

GHANA CARD

IMANI Worried Over Possible Disenfranchising Of Citizens In 2024



Kofi Bentil, Senior Vice President of IMANI Africa

Kofi Bentil, Senior Vice President of IMANI Africa, has expressed concerns that the Electoral Commission (EC) may disenfranchise some Ghanaian citizens if it insists on

using the Ghana Card as the sole document for voter registration. Bentil believes that citizens without the Ghana Card should not be excluded from the voting

process, and the EC should make other constitutionally acceptable means of identification available to them.

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WHY NKRUMAH NEVER DIES

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Cherish The Peace In Your Country – Palestinian Ambassador To Ghanaians



H.E. Abdalfatah Ahmed Khalil Alsatarri, Palestinian Ambassador to Ghana & Dean of Arab Diplomatic Mission

The Palestinian Ambassador to Ghana and Dean of Arab Diplomatic Missions in Ghana, Abdalfatah Ahmed Khalil Alsatarri, has described Ghana as a very peaceful country for business.

The Palestinian Ambassador indicated that he feels safe when he visits the regions across the country due to the

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We Have No Interest In Doing Bidding Of Any Political Party, Says EC

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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.

GHANA CARD

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from front page

explained that not having the Ghana Card is not the fault of the citizens, as there are still many cards held up in a warehouse somewhere.

"There seems to be an arrangement by which people will be disenfranchised if they do not have the Ghana card.

People will be disenfranchised if they do not have a Ghana card.

"Not having the Ghana card is not of their doing. You've heard about how many cards are held up in a warehouse somewhere," he said. Bentil noted that the law provides a fundamental qualification for voting, and while the Ghana Card does not satisfy this qualification, citizens should not be excluded from the voting process if they do not possess one.

He warned that if any citizen is disenfranchised due to not having the Ghana Card, they may seek legal action against the EC, which could lead to the electoral body losing the case.

Meanwhile, the Chairperson of the EC, Jean Mensa, clarified that the Ghana Card will not be required to vote in the 2024 general election but will only be used as an identification document for registering qualified voters.

"The Ghana Card will not be used for voting in the 2024 election. The Ghana Card is only a required document to register as a voter. Once you present your Card and successfully register as a voter, you would be issued a voter's identification card which bears the code of your region, your district, your electoral area and the name of your polling station.

"The Card does not have these features and therefore it will not be used to vote in the 2024 general election," she disclosed.

However, the Minority caucus in



Kofi Bentil, Senior Vice President of IMANI Africa

Parliament disagrees with this approach, stating that the Ghana Card is not accessible to everyone and cannot be the sole document required for registering voters.

The National Identification Authority (NIA) has stated that a majority of about 17 million Ghanaians have been provided with the Ghana Card, and the rest could be served within six months.

Experts have called for the use of other authorized documents, as some doubt the possibility of serving everyone before the election.

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THE INSIGHT

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WHY NKURUMAH NEVER DIES

By Yen Nyeya

Fifty-seven years ago, an unretrievable catastrophe befell Ghana, precisely on 24th February 1966. Local collaborators, from the privileged classes of landed property and individuals affiliated with the feudal establishment and the top echelons of the army and police, corroborated with foreign imperialist interests (teleguided by American and British Intelligence agencies) overthrew the progressive government of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention Peoples Party (CPP).

They were determined to destroy and prevent Ghana from emerging as a beacon of hope for the African continent.

The policies of CPP of industrialization through import and export substitution industries that created employment and provided goods and services for Ghanaians were aborted. Viable state enterprises were sold out to foreign interests. Those that were considered not viable were abandoned. The state control of some of our extractive sectors such as the gold mines was sold out to foreign capitalist interests.

Ghana was firmly returned to the stranglehold of neo-colonial domination. The Pan-Africanist goal of bringing Africa together was

stopped. The liberation of Africa was not of concern to the new military rulers Lt. Generals Akwasi Amankwa Afrifa and Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka. The foreign press hailed the coup as a return to democracy in Ghana. The capitalist countries led by the United Kingdom and the United States rejoiced on the return of Ghana to neo-colonial domination and their sphere of influence.

On the occasion of the coup, which destroyed anything progressive in Ghana, it is the duty of progressive forces to reflect on this day and work together to revive and continue with the progressive programme of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Over the years, progressive forces have agonized but not acted to salvage Ghana from the neo-colonial calamity that befell Ghana on the 24th of February 1966.

