

# KEJETIA INFERNO

**Report Reveals Details Of How Authorities Were Warned About Fire Safety Defects And Possibility Of Major Fire outbreak**



**Sam Pyne, Chief Executive Officer Of Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly**

Just exactly a week when the Kejetia market fire destroyed over 33 shops with merchandise worth several millions of cedis lost in the inferno, damning report stumbled upon by *The Insight* reveals that there was a warning about the

possibility of a fire outbreak in the market. The Report titled, "Kumasi Central Market Phase I; Routine Inspection of Kumasi Market Phase I Operations", detailed how contractors of the project,

Contracta, raised concerns about fire safety and the malfunctioning of some of the equipment at the new ultra-modern market but were

*Cont. on page 3*

## US Paranoid About Russia-China Summit

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### Asantehene Sends Strong Message to Akufo-Addo Over Economic Hardship



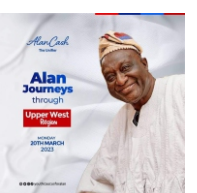
**Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II**

The Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II has implored the government of President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to be transparent with citizens on issues to do with the economy. According to him, there is a need for the government to come clean on the

*Cont. on page 2*

## Alan Sets Upper West Alive

*...Gets Blessed By Wa Naa Fuseini Pelpuo IV*  
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# Celebration Of Life

OSONKO ANONA OKUSUBENTSIR, EBUSUAPANYIN NANA KOW ATTA, OBAAHENMA MAAME AMA DONKOR HOWARD, EBUSUA KYEAME KOJO ABAKAH AND KOFI ARTHUR. EBUSUA MPANYINFO JOSEPH ACHEAMPONG, BENJAMIN KOFI ACQUAH, EBO EDUMUNDSON, PAUL ARTHUR, KOFI ACQUAH, SIR QUARTEY, KOW EDUMADZIE, KOBENA KYEKYIBI, KOFI KYIKYIBI, KOW DADZIE, KAKRAH NYARKOR. MBAAMPANYINFO ADJOWA NANA, ESSIE NYARKOWA, ESSIE POBEE, ADJOWA MANSA, AMA PANYIN, EKUA AKYIBI, EFUA APREKUA, EKUA AFRIBA, ABENA ADOKO. ABUSUPANYIN KWAME NTIM, OPANYIN KWABENA ASUKPA, OPANYIN KOFI ADU NTOW, YAW AMPENY ADU AND THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION OF THE DUNWELL METHODIST CHURCH (NEW-LEGON) ACCRA DEEPLY REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THE PASSING AWAY OF THEIR BELOVED WIFE, MOTHER, AUNTY AND DAUGHTER



## DR. MRS. JANE IRINA ADU

Founder And President of the Potter's Village Home  
(Dodowa) Affectionately called

**MAMA JANE**  
1954-2023

### FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

#### THERE WILL BE NO WAKE

**PRE BURIAL SERVICE:** Saturday, 29th April, 2023,  
6am -8am at The Potter's Village Home premises,  
Dodowa

**BURIAL SERVICE:** Saturday, 29th April, 2023,  
8:30am at The Potter's Village Home premises,  
Dodowa Behind the Forest Hotel

**FINAL FUNERAL RITES:** The Potter's Village Home  
premises, Dodowa Behind the Forest Hotel.

**INTERMENT:** Private

**THANKSGIVING SERVICE:** Sunday, 30th April, 2023,  
At Dunwell Methodist Church, Adenta (New-Legon), 8am.

**WIDOWER:** Mr. Yaw Ampeny Adu (Wofa Yaw)-  
Deputy Commissioner of Finance, Retired (GRA)

**CHILDREN:** Randy Kofi Adu (GRA), Charles Kwadwo Adu  
(Blue Sky Product(s) Ghana Ltd), Nana Ama Adu Owusu  
(The Potter's Village Home), Maame Akosua Adu Otoo (GES),  
Sophia Okyne Myers (The Potter's Village Home),  
Kwabena Amofio Adu (Ghana Health Service).

