

Drobonso Chief, Elders Threaten Demo Over Abandoned

MAHAMA 'E BLOCK'



Chief and elders of Drobonso, the district Capital of Sekyere Afram Plains District of the Ashanti region have threatened to stage a demonstration if the government fails to complete and enrol students into the Community

Day SHS in the area. The traditional rulers say the project which was started by the erstwhile John Mahama administration is yet to be operational due to the lack of water and electricity supply and other

installations. They also lamented the poor state of roads leading to the facility adding that the school has now become a grazing field for livestock.

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---Mankatta Family Tells Ovorko family



TUC Boss Wants National Cathedral Turned Into Hospital



Dr Anthony Yaw Baah is the TUC boss

The Secretary General of the Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC), Dr Anthony Yaw Baah has expressed readiness to support efforts to turn the ongoing national cathedral project into a hospital facility. According to Dr Anthony Yaw

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Machomen On Rampage At Gwira 'Sika Ne Asem'

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Kan Dapaa, National Security Minister

The INSIGHT

— EDITORIAL

THIS IS WORRYING!

Recent happenings in the state of Palestine regarding the annexation of lands and the committal of atrocities by Israeli forces to say the least is highly repugnant.

Never a day passes without one form of violence or assault being perpetuated by Israel against the people of Palestine.

These acts including seizure of Palestinian lands have been carried out with the highest level of impunity, apparently due to the support provided by America.

Across the West Bank and other occupied territories, there have been protests over plans by Israel to annex more of such lands.

Clearly, this show of impunity and disregard for international law is highly condemnable and unacceptable.

There is no denying the fact that the Israeli authorities' constant destruction of Palestinian homes in Occupied West Bank for new Jewish settlement has been done with the full support of the United States, in spite of persistent international condemnation of such lawless and dastardly acts. Apart from the West Bank's Area C, Gaza has also been turned into a huge killing field as Israel has over the years committed acts of genocide with impunity.

Nobody has been spared the atrocities of the Zionist state which has killed women and children, the old and the young, abled and bodied persons and people with disability.

We firmly believe that Israel is emboldened to carry out these atrocities because of the support it receives from the US and its surrogates around the world.

Undoubtedly, what the world expect to see is the easing of tension and an end to the brutalities in Palestine.

TUC Boss Wants National Cathedral Turned Into Hospital



Dr Anthony Yaw Baah is the TUC boss

from front page

Baah Ghana does not need a national cathedral and threw his support behind the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Member of Parliament (MP) for North Tongu Constituency in the Volta Region, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, in his fight against the construction of the National Cathedral. The TUC boss made the pledge at a forum dubbed 'Ghana's Day of Shame' organised by the Socialist Movement of Ghana (SMG) last Friday February 24, 2023.

The event saw in attendance many stalwarts in Ghana's politics including former Chairman of the New Patriotic Party, Paul Afoko, founding member of the NPP, Dr. Nyhah Nyaho Tamakloe, former flagbearer of the Convention People's Party, Dr Abu Sakara and some members of the diplomatic mission to Ghana, including Cuba's Ambassador to Ghana, Algeria, China, Namibia and Russia all in attendance.

Addressing the gathering, TUC's General Secretary reiterated his opposition to the construction of the National Cathedral and called on Mr Ablakwa to do all he can to convert the construction of the cathedral into a hospital if the NDC comes to power.

"We don't need to use state resources to build a cathedral. What saddens my

heart was that when TUC started the campaign against the construction of the cathedral nobody minded.

"We will back our brother here to change the plan of building a cathedral when in fact we don't need a cathedral.

"We need hospitals and schools, we don't need a cathedral," he stated

Source: classfmonline.com

THE INSIGHT

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Drobonso Chief, Elders Threaten Demo Over Abandoned MAHAMA 'E BLOCK'

from front page

The Chief of Drobonso, Nana Dwamena Dankwah Dwubi-Siaw at a news conference on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 expressed his dissatisfaction with the government over the delay in completing and operationalizing the Community Day Senior High School.

He emphasized that the delay in the completion of the project is affecting the education of students in the area, who are being deprived of the opportunity to attend school due to the lack of a suitable learning

environment.

"The SHS should have been added to the schools enrolling first-year students for this academic year but, since former president John Dramani Mahama left office after initiating the project, the project has been abandoned. We pleaded with the current government to make it a boarding school for us due to the distance between the school and the town, to which President Akufo-Addo agreed."

"However, the road from Drobonso to where the school is situated is not motorable

whiles electrification in the area has also hit a snag. No water connection to the place and water reservoirs numbering about six have started rotting. The school has now turned grazing field for sheep and goats while some residents use the veranda to dry their corn and rice, so we are pleading with the Education Minister and President Akufo-Addo to come to our aid and complete the school."