Ghana is a pale shadow of what it was emerging to become shortly after independence. Those who have led Ghana since the 24th of February 1966 coup and the current two competing parties (NPP and NDC) have nothing to offer to the Ghanaian populace. Despite the claim that one is liberal democratic, and the other is social-democratic, they have both pursued very similar policies. They have continued to follow and implement the policies laid down by the foreign capitalist interests that organized the overthrow of the CPP government

led by Nkrumah.

They compete in who is more greedy in looting the wealth of the country and this has brought untold hardship to the Ghanaian population. Millions of young people are without jobs and the few jobs that are available are sold to the highest bidders invariably people connected to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) depending on who is in power. And when they are in power, they invent ways to take money away from the poor as the E-levy seeks to do or rush to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank who will prescribe policies that leave the majority poor in the name of economic growth. There is therefore little to choose from when deciding whether to vote NPP or NDC.

It is incumbent on progressive forces to understand and come to the realization that our inability to offer an alternative to the decadent economic and social system will sustain and deepen the downward slide into poverty and immiseration of the mass of our people.

We, in the Social Justice Movement Ghana (SJMG) have recognized that no single progressive party or organization can provide an alternative to the dyarchy of the NPP/NDC. As a result, we have entered into an alliance with a number of progressive organizations

and formed the Progressive Alliance of Ghana (PAG). PAG shall be a part of a new type where integrity, transparency, and genuine internal democracy rather than who is the biggest financier to the party will determine party policy and practice.

The PAG is almost at the stage of registering as a full-fledged progressive and socialist party with a clear agenda on how to get Ghana out of the stagnation of colonial domination and exploitation. We call on mass organizations and other progressive groups to join us in this noble task to free our country from continued neo-colonial control, domination, and exploitation.

The only way we can avert the damage that has befallen Ghana and destroyed the socio-economic fabric of the country is to come together and complete the task that Kwame Nkrumah started. The struggle must be supported by all of us. We must eschew all forms of sectarianism and realize that the agenda for social transformation can never happen if we remain in our small enclaves and struggle to access resources from the two dominant parties or remain largely in social media (rather than in the villages and towns where the people are) and spend endless hours talking to ourselves instead of mobilizing the mass of the people.

The population is crying for change. The people want a genuine socialist



Kwame Nkrumah, First President of Ghana

organization that can transform this country for us all. It is by working together honestly, transparently and with integrity that we can achieve this collective agenda for social change and avenge the crime of the 24th of February 1966.

Onwards with the struggle for social justice and social transformation in Ghana now. The struggle continues.

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Cherish The Peace In Your Country – Palestinian Ambassador To Ghanaians



H.E. Abdalfatah Ahmed Khalil Alsatarri, Palestinian Ambassador to Ghana & Dean of Arab Diplomatic Mission

peaceful nature of Ghanaians, unlike in some other countries, where you are cautioned against going out at certain times of the day due to the crime rate. According to the ambassador, he does not feel like he is in a foreign land while serving his country in Ghana.

“For me as ambassador, I try all

the time to increase the relationship between my country and Ghana. Because we like this country, we like the people of this country, and we all the time thank all the leaders of this country.

“I've lived in Ghana for eight years and four months. For me, I'm not feeling like I'm in a foreign country. For me, I'm feeling I'm in my country," he said.

He noted that Ghana is like a second home to the Palestinians since they enjoy visiting Ghana due to the friendly nature of the people.

“The Ghanaian people are very generous, generous with the Palestinian people; they greet us all the time. They receive the Palestinian people very well and

very good. I visit a lot of areas in Ghana: I visit Tamale, I visit Wa, I visit Sunyani, Berekum, Western Region, we're feeling Ghana [is] our second country we're not feeling that Ghana [is] a foreign country so we like this country," the Palestinian Diplomat said.

He continued: “Any Palestinian businessman who calls me and says I want to do business in Ghana I ask him to come, 'Don't wait'. All the time, I tell them you can come fast and start to work because Ghana is [a] very peaceful country and all the Palestinian people all in Ghana and Palestine like this country.” On the commonalities between both countries, the ambassador stressed on the culture of peace that Ghana and Palestine share.

“The Ghanaian people believe in the culture of peace. I [visited] some of the countries, you know what they told me when I arrived at the hotel? They told me, don't leave the hotel after six in the evening. “When I arrived at the hotel, they told me please don't try to go outside after six, because they're afraid that thieves will try to kill you and steal your phone. But here in Ghana when I visit Berekum, I'm not afraid of anything,” he touted the former Gold Coast country. He urged Ghanaians to cherish the peace prevailing in the country currently.

“Ghana is a very peaceful country and I ask all the Ghanaian people to know the

importance of this country. Because if they're going to some of the countries in the world, maybe they cannot leave their houses after six, because they're afraid when they go outside...” the Palestinian Ambassador stated.

