

## Committee Faults Energy Commission Over 'Confusion' Surrounding Proposed Ban On Second Hand Appliances



**Some Members Of The Second Hand Dealers Association**

**T**he Mines and Energy Committee of Parliament over the weekend took a swipe at the Energy Commission of Ghana for not consulting them before getting a Legislative Instrument on proposed ban on second hand appliances passed

in the house. According to the Parliamentary Committee, for the Energy Commission and government to propose such a ban on second hand appliances which business involves the livelihoods of over 100,000

Ghanaians without considering a smooth transition which involves a periodic time frame and education for such a ban is unacceptable. The Committee was not happy that the Energy Commission did

*Cont. on page 3*

## GOLD FOR OIL

### A Smart Barter Deal Or Smooth Gold Stealing Scheme?

*Asks Dr. Kwame Ampofo*

**D**r. Kwame Ampofo, an Energy Consultant and former Member of Parliament (MP) for South Dayi

has questioned the Gold for Oil Policy, a barter arrangement recently announced by the government of Ghana wondering

whether it is a smart barter deal or a smart (smooth) gold stealing scheme.

According to the energy expert,

*Cont. on pages 6&7*

### China Reboots 'No Limit' Partnership With Russia

*page 10*

## Health Crisis Looms In Tema

**...As Unauthorized Persons Allegedly Issue Certification To Food Handlers At TMA**



**Kwaku Agyeman-Manu, Minister of Health**

**T**here is looming health crisis at the Tema Metropolis in the Greater Accra Region following reports that some unauthorized persons at the Metro Office are allegedly providing certification to food handlers contrary to laid down regulations. Already, this paper learnt that the matter was brought before the Tema Metropolitan Chief Executive in a memo presented

*Cont. on page 5*

### Kejetia Fire Disaster: Peace Watch CEO Calls For Resignation Of Chief Fire Officer



*page 2*

# The INSIGHT

## — EDITORIAL

### DEAL WITH IT!

**T**he revelation that there is upsurge in stroke cases among young people per records at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi is very deeply worrying.

There is clearly no doubt that non-communicable or lifestyle diseases appear to have fast taken over from communicable which used to be our bane as a country. According to the Neurologist, Dr. Fred Stephen Sarfo those as young as 13 are now developing the condition which one suffers when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts resulting in lack of blood to the brain and thus death of the brain cells.

According to the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital it records between 800 and one thousand cases, each year with more than 300 dying and the rest becoming permanently disabled.

With its high risk factors being hypertension, diabetes, high alcohol intake and lack of exercise among others, there is the need for improved or change in lifestyle including other health measures to adequately deal with the situation. Stress is also another causative or factor and health authorities need to intensify public education to reverse the tide. The revelation that there is upsurge in stroke cases among young people per records at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi is very deeply worrying.

There is clearly no doubt that non-communicable or lifestyle diseases appear to have fast taken over from communicable which used to be our bane as a country. According to the Neurologist, Dr. Fred Stephen Sarfo those as young as 13 are now developing the condition which one suffers when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts resulting in lack of blood to the brain and thus death of the brain cells.

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## Kejetia Fire Disaster: Peace Watch CEO Calls For Resignation Of Chief Fire Officer

**T**he Chief Executive Officer of Peace Watch Ghana, Madam Diana Yonkopa Daniels, has

called on the Chief Fire Officer, CFO

Julius Kuunour Aalebkure to

immediately resign over the recent

spate of fire outbreaks in the country.

Her call comes on the heels of last

Wednesday's fire outbreak at the

Kumasi Central Market popularly known as the "Kejetia market".

According to her reports of fire tenders getting to fire scenes without adequate

water to extinguish raging fires is

becoming one too many. Although the

fire service was able to extinguish the

fire which happened on Wednesday,

March 15, 2023, eye witnesses accused

the firefighters of not having enough

water in their tenders before reaching

the fire scene.

According to some eye witnesses and

fire victims the water challenge resulted

in the fire spreading to other areas of

the market which is fairly new in

construction.

In view of that, Peace Watch Ghana CEO

whose Organization has been at the

forefront of promoting peace, security

and interests of other paramilitary

institutions believes the Chief Fire

Officer cannot escape blame this time.

Speaking in an interview, she said in this

day and age of technology with its

accompanying equipment no one

struggles to fight fire and allows it to

spread to destroy the wares and

livelihoods of traders.

"He must resign. I am aware the fire

service has been equipped over the

years by governments after

governments. What excuse does this

Chief Fire Officer have for not ensuring

that a strategic market of this nature

will be allowed to go in that much

flames without their prompt arrival to



**Diana Yonkopa Daniels**

put out the fire", she said.

She added that, "There is no way he can even say they were not called in time because everybody now knows the short code and numbers to the Fire Service which are 112, 192, 0302772446 and would have surely called on time", she pointed out.

Madam Yonkopa Daniels, who was not too happy with the situation called on the Chief Fire Officer to resign before he is fired.