Nana Dwamena Dankwah Dwubi-Siaw has however issued a three-month ultimatum to the government to complete the project or



face their wrath. "I earlier halted a planned demonstration that residents had earlier wanted to embark on, but we are giving the government just three months

to do something about the project, or else we will embark on the demonstration," he said.

Source: dailymailgh.com

24Th February 1966 Was Ghana's Darkest Day, Peter Mahama Recounts



Fifty seven years ago today, which I describe as the DARKEST DAY in Ghana, of which Ghana has never recovered, my brothers Alfred, Adam and I were smuggled from the comfort of our Kanda Estate home, to some house in Nima 441 by our Auntie Dampo who was our caretaker then till about 9pm that night, when the indiscriminate shooting had subsided. After 9pm she decided to take these Dadaba's from Nima to Ringway Estates where our mother (her sister) lived. This is the riskiest journey I've ever undertaken in my life and it

still lingers fresh in my mind after 57 years. That night she got some brave taxi driver to ferry us from Nima to Ringway Estate. As soon we boarded and took off, we were stopped by soldiers who put their seriously wounded colleague into our taxi and ordered the driver to take him to 37 Military hospital. That night our taxi was escorted from check point to check point surrounded by heavily armed soldiers marching on both sides of our vehicle and handing us over to the next check point from Nima Police station to Broadcasting Hse, then to Sankara round about and then through 3 more check points to

the front of Flagstaff House. where the cenotaph is now. For the first time in my young life, I saw dead bodies piled on each other littered on the ground covering that whole area which at that time was a Helipad for landing the Presidential Helicopter. Later in life, I came to know that those bodies were the bodies of the gallant servicemen who died protecting the 1st Republican constitution. May their souls and that of our great leader Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah see no rest until the complete demise of the UP tradition.

--Source Peter Mahama



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Massive Rally In Berlin Demands Peace In Ukraine



Anti-war rally in Berlin. Photo: JungeWelt On the one year anniversary of the state of the war, Berliners took to the streets to demand deescalation and peace

Tens of thousands of people last Saturday rallied at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin demanding that German Chancellor Olaf Scholz take an active role in encouraging negotiations to end the ongoing war in Ukraine. The mobilization with the slogan 'Uprising for Peace' was called

for by Left party MP Sahra Wagenknecht, journalist Alice Schwarzer, retired Brigadier General Erich Vad, economist Jeffrey Sachs and others. It called for negotiations, diplomacy and peace, instead of the ongoing escalation of the war by delivering sophisticated arms and ammunition to Ukraine. Sahra Wagenknecht MP and Alice Schwarzer also initiated a petition titled 'Manifesto For Peace' demanding the German Chancellor to “make a strong alliance for a ceasefire and peace negotiations at both the German and European levels.” The anti-fascist groups who

attended the rally in Berlin also protested the presence of far-right groups like the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in the rally. A day prior, on February 24, anti-war groups including the Berlin Peace Coordination (FRIKO), German Communist Party (DKP), and others also rallied in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin calling for peace. The eight year long Russia-Ukraine conflict escalated to a full-fledged war on February 24, 2022, when Russian armed forces crossed into Ukraine. According to the Manifesto for Peace, as of now over

200,000 soldiers and more than 50,000 civilians have been killed in the war. As all attempts at peace talks have been sabotaged, the death toll is likely to increase. Currently, there are millions of Ukrainians living as refugees in countries across Europe. The heavy sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United States against Russia and Russian energy companies have triggered a steep increase in energy prices across Europe, which was dependent on cheap Russian gas for years. This has sparked a broader cost of living crisis across the region. While under the

instigation of US and NATO, the political leadership in EU countries continue war mongering, the crisis-hit working class sections across Europe have now strengthened their mobilizations demanding peace. In their 'Manifesto for Peace', Sahra Wagenknecht MP and Alice Schwarzer have stated that “negotiating does not mean capitulating. Negotiating means making compromises, on both sides. With the aim of preventing hundreds of thousands more deaths and worse.”

Pakistani Brothers Finally Leave Guantanamo Bay After 20 Years Without Charge Or Trial

After spending two decades of their lives in the notorious Guantanamo Bay detention center without any charge or trial, two Pakistani brothers were finally sent home by the US authorities on Thursday, February 23. Abdul Rabbani (55) and Mohammad Rabbani (53) were first arrested by Pakistani authorities in 2002 from Karachi and were later transferred to the US intelligence agency CIA's custody, finally ending up in Guantanamo Bay. They were accused by the US of helping Al-Qaeda operatives by providing them with shelter and other logistical support. However, they were never charged or tried formally. Both brothers have accused the CIA of torturing them in custody before transferring them to Guantanamo Bay. The detention center at