“The Palestinian people have the same, we have the culture of peace. We're looking for peace, we support peace. “We have the same culture of peace, the Ghanaian people and the Palestinian people,” the ambassador added.

Ambassador Abdalfatah Ahmed Khalil Alsatarri was speaking in an interview with Nana Otu Darko on Class TV (CTV's) Dwabre Mu, on Wednesday, 15 February 2023.

Source: classfmonline.com



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

US Renews “National Emergency” Against Venezuela, Keeping Brutal Sanctions In Place



US President Joe Biden last Wednesday, March 1, renewed a directive declaring a state of national emergency “with respect to the situation in Venezuela.” Titled Executive Order 13692, the measure was first implemented by former President Barack Obama in 2015 citing an “unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign

policy of the United States.” The EO was accompanied by sanctions against seven Venezuelan officials. EO 13692, which has been renewed for another year, provides an expansive basis for the US to continue to impose illegal and brutal unilateral measures against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and socialist President Nicolás Maduro.

The US claims that EO 13692 “does not target the people or economy of Venezuela,” but focuses on individuals instead. However, especially in instances where the individuals targeted have been government officials, the impact of the sanctions has been much broader. In 2021, following a visit to Venezuela, the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Alena Douhan, noted that “the state of national emergency announced by the US Government on [March 8] 2015 as the ground for introducing sanctions against Venezuela, and repeatedly extended, does not correspond to the requirements of article 4 of the International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”

She emphasized that the unilateral sanctions against Venezuela's economic sectors including oil, mining, and gold constituted a “violation of international law.” Douhan added that “the announced purpose of the ‘maximum pressure’ campaign [under president Donal Trump]—to change the Government of Venezuela—[violated] the principle of sovereign equality of states and [constituted] an intervention in the domestic affairs of Venezuela.” While the US and its allies have been defeated in their multiple attempts to overthrow President Maduro and the Bolivarian Revolution, they have not ceased their attacks on Venezuela, using aggressive means like sanctions to

undermine the country's sovereignty, destroy its economy, and threaten the lives of its people. President Biden has kept much of his predecessors' harmful legacies in place, including the sweeping sanctions imposed on Venezuela under Trump in 2017 and again in 2019. Sanctions, accompanied by an economic embargo and the illegal seizure of state assets, have led to a multifold rise in food insecurity and outbreaks of diseases, while denying hundreds of thousands of people access to medical treatment. They have also hindered the government's ability to build or repair critical infrastructure, including water distribution systems and electricity supply. These unilateral measures against Venezuela are a continuing violation of the very human rights that the US so boldly claims to defend.

Israeli Minister Bezalel Smotrich Calls For Razing Down Palestinian Town Of Huwara

Days after it came under attack from illegal Israeli settlers, the Palestinian town of Huwara, near Nablus, was targeted by the Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich on Wednesday, March 1. In a TV interview, Smotrich claimed that calls made by some of the extremist settlers to raze the town were just, and that instead of leaving the task to private individuals, “the state [of Israel] should be the one to do that.” Smotrich has been a leader of the settler movement before becoming a minister in the present ultra-right government in Israel led by Benjamin Netanyahu. He also looks after settler affairs in the occupied West Bank. Huwara was attacked by hundreds of

Israeli settlers on Sunday. At least one Palestinian was killed and close to 400 were injured. The attacking settlers torched scores of Palestinian homes and burnt their property under the full protection of Israeli security forces.

The attacks on Huwara have not ceased since. The Israeli security forces shut down all Palestinian businesses in the town, and they remained shut even four days after the attack. A group of settlers reportedly attacked the residents of the town on Wednesday as well, when a US delegation was visiting the town. Ever since the attacks on Sunday, Smotrich has been making statements justifying the settler violence. On February 27, he had retweeted

a post justifying “collective punishment” (which is considered illegal in international law) as a “necessary tool.” He had also called for attacks with helicopters and tanks inside Palestinian residential areas. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) reacted to Smotrich's statement and called him a “racist terrorist” who needed to be prosecuted under international law for calling for “massacres against Palestinians.” Reacting to comments made by Smotrich in favor of settler violence, former Israeli defense minister and opposition leader Benny Gantz accused him of wanting to create a second *Nakba* of

Palestinians. The *Nakba* was the mass forced migration of Palestinians caused by Israeli occupation forces at the time of the creation of Israel in 1948. According to various estimates, between 700,000 and 800,000 Palestinians were expelled from their villages and towns at the time. Most of them live as refugees in different parts of the world, including in the occupied Palestinian territories. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh visited the town of Huwara on Wednesday and proclaimed that Palestinians need to form “popular protection



(Photo: WAFA). A long time leader of the illegal settler movement in the occupied territories, Bezalel Smotrich is now a minister in Benjamin Netanyahu's ultra-right government and also looks after settler affairs. His vicious statements come days after the town of Huwara was attacked by hundreds of settlers

committees in the villages, towns and refugee camps as a real response to the settlers rampage,” Wafa reported. Shtayyeh also accused the Israeli government of encouraging settlers to carry out attacks against Palestinians “to carry out crimes of occupation” under full security cover.