## THE INSIGHT

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# Committee Faults Energy Commission Over 'Confusion' Surrounding Proposed Ban On Second Hand Appliances

## from front page

not consult them in all their deliberations in proposing the ban despite having the finest brains on the committee which involves lawyers, economists, energy experts and former energy ministers among others. The committee therefore said it intended to invite the Energy Commission for their reason for the ban despite being told it is mainly about reducing energy consumption, something which the second hand dealers Association has refuted claiming second hand appliances do not consume much energy as claimed by the Energy Commission. The Parliamentary Select Committee on Mines and Energy raised the concerns when the leadership of second hand dealers association met them last Friday to express their concerns over the proposed ban. Already, the Committee is of the opinion that any proposed ban on second hand appliances for new appliances should consider the costs and purchasing power of Ghanaian consumers most of whom cannot afford brand new electrical appliances. The Ranking Member on Parliament's Mines & Energy Committee, John Abdulai Jinapor, asked the government to immediately review its decision to ban the importation of all used electrical appliances. According to him, this directive will render a majority of Ghanaians who trade in these appliances unemployed and have severe economic consequences on the already impoverished Ghanaian consumer. He said the decision by the Government of Ghana, acting through the Energy Commission, to ban the importation of all used electrical appliances into the country is most unfortunate and must be reviewed immediately. The MP said even more disturbing is the lack of a grace period or transition period before implementing this policy. "For such a policy that has far-reaching consequences, it is only proper that some transition period is allowed to enable traders and consumers ample time to adjust to the policy, especially this time that the uncertainties in the Ghanaian

economy are abound", he said stressing that the way and manner in which the Legislative Instrument (LI) was rushed through Parliament without adequate consultation and extensive engagement with the various stakeholders was most unfortunate and appalling. "It is important to remind the Energy Commission that best practices will require the Commission to engage in extensive consultations, particularly with the Mines and Energy Committee of Parliament, to solicit their views and input on such an important LI before implementation." Other members of the committee such as Dr. Kwabena Donkor, Armah Kofi Buah, Samuel Atta Akyea among others raised concerns about the lack of transition period and adequate education for the proposed ban. The Energy Commission, it would be recalled, announced a ban on the importation of 20 used electrical appliances and renewable energy products earlier last month. This regulation, according to the commission, entered into force on November 2, 2022. A statement from the commission said the ban was to prevent Ghana from becoming a destination for used and substandard products, to protect the environment and to protect consumers from paying high electricity bills. Some of the products are air conditioners, television sets, electric kettles, washing machines and fans. "To protect the livelihoods of persons in the electrical appliances and renewable energy products markets, the Regulations provide for a transitional period of one year for the market to adjust," the statement said. However, Second Hand Dealers Association in a press statement after meeting the Parliamentary Select Committee on Mines and Energy signed by Daniel Asare, its Chairman called for a repeal of the law calling for the ban. This is the full text of their press statement; **Concerned Second Hand Dealers Association** 17<sup>TH</sup> March, 2023 **PRESS STATEMENT** You are all warmly welcomed to our press conference. We have gathered here today to alert the general public of our old fight to kick against the ban on importation of second hand electrical appliances by the Energy Commission. We want the law to be repealed. Our reasons are very simple and understandable by everyone which the Energy Commission themselves

totally bear with us but because of arrogance, fear and panic from the general public to see their incompetence about their job, they are still showing their naivety and shoddy work. The work done by the Commission is fiasco and we will advise the sitting government to start investigating them immediately and quickly make changes at the Energy Commission to avoid future harm to the government and the nation at large. It is very shameful for a high institution like the Energy Commission to state in their press release that, used appliances are high energy guzzlers. Stating further that in 2003, a study conducted by the Energy Foundation revealed that a whopping 30% of the total national electricity generation was wasted on used appliances. We want to ask the Energy Commission what work at all are they doing for our dear nation? Do they have proper researchers? We don't think they have since they are using twenty (20) solid year old research which was not even conducted by them. They are just failures and causing financial lost to the state. They need to be sacked. No wonder the Commission has deceived the sitting government with snarky tactics by using 2012 slabs also boldly wrote it in their press release, this is a fiasco to the Commission and the nation as a whole. Mr. Hurbert Zan through an interview with Accra based radio station Atinka FM on their morning show dated 27th January 2023 stated that, the Commission were banning these second hand electronic appliances because of our weather climate being different from the European weather so these appliances becomes dangerous and unfriendly to use in Ghana. We are telling Mr. Hurbert and the entire Energy Commission to go back to school and learn well before they come out with this diabolical statement. We could even see from where we are sitting that some of them are using fake certificates and do not merit the positions they are handling. It is only car tyres which due to European weather are been changed to use specific types during the winter season. So who is lecturing them with this mischievous statement? On 26th January 2023, the same Mr. Hurbert said on Adom FM show Edwaso Nsem that if Ghanaians can afford to buy "iPhone 14 PRO MAX" why can't we afford to buy brand new electrical appliances. How can