Guantanamo Bay was first established under George W Bush's administration in the US as a part of the so-called 'Global War on Terror' after the September 11 attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, with the objective of bypassing legal obligations related to detainees. According to reports, at least 779 people have been detained in the facility so far, which has been illegally built on an occupied part of Cuba. Over the years, many prisoners have been transferred to third countries or repatriated, especially after global media attention was directed at the human rights violations taking place there following the publication of the Gitmo files by Wikileaks. According to the AP, there are 32 more detainees in Guantanamo Bay, of whom 18 are “eligible” for

transfer—meaning they are not facing any charges or trial and will be transferred once countries willing to take them are found. Nine of the detainees are facing trials and only two of them are convicted. In a statement on Thursday, the US Defense Department claimed that the repatriation of the two Pakistanis was a part of attempts to reduce the “detainee population and ultimately [close] the Guantanamo Bay facility,” AP reported. President Joe Biden has promised to shut down the facility by 2024. Barack Obama had also promised that he would close Guantanamo Bay during his 2008 run for the US presidency.



(Photo: Shane T. McCoy, U.S. Navy via Wikimedia Commons). Hundreds of detainees have been incarcerated for years in the notorious American detention center in Cuba without any formal charges, and allegedly faced various forms of mental and physical torture

Allegation Of Land Grab

Retract And Apologize To Deputy Ambassador to China Madam Akua Afriyie ---Mankatta Family Tells Oyorko Family

Members of Makatta family of Pampaso in the Apadwe Traditional Area of the Eastern Region have cautioned William Agyekum Acquah Asante of the Oyoko Royal family of Odumase to retract all allegations he has levelled against the Deputy Ambassador to China, Madam Akua Afriyie over the purchase and ownership of portions of land at Panpanso Krokese.

The family led by the linguist, Okyeame Otibu of Panpanso Krokese, in a press conference on Monday February 27, 2023 indicated strongly that the Deputy Ambassador to China acquired the land genuinely from the allodial owners, hence all allegations that she had acquired the land illegally were false.

According to him, Mr Kofi Asante Agyekum Acquah and his elders of Nana Amon Kwame and Kwasi Amoani Oyoko Royal families are trying to attack the Deputy Ambassador for no reason. Okyeame Otibu said that all the tracks of land located at Odumase-Panpanso belong to the Mankata family and that the Oyoko Royal family has never had a land in the area.

He pointed out that all the people laying claim to lands in the area should be ignored

He stressed that Mr Acquah and his people have no land within the enclave of Odumase-Panpanso Mankata.

According to him, the land in the possession of Madam Akua Afriyie was sold to her by Mankata hence all attempts to take the land away from her would not be allowed. He averred that the family has all documents over the lands, and indicated that records at the Lands Commission are evidence of the fact that the land belongs to Mankata and for that matter, he has the right to sell the land.

He also claimed that Mr Kofi Asante Agyekum Acquah himself on several occasions took people to Mankata for documents covering lands they have acquired and that they have all evidence pointing to the fact that Mr Kofi Asante Agyekum Acquah is trying to claim portions of land which do not belong to their family but Mankata family.

"We went to Court on several occasions and it was clear that the land here belongs to us. We never begged land from them. We gave them lands to settle and to set records straight, the lands belong to us that is why we gave them portions. Mankata family has authority to sell our land and so whoever we sold land to is genuine." "Nobody has the power to stand

against Madam Akua Afriyie because she bought the land from us; from the Mankata family," Okyeame Otibu stated.

However, in response to these claims, Mr Kofi Asante Agyekum Acquah in a separate interview averred that he is not ready to render any apology to the Deputy Ambassador to China because "she acquired the land fraudulently from the Mankata family."

"I will never retract and apologise today nor tomorrow. I stand on all the Court rulings in our favour that all the 5,068 acres of land belong to us the Oyoko family," he said.

He stated that apart from the 1915, 1922, 1924 and 1926 judgements which went in favour of the Oyoko family, the Mankata family in 1913 made a document signed by Okyehene I, Apedwahene Nana Koreafa, Yaw Ntikura and all those who bought land from them signed that document and in the document, it was stated that at the expiry date of 99 years the land reverts back to the rightful owners. "I want to ask, who are the rightful owners?" he asked.

My great grandfather knowing very well that the land belongs to him never signed that document and

took the case to Court in 1920 and won.

"If Mankata has a land there, I don't dispute that, but the 5,068 acres belong to us and we are not ready to let go. I will fight till the last drop of my blood to reclaim every single portion that the Makata family took and sold to other people," he indicated.

"The historical documentary evidence available indicate that the original Mankata was a hunter and that he engaged in trading as well. During that time they were cutting timber for canoes at Odumase and that the original Mankata came to settle at Sansemi doing all these sorts of businesses," Mr Asante narrated. According to him, it has emerged that the original Mankata entered into a business with Chief of Apedwe Traditional Area in the person of Nana Abrokwa and that Mr. Asante said during the course of their businesses, it was stated that Nana Abrokwa was indebted to the original Mankata. He said since Nana Abrokwa could not afford to pay the money, he [Nana Abrokwa] said he would pay his debt with piece of land that he said was located at Panpanso Krokese.