THE GHANA CARD AND REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

Article 42 of the constitution guarantees the right to vote to every Ghanaian who is at least 18 years old and of a sound mind.

What article 42 does not do is to provide how to identify a citizen of Ghana.

The EC has over the years relied on various identification documents including the guarantor system for those who do not have the required form of identification.

Regulation 1 (3) of the proposed CI primarily requires that anyone who wants to register as a voter must acquire the Ghana card which shows evidence of identification of the owner of the card.

The proposed C.I requires anyone who wants to register as a voter to provide the Ghana Card as evidence of identification (citizenship and

age) to meet the requirements of article 42.

It is the view of the Commission that the Ghana Card addresses this concern because it shows one's citizenship and age.

Once one acquires the Ghana Card, the Personal Identification Number (PIN) becomes a permanent identity

THE GUARANTOR SYSTEM

The guarantor system was introduced in 1992 to cater for applicants without any form of identification.

The National Identity Register Regulations, 2012 (LI 2111) enjoins the EC in Regulation 7:1j to use the Ghana Card for registration of voters.

Voters hid behind the guarantor system to guarantee for people they have never met.

The guarantor system opened the gate for Non-Ghanaians and

minors to register.

The guarantor system is also a source of conflict at the registration centers because agents of the political parties try to at times use violent means to prevent people who they believe are unqualified to register as voters.

EC DISTRICT OFFICES AS REGISTRATION CENTRES

According to the new C.I, in Regulation 2b, in addition to registration at the District Offices, the Commission shall designate additional centers which will be gazetted for registration.

The EC has been registering at the district offices on several occasions. As recent as 2020, registration took place at the district offices for the elderly and the vulnerable ahead of the general elections.

REGISTRATION SUPERVISORS AND REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Commission wants to mainstream the continuous registration of voters. The District Electoral Officers will serve as registration supervisors.

The District Electoral Officers/Registration Supervisors will therefore report to the Regional Directors.

VOTERS REGISTER

There will be no room for people to vote more than once because of the following:

The Electoral Area register consists of polling stations registers forming an electoral area and that is what is used to conduct elections for Assembly Members and Unit Committee Members.

The Constituency Register consists of polling stations registers forming a constituency and that is what is used to conduct elections for Parliamentarians.

There are therefore, the polling station register, an electoral area register, a constituency register and a national register. The national register is used to elect the president of the country.

The BVDs contain the data of voters for a specific Constituency but becomes polling station specific immediately it is used for a particular polling station.

For a voter to be verified by a BVD, that voter's name and quick response (QR) code should belong to that particular polling station.

There will be no multiple voting because a voter's name cannot appear in different registers and therefore nobody can vote more than once.

Repeal of C.I 91 and C.I 126

Regulation 33, Sub Regulation (2) states that: despite the revocation of the enactments specified under sub regulation (1), the existing Voter Register in force immediately before the coming into force of these Regulations shall be considered to have been issued under these Regulations and shall continue to have effect until the Commission compiles a new Voters Register.

It is clear from this that all the 17m people, who registered under C.I 91 will continue to be qualified voters under the new C.I.

Exclusion of the NDC from the C.I Process

The new C.I has been discussed at IPAC meetings on more than four occasions. There is no sub-committee of IPAC; therefore no sub-committee has been discussing the C.I. In all these meetings the NDC was invited and minutes were shared with the NDC.

The Commission wrote to the NDC to nominate one person to serve on the modalities committee, which will develop the modalities for the continuous registration voters, after the new C.I has been passed. The NDC actually submitted the names of two persons for this assignment. The modalities committee is yet to start work because the new C.I has not been passed.

The Electoral Commission and National Security

The Electoral Process is perhaps the most transparent of its kind around the world.

Stakeholders, especially political parties are part of the process from the registration, nomination, printing and distribution of ballot papers, voting and declaration of results. The Political Parties send their agents or representatives to observe the activities at all the stages and can question any irregularities at each stage.