**GRAND CHILDREN:** Ennyimnyamba Baaba Dekua Otoo,  
Nana Kwesi Ayeyi Anwhir Otoo, Hanoch Ampeny Adu,  
Davida Joys Bempah Owusu, Giovanna Irina Adu,  
Benedict Asamoah Owusu, Thelma Dorcas Naa Anowah Myers,  
Yaa Ohenewaa Adu, Charmaine Akosua Yoobio Adu, Jane  
Zoe Adubea Owusu, Ruth Tonya Nkeeba Myers, Adwoa Nhyira  
Adu, Afia Ohemaa Adu, Daniel Nii Shidaa Myers, Jane Irina  
Nkeeba Otoo

**IN-LAWS:** Mr. Samuel Deku Otoo, Ps. Alex Asamoah  
Owusu, Mr. Henry Hutton Myers, Grace Boatemaa Adu,  
Grace Odeibea Opoku Adu.

**SIBLINGS:** Madam Gladys Okyne, Mr. Samuel R. Okyne,  
Mr. Kwesi Larbi Okyne, Mr. Robert Nii-Armah Okyne,  
Percy Nii Okyne (USA).

**NEPHEWS & NIECES:** Lily Kyei-Baffuor Jones (UK), Patsy Kyei-  
Baffuor (UK), George Appiah, John Kwabena Okyne,  
Jane Gerbs, Sophia Mecaj, Emmanuel S. Okyne, Joana Essel,  
Juliet Baffuor-Adjei (UK), Harriet Attafi, Beatrice Okyne,  
Patricia Okyne, Wendy Twumasi, Michael Amofio Okyne,  
Christine Okyne, Isaiah Laurel Okyne, John Amofio Okyne,  
Sophia Nana Koba Okyne, Margaret Akua Okyne, Jennifer  
Maame Esi Okyne, Ama Ahema Okyne, Irene Okyne,  
Robert Kwaku Okyne, Nana Adwoa Okyne

**CHIEF MOURNERS:** The entire Anona Ebusua family of  
Anomabo Ebusua Baatan Opanyin Joseph Ebenezer  
Enniful, Ebusua Panyin Kofi Nyamekye Abban, Okyeame  
Samuel Kofi Eshun, Mr. Charles Kwesi Mends, Mr. Richmond  
Ebo Appiah, Mad. Gladys Okyne, Mr. Samuel Kofi Okyne, Mr.  
Robert Okyne, Mrs. Florence Clarke, Mrs. Janet Afful, Mrs.  
Georgina Ocran, Mrs. Sarah Amoah, (Agona Swedru), Mr.  
Ebenezer Mensah, Mr. Edward C. Mensah, Edusei Bawuah  
(Kumasi), Eunice Harold (Cape Coast), Robert Richardson  
Okyne Jnr, William Scott Okyne and siblings, Mary Bortsie &  
brothers, Albert Okyne & siblings together with The Aduana  
family of Anum headed by Opanyin Kwame Ntim, Comfort  
Attuah, Faustina Adu & Siblings, Maxwell Osafo & Siblings,  
Wilson Adu, Vida Adu Lartey, Diana Adu, Adu Amankwaa,  
Frederick Kwabena Offei, Afua Oseiwa, Prof. Kwame Joseph  
Osafo, Charles Hanson Adu & Siblings. Margret Attuah,  
Akua Asabea, Comfort Nyarko (CIP) Rtd, Emelia Offeibea,  
Dora Asihene & Siblings, Margret Okoh, Kwadwo Baadu Adu  
(ASP), Sarfo Adu (UK), Ama Serwaa Attuah, Ama Safoa,  
Hannah Osafo (UK), Efua Biamah, Kwadwo Sarfo (okoto),  
Alfred Kwame Davidson & siblings, Samuel Asare (USA) &  
Siblings, Addo Kweku (USA) & Siblings. Dr. James Clarke,  
Board and Management of The Potter's Village Home.

**ATTIRE: Black & White**

**GPS CODE: GK-0942-4795**

**ALL FRIENDS AND SYMPATHIZERS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED**



# The INSIGHT

## — EDITORIAL

### THE HIV/AIDS MENACE

**T**he report released recently which showed a rise in HIV among pregnant women should be of utmost concern to all.

Even worrying is the Ghana AIDS Commission's admission that HIV/AIDS is on the ascendancy in the country.

