since February 2022.

These anti-poor austerity measures are being implemented in pursuit of an IMF loan that is still pending approval—which is in turn conditional on the restructuring of Ghana's debts to a level deemed sustainable. “The IMF is unfortunately central to how debt is managed in the global system. In theory, there is no structured process of dealing with a government debt crisis, there is no way for governments to declare bankruptcy,” Jones said. “So the IMF rules the system that exists in its place. When countries get into a debt crisis they turn to the Fund to seek more loans, and often the IMF grants these loans, which enables previous creditors to keep being paid while the IMF insists on austerity.” The Fund determines the contours of debt relief—how much debt can be restructured, what does this restructuring look like, whether it is in the form of simply moving

payments into the future or actual debt cancellation—in a package, Jones added, which also includes deciding the extent of austerity.

## Rescuing Ghana from the imperialist debt trap

Ghana's debt crisis has been [attributed to a continued dependence on commodity exports—rooted in colonialism—which are susceptible to volatile prices, as well as irresponsible lending and borrowing practices. The present debt crisis also shares key similarities with the debt crisis that had affected much of the Global South in the 1980s and 1990s.](#)

“The decade following the 2008 financial crisis saw a big increase in lending, the biggest driver of which are high interest loans from private lenders,” Jones stated. “A similar boom in lending had taken place in the 1970s. At the start of the 1980s, there were a series of economic shocks, commodity prices fell and interest rates went up. Even then much of the debt was owed to private lenders.” However, in the 1980s and 1990s, the IMF and the World Bank lent more money, which allowed private lenders to keep being paid. As a result, “there was a transfer of debt from private lenders to multilateral institutions. This proved disastrous for countries who had to pay back these loans whilst implementing austerity.” When some debt cancellation did take place in the 2000s, it was the multilateral creditors who were affected, and had to pay, instead of the original lenders. “This incentivized these lenders to keep acting recklessly, and is one of the reasons we have another crisis

now.”

Ghana's debt fell significantly between 2003 and 2006 following debt cancellation under the IMF and World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries and Multilateral Debt Relief initiatives. Ghana witnessed major economic growth in the following years as the prices of gold and cocoa, two of the country's main exports, began to increase. This also led to a rise in lending—between 2007 and 2015, Ghana had \$18.2 billion in external loans and \$8.7 billion in debt payments.

Between May 2007 and February 2015, the IMF and the World Bank assessed Ghana to be at moderate risk of debt distress. This classification meant that Ghana was eligible to receive 50% of the support from the World Bank in the form of grants and the other 50% as loans. However, analysis has [revealed](#) that 93% of the Bank's funding to Ghana during this time was in the form of loans.

In March 2015, Ghana was declared to be at high risk of debt distress, qualifying the country to access 100% of the support in the form of grants. However, the World Bank still agreed to give the country \$1.16 billion in loans. Between 2013 and 2014, commodity prices fell, as did the value of the cedi. As a result, the relative size of Ghana's external debt and debt payments increased. The government was forced to take on new debts in the form of bonds in 2013, 2014, and 2015, all with high interest rates ranging from 7.9% to 10.75%.

The crisis was taking the shape of a new debt trap. Speculators now stand to rake

in [massive profits](#) unless there is substantial debt cancellation for Ghana. In 1987, the president of Burkina Faso and Marxist Pan-Africanist revolutionary, Thomas Sankara, had [raised](#) a rallying call for a “united front against debt”—“debt is neo-colonialism,” he had stressed, “controlled and dominated by imperialism, debt is a skillfully managed reconquest of Africa.”

35 years later, Sankara's words still ring true, as Western private lenders continue to reap obscene profits off the very debt that is pushing people in countries such as Ghana further into poverty.

“These debts are simply unpayable not just because of the unfair international economic order. They are also unpayable because a lot of these loans serve the foreign policy interests of imperialist powers,” Kwesi Pratt Junior told *Peoples Dispatch*.

“The best example of this is Zaire (present day DRC) under Mobuto Sese Seko. Everybody knew that he was richer than his country, they knew that the loans that were being given to Zaire could not be repaid and yet they kept pumping in loans, because they wanted to hold up Zaire as a bastion against the expansion of communism.”