Agents of Political Parties are involved in all these various stages; as a result, any talk of rigging elections by the EC is a figment of someone's imagination. This cannot happen in Ghana's elections.

Electoral Commission and National Security cannot collude to rig elections in Ghana and all stakeholders including the Political Parties know this.

The EC has said on several platforms that this registration is going to be a continuous one. This means that it is going to be continuous till 7th October, 2024 for the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.

We Have No Interest In Doing Bidding Of Any Political Party, Says EC



Dr Bossman Asare, Deputy Chairman of the Electoral Commission

The Deputy Chairman of the Electoral Commission (EC) in charge of Cooperate Services, Dr Bossman Asare, has said they have no interest in pleasing any political party at the expense of others.

In an interview on Asempa FM's Ekosii Sen show, he stated categorically that the

officials of the Commission have their core mandate. This, he explained, is to make sure transparency, fairness and integrity are upheld at all times as the Commission's core values state.

"Though we are human beings, and we sometimes make some errors, we don't

work to get party A satisfied as others suffer," he said. This comment comes on the back of controversies that have characterised plans by the EC to roll out a Constitutional Instrument to make the Ghana Card the solely required document for voters' registration. The Commission, following the announcement, has been accused by the National Democratic Congress of attempts to disenfranchise eligible voters and also rig the elections. But Dr Bossman assured Ghanaians of free and fair elections in 2024, stating that the EC cannot and would not be moved by any political party.

Source: otecfmghana.com

COCOBOD Case: Add Agongo's Recusal Motion To Transfer Docket To CJ – Lawyers To Retired Judge

Lawyers of businessman Seidu Agongo, the Chief Executive Officer of Agricult Ghana Limited, have asked for his pending application for retired Justice Clemence Honyenuga to recuse himself included in a docket to be transferred to the Chief Justice (CJ) for reassignment. The retired Justice of the Supreme Court who was sitting on the case in which Dr. Stephen Kwabena Opuni former Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board and two others as an additional High Court judge had been the subject matter of several recusal applications including a pending one from the businessman. Before the application could be moved, the Attorney General's (AG) Office through Deputy AG, Alfred Tuah Yeboah had asked for the brief to be transferred.

The request from the Attorney General's office to refer the matter to the CJ was premised on the grounds that Justice Honyenuga had "extremely limited" time to conclude the case following his extended mandate by CJ upon retirement on September 4, 2022. However, prior to ordering the Registrar of the High Court to

transfer the case docket to the CJ for it to be reassigned, lawyers of the accused persons urged the judge to include in the records the pending motion for his recusal to be included in the documents to be sent to CJ. Counsel for the 2nd and 3rd Accused (Seidu Agongo and Agricult), Nutifafa Nutsukpui, holding Benson Nutsukpui's brief submitted that the said motion should be part of the records even though the judge in question had his mandate virtually expired. "It's our submission that the said motion (recusal), being a process on the case docket remains on the docket for the Chief Justice to re-assign a new person to consider," Counsel submitted.

He added, "It's our view respectfully that at the point of the decision where the court would've made the order to return the brief to the Chief Justice, the motion had already been filed and forms part of the docket for all processes." To this, he said, "it's our prayer that the docket as it is be returned in its entirety to the Chief Justice for re-assigning."

Prosecution's position

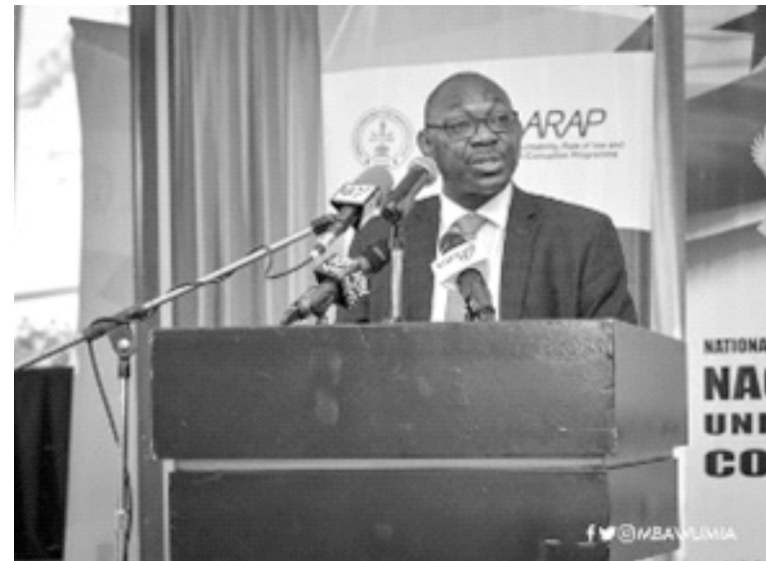
Stella Ohene Appiah, a Principal State Attorney, initially said since the docket was going to be re-assigned,

the pending application for recusal would no longer be necessary. She however, sided with the defense saying "if counsel wants the application to go for a new judge, as part of the records of proceedings; I also think that it should be on the docket as proof of how many times the accused persons have tried to unseat the previous trial judge. She said, its inclusion "will set the records along the line so it should be known."