Certainly, all these come against the backdrop of increased awareness and public sensitisation over the years, to get the menace effectively under control.

The government through the Ministry of Health, the Ghana Health Service, The Ghana Aids Commission and several world bodies and stakeholders succeeded to a large extent in creating the awareness of condom use and abstinence. The sudden rise in cases of HIV infections simply means that something is not being done or gone wrong.

It is the view of this paper that stakeholders in the health sector will once again come together to find lasting solutions to the problems giving rise to new infections and nib it in the bud.

Towards this end, it is the opinion of The Insight that new intervention measures would help to address the problem.

It is also the expectation of Ghanaians that past measures which helped in addressing the problem such as condom use, abstinence, among others will be revisited and employed in the fight including the individuals who spearheaded such bold initiatives.

# Asantehehene Sends Strong Message to Akufo-Addo Over Economic Hardship

*from front page*

current state of Ghana's economy

including the recently conducted

Domestic Debt Exchange Programme.

"Our debt level has become unsustainable pushing the government to roll out a domestic debt exchange programme that aims to restructure the nation's debt and ensure some fiscal space for the country to operate.

"Sadly it appears public consultation did not take place before the programme commenced. The nation is currently in a tense mood even though government has announced the completion of the programme. I want to implore government to demonstrate high level of transparency and be candid in these difficult times in order to win the trust and confidence of the general public," the king said.

Otumfuo who was speaking at the 56th congregation at KNUST, further called on the government to engage in inclusive and broader consultations in dealing with the current challenges.

"Government should be more accommodating and reach out to those who may even oppose them politically, the interest of the country is paramount, and we must all work together to prevent the collapse of the economy. No one can pretend not to see the difficult times that we find ourselves in. But at the same time I want to encourage all of us to keep hope alive.

"As we move to negotiate with our external creditors, I urge government to bring together the best brains with the requisite expertise from all political perspectives to present the finest proposal so that whatever decision the country chooses will be everyone's responsibility," Otumfuo added.



He also called on the government to review its expenditure as a way of tackling wasteful spending.

"The current economic difficulties should serve as a wake-up call for all of us to carefully review our economy and implement some significant adjustments. The moment has come for us to reduce wasteful spending and direct resources towards economically productive areas in order to improve the quality of life of our people," Otumfuo Osei Tutu II entreated.

## THE INSIGHT

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# KEJETIA INFERNO

## Report Reveals Details Of How Authorities Were Warned About Fire Safety Defects And Possibility Of Major Fire outbreak

*from front page*

apparently ignored during a routine inspection conducted. “The purpose of this report is to highlight issues that were identified by the contractor focusing mostly on issues related to safety. Issues of other nature are identified below however the main focus is the safety of the users of the market. “It is of the outmost importance to correct all the defects presented below, non-action can lead to severe consequences with potential loss of life”, the report warned and raised issues regarding fire hydrants and fire extinguishers boxes which were randomly inspected and identified the

absence of accessories and/or fire-fighting equipment in all of them among others. There are calls for investigations into the fire disaster but already, the report reveals damning information about defects in equipment in case of fire that were not adhered to for instance the report revealed many of smoke detection sensors had caps, making it impossible to read and use the system in an adequate way. Additionally, some detectors had been damaged and needed substitution and also the system of hydrants and sprinklers depressurized, and the jockey pump had been turned off making the system inoperative,

all of which were apparently ignored until the fire disaster occurred last Wednesday. The project of the Kumasi Central Market Phase 1 was handed over to the client in December 2018. Under Client's request to perform the O&M of KMP1, on February 2018 Contracta created an operation, management and maintenance company, Kejetia Central Market O&M Limited (KCML/O&M), that on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 signed an MoU with KMA. Consequently, a one-year pro-bonus O&M Contract was signed on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (later on expanded by three additional months) between Kumasi City



Market Lda (KCML), an SPV created by KMA for the Market management, and KCML/O&M). In June 2019, six months after the handover, the market begun effective operation. Contracta

engaged an experienced team in managing popular market operation & maintenance to assist KCML on the O&M of KMPI. This is the full text of the report

*cont. on pages 6&7*

## Dry Ice Could Be Detrimental To Health – FDA Warns Public



The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) has cautioned bartenders and the public against the excessive use of dry ice in the preparation of cocktails as it can be detrimental to their health if not handled carefully. The use of dry ice in

cocktails has become increasingly popular in recent years, as it adds a unique and impressive visual effect to many cocktails because of the dramatic “smoking” effect it creates.