Tendering documentary evidence to support his claims,' Mr Asante noted: "In fact Nana Abrokwa gave original Mankata fourteen (14) acres of land at Panpanso Krokese and that 14 acres of land don't share boundary with Nana Amon Kwame and Kwasi Amoani Oyoko Royal families at Odumase /Kojo Fosu." He averred that members of Mankata family used the said concession site plan that includes the land of Nana Amon Kwame and Kwasi Amoani Oyoko Royal families and registered the lands into their name without our knowledge in 1988.

To this, Mr. Asante sent a word of caution to the Deputy Ambassador to China, Madam Akua Afriyie to stay off the land and go for whatever money she took from Mankata in respect of the said land.

This Is Not The Time For 'Na Who Cause Am' - Addai-Nimoh Pushes For Solutions To Current Economic Mess

Nana Aba Launches Women Of Valour

By Florence Anim

About 200 women from all walks of life and dignity would gather in Accra to a conference in commemoration of the International Woman's Day on March 7.

The upcoming event was announced at the launch of Women of Valour, a project being undertaking by a media personality, Nana Ama Anamoah to motivate women.

The Women of Valour project hopes to bring together women in the academia, business, entertainment, industry and other facets of life to share their stories to motivate others who find themselves in situations and needed encouragement. In a short speech delivered

on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, Ms Anamoah said Women of Valour is a project she has incubated for ten-year-old. According to her, it will be an annual event coinciding with the International Woman's Day.

She explained that the annual event would serve as a platform where untold stories of women from all quarters of life will be heard.

Using herself as an example, Ms Anamoah told her enthusiastic audience that she has survived several pitfalls because she was inspired by other people's stories.

Therefore, the Woman of Valour would be an event not for pictures and glamour but a serious

business for learning outcomes. Similarly, it is to help women to build acquaintance, which is quite uncommon in the community of women.

Three speakers carefully selected to headline the event are former Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, Charlotte Osei Esq, Business Executive and Communications Professional, Obuobia Darko-Opoku and Certified Etiquette Coach, Sika Goka.

Others to feature at the event are multiple award-winning Nigerian actress, Omotola Jalade Ekeinde, award-winning South African sports presenter, Julia Stuart, and Ghanaian social entrepreneur and children's rights advocate, Eugenia Baffour Bankoh.

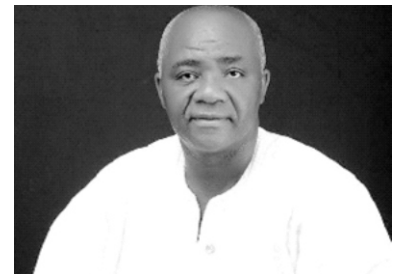
A former Member of Parliament for Mampong, Francis Addai-Nimoh, has said that this is not the time in the country to be looking for who caused the economic challenges the nation is currently facing.

Rather, he said, this is the time to be looking for solutions.

The [New Patriotic Party](#) stalwart, who is seeking to become the party's next flagbearer, told [GhanaWeb](#) that there is no doubt that there is currently a big economic problem in the country. He, however, indicated that until solutions are found, it would not be prudent to be pushing blame on anyone.

"The problem is that our debt is not sustainable. We are using about 70% of our domestic revenue to service our debt, so, how much is remaining to pay for compensation, how much is remaining to pay for other government services and statutory payments. Then, how much will remain for you to undertake investment projects in terms of infrastructure, roads, schools, hospitals, and then the ability to feed yourself.

"So, currently, we have a problem. I do not want us to focus our attention on



what I will call 'na who cause am?' in this case, where there is a problem, you look for a solution to the problem. Then when the solution is secured, then we can come back home and ask ourselves, who is the causative agent, or who caused that?" he said.

On the subject of his chances at becoming the [New Patriotic Party's](#) next flagbearer, Francis Addai-Nimoh stated that he drew a pattern of how people who have tried to lead the party after having once served in the previous government, have always failed.

By doing so, he positioned himself as the best candidate for the NPP, confident that he will lead it to another election victory.

Nigerian Elections - Eight Issues Young People Want The New Govt To Address

By Tope Shola Akinyetun

As Nigeria prepares for the 25 February presidential elections, it's interesting to consider what young Nigerians are expecting.

There are plenty of them: 52.2 million people aged 18-35. That's about 28% of Nigeria's total population and more than the entire populations of Ghana and Benin Republic put together. In spite of the prospects that this number holds, young people in Nigeria are largely marginalised from governance.