Pratt further added, “we are in the current condition because our economy is still modeled on colonialism.

One of the best ways to understand this is to look at

Ghana's railway network—it always starts from areas of wealth, the mining areas of bauxite, gold, and diamonds, and ends up at the ports. These minerals do not move towards the centers of production, the factories, but they go to the ports to be exported out of the country.” “This typifies the relationship between Ghana and the colonial metropolis,” he emphasized. “What does it mean when Ghana signs a foreign exchange retention agreement with mining companies allowing them to keep 98% of the total value of minerals exported from the country. In actuality, only about 2% of the value of what is mined in Ghana comes back to its economy. This has to change.” For the SMG, the way out, not just for Ghana but for all of Africa, is through a fundamental restructuring of the economy and a return to the agenda of the independence movement—for the people to be able to determine their own political destiny and to own and use their natural resources for their own benefit. “We need to build an economy that responds directly to the needs of the people, to restructure it in a way that will make land available to the tillers, and that will ensure that people have access to services such as healthcare and education,” Pratt added.

# Pope Benedict: Shaped And Dislocated By History



By Owei Lakemfa

**T**HE youthful Father Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger, later, Pope Benedict XVI, was a brilliant theologian and academic who, at age 31 in 1958, was already a full professor at Bonn University. But before turning to the priesthood, he had been a POW in the Second World War. It was a war in which humanity seemed to have lost its soul. But no sooner had the world vowed to settle issues peacefully, and established the United Nations as a backstop than humans resumed wars. Pope Benedict XVI In Asia, the two-stage Vietnamese War, first against France, and later against the United States, erupted on December 19, 1946. The world came close to another world war with the three-year Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950. The quite bloody Chinese Civil War which claimed over a million lives, also erupted in 1948, ending only with the triumph of the Maoist Revolution.

The French murdered over two million Algerians from 1954 to 1962 in a vain attempt to stop Algerian independence. In other parts of Africa, the 'strong winds' of independence were so strong that in 1960 alone, 17 countries in various shapes emerged from the yoke of

colonialism, with many, like Kenya and Cameroon, having visible scars. These events did not halt human progress, as the Soviet Union launched Yuri Gagarin, the first human into space, on April 12, 1961, and the United States launched Alan Shepard, the second, on May 5, 1961. The world was barely recognisable, and the Catholic Church was forced to locate itself in a grossly distorted world tainted by the biting and potentially destructive Cold War. What roles had the church played when the world was on its knees, bleeding profusely? Was the church speaking to itself rather than communicating with the congregation? In any case, how can it communicate when the priest conducts mass only in Latin, which almost 100 per cent of Catholic faithful do not understand?

Did it know the world it was operating in? Should the Church be just about the ancient past, or, also about the modern world? Was it relevant and in danger of disintegrating and disappearing into folklore? The Church decided that the way out, was to convene the Second Vatican Council, which would bring bishops from all over the world to hold a mirror to itself, identify with the hopes and needs of Catholics worldwide, extend a hand of fellowship to other churches and religions and clear the pathway to the future.

In his 1975 book, *The Runaway Church*, Peter Hebblethwaite quoted a British bishop as saying that but for

the Second Vatican, which held from 1962-65, "the Church would have been like the Loch Ness monster: rumoured to exist, of venerable antiquity, actually seen by some, but of not much relevance in the contemporary world." Ratzinger, at 35, attended the Second Vatican as an aide to Cardinal Joseph Frings. It obviously had a positive impact on him until after 1968, when his views visibly began to change.

However, the Council had introduced democracy into a hitherto, highly hierarchical institution, with whoever was Pope as the infallible Vicar of Christ, the bishops as the unquestioned successors of the Apostles, and the priest as the Man of God in the parish. But the Second Vatican gave rise to another argument. If Jesus said the time is coming when God will not be worshipped in Jerusalem (the Temple) John 4:21, and that: "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth," (John 4:24). Where is the place of the Church as a temple? But the implication is: if worship leaves the temple and God is worshipped only in spirit and truth, that will be the end of the priesthood. It might mean that the Church was engaging in self-liquidation.

There were many progressive outcomes of the Second Vatican Council, such as the Church needing to identify with the meek, the poor, and the defenseless and even standing up against dictators.