Counsel for Dr. Stephen Kwabena Opuni led by Samuel Codjoe, added: "My lord in my opinion, once it's part of the record," it should be part.

By Court

Retired Justice Honyenuga said "It is crystal clear that it is impossible for me to conclude and determine this case, in the circumstance, I will uphold the submission of the Attorney General under Section 105 of the Court Act, 1993, Act 459. "Now, this is my ruling on the submissions by the Deputy Attorney General. I must state that it is refreshing that Attorney General who initiated the Criminal proceedings against the



Supreme Court Judge, Justice Clemence Honyenuga

accused persons has submitted through the Deputy Attorney General that this case be referred to the Chief Justice due to the limited time at my disposal," he stated.

"Indeed, due to the limited time accorded me by the Chief Justice to continue to hear this case, it is crystally clear that it is impossible for me to conclude and determine this case with DW7 in the box.

"In the circumstances, I will uphold the submission of the Deputy Attorney General and hereby grant the application under Section 105 of the Court's Act 1993 Act 459 as amended.

"It is hereby ordered that the pendency of this case be reported to the Chief Justice for his directions. Accordingly, the Registrar of this court is to carry out this order forthwith. In the circumstances I will adjourn this case to the 15th of March, 2023," Justice Honyenuga ordered.

Dr. Opuni and businessman Seidu Agongo have pleaded not guilty to some 27 charges and are standing trial for an alleged willfully causing financial loss to the State following the purchase of Lithovit Liquid fertilizer to cocoa farmers.

Source: kasapafrmonline.com

Lassa fever: GMA Says It's Engaging Govt To Fast-Track And Mobilise Ribavirin For



The Ghana Medical Association (GMA) has revealed that the confirmed cases of Lassa fever include doctors and health workers who were exposed in their line of duty. Ghana's total caseload stands at 14. In a statement issued on Wednesday, March 1 2023, the GMA acknowledged "measures being put in place to trace their contacts and contain the virus from spreading further." The GMA indicated that it is "facilitating the provision of psychological support" for its

colleagues who have been confirmed to have the disease currently. It noted that "while no vaccine currently offers protection against Lassa Fever, Ribavirin offers good outcomes especially when given early along with other supportive management." It is further noted that it is engaging the government "to fast-track the mobilisation of the drug to ensure its availability for the management of patients." It, therefore, advised its members to adhere strictly to

"IPC protocols especially regarding the use of PPEs at all times and ensure all other members of the care team do same.

"In particular, wearing of facemasks at all times at work, frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizers, use of gloves and avoidance of contact with bodily fluids." "The GMA will continue to monitor the situation and advise members accordingly," the statement added.

Lula And The Second Progressive Wave In Latin America

By Miguel Enrique Stedile

This century that has been, and will continue to be for a long time, marked by the geopolitical dispute between the United States' attempts to maintain hegemony and China's rise, which is shielded by Russia. Latin America and the Global South, however, occupy a central role because of its resource wealth, which is the object of the desire and greed of "green capitalism". Political control over this territory implies easy access to agricultural products, minerals, and hydrocarbons converted into commodities. The first progressive wave, which began with the victory of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 1998, was characterized by regional integration and geopolitical sovereignty that removed the continent as a satellite of the United States. UNASUR and CELAC diminished the power of the traditional OAS, retrieving Cuba from political isolation imposed by the US. The second decade of the 21st century was marked by a counteroffensive by the United States. The US supported, publicly or discreetly, movements to weaken and overthrow these independent and proud Latin American governments, even if they played within the limits of capitalist institutionality and reformism. Thus, different antidemocratic actions were used in the continent such as parliamentary coups (Paraguay and Brazil), traditional military coups (Honduras), hybrid wars (Venezuela and Bolivia) and the constant and intensive use of lawfare by the judiciary and by parliaments and industrialists, given the subordination of elites in Latin America.