In a health note issued by the Authority and copied to the Ghana News Agency, Delese

Mimi Darko, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the FDA explained that when dry ice is added to drinks, it sublimates. It is extremely cold, with a temperature of around - 78.5°C, and colder than regular ice, therefore, making it a good option for chilling drinks quickly.

“Use only small amounts of dry ice in cocktails, as a little goes a long way when it comes to creating the smoking effect,” Mrs Darko said, adding that using too much dry ice could cause an excessive amount of carbon dioxide gas inhalation.

According to the FDA, dry ice, which is a solid form of carbon dioxide is not toxic but could pose some respiratory challenges to consumers and

cause burns when it comes into contact with the skin. This makes it move directly from the solid state to the gaseous state, releasing carbon dioxide gas, which could displace oxygen in the air and create a hazardous environment, particularly in small or enclosed spaces. The Authority, which is responsible for regulating food and medicine in Ghana, asked bartenders and the public to ensure that they always wear gloves and use tongs and other appropriate tools to handle the dry ice. It also advised against the swallowing of dry ice by customers and recommended that dry ice is kept in a well-ventilated, cool, and dry area,

with seals not kept in airtight containers or rooms. To ensure that consumers were aware of the possible hazards and handled the beverages carefully, she urged that drinks that include dry ice be appropriately branded by noting with warning signs on the menu or by personally alerting customers when they order the drink. The FDA CEO also encouraged bartenders to educate themselves and other workers on how to handle dry ice properly, including wearing gloves and using tongs.

**Source -- GNA**





# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Xiomara Castro Ditches Cold War Legacy, Honduras To Establish Relations With China



*Xiomara Castro had indicated over the course of her presidential campaign that she planned to establish relations with China. Honduras was one of the 13 remaining nations that recognized the Republic of China in Taiwan. The switch marks further reinforcement of the One-China consensus*

Honduras has announced plans to establish relations with the People's Republic of China, in yet another blow to Taiwan. The move was announced by leftist president Xiomara Castro on Tuesday, March 14 on Twitter. Castro stated that she instructed her foreign minister to begin negotiations with Beijing, in a move that would implicitly cut ties with the self-proclaimed Republic of China (ROC), based in Taiwan.

"I have instructed [foreign minister Eduardo Enrique Reina] to manage the opening of official relations with the People's Republic of China, as a sign of my determination to comply with the Government Plan and expand the borders freely in concert with the nations of the world," Castro [tweeted](#). Castro had indicated over the course of her presidential campaign that she planned to establish relations with China. After she took over the presidency in 2022, riding on the back of an emphatic electoral victory, Castro's administration enacted the Government Plan which included establishing diplomatic ties with the PRC. "We will seek to establish the most cordial and friendly diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and with the communities of Asian and African countries that want to interact with us," read the Government Plan. Elaborating on the Honduran president's announcement, Reina

asserted in a statement made on Wednesday, March 15, that the decision was "pragmatism, not ideology." He also indicated that the move was part of the government's plan to establish close relations with major economies both in the region and around the world. "The global situation is complicated, we need to open up," Reina added. Since the arrival of the progressive government of Xiomara Castro, the Central American country has moved further away from US foreign policy orientations and closer to its regional counterparts. During the government of conservative President Juan Orlando Hernández, Honduras broke off diplomatic relations with Venezuela and expelled the Cuban doctors working in the country, moves which were reversed in the first six months of Xiomara Castro's government. Her decision regarding China will put Honduras in league with the growing number of nations in