a person employed to work for such a higher institution make such a shameful statement on a big platform forgetting all his family members and people from his hometown cannot afford to buy iPhone14 PRO MAX. We want him and the Commission to understand that, there are still some people in this country who are not using mobile phones at all not to even talk of common "yam" phones due to economic hardship. Through their various interviews with different radio and television stations, there are inconsistencies in their own statements. Because they said on Adom FM, Atinka FM and UTV that they have ban nineteen (19) electrical appliances but due to the unbearable heat and pressure from us, they granted another interview with GBC radio saying they are regulating these appliances. So which is which? They again said on Angle FM, Kumasi based radio station that they never made mentioned of second hand electrical appliances being hazardous but it was rather the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which made that statement. We want to again ask them why did they include it in their press statement? If it is not from their source. So the Commission wants to tell Ghanaians that they have plagiarized the EPA? Again showing high level of incompetency. The Commission made false statement to the general public about the terminology Dumping, which they claim Dumping is defined as the practice of exporting to another country or territory products that: contain hazardous substances; have environmental performance lower than is in the interest of consumers or that is contrary to the interests of local and global commons; are often too inefficient to sell in the appliance markets of the countries of manufacturer or their export inflicts economic, social and environmental cost on vulnerable populations in the receiving countries. Which website did they get this terminology Dumping from or they

conjured or formulated it themselves. We are very sure they don't know what they are saying but just saying and typing anything that comes in mind. We are stating categorically that Dumping is a term used in the context of international trade. It's when a country or company export a product at a price that is lower in the foreign importing market than the price in the exporter's domestic market. Dumping is legal under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules unless the foreign country can reliably show the negative effects the exporting firm has caused it's domestic producers. The big question here is; do we have domestic producers for these outlined electrical appliances the Commission is banning? We therefore draws the attention of the Commission on the terminology Dumping as having direct relation with cheaper prices or prices relatively lower but not what they said in their press release. The funniest aspect of their statement is that, they are claiming that importers in this business do not pay duty. When did the Ghana Immigration Service hire these unscrupulous citizens to do their work for them? They should concentrate on their own work which they are finding it so difficult to do. We all were thinking the Commission was doing a great job but we have now realized that they are doing more harm than good. All that we are saying is the Energy Commission has totally deceived the Energy Ministry with malevolence and we want a total repeal of the law. We appreciate your time with us. Thank you. Signed Daniel Asare Chairman, Second Hand Dealers Association



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Working Class Slams The 'Anti-Worker' Budget In The UK



*The controversial Spring Budget comes amid a wave of strikes and mobilizations by trade unions in the country. Photo: Jeremy Corbyn. For more than a year, workers across the UK have been demanding an increase in wages to combat the cost of living crisis*

Trade unions, left parties, and civil society organizations in the UK have denounced the Spring Budget 2023, delivered by Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt on Wednesday, March 15. The Chancellor and the Tory party have claimed that the Budget sets forth a growth

plan for the country that will help avoid recession and halve the soaring inflation this year. However, trade unions have condemned that it fails to tackle the ongoing public sector pay disputes and neglects the overwhelming demand for an increase in wages at par

with inflation. It has been further criticized on the grounds that it calls for an increase in the UK's defense spending to 2.25% of the GDP, and promised £11 billion (USD 13.26 billion) to the defense budget over the next five years.

Hundreds of thousands of workers affiliated to various trade unions continued their strikes, demonstrations, and pickets on Wednesday, protesting the fall in real wages and demanding pay restoration. Workers on strike hailed from unions such as the National Education Union (NEU), University and

Colleges Union (UCU), Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union, the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), Junior Doctors, and others. To this date, rather than engaging with the protesting workers, the Tory government has resorted to regressive anti-labor measures such as the [anti-strike bill](#) and the [Scabs Charter](#) in order to break strikes and penalize protesting unions and their workers. As there is no significant and structural relief promised for the overworked and underpaid working class in the 2023 Budget, citing predictions by the Office for Budget Responsibility, the *Morning Star* has [reported](#) that “the take-home disposable income per person in the country would tumble 5.7% by March 2024.”

In a statement on March 15, Robert Griffiths, the general secretary of the Communist Party of Britain (CPB), [described](#) the budget as “more pain today, perhaps some jam tomorrow.” The CPB leader also said, “the Treasury is foregoing

around £27bn in [Corporation Tax] revenue over the next three years—income that could have been invested in green energy-saving and cost-cutting programs that would keep people warm and help them travel more easily for work, family and leisure purposes.”

On Wednesday, the leader of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), Mick Lynch, [stated](#) that “this is a budget for the wealthy thought up by a government that are servants of the super rich...The policies of pay restraint mean workers are getting poorer and are having to work for longer just to make end's meet.” “That is why regardless of what Jeremy Hunt has said today workers will continue to fight for a better deal in the workplace and in their communities,” he added. Jeremy Corbyn, MP and former Labour leader, also criticized the budget on Wednesday, and [wrote](#): “on the same day that 700,000 workers went on strike for decent pay, Jeremy Hunt handed out £9bn in tax cuts to corporations.”

### Saudi Arabia And Iran Normalize Ties In China-Brokered Deal

On March 10, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the People's Republic of China issued a [joint trilateral statement](#) announcing the normalization of ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Iran and Saudi Arabia have had a tense relationship since 2016, when Iranian protesters attacked the Saudi Arabian embassy in Tehran after the Saudi execution of Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, a prominent Shiite cleric and a critic of the Saudi government. Saudi Arabia and its allies subsequently [cut ties](#) with Iran following these protests. According to the joint statement,



the agreement between nations “includes their affirmation of the respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in internal affairs of states.” This diplomatic move signals an important step in the leadership of China in global diplomacy, and a shift away from US hegemony, especially in West Asia. This comes after China's announcement in December

2022 to Gulf state leaders in Riyadh, that China would work to [buy oil and gas in yuan](#), rather than the US dollar. At the time, when asked about Saudi Arabia's ties with Washington given strengthening relations with China, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said, “We do not believe in polarization or in choosing between sides.” Marxist academic and journalist Vijay Prashad [wrote](#) of the agreement, “The Chinese bring together Saudi Arabia and Iran. The United States want the Saudis to join with Israel in a military bloc against Iran. You tell me who is trying to create a zone of peace for our time.”