However, the fact that it allowed open debates among bishops, exposing disagreements, challenged traditional hierarchy and authority (where unquestioned obedience had previously been the case), and provided fertile ground for Liberation Theology meant that some saw the Council as endangering the Church. While Liberation Theology emphasizes social justice, environmental protection, and building God's kingdom on earth to ensure His will is done as it is in heaven, its opponents claim it is the secularisation, radicalisation and politicisation of the Church.

Cardinal Siri of Genoa argued that "the Council was the greatest mistake in recent ecclesiastical history." Some bishops, like Dr. McQuaid of Dublin and Cardinal MacIntyre of Los Angeles, were in revolt. Some 100,000 priests left within ten years, and to some, like Ratzinger, who had initially supported the liberal movement of the Church, the Second Vatican was like a genie that had escaped from the bottle; it had to be recaptured and rebottled.

This became Ratzinger's quest for the rest of his life; returning the Catholic Church to its ancient traditions, untouched and unaffected by modernisation. As Archbishop of Munich from 1977, he was more Catholic than the Pope—and as the Head, Congregation of the Faith (the successor office to the Inquisition), the fear of Cardinal Ratzinger was, for many priests, the beginning of wisdom. He declared Liberation Theology a "singular heresy", and clobbered its leaders like Leonardo

Boff. He was so hawkish that he became known as "God's rottweiler". He capped it with being the Pope from April 19, 2005, to February 28, 2013, when he resigned, the first resignation of a Catholic pontiff in seven centuries. Pope Benedict upheld the Church ban on birth control to the extent that when HIV/AIDS ravaged the world and there were appeals that he allows the use of condoms, at least for prevention, he refused. If one partner in a Catholic marriage was positive, the couple was expected to either refrain from copulating or risk infection. He also strictly upheld the Church ban on divorce, feminist ideas, and abortion, no matter the circumstances. As Pope, he engaged in needless controversies. For instance, he claimed that Catholicism was the only true church of Christ and that Islam was an injurious faith spread by the sword. He encouraged the conversion of Jews, but later tried to mend fences by exculpating Jews from allegations that they murdered Jesus Christ. By the time the Holy Father passed away on December 31, 2022, he had been so dislocated by the liberal history that made him that he had transformed into one of the most conservative Popes in history. But he could not defeat the Second Vatican; his successor, Pope Francis, is a product of the progressive spirit that permeated that ecclesiastical gathering 58 years ago.

## As Chinese Businessman Allegedly Blocks Wetlands McCarthy Hill Residents Hail Pentecost Church For Averting Flooding ...Call On Weija Gbawe Assembly To Act

from front page

church (as known as Salvation Prayer Centre) for working assiduously to avert flooding in the area. The residents believe but for the church which has taken upon itself to dredge the drains including the Baale River after several calls to the assembly have gone unheeded, the area would have been flooded anytime it rains. The Church has been dredging Baale River every now and then had it not been that, the crisis would have been more dire. "We the residents are so appreciative of what Salvation prayer centre church has done and will urge them to assist us always", a resident said.

"Everyone knows that that Chinese man friend is just looking at his stomach and not the welfare of the community," another resident lamented.

The McCarthy South Hills area flooding has been a major concern for residents, and there is often much apprehension anytime the rainy season draws near. It is against this backdrop that residents want the Weija Gbawe Municipal Assembly to help them avert the flooding crisis which bedevils them every rainy season even as the church tries to help. Their concern comes at a time when a Chinese businessman is alleged to

have blocked the wetlands resulting in flooding in the area.

Even though the Chinese businessman denies the claim and accuses the church rather of causing the flooding, the residents believe it is the assembly's duty to act to end the perennial flooding crisis.

Already, some residents are beside themselves with anger over what they claim is a blockade of McCarthy South Wetlands engineered allegedly by a Chinese businessman.

The residents are not happy that in spite of several complaints to the Weija-Gbawe Municipal Assembly, the authorities do not seem to be interested in the developments which are adversely affecting they the

residents in several ways.

The residents most of who are from McCarthy Hill South area, Panbros embankment, Menskrom, Salvation, Wiaboman and others claim that the blockade of the wetlands results in flooding in the area.