This election holds immense significance for young Nigerians, particularly in light of the current economic difficulties, insecurity and their exclusion from the political process and decision making. I have focused various studies on the political expectations of the youth. One of my more recent studies looked at the relationship between youth political participation, good governance and social inclusion in Nigeria. It involved 1,208 participants selected from Nairaland.

[Nairaland Forum](#) is a Nigerian website created in 2005 that now has millions of readers. The online discussion site gets an average of 8.8 million visitors daily. It has become a place for young Nigerians to voice their opinions on a wide range of economic, political and social issues.

I am not assuming that the perspective of Nairaland users is representative of young Nigerians as a whole. But I contend that it

provides valuable insight into how they see the world. In this article I focus on expectations around governance. My study found a positive relationship between youth political participation and good governance. It suggests that involving young people in politics will promote political development, improve transparency and enhance human capital.

Nigeria's governance ranking

Governance covers a wide range of issues, including security, the rule of law, participation, rights and inclusion, economic opportunity, human development, and public perception. Data from the Ibrahim Index of African Governance reveals that [overall governance in Nigeria](#) declined between 2016 and 2021. Nigeria currently ranks 30th on the continent.

My findings indicate that young Nigerians rank the largest declines as follows: media freedom, the representation of women, food security, corruption in the public sector, armed conflict, effective administration, undue influence on government by the political elite, and equality of socioeconomic opportunity.

1. Media freedom

Young Nigerians are deeply concerned about a lack of media freedom. They will want the incoming government to ensure that the media can operate freely in discharging its duties. The media, both mainstream and digital, must be protected by law and the government must ensure [digital rights](#), internet freedom and digital sovereignty (the right of entity to control its digital data) are upheld.

2. Representation of women

Young people want women to be represented better in governance and in

parastatals. The incoming government must promote gender equality in its appointments, without compromising on merit.

3. Food security

[Food security](#) is another pressing issue raised by young Nigerians. The challenges posed by climate change, such as flooding, drought and cyclones, have made people less food secure, particularly in communities near the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin. Climate governance policies must be put in place to mitigate the risk. The ongoing conflict between pastoralists and farmers, made worse by the strain on resources, also needs resolution.

4. Corruption

The incoming government must address corruption on both the demand and supply sides. Nigeria currently ranks 150 out of 180 countries on the [Corruption Perceptions Index](#). Corruption requires the collusion of both giver and receiver. Therefore, it is necessary to address the complicity of Nigerian citizens in such activities. Petty and grand corruption in the academic, judicial and administrative sectors needs attention.

5. Armed conflict

Young Nigerians want the incoming government to deal with armed conflict. In the [Global Peace Index](#), Nigeria currently ranks 143 out of 163 countries globally. The [causes](#) of armed conflict in Nigeria are multifaceted and include water stress, competition for natural resources, climate change, identity crises, perceived relative deprivation and insurgent groups like Boko



Haram. These conflicts are often driven by the proliferation of small and light weapons, porous borders, and ungoverned spaces. The threat of insecurity looms large over Nigeria, casting a shadow over the prospects of peace and development for young people. The prevalence of police brutality has further eroded public trust and respect for the institution. The police allegedly use excessive force in their attempts to maintain order. The [EndsSARS](#) protests of 2020 were an expression of discontent with the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, which was accused of harassing, brutalising and extorting young people. The youth-led protests were met with government force. This may influence voting choices in the upcoming general elections. The incoming government must address the grievances that underlie armed conflict and the factors that fuel it.

6. Effective administration

The government must also promote effective administration and equal socioeconomic opportunity. To close

the well-documented equality gap, the government must empower people to succeed in business, agriculture and technology ventures.

7. Undue influence

The undue influence of the political elite, known as "cabals", impedes transparency and diminishes trust in the government. The new government must run an open system devoid of cabals. It must be accountable and involve young Nigerians in decision making.

8. Equal socioeconomic opportunity

The Nigerian economy is currently beset by a host of challenges, including inflation, rising debt, susceptibility to external shocks, and high unemployment. Recent data from the [International Monetary Fund](#) indicates a negative trend across various indicators.

French President Says Only Negotiations Can End Ukraine Conflict



Emmanuel Macron, French President

The war between Russia and Ukraine can only be ended through negotiations, French President Emmanuel Macron has said.