# Health Crisis Looms In Tema

## ...As Unauthorized Persons Allegedly Issue Certification To Food Handlers At TMA



**Kwaku Agyeman-Manu, Minister of Health**

on February 7, 2023 but no action has since been taken over the development. This paper is reliably informed that the Finance Officer at the Metro Office is now the one who certifies food handlers to prepare or provide food for sale to the public instead of an Environmental Health Officer or

Health Inspector as is known under section 49 of the Public Health Act 851, 2012 and section 14 of Local Government Act who perform such activities under the Public Health Act for purposes of ensuring public health and safety. Per the law Health Certificate is

undertaken to ensure that persons who handled food for public consumption are fit to do so.

Under this background, the Environmental Health and Sanitation Management Department is established and the personnel trained to educate food handlers and issue a certificate when they are declared fit by a Medical Officer, a function performed in consonance with the Medical Officer and the Food and Drugs Authority.

This is reflected in the TMA Bye-Laws section 21 subsection 6 (a)&(b) and the Public Health Act 851, 2012 section 82 (b) and section 135 (5a) and 149.

This certification is handled by a health personnel who understands the health implication of issuing a certificate to someone to handle

food for public consumption.

However, happenings at the Tema Metro where the Finance Director and other unauthorized persons are alleged to be doing the certification has raised eyebrows and causing consternation because of the fear of a looming health crisis.

It would be recalled that only recently some five persons who ate "Waakye" reportedly died in what was said to be food poisoning.

In view of that, tongues are wagging as a result of current happenings.

Attempts by this paper to contact the finance director and the metro chief executive for their response to the allegation proved futile as at the time of going to press.

This is a copy of the memo written to the Tema Metropolitan Chief Executive;

TEMA  
METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO THE METRO  
CHIEF OFFICER  
FROM: METRO ENV.  
HEALTH OFFICER  
DATE: 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY,  
2023

Subject: complaint on unauthorized person endorsing and declaring food handlers fit to handle food for public consumption.

The Environmental Health Officer or Health Inspector is known under section 49 of the Public Health Act 851, 2012 and section 14 of Local Government Act to perform activities under the Public Health Act for purposes of ensuring public health and safety. Health Certificate is undertaken to ensure that persons who handled food for public consumption are fit to do so.

Under this background, the Environmental Health and Sanitation Management Department is established and the personnel trained to educate food handlers and issue a certificate when they are declared fit by a Medical Officer, a function performed in consonance with the

Medical Officer and the Food and Drugs Authority. This is reflected in the TMA Bye-Laws section 21 subsection 6(a)&(b) and the Public Health Act 851, 2012 section 82(b) and section 135(5a) and 149. I have herewith attached copies of food handlers' certificate endorsed by the Metro Finance Officer of Tema Metropolitan Assembly, whose professional scope or content of work is not within the health profession as shown on the attached copy he has endorsed and declared fit health certificates for food handlers and certify same to handle food.

I am not aware under the Public Health Act 851, 2012 and the Health Professions Regulatory Bodies Act, Act 857, 2013 that the Metro Finance Officer, who has endorsed and certify a food handler's certificate to handle food is an authorized Health Officer. He is also within attached laboratory report, the blood sample is the only sample of the food handler taken and analyzed by the laboratory Scientist/Technician neglecting the stool and urine samples that are included for examination when food handlers are screened.

I write to your office to help ensure that the required guidelines and code of practice by the Food and Drugs Authority are implemented. I look forward to hearing from you within fourteen (14) working days as I prepare to take further action.

Thank you for your cooperation  
WISDOM ADITSEY  
METRO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS  
CC:  
HEAD, METRO HEALTH DIRECTORATE  
TEMA METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY  
TEMA  
THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER  
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICE  
ACCRA  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT  
GHANA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS ASSOCIATION  
ACCRA  
THE HEAD LEGAL DEPARTMENT  
TEMA METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY  
TEMA.

## Policy Inconsistencies Of NPP Govt Collapsing Ghana's Economy – Prof. Lord Mensah

Lecturer at the University of Ghana Business School, Professor Lord Mensah has highlighted the issue of policy inconsistencies of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) government, as the root cause of Ghana's economic woes. In an interview with Samuel Eshun on e.tv Ghana's Fact Sheet programme, Professor Lord Mensah reiterated that the removal of road tolls was a policy decision that had a negative impact on the country's finances. He stated that the purpose of tolls was to generate revenue for the road fund, which in turn was used for road maintenance and other purposes. However, with the introduction of the e-levy, which was supposed to cover road tolls, the government failed to maintain roads, leading to their deterioration and the eventual need for reconstruction. This, in turn, has resulted in a huge financial loss to the country. "We might take things for granted and say when you dip your hands directly into the government coffers that is when you're causing financial loss to the state. But then

some decisions which create a cost indirectly to the country is also a way of causing financial loss to the state," he told Samuel Eshun.