Latin America that recently switched their diplomatic ties from Taiwan to China. Since 2017, Panama, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua severed their ties with Taiwan. Honduras was one of the last 13 sovereign nations that holds official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, eight of which are in Latin America and the Caribbean. These countries have a long history of right-wing and US-supported governments and as a result still hold onto a Cold War legacy of refusing to recognize the PRC as the authority over the whole of China. Even as the US itself began recognizing the PRC in 1979, many right-wing governments have continued the policy of shutting out the People's Republic. While Reina insists that President Castro's decision was not ideological, domestic politics have often influenced relations with China and the rest of the world. South Korea recognized the PRC

after its democratization in 1988 and South Africa did the same after the fall of apartheid. In Latvia, the fall of socialism and the nation's exit from the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in briefly cutting ties with China under a conservative and right-wing government. Nicaragua, the latest country to cut ties with Taiwan in 2021, has a more dramatic history when it comes to its relations with China. The country had first recognized the PRC over the ROC in Taiwan in 1985, shortly after leftist Daniel Ortega first came to power as president. But right after Ortega lost to a conservative-backed administration under Violeta Chamorro, Nicaragua reverted to maintaining full diplomatic ties with Taiwan. China has welcomed the Honduran government's decision. "On the basis of the one-China principle, China is willing to develop amicable and cooperative relationships with all countries around the world, including Honduras," said China's foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin.

### Junior Doctors In The UK Begin Strike Over Pay Restoration

Tens of thousands of junior doctors in England began a 72-hour strike last Monday, March 13, after the government failed to come up with an offer good enough to bring them to the bargaining table. Junior doctors are asking for full pay restoration, an approximately 30% salary increase to make up for the income lost since 2008. They are also demanding investments into the National Health Service (NHS) that would make working conditions bearable, addressing high rates of burnout and emigration. The British Medical Association (BMA) and the Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association (HCSA), which have been coordinating the strike, refused Health Secretary Steve

Barclay's offer of a one-off payment to address the rise of costs of living and a potential, undefined raise for next year. A similar offer led to the postponement of strikes planned by nurses and other health workers last week. Junior doctors, however, found the offer unacceptable and insisted on more decisive action to tackle the crisis that the NHS is facing at the moment. According to the junior doctors' associations, newly qualified doctors employed in the NHS make £14 per hour (approximately USD 17), which puts them in an extremely precarious position. Many of them, especially those who

are not from well-off backgrounds, are shouldering significant debt accumulated during medical studies as they work for the meager salary. Thousands of operations and medical appointments were canceled during the first day of the strike, including in services which are usually left out of industrial action, like ambulance and emergency services. While Health Secretary Barclay put into question the morality of the strike, most health workers—including some from hospital management—declared their support for the junior doctors' actions. They stated

their support even as they faced severe disruption to health services and senior doctors were called to take on the care roles usually carried out by junior colleagues. From his side, the health secretary said junior doctors' demands would cost £2 billion (USD 2.4 billion) to fulfill and thus are "simply unaffordable." But most people in England feel the NHS is worth protecting and investing in. Thousands of activists, patients, and health workers took to the streets of London a couple of days before the beginning of the strike in a "SOS NHS" protest. In addition to expressing



*Junior doctors in a picket line on March 13, 2023. (Photo: BMA Junior Doctors). Tens of thousands of junior doctors walked off their jobs across England as part of a 72-hour strike in an attempt to secure pay restoration and improvement of working conditions*

their support for striking health staff, the protesters called for an end to NHS privatization and better health care for all. **People's Health Dispatch** is a fortnightly bulletin published by the [Peoples Health Movement](#) and [Peoples Dispatch](#).

# Former Old Tafo MP, Dr. Anthony Osei Akoto Dead



Dr Anthony Osei Akoto

**A** former Member of Parliament for the Old Tafo constituency in the Ashanti Region, Dr Anthony Osei Akoto is dead. This was announced via the Facebook Page of Parliament on Monday, March 20, 2023.