"I want Russia's defeat in Ukraine and I want Ukraine to be able to defend its position, but I am convinced that the end [of the conflict] will ultimately not be reached militarily," Macron said in an interview with broadcaster France Inter and newspapers Le Figaro and Le Journal du Dimanche. "Neither side can fully

prevail," Macron said. "Because the effects of mobilization are not as great as expected and have capacity limits." Macron reiterated that Ukraine now needs a military offensive to bring Russia back to the negotiating table. However, he does not believe that Russia should

be attacked on its own soil, as some have suggested. "Above all, these observers want to crush Russia. This has never been and never will be France's position." Macron expressed doubts about the possibility of significant domestic pressure in Russia to end the conflict. "Do we honestly think that a democratic solution will

emerge from the Russian civil society, after years of hardening and conflict? I truly wish that, but I don't really believe it," Macron said. The French leader went on to say that any alternative to Russian President Vladimir Putin within the current set up appeared worse to him. **Source -- GNA**

Machomen On Rampage At Gwira 'Sika Ne Asem'

...Terrorize And Beat Residents, But Gwira Banso Denies Claim

Residents of Sika Ne Asem and its adjoining communities in the Gwira Traditional Area of the Evalue-Ajomoro-Gwira Municipality in the Western Region have called on President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Dr. George Akuffo Dampare and the National Security Minister, Mr. Albert Kan Dapaah to, immediately come to their rescue since they are currently living in fear and insecurity in their ancestral home.

The affected residents living in Sika Ne Asem who are predominantly farmers and small-scale miners have lamented the beatings and attacks meted out to them and destruction of their properties by these gun-wielding manchomen from Gwira Banso are so pervasive to the extent that they are living in their ancestral home as if they are slaves, forcing many of the residents who fear for their lives to run away from the area.

This life-threatening phenomenon, according to the visibly worried residents follow the current illegal invasion of Sika Ne Asem community by manchomen from Banso in the Gwira Traditional Area of the Evalue-Ajomoro-Gwira Municipality.

Mincing no words, the affected residents, mostly farmers accused the Chief of Banso in the Gwira Traditional Area, Nana Ette Akrade II of allegedly being the brain behind the illegal invasion by marauding macho-men in Sika Ne Asem, recalling that somewhere last year Nana Ette Akrade II himself led these same manchomen to storm the Sika Ne Asem with brute force to stop workers on the land in the area who were nursing cocoa seedlings for the government's Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ). However, Nana Ette Akrade II flatly denied the allegation.

This notwithstanding, the residents noted that a couple of days ago, these manchomen stormed Sika Ne Asem and told

them boldly that they have been sent to seize the chanfangs, other mining equipment and farming lands from the cocoa growing farmers. They pointed out that the macho-men stopped the small-scale miners, ostensibly to get these lands to be given to the foreign illegal small-scale miners who are from China, Niger and Mali to mine gold in Sika Ne Asem and share bounties with their paymasters.

In a fact-finding mission to Sika Ne Asem on Saturday February 25, 2023, the farmers and small-scale miners detailed how they were severely beaten, attacked, harassed, terrorized, intimidated and manhandled by these gun-wielding macho-men without committing any criminal offense.

The residents told the journalists that the macho-men were sent to Sika Ne Asem to extort monies, seize the chanfangs, other mining equipment from the residents who were engaging in the small-scale mining activities.

The residents added that these macho-men also used their powers to visit mayhem on the farmers by way of seizing their pumping and spraying machines and other farm items usually used by the cocoa growing farmers.

According to them, these manchomen also seized the cocoa beans from the cocoa farmers who can't afford to pay the money they demanded from them.

The pieces of documentary evidence and grievances from the farmers and residents were corroborated by the Tufuhene of Gwira Sika Ne Asem, Nana Tapoli who spoke to the journalists when they visited the area on Saturday February 25, 2023 to authenticate the reports.

The chief disclosed to the journalists that they had information that these macho-

men were hired for protection during the installation of the chief of Gwira Banso.

Following this development, the chief noted that when the manchomen of the Banso chief got wind of the information that the youths in Sika Ne Asem started mining activities, they stormed the area and forcefully demanded money from the miners/youths.

He said the youths resisted that they would not pay such money to the macho-men from Gwira Banso since they are not using the money to carry social and infrastructure intervention projects and programmes in Sika Ne Asem. "Our youths told these macho-men that if it is necessary that they have to pay any tax to the Macho-men from Gwira Banso then it is necessary for them to rather pay such money to the traditional authorities of Sika Ne Asem, because they also need money to renovate their school building because the school in the deplorable state," the Tufuhene told journalists.

He indicated that the youths told the macho-men that if that may be the case that they would come from the Gwira Banso to exort monies from the mining activities from Sika Ne Asem community, then it is necessary for them to inform the DCE of the area about the issue.

He mentioned that when the residents/youths reported the matter to the DCE, she intervened in the matter but in the following day the macho-men came to the land again at Sika Ne Asem and started forcing the youths to take money as well as subjecting them to attacks and beatings.

They stated that for the past three days that the manchomen invaded the area



Photo: David Andoh

Kan Dapaah, National Security Minister

seized changfans and other mining items of the illegal small-scale miners who mined in the community for the past five years.