Professor Mensah emphasized that policy inconsistencies have serious consequences on the economy, as they create chaos and uncertainty, which make it difficult to raise funds to pay off debts.

He further stated that the failure of the government to pay matured bonds was a clear indication of the dire situation the country finds itself in. "We shouldn't take this for granted as it was removed and now being introduced so nothing is being lost. When you create chaos in your policy deliveries you end up messing up the economy and this is exactly what we find ourselves in now. The point where we cannot even raise money to pay out debts and as of last week bonds that were matured have not been paid. Are we going to continue having these inconsistencies in policies that



*Lecturer at the University of Ghana Business School, Professor Lord Mensah*

will create more cost for us thereby building up into our public debt?" The professor called on the government to address the policy inconsistencies and take steps to stabilize the economy. He also urged the government to be more transparent in its decision-making processes and involve stakeholders in policy formulation to ensure that policies are well thought out and properly implemented. Meanwhile, after abolishing road tolls in November 2021 as part of what the Finance Minister says was an effort to reduce traffic flow and enhance productivity, the Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta is back in Parliament with another proposal seeking to bring back the tax, this time at a slightly higher rate.

Source: [etvghana.com](http://etvghana.com)

# Galamsey: Government Takes Steps To Resolve Transboundary Water Pollution

Government of Ghana has taken steps to resolve transboundary issues on river pollution regarding the Tano and Bia rivers which also flows through Ivorian waters.

To this end, the Ministries of Lands and Natural Resources, Sanitation and Water resources, Defence and Environment Science Technology and Innovation have met a high powered delegation from Cote D'Ivoire, led by the Ivorian Minister for water and Forest, Laurent Tchagba.

Ghana's Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Samuel A. Jinapor who co-chaired the meeting with the Sanitation and Water Resources Minister, Cecilia Abena Dapaah on 14th March 2023, informed the Ivorian delegation that there has been a lot of challenges in protecting the country's river bodies, however, government has not relented for once as the President of the Republic, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo keeps waging war against illegal miners in the country.

Mr Jinapor who also spoke on behalf of the Defence Minister, Dominic Nitiwul said the Ghana government has adopted a two-pronged approach to fighting illegal Mining, popularly known as galamsey which is the main source of pollution of the country's river bodies.

The two-pronged approach which he mentioned to be law enforcement and reformation, has seen to the declaration of river bodies as red zones to mining and also authorizing the involvement of the Military on Operation Halt, an initiative geared towards riding the rivers off illegal miners.

The Lands Minister further stated that although illegal mining continues to pose a threat on the countries river bodies, he is optimistic that out of the deliberations of the meeting, they will be able to come to a firm conclusion that will help resolve the issues of water pollution in both countries, adding that he looks forward to working closely with all stakeholders to come to grips on the matter plaguing both countries.

The Sanitation and Water

Resources Minister, Cecilia Abena Dapaah for her part, noted that water is very central to the wellbeing of people around the world and not only Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire, therefore, it is pertinent to take up the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 6 which advocates clean water and sanitation for all.

She also hoped that this bilateral meeting will help both countries take cognisance of the far reaching effects of a waterless world and make concrete decisions that will help both countries and the world at large.

The leader of the Ivorian delegation and Minister for Water and Forests, Cote D'Ivoire in his submission expressed his gratitude for a warm reception from all participating Ministries.

He said the issue of water is important in the history of both countries as it binds them in one way or the other and hoped that together they will be able to confer on issues and resolve the common challenge.



**Lands and Natural Resources Minister, Samuel Abu Jinapor**

Also at the bilateral meeting on the Ghana side were the Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr. Kwaku Afriyie, the Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, responsible for Lands and Forestry, Benito Owusu-Bio, CEOs of the Minerals Commission and Environmental Protection Agency, Mr. Martin Ayisi and Dr. Henry Kwabena Kokofu, respectively.

The Managing Director of the Ghana Water Company, Dr.

Clifford A. Braimah, the National Coordinator of the Boundary Commission, Major General Emmanuel Kotia and other officials from all Ministries were also present.

On the Ivorian side, were the Ambassador of Cote D'Ivoire to Ghana, Bernard Ehui - Koutoua, Defence Security Technical Coordinator of the National Border Commission of Côte D'Ivoire, Loua Deti Cesar and other officials.

# Representation Of The Frente POLISARIO At The United Nations

**P**RESS RELEASE [New York, 11 March 2023]: The permanent representative of the occupying state of Morocco to the United Nations recently sent a letter to the President of the Security Council in a desperate attempt to distract from the letter addressed by the President of the Sahrawi Republic (SADR) and Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO, H.E. Mr Brahim Ghali, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr António Guterres, regarding the outcomes of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Frente POLISARIO, which the Security Council circulated to Member States as an official document.

The letter of the representative of the occupying state of Morocco, in both format and content, is yet another example of this person's obsession with fabrication, slander, and misrepresentation. As usual, because of lack of any evidence to support the series of his mendacious allegations, the representative of the occupying state has resorted again to *ad hominem* attacks and blaming others in a language that goes against the basic rules and ethics of diplomacy and tact.