This "second wave" of progressivism emerges in a scenario of less than favorable external and internal forces. And as the presidents of Chile and Peru (Gabriel Boric and Pedro Castillo) know very well, electoral victories are not necessarily political victories in their entirety. The new leaders came to power with complex, young and often fragile alliances, some of them with right-wing sectors, such as Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva's candidacy. Alliances that are weakly formed or are not formed around programs, carry with them tensions and contradictions between different forces. There are also the contradictions that the progressive "first wave" was not able to overcome, as the Cuban intellectual Fernando Heredia reminded us: all advances are reversible; world capitalism is hyper-centralized, financialized, parasitic and destructive, and can only live if it continues to be so; and, the exploitation and domination of Latin America are necessary for the maintenance of US imperialism. Therefore, Lula will discover a very different scenario from the one he left at the end of his second mandate. His election aroused expectations and hopes throughout the continent. Lula still contends with the internal devastation and dismantling of the state, in all areas, as well as a global recession on the horizon and the return of the hunger to the country. It is still unknown how resilient the far-right opposition mobilized by the remnants of Bolsonaroism will be, but the



Lula returns from first international trips reintegrating Brazil into Latin America - Presidency Argentina. The "Second wave" of progressive governments emerges against a backdrop of less than favorable external and internal forces

riots of January 8 signal an active opposition. Even without the support of the Bolsonaro government, what will be the behavior of the extreme right in Latin America, since it is highly internationalized, ideologically and financially? The new Brazilian government faces the prospect of both the global economic and climate crises. In both cases, Lula's administration needs to build alternatives that do not punish the poorest and do not take place within the ineffective framework of "green capitalism." Not to mention that Brazil and Latin America will be pressured to choose "coexistence" with the United States or cooperation with China. The Brazilian left, as well as its Latin American counterparts, has the challenge of understanding the deep transformations in work in peripheral countries and the changes in the organizational,

cultural and ideological configuration of the working class, from production and precarious work to the advance of religious fundamentalism. And, again and permanently in leftist governments, the tension between time and the limits of the state will confront the urgency and the need for structural changes demanded by popular movements. The people must be the subject of the transformations and clashes, to understand these limits not in a passive way, but as a tool to accelerate them. The progressive processes in Latin America are often personified in the trajectory of their leaders. Lula, Cristina Kirchner, and Andrés Manuel López Obrador are examples of personalities that go beyond the limits of their organizations and political fields, that assume the roles of spokespersons for the projects they represent, but, at the same time, may collaterally replace organizations in the dialogue with the population or be too

responsible to make the decisions to conduct these processes individually. What the Latin American progressive "first" and "second wave" have in common is the conviction that in this scenario of geopolitical dispute and global economic crisis, there are no individual ways out. It is only possible to place oneself in a sovereign position by acting in regional cooperation, recovering the mechanisms of integration and solidarity, behaving as a cohesive bloc, based, not on pragmatism, but on a historical project of autonomy, independence and political, food, energy and ecological sovereignty. And, primarily, sustained by a permanent organization and popular mobilization.

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PRESENTATION BY MRS JEAN MENSA, CHAIRPERSON OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF GHANA TO THE PARLIAMENT ON TUESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY, 2023 AT 1PM THEME: CONTINUOUS VOTERS REGISTRATION C.I

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guarantee the credibility and integrity of our Register, and our elections as a whole. It will: - prevent the enrolment of minors on the Register - prevent foreigners from being registered to vote and - eliminate the guarantor system which is prone to abuse and which promotes conflict and violence. Additionally, it will avoid costly, time-consuming, tedious follow-up processes such as the DRRC. Finally, by using the Ghana Card as the main source of identification, the EC will be conforming to Regulation 7 (1) of the Legal Instrument (LI) passed by Parliament i.e. the National Identity Register Regulations LI 2111, which states that the National Identity Card SHALL be used for a number of transactions where identification is required - including the Voters Register. More importantly, the NIA

has assured us that, as of today, it has only a little over 500,000 Cards pending printing. Additionally, they have 3.5 million blank Cards are here in Ghana in a bonded warehouse. We are also reliably informed that monies have been released and that more funds are in the process of being released. With this assurance, coupled with the fact that, like the EC, the NIA has offices in all the districts and regions, we are confident that our Continuous Registration Exercise will be inclusive, participatory and robust. We are confident that anyone who qualifies to register will have the opportunity to do so, if they so wish. On our part as the institution

mandated by the 1992 Republican Constitution to compile the register of voters and revise it at such intervals as may be determined by law, we will do everything in our power to register all qualified applicants who wish to register as voters. Our goal is to ensure that no one is left behind. As you know, the EC has a proven track record in this regard. In 2020 despite the concerns raised by the sections of the society that the Registration Exercise will not be successful, the EC registered over 17 million people in 38 days during the COVID-19 pandemic and during the rainy season. It was a seamless and inclusive process and no one was left out. The number of persons on our register, represents