They insist that despite several complaints, the flooding appears to be a perennial problem because the assembly does not want to act to resolve the issue.

Speaking on behalf of the residents recently, assembly member for McCarthy Hill south area. Hon. Clement Adjei said the situation has been exacerbated by one Robert Tang of VVIP motors.

According to Clement Adjei, the Chinese businessman has almost

blocked Baale river and when confronted he surprisingly sent Nadmo officials to meet them at Weija Gbawe assembly.

"Robert Tang sent Nadmo officials one Yartey and Abu Ramandan and Sarkin Abubakar and myself met the municipal chief executive honourable Patrick Kumor in his office last year but nothing concrete came out after that meeting," Hon. Adjei lamented. The Assemblyman said every sign post erected by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been pulled down by this Chinese businessman and Weija Gbawe assembly led by Hon Patrick Kumor is doing virtually nothing for the residents.



# FULL TEXT OF REPORT ON THE AUDIT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA COVID-19 EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD MARCH 2020 TO JUNE 2022

from page 7

## No. REGION QUANTITY OF COVID-19 VACCINES EXPIRED (DOSES) ASTRAZ ENEC PFIZER J&J MODERNA SPUTNIK-V TOTAL

1. Ahafo 17,040 - - - 17,040  
2. Bono East 23,020 10,362 2,330 35,712  
3. Central 4,300 2,208 440 - - 6,948  
4. Eastern 189,860 79,860 16,365 16,198 - 302,283  
5. Greater Accra 132,830 16,476 4,235 588 327 154,456  
6. North East 7,310 15,702 - - - 23,012  
7. Northern 42,700 3,174 55,355 19,278 - 120,507  
8. Oti 63,390 42,696 58,280 2,730 - 167,096  
9. Savannah 8,470 2,040 1,365 - - 11,875  
10. Upper East 18,210 1,686 11,425 - - 31,321  
11. Volta 32,610 6,654 - 15,568 - 54,832  
12. Western 84,690 12,492 - 84 - 97,266  
13. Western North 18,210 1,686 11,425 - - 31,321  
**Total 624,430 193,350 149,795 54,446 327 1,022,348**  
180. The Programme Manager explained the vaccines were donated vaccines which were delivered to them close to expiry.  
181. The vaccines could accidentally/mistakenly be issued among the wholesome ones for vaccination which could pose public health threat to the country.  
182. We recommended that the Director of Public Health Department should ensure the vaccines are disposed of safely.  
183. Management responded that as part of public health measures, these vaccines are not kept in the cold room at all so that they are not accidentally issued among safe vaccines. They are rather kept out of the Cold Room and transported to the Regional

Health Directorate for destruction according to standard operating procedures (SOPs).  
184. Management also indicated that as part of the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and in accordance with law, management is working with a team composed of Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana Health Service, Health Partners including WHO and/or UNICEF), the Environmental Health department of the relevant Local Government, Environmental Protection Agency and other departments to dispose of the expired vaccines.  
**NATIONAL FOOD BUFFER STOCK COMPANY**  
**Over-invoicing of store items – GH¢1,406,085**  
185. Section 7 of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921) states that, ‘a Principal Spending Officer of a covered entity shall ensure the regularity and proper use of money appropriated in that covered entity.’  
186. We noted during our review that, between April 2020 and September 2020, National Food Buffer Stock Company (NAFCO) received three payments totalling GH¢42,237,770.00 from the Ministry of Finance for the supply of food items to Faith-based organisations and selected MMDAs in Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi. This was in respect of Government’s support to Ghanaians during the lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We noted however, that waybills from the various Institutions amounted to GH¢40,831,685.00 resulting in an over-invoicing of GH¢1,406,085.00. Details are as shown below:  
**OVER-INVOICING**  
**No**  
**•**  
**ITEMS AUDITED**  
**QTY**  
**(Waybills)**  
**Invoiced**  
**Qty**