The letter is part of the Moroccan

regime's desperate attempt to discredit the legitimate liberation struggle waged by the Sahrawi people, under the leadership of the Frente POLISARIO, against the illegal Moroccan occupation of parts of the Sahrawi Republic (SADR), which has entered a new phase since 13 November 2020. In this respect, the representative of the occupying state claims that the Frente POLISARIO has ties with "terrorist groups" citing an article published in a European newspaper whose content is based on the hearsay of an unknown person, which demonstrates the absurdity of the representative's claims.

Everyone, including the partners of the occupying state, is well aware of the nature of these allegations, which are not new. Suffice it to refer in this context to the answer given by Mr Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on 17 February 2023, in which he stated that the European Union, the main partner of the occupying state, did not have information on alleged collaboration between the Frente POLISARIO and terrorist groups in the region.

The indisputable fact is that the occupying state of Morocco is the largest producer and exporter of cannabis in the world as confirmed by several international reports including the US Department of State's 2022 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's World Drug Report 2022.

The dissemination of such mendacious propaganda by the representative of the occupying state of Morocco is nothing but an attempt to conceal the well-documented role of the occupying state in supporting terrorism and transnational terrorist groups that depend on Moroccan cannabis and other drugs as the main source for financing their terrorist operations in the Sahel-Sahara region.

The continuation of the military illegal occupation of parts of the Territory of the Sahrawi Republic (SADR) by the occupying state of Morocco, its continued expansionism as well as its attempt to "increment" its power by allying itself with external parties is the real threat to the security and

stability of the entire region.

In his letter, the representative of the occupying state claims that the Security Council welcomed the work of the "human rights commissions" of the occupying state in the Occupied Sahrawi Territories. The fact confirmed by the reports of many international organisations is that the occupying state of Morocco is a state that does not respect human rights due to its appalling and well-documented record of human rights violations in the Occupied Sahrawi Territories where Sahrawi civilians, human rights activists and defenders are subjected continually to terrorisation and the most heinous forms of psychological and physical torture.

The occupying state of Morocco is also the least qualified in the world to speak about human rights because of its political regime based on tyranny and degradation of human dignity. The mass demonstrations currently taking place in many parts of the kingdom demonstrate the rejection by free Moroccans of decades of oppression, impoverishment, and enslavement.

In closing, resorting to fabrication, slander, and misrepresentation is also a

blatant attempt by the representative of the occupying state of Morocco to divert attention from the scandals that have come to haunt the occupying state after it has been proven by conclusive evidence that it is involved in the use of bribery, corruption and participation in a criminal organisation to influence current and former members of the European Parliament (MEPs). No wonder for it is an open secret that these are precisely the main tools on which the diplomacy of the occupying state relies in its operation.

As a result, several MEPs have called for the Moroccan regime to be punished for its mafia-like criminal behaviour, while investigations led by Belgian Authorities continue to uncover more details of what has become known as the "MoroccoGate" scandal.

Dr Sidi M. Omar  
Representative of the Frente POLISARIO at the United Nations Coordinator with MINURSO



# China Reboots 'No Limit' Partnership With Russia

By M. K. Bhadrakumar

The 'butterfly effect' of the visit by Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee, to Moscow on February 21-22 is already discernible. It can influence a much larger complex system still. The two sides agreed to consolidate and develop the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era and to continue to closely coordinate their foreign policy efforts; the Ukraine crisis situation, which is at a tipping point, has further tilted in Russia's favor; and, Chinese diplomacy on the post-pandemic rebound is signalling a periodic long-term behavior that can generate 'deterministic chaos' in Eurasia and Asia-Pacific. Wang Yi had meetings with the Secretary of Russia's Security Council Nikolai Patrushev — as coordinators of the mechanism of China-Russia Strategic Security Consultation — and with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and President Vladimir Putin. The [Russian readout](#) said that “The parties praised the current state of Russian-Chinese relations, which continue to expand dynamically in the context of sharp changes in the international arena... They underscored the importance of further strengthening close foreign policy coordination... They also reiterated the futility of attempts by third countries to impede the healthy, dynamic progress of Russian-Chinese relations, to restrain the development of our countries through sanctions and other illegitimate means.”

[Wang Yi conveyed to Putin](#) that “Russia-China relationship has stood the test of the drastic changes in the world landscape and become mature and tenacious, standing as firm as Mount Tai... Although crises and

chaos often emerge, challenges and opportunities exist at the same time, and this is the dialectics of history.”

He said China is ready to work with Russia “to maintain strategic resolve, deepen political mutual trust, strengthen strategic coordination, expand practical cooperation and defend the legitimate interests of both countries, to play a constructive role in promoting world peace and development.”

[Putin expressed](#) “the warmest words of gratitude” to Wang Yi for the booming bilateral trade (which reached \$185 billion last year.) In the conditions under sanctions, for Russia, this is a crucial lifeline. Putin mentioned cooperation in the international arena as particularly important “for stabilizing the international situation” and stressed that the Russian side is expecting a visit by President Xi Jinping. The Ukraine situation figured prominently in Wang Yi's meeting with Lavrov where he dwelt on China's “vision of the root causes of the Ukraine crisis” and China's approaches to a political settlement. The Russian readout said Lavrov “commended Beijing's constructive policy and reaffirmed the high level of proximity of our assessments of this agenda.”