Details on the passing of the 69-year-old former Finance Minister are readily not known. "Former Old Tafo MP, Hon. Dr Anthony Osei Akoto passes away. May he rest in peace,"

Ghana's Parliament posted. Dr. Akoto Osei was an Economist by profession. On 27 March 2002, he became a member of the management board of Merchant Bank (Ghana) Ltd. Previously, he worked as an associate

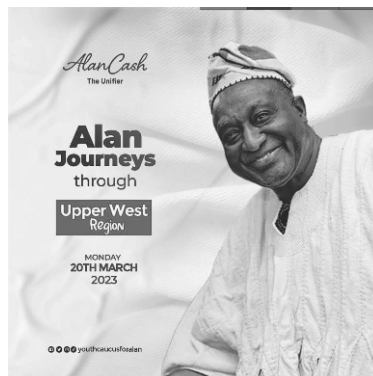
professor at Dillard University (USA) and previously as a research assistant at the Center for Policy Analysis (Ghana). Osei worked as deputy minister for Finance and Economic Planning in May 2003 and was a major economic adviser to the government. He was elevated to substantive Minister for Finance and Economic Planning after the death of the then Minister Kwadwo Baah Wiredu. He served in that role until 6 January 2009 when the government was handed over to the National Democratic Congress which had won the 2008 General Elections. In February 2017, Osei was sworn in as Minister of Monitoring and Evaluation after being nominated by President Nana Akufo-Addo and going through

the vetting process in the parliament of Ghana. The ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation was a newly created Ministry to evaluate, monitor and plan review summits and forums in fulfilment of the government's policies on evaluating the progress of its own ministries. In May 2017, President Nana Akufo-Addo named Anthony Akoto Osei as part of the nineteen ministers who would form his cabinet. The names of the 19 ministers were submitted to the Parliament of Ghana and announced by the Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Prof. Mike Ocquaye. As a Cabinet minister, Anthony Akoto Osei was part of the inner circle of the president and aided in key decision-making activities in the country.

## Alan Sets Upper West Alive ...Gets Blessed By Wa Naa Fuseini Pelpuo IV

**F**ormer Trade and Industry Minister and 2024 Presidential Candidate hopeful for New Patriotic Party (NPP), Alan Kyerematen lit up the Upper West Region as part of his nationwide tour to announce his Presidential dreams. The seasoned politician stormed the Upper West Region on Monday to announce his Presidential ambitions and was massively welcomed by industry players and party sympathizers. As part of his visit to stakeholders in the region, the Presidential hopeful and industrial expert paid a courtesy call on the Wa Naa, Naa Fuseini Pelpuo IV at his Palace in Wa, to officially announce his intentions of contesting the upcoming NPP Presidential Primaries. At the Chief's Palace, Hon Kyerematen was warmly welcomed and blessed by the overlord of the Waala kingdom. Kperihinaa Abdulai Abubakari Kunjokouung II, Paramount chief

of Kperihi traditional area, who spoke on behalf of Naa Fuseini Pelpuo IV, heaped kind words on the former Trade and Industry Minister and urged him to maintain his decency on the political scene and remain focused on his aspiration. On his part, Hon. Kyerematen laid down his master strategy in the Great Transformational Plan (GTP) to revamp the economy, and called on Ghanaians to lean towards industrialization as means to boosting economic growth of the country. The former Trade and Industry Minister highlighted the need to shift towards industrialization if Africa as a continent is to get out of the shackles of poverty and dependency. He pledged to invest in the agricultural sector once given the nod, citing commercial cultivation of groundnuts as an example of how local raw materials could be



used to turn the economy around. Sympathizers within the New Patriotic Party stormed the Wa Naa palace to show their solidarity for the long serving former Trade and Industry Minister, considered as favourite for the leadership role. Delegates within the New Patriotic Party (NPP) will go to the polls later in the year to decide the faith of Hon Alan Kyerematen, HE Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Hon Kennedy Ohene Agyapong, among others, gunning to lead the party into the 2024 elections.