He pointed out that they had information that the manchomen have come to rent hotel in Sika Ne Asem to embark on extortion spree from the small-scale miners. He said when they had information, they didn't understand the matter and it was one medical doctor who officially called the MCE to draw her attention to the plan extortion spree that the manchomen wanted to embark on. Lamenting over the situation, the Tufuhene pointed that the anytime that macho-men stormed the area they were holding guns and other offensive ammunitions and machetes as if they are coming to war zone.

He said they didn't even know where the manchomen have gotten these very expensive guns and offensive ammunitions from. To this end, the Tufuhene stressed the need of the President Akufo-Addo to impress upon the IGP and National Security Minister to immediately deploy the military and police officers to the area to bring peace and order.

Reacting to the allegations in an interview with journalist on Sunday February 26, 2023, Nana Ette Akrade II admitted sending some family members of the

Banso Divisional Stool to protect their family cocoa farms on the lands at Sika Ne Asem.

He pointed out that he sent the members to the lands on Sika Ne Asem to prevent the farmers/residents who are engaging in the illegal small scale mining activities to destroy the cocoa farm trees on the family lands under the Banso Divisional Stool in Sika Ne Asem.

He denied the allegations that his boys are macho-men, saying that they are family members who were tasked to control and supervise the landed properties of the Banso Divisional Stool.

The chief explained that those who were stopped to step foot on the land at Sika Ne Asem are doing illegal mining activities on the land which are destroying farm lands and forest range reserves saying that he stopped because he protecting the land from destruction of illegal small scale mining activities.

He further denied allegation levelled against the boys for holding guns, extorting money terrorizing and beatings residents on the land at Sika Ne Asem, adding that they felt that their lives and properties were attacked why is it not they don't report the incident to the police for those who are attacking them to be arrested.

Towards Scuttling Russia-German Energy Cooperation

How America Took Out The Nord Stream Pipeline

from page 7

The plan to blow up Nord Stream 1 and 2 was suddenly downgraded from a covert operation requiring that Congress be informed to one that was deemed as a highly classified intelligence operation with US military support. Under the law, the source explained, “There was no longer a legal requirement to report the operation to Congress. All they had to do now is just do it—but it still had to be secret. The Russians have superlative surveillance of the Baltic Sea.” The Agency working group members had no direct contact with the White House, and were eager to find out if the President meant what he'd said—that is, if the mission was now a go. The source recalled, “Bill Burns comes back and says, The Norwegian navy was quick to find the right spot, in the shallow water a few miles off Denmark's Bornholm Island . . .”

The operation

Norway was the perfect place to base the mission. In the past few years of East-West crisis, the US military has vastly expanded its presence inside Norway, whose western border runs 1,400 miles along the north Atlantic Ocean and merges above the Arctic Circle with Russia. The Pentagon has created high paying jobs and contracts, amid some local controversy, by investing hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade and expand American Navy and Air Force facilities in Norway. The new works included, most importantly, an advanced synthetic aperture radar far up north that was capable of penetrating deep into Russia and came online just as the American intelligence community lost access to a series of long-range listening sites inside China. A newly refurbished American submarine base, which had been under construction for years, had become operational and more American submarines were now able to work closely with their Norwegian colleagues to monitor and spy on a major Russian nuclear redoubt 250 miles to the east, on the Kola Peninsula.

America also has vastly expanded a Norwegian air base in the north and delivered to the Norwegian air force a fleet of Boeing-built P8 Poseidon patrol planes to bolster its long-range spying on all things Russia.

In return, the Norwegian government angered liberals and some moderates in its parliament last November by passing the Supplementary Defense Cooperation Agreement (SDCA). Under the new deal, the US legal system would have jurisdiction in certain “agreed areas” in the North over American soldiers accused of crimes off base, as well as over those Norwegian citizens accused or suspected of interfering with the work at the base.

Norway was one of the original signatories of the NATO Treaty in 1949, in the early days of the Cold War. Today, the supreme commander of NATO is Jens Stoltenberg, a committed anti-communist, who served as Norway's prime minister for eight years before moving to his high NATO post, with American backing, in 2014. He was a hardliner on all things Putin and Russia who had cooperated with the American intelligence community since the Vietnam War. He has been trusted completely since. “He is the glove that fits the American hand,” the source said.

Back in Washington, planners knew they had to go to Norway. “They hated the Russians, and the Norwegian navy was full of superb sailors and divers who had generations of experience in highly profitable deep-sea oil and gas exploration,” the source said. They also could be trusted to keep the mission secret. (The Norwegians may have had other interests as well. The destruction of Nord Stream—if the Americans could pull it off—would allow Norway to sell vastly more of its own natural gas to Europe.)

Sometime in March, a few members of the team flew to Norway to meet with the Norwegian Secret Service and Navy. One of the key questions was where exactly in the Baltic Sea was

the best place to plant the explosives. Nord Stream 1 and 2, each with two sets of pipelines, were separated much of the way by little more than a mile as they made their run to the port of Greifswald in the far northeast of Germany.