The [Chinese readout](#) said Putin and Wang Yi “exchanged in-depth views on the Ukraine issue. Wang Yi appreciated Russia's reaffirmation of its readiness to solve problems through dialogue and negotiations. China will, as always, uphold an objective and just position and play a constructive role in the political settlement.”

Significantly, a day after Wang Yi returned to Beijing from Moscow, the Foreign Ministry issued a statement titled [“China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis”](#). Presumably, Wang Yi sensitized the Russian side beforehand, as the foreign ministry in Moscow

lost no time on the same day to [effusively compliment “our Chinese friends.”](#)

The Chinese statement, couched in principles of neutrality, distinctly tilted in Russia's favor. The core issues highlighted by Moscow in its December 2021 proposal for dialogue with NATO and the US (which the latter ignored) find mention in the Chinese statement.

Significantly, the Chinese statement strongly rejected the unilateral sanctions and maximum pressure by the US and EU against Russia and the West's “long-arm jurisdiction” against other countries. No wonder, the western capitals have taken a dim view of the Chinese statement and see it as loaded in favor of Russia.

The Chinese statement, issued on the first anniversary of the Russian operations in Ukraine, has factored in that the conflict has existential overtones for Moscow and Russia's defeat is simply unthinkable as that would fundamentally shift the global strategic balance against China. Interestingly, there is a pointed reference in the Chinese readout on Wang Yi's talks with Patrushev (Russia's highest-ranking security official) to the effect that “Both sides believed that peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region should be firmly defended and that the introduction of the Cold War mentality, bloc antagonism and ideological confrontation should be opposed.”

The Chinese statement on Ukraine followed the release of two major foreign policy documents in Beijing on successive days. The first one dated February 20 is a frontal attack on the US foreign policies, titled [“US Hegemony and Its Perils”](#).

The 4,080-word document is a veritable iteration of thoughts and perspectives that are frequently articulated in Putin's speeches and writings



*Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) met with Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee Wang Yi, Kremlin, Moscow, February 22, 2023. Russia and China have agreed to consolidate and develop their comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era and to continue to closely coordinate their foreign policy efforts. The forthcoming visit by Xi Jinping to Moscow, likely to take place next month, will be a defining moment*

through the past 15-year period since his famous speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference where the Russian leader spoke on international security problems in a unipolar world characterized by “one type of situation, namely one center of authority, one center of force, one centre of decision-making,” a world in which there is “one master, one sovereign.” The second document issued in Beijing on February 21 is titled [“The Global Security Initiative Concept Paper”](#). In 3580 words, it lays out the guardrails and guiding principles of Chinese foreign policy and stresses the priorities of cooperation in the world community.

Chinese foreign policy is shifting gear. Although the Ukraine crisis and the Taiwan problem cannot be compared, Beijing senses that the weakening of Russia is a vital segment of the US strategy to isolate and confront China, and therefore, the outcome of the conflict in Ukraine is going to be profoundly consequential for China. Indeed, a Russian defeat in Ukraine will constitute a severe setback for China too. Wang Yi's visit testifies that China is willing to step up solidarity with Russia at a juncture when any residual hopes of improving ties with the US have been dashed and that [relationship is in free fall](#). Wang Yi's meeting with Biden last week on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference did not go well. Meanwhile, the US officials are [reportedly confabulating](#) with Taiwan's

foreign minister and National Security Advisor.

President Biden has rejected any mediatory role for China in Ukraine. All things taken into account, the probability is that China may step up its support for Russia. The big question is whether this would take the form of military help. The [CIA director William Burns stated](#) last week that “we're confident that the Chinese leadership is considering the provision of lethal equipment. We also don't see that a final decision has been made yet, and we don't see evidence of actual shipments of lethal equipment.” Yesterday, when asked about US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's warning Sunday that there would be 'real costs' for China if it went forward with providing lethal aid to Russia, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning did not give a direct answer. “The US is in no position to point fingers at China-Russia relations. We do not accept coercion or pressure from the US,” she said.

Interestingly, the Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov also chose not to answer a related question as to whether Russia had asked China to provide any equipment for its special military operation. The forthcoming visit by Xi Jinping to Moscow, likely to take place next month, will be a defining moment. There is a palpable sense of disquiet in the West, as China's manufacturing capability exceeds that of the US and Europe combined. Russia is deferring the big offensive in Ukraine, pending Xi's visit.

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# Yes, The US Gov't Did Bailout The Banks. What Would A People's Bailout Look Like?

The March 10 [collapse](#) of Silicon Valley Bank sent shockwaves throughout the world economy. Since then, the US government moved quickly and decisively to bailout the bank's depositors to the tune of USD 151 billion. The collapse of SVB, a bank utilized heavily by the tech industry and venture capitalists, is the second largest bank failure in US history. Signature Bank, based out of New York, also failed quickly afterwards as SVB's crash triggered distrust in the banking system across the nation. The US government also bailed out Signature, spending USD 70 billion to ensure that the bank's depositors had access to all of their money.