**Difference (Qty)**  
**Cost/Unit**  
**Total Amount**  
**GH¢**  
1 Rice (50 kg) 22,878 23,776 898 215 193,070.00  
2 Beans (50kg) 22,838 23,776 938 265 248,570.00  
3 Gari(50kg) 15,519 16,146 627 360 225,720.00  
4 Sardines (box) 46,902 48,796 1,894 145 274,630.00  
5 Tomato paste(box) 128,672 132,030 3,358 40 134,320.00  
6 Eggs(crates) 237,265 240,050 2,785 25 69,625.00  
7 Canned Tuna 6,700 7,560 860 302.5 260,150.00  
**TOTAL 1,406,085.00**  
187. The Head of Operations explained that the differences were as a result of suppliers not submitting waybills after delivery.  
188. In the absence of acknowledgement of receipt of the GH¢1,406,085.00 worth of supplies by any other Institution, we were unable to confirm that the bill submitted and paid by the Ministry of Finance was the actual cost of supplies made.  
189. We recommended that the CEO of National Food Buffer Stock Company should refund the excess amount of GH¢1,406,085.00 to the Auditor-General’s Recoveries account.  
**Payment vouchers not fully acquitted – GH¢765,459**  
190. Regulation 78 of the Public Financial Management Regulations, 2019 (L.I. 2378) states that ‘a Principal Spending officer of a covered entity is personally responsible for ensuring in respect of each payment of that covered entity that evidence of services received, certificates for work done and any other supporting documents exists.’  
191. We noted that between April 2020 and November 2020, the Accountant made 23 payments totalling GH¢4,520,661.84 to various suppliers for the

supply of various food items to the Pentecost Convention and Pantang Isolation Centres to cater for COVID-19 patients.  
192. Further scrutiny disclosed that out of the total payments made, GH¢3,755,202.58 were fully acquitted to substantiate the payments leaving a difference of GH¢765,459.26 unacquitted. Details are attached as Appendix ‘F’.  
193. In the absence of official receipts and other relevant documents, we could not authenticate the payment.  
194. We recommended that the CEO should ensure that the outstanding amount of GH¢765,459.26 is substantiated, failing which the CEO should refund the amount into the Auditor-General’s Recoveries account.  
195. Management responded that they had attached copies of supporting documents for the items and were available for audit.  
**Audit Position**  
196. Management could not provide the supporting documents on our follow up. We therefore reiterate our recommendation.  
**Non-deduction of tax – GH¢27,313**  
197. Section 116 of the Income Tax Act, 2015 (Act 896) requires that, a withholding agent shall withhold tax on the gross amount paid for the supply of goods, services or works valued over GH¢2,000.00.  
198. We noted during the period under review that the Head of Accounts made payments totalling GH¢910,431.03 to various suppliers but failed to withhold tax on the payments amounting to GH¢27,312.93. Details are attached as Appendix ‘G’.  
199. The infraction could result in a loss of tax revenue totalling GH¢27,312.93 to Government.  
200. We recommended to the CEO to ensure that the details of the affected suppliers are submitted to the

Commissioner-General of Ghana Revenue Authority to aid tax compliance reviews.  
201. Management responded that due to the urgency of the transactions during the COVID era, NAFCO as at that time had no stocks of these food items and had to resort to the open market such as (Agbogbloshie, Makola, Farmers Market, etc.) on a cash and carry basis.  
**MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**  
**Payment acknowledged with Honour Certificates – GH¢11,999,444**  
202. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) received a total of GH¢12,000,000 in cash from the Ministry of Finance in four tranches as shown below:  
**Date Tranche Amount GH¢)**  
7 April 2020 1st 1,200,000.00  
9 April 2020 2nd 3,600,000.00  
17 April 2020 3rd 4,200,000.00  
24 April 2020 4th 3,000,000.00  
**Total 12,000,000.00**  
203. We noted from the records of the Ministry that an amount of GH¢7,999,524 and GH¢3,999,920 were expended in Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi respectively for COVID-19 emergency food payment for the delivery of hot meals to poor and vulnerable people.  
204. The Ministry engaged caterers, some of whom were from the School Feeding Programme and Joefel Catering Services among others for the supply of hot meals and spot payments ranging between GH¢5,000.00 and GH¢48,000.00 were made to the service providers.  
205. Our review disclosed that Management of MoGCSP accepted honour certificates to retire a total of GH¢11,999,444.00 paid to caterers. We noted however, that Joefel restaurant and caterers drawn from the School Feeding Programme who are capable of providing official receipts also acknowledged

to be cont.