The Norwegian navy was quick to find the right spot, in the shallow waters of the Baltic sea a few miles off Denmark's Bornholm Island. The pipelines ran more than a mile apart along a seafloor that was only 260 feet deep. That would be well within the range of the divers, who, operating from a Norwegian Alta class mine hunter, would dive with a mixture of oxygen, nitrogen and helium streaming from their tanks, and plant shaped C4 charges on the four pipelines with concrete protective covers. It would be tedious, time consuming and dangerous work, but the waters off Bornholm had another advantage: there were no major tidal currents, which would have made the task of diving much more difficult.

After a bit of research, the Americans were all in.

At this point, the Navy's obscure deep-diving group in Panama City once again came into play. The deep-sea schools at Panama City, whose trainees participated in Ivy Bells, are seen as an unwanted backwater by the elite graduates of the Naval Academy in Annapolis, who typically seek the glory of being assigned as a Seal, fighter pilot, or submariner. If one must become a “Black Shoe”—that is, a member of the less desirable surface ship command—there is always at least duty on a destroyer, cruiser or amphibious ship. The least glamorous of all is mine warfare. Its divers never appear in Hollywood movies, or on the cover of popular magazines.

“The best divers with deep diving qualifications are a tight community, and only the very best are recruited for the operation and told to be prepared to be summoned to the CIA in Washington,” the source said.

The Norwegians and Americans had a location and the operatives, but there was another concern: any unusual underwater activity in the waters off Bornholm might draw the attention

of the Swedish or Danish navies, which could report it.

Denmark had also been one of the original NATO signatories and was known in the intelligence community for its special ties to the United Kingdom. Sweden had applied for membership into NATO, and had demonstrated its great skill in managing its underwater sound and magnetic sensor systems that successfully tracked Russian submarines that would occasionally show up in remote waters of the Swedish archipelago and be forced to the surface.

The Norwegians joined the Americans in insisting that some senior officials in Denmark and Sweden had to be briefed in general terms about possible diving activity in the area. In that way, someone higher up could intervene and keep a report out of the chain of command, thus insulating the pipeline operation. “What they were told and what they knew were purposely different,” the source told me. (The Norwegian embassy, asked to comment on this story, did not respond.)

The Norwegians were key to solving other hurdles. The Russian navy was known to possess surveillance technology capable of spotting, and triggering, underwater mines. The American explosive devices needed to be camouflaged in a way that would make them appear to the Russian system as part of the natural background—something that required adapting to the specific salinity of the water. The Norwegians had a fix. The Norwegians also had a solution to the crucial question of *when* the operation should take place. Every June, for the past 21 years, the American Sixth Fleet, whose flagship is based in Gaeta, Italy, south of Rome, has sponsored a major NATO exercise in the Baltic Sea involving scores of allied ships throughout the region. The current exercise, held in June, would be known as Baltic Operations 22, or BALTOPS 22. The Norwegians proposed this would be the ideal cover to plant the mines.

The Americans provided one vital element: they convinced the Sixth Fleet planners to add a research and development exercise to the program. The exercise, as made public by the

Navy, involved the Sixth Fleet in collaboration with the Navy's “research and warfare centers.” The at-sea event would be held off the coast of Bornholm Island and involve NATO teams of divers planting mines, with competing teams using the latest underwater technology to find and destroy them.

It was both a useful exercise and ingenious cover. The Panama City boys would do their thing and the C4 explosives would be in place by the end of BALTOPS22, with a 48-hour timer attached. All of the Americans and Norwegians would be long gone by the first explosion.

The days were counting down. “The clock was ticking, and we were nearing mission accomplished,” the source said.

And then: Washington had second thoughts. The bombs would still be planted during BALTOPS, but the White House worried that a two-day window for their detonation would be too close to the end of the exercise, and it would be obvious that America had been involved.

Instead, the White House had a new request: “Can the guys in the field come up with some way to blow the pipelines later on command?” Some members of the planning team were angered and frustrated by the President's seeming indecision. The Panama City divers had repeatedly practiced planting the C4 on pipelines, as they would during BALTOPS, but now the team in Norway had to come up with a way to give Biden what he wanted—the ability to issue a successful execution order at a time of his choosing.

Being tasked with an arbitrary, last-minute change was something the CIA was accustomed to managing. But it also renewed the concerns some shared over the necessity, and legality, of the entire operation.

The President's secret orders also evoked the CIA's dilemma in the Vietnam War days, when President Johnson, confronted by growing anti-Vietnam War sentiment, ordered the Agency to violate its charter—which specifically barred it from operating inside America—by spying on antiwar leaders to determine whether they were being controlled by Communist