Many are outraged at the amount of money being thrown at banks and venture capitalists, and are calling for a bailout of the people, not the rich.

## Is this really a bailout?

Top US officials including [US President Biden](#) and [Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen](#) have attempted to reassure the public that the government is not in fact bailing out the banks. This is due to the mass public backlash over the sheer quantity of government money spent on these banks.

US politicians have insisted that, unlike the [2008 bank bailouts](#) that generated waves of popular movements from Occupy Wall Street to the Bernie Sanders campaign, no taxpayer money will be spent towards SVB or Signature. Instead, the money is coming from a "special levy" on banks. However, [some have pointed out](#) that the money that banks will use to pay this levy comes from bank profits, which are ultimately generated through fees taken from customers and the money made by speculating using

customers' deposits. In other words, the bank's money is really the people's money.

## Do banks really keep your money safe?

This recent bank crisis has shed light on some uncomfortable truths about the banking system under capitalism. Although the deeper cause of SVB's collapse was the Federal Reserve raising interest rates which devalued government bonds, this interest rate raise caused customers to begin to mistrust SVB's investment in such bonds. This created a "bank run", in which large numbers of depositors begin to withdraw all their money from the bank at once.

Why should it be a problem for depositors to want their money back, if banks exist to keep people's deposits safe and whole? This is because in reality, banks do not keep money safe, they gamble with it. In order to generate profits, banks invest the vast majority of their customers' deposits into stocks, bonds, or other securities. Bank runs happen every few years across the globe, but banks are usually never financially prepared for them, as they are incentivized under capitalism to generate the most profits possible by speculating on more and more of their deposits. For example, if one bank speculates on 90% of their deposits, they will fall behind a bank which speculates on 95%. This was exacerbated in 2020, when the Federal Reserve eliminated the reserve requirement altogether. For decades, banks were required to keep a certain amount of deposits in reserve. But the Fed used the pandemic as an excuse to eliminate this rule, and now banks are

required to keep 0% of deposits in cash. Banks now have very little of their money in cash: SVB had 5% out of USD 175 billion before its crash, and both Bank of America and JPMorgan have 2%.

## What would a bailout of the people look like?

The banks and venture capitalists gamble with people's money. Yet time and time again, the government bails them out when risky gambles naturally go wrong. But some are pointing out that when it comes to the working class, the US government does not invest billions of dollars within a matter of days. The majority-Black city of Jackson, Mississippi has gone without reliable drinking water [since September 2022](#). The bold social spending proposals of the Build Back Better legislation package were slowly chipped away at and ultimately [destroyed](#) supposedly for being too expensive, although the proposed social programs would have been a [fraction](#) of the billions just spent on banks.

Not only is the US not investing in working people—it's [divesting](#). 32-states are set to cut food stamps drastically this month, creating what experts call a "hunger cliff", impacting [over 30 million people](#). Some could see monthly food assistance fall from USD 281 to USD 23. This comes at a time when groceries were [11.3% higher](#) in January than they were a year prior. Eggs, in particular, cost [70% more](#) than they did a year ago.

The dire economic straits of working people in the US are too numerous to list, but here are a few more realities: Tech companies like Uber and Lyft successfully upheld legislation in California that keeps gig workers' wages down to as



*US politicians have insisted that, unlike the 2008 bank bailouts that generated waves of popular movements from Occupy Wall Street to the Bernie Sanders campaign, no taxpayer money will be spent towards SVB or Signature. (Photo: Michael Fleshman). The US is divesting from working people and investing in banks and venture capitalists, to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars*

low as [USD 6.20 an hour](#). [Over one in four](#) US adults have rotting teeth, disproportionately Black people, people with low incomes, and those with less than a high school education. Most people in the US [struggle with weekly expenses](#). Some argue that if the government begins to invest in poor and working people instead of the rich, these efforts will be generously rewarded in the nation's economy. Biden's student debt relief program is currently being [stymied](#) by right-wing billionaire donors in the nation's court system. But student loan forgiveness could boost the US economy, experts say, as more adults would have the money to participate in consumption, especially in [the housing market](#).

More than half of the people in the US from ages 16 to 74 read below a sixth-grade reading level, but if literacy skills are raised through investments in public education, this would generate USD 2.2 trillion in annual income for the US, a [Gallup study](#) found. This would account for almost 8% of the nation's GDP.

*Peoples Dispatch* spoke with *Breakthrough News* journalist Eugene Puryear on what exactly a bailout of the people could look like. "We can look to the precedent that was set during

the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Something like the [Paycheck Protection Program](#) could be set up by the Federal Reserve," Puryear said. "It could also take the form of direct checks to workers who are facing potential disruptions in their income." Puryear proposed the nationalization of private banks. This way, the banks "could keep all of the various operations that need to be going, like payroll, [for] any legitimate business that was somehow caught...in the ructions created by the banks that they chose to do business with."

These solutions, says Puryear, could resolve issues "in the favor of workers and in ways that put the pain most on the investors and the speculators." However, ultimately, "whatever we do to address the SVB crisis, we will be doing again and again and again, because it won't be solving the fundamental problem."

"The only thing we can really do," Puryear said, to end the cycle of economic crises and bank bailouts, "is to get rid of capitalism, because that's where this comes from."