55% of our population of 31 million, the highest in West Africa with the exception of Cape Verde which has a population of 600,000. To enhance the transparency of the registration process, the political parties may have their agents at the registration centers. Additionally, the Commission will regularly update the political parties on the number of registrants at each District Office. Mr Speaker, I wish to emphasize that the Ghana Card will not be used to vote in 2024. The Ghana Card is only a requirement to qualify a person to register as a voter. Once you present your Ghana Card and successfully register as a voter, you will be issued a Voter's Identification Card which bears the code of your region, district, electoral area, and polling station. The Ghana card does not have these features. It will not be used to

vote in the 2024 General Elections. In conclusion we wish to state that, in the exercise of our mandate, we are mindful of Article 42 which enjoins us to register Ghanaians who are 18 years or above and who are of sound mind. We do not intend to disenfranchise persons who qualify to vote. It is in our interest to register them. It will be an antithesis to deny any Ghanaian the right to register. However, we equally have the responsibility to ensure that only qualified Ghanaians are found in the voters register. We owe this responsibility to Ghanaians and we will work to uphold that. Mr. Speaker and Hon. Members, we are grateful for your time and attention. May God bless our homeland Ghana and make our nation great and strong. Thank you.

One Year Of Baby Formula Shortage In The US

By Ana Vracar

Baby formula supplies in the United States are still fluctuating, a full year after the closure of one of Abbott Nutrition's factories in February 2022. At the beginning of this year, forecasts by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and industry rivals predicted that stocks could reach pre-shortage levels in spring 2023. Yet, while the situation has improved in comparison to May or June 2022, many parents and caregivers continue to report difficulties in finding the right type of infant formula—or any type of formula at all. According to the US Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey, 1.9 million households reported problems in finding infant formula in January 2023. This was already an increase in comparison to November and December 2022, when 1.5 and 1.7 million households, respectively, said

they experienced difficulties in purchasing baby formula. Then, on February 20, Reckitt—which was able to take hold of approximately 50% of the overall US infant formula market since Abbott ran into trouble—announced a voluntary recall of 145,000 cans of its baby formula Enfamil due to suspicion of *cronobacter* contamination. Company officials claim this will not affect the overall availability of formula since a limited amount of product was under doubt of contamination, but the news only added to the commercial milk formula industry's bad track record.

Experts say proper budgets, not slogans, will improve breastfeeding rates

Only days before news of the Reckitt recall reached the media, dairy giant Lactalis was indicted in France following a 2017 series of salmonella infections among children who were fed their formula. Years and miles apart, the cases illustrate how the commercial milk formula industry still manages to avoid attempts of more

significant regulation. Several reports published over the past months, including one by Third World Network and the United Nations University, and the most recent Lancet series on breastfeeding, reiterate that commercial milk formula producers rely on aggressive marketing strategies to reach health workers and families. They have also been investing into lobbying to keep governments in line. Between 2007 and 2018, the biggest infant formula producers in the US, including Abbott and Reckitt, spent USD 55.1 million USD on lobbying the government. Almost 80% of this amount—USD 43.8 million—was spent by Abbott.

While companies' lobbying budgets remain higher than the funds allocated by the government for breastfeeding support, it should not come as a surprise if relying on infant formula remains a standard in child nutrition in the US. And judging from the response of health and food authorities until now, there will not be a significant shift in policy or a more significant revision of the relationship with the commercial milk formula industry.

The FDA's evaluation of the response to the shortage, including recommendations for the future, fails to identify the dependence on the infant formula industry as a risk factor. Both the FDA and mainstream analysts are focused on finding technical solutions that would allow things to go back to where they were before February 2022—either by keeping lower import tariffs for infant formula or investing more in *cronobacter* monitoring.

On the other hand, health and nutrition experts are warning that merely restructuring the commercial milk formula market will not be enough to avoid similar problems in the future. Instead of expanding existing partnerships with the industry, they see a better chance in building women-centered, culturally appropriate health systems, and expansions of workplace rights such as

mandatory paid maternal leave, to increase breastfeeding rates. Barring adequate budgets and fiscal policies, campaigns to promote breastfeeding will remain superficial, Phillip Baker and his co-researchers pointed out in one of the recent Lancet studies.

“Without substantive societal investments to enable breastfeeding, women's choices are open to manipulation by exploitative commercial milk formula marketing,” the researchers warn.

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