## DR. SAM ANKRAH'S REACTION TO PRESIDENT NANA AKUFO-ADDO'S STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

**T**ypical of the NPP-NDC Administrations for the past 30 years, this year's State of the Nation Address sang praises to a mediocre and painful past, instead of setting stepping stones into the nation's future. As usual, this SONA made a mockery of our bitter and bleak economic circumstances by gaslighting Ghanaians to accept the illusion that, our lives and livelihoods are far better off - in direct opposition to the harsh realities we wake up to every day. Again, as usual, the opposition's response has been nothing but a playful walk over the address, instead of laying building blocks for our future. Worse still, in the coming weeks, Ghanaians will be subjected to a free-for-all drinking-bar-styled parliamentary banter, which amounts to no change at all in the woeful plight of Ghanaians: Our healthcare systems would remain chronically impaired, our children's education and future would remain uncertain, and our youth's unemployment status gets more depressing year after year, with some

remaining jobless 5 painful, wasted years after leaving school, because there's zero effort by those at the helm of affairs towards mass industrialization. And as at our 66th independence anniversary, just a couple of days ago, we're in deep prayers, sheepishly awaiting loan approval from our long-time creditors. Yet, at the end of it all, two situations shall be guaranteed: (1) The NPP-NDC would pay themselves in full, their huge ex-gratias, in addition to all that they're enjoying with their families and allies now; (2) Our situation would remain unchanged or even worse. The time to wrestle our independence from the self-serving NPP-NDC fraternity is long overdue. They should NOT be the ones leading our nation into our 70th post-independence milestone. We are exhausted! We are tired! We are worn out! We want out of this painful, empty relationship! Enough Is Enough!



# US Paranoid About Russia-China Summit

By M. K. Bhadrakumar

The [arrest warrant](#) issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Vladimir Putin can only be seen as a publicity stunt by the Anglo-Saxon clique, with the US leading from the rear. Ironically, though, the ICC acted on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Iraq in 2003, which led to horrific war crimes but the “judges” at Hague slept over it. Both Washington and London admit today that the 2003 invasion was illegal—based on trumped up allegations against Saddam Hussein.

There's no chance, of course, that the ICC warrant will ever be taken seriously. ICC has no jurisdiction in Russia, which, like the US, is not a signatory to the Rome Statute. But the intention here is something else.

The mud-throwing at Putin is yet another display of President Biden's visceral hatred towards the Russian leader that goes back to a joust in Moscow well over a decade ago when Putin told him off brusquely, and is timed to distract attention from the state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Moscow on Monday, an event that not only has spectacular optics but is sure to intensify the “no limit” partnership between the two superpowers.

The Anglo-Saxon clique is watching with dismay the talks in Moscow. To be sure, Moscow and Beijing have decided to stand together to bury the US hegemony. Today, China exceeds the combined manufacturing capacity of the US and its European allies, and, equally, Russia has emerged as the world's largest nuclear weapon state superior to the US both in the quantity and quality of weaponry.

It has dawned on the US mind that Russia cannot be defeated in Ukraine. There is a chicken-

and-egg situation facing NATO, according to a [report in Politico](#). Massive investments are needed to catch up with Russia's defense industry but Europe's ailing economies have other critical priorities of survival and battling mounting social unrest. The notions of defeating Russia in a proxy war in conditions of “sanctions from hell” have turned out to be delusional. It is the US banks that are collapsing, it is European economies that are threatened by stagnation. The US' exasperation is evident in the top-secret mission by MQ-9 Reaper drone near the Crimean peninsula on March 14. US Global Hawk drones have been spotted regularly over the Black Sea in recent years but this case is different.

The Reaper's transponder was switched off as it approached Russia's temporary regime for the airspace established for the purposes of the special military operation near the Crimean peninsula (which Moscow had duly notified to all users of international airspace in accordance with international norms).

In the event, Russia's Su-27 fighter jets outmaneuvered the Reaper, which lost control and drowned in the Black Sea. Moscow conferred state awards to the two pilots who drove Reaper to the seabed. Russian ambassador in Washington [since warned](#) that while Moscow is not seeking any escalation, any deliberate attack on a Russian aircraft in neutral airspace will be construed as “an open declaration of war against the largest nuclear power.”

If the US had planned the drone incident to test Russia's reaction, well, the latter has given an unambiguous response. And all this took place in the immediate run-up to President Xi's visit. Biden since hit back by welcoming the ICC warrant on Putin saying “it's justified... (and) makes a very strong point.” But Biden's memory is failing him again. For, the stated American position on ICC is that Washington not only doesn't recognize the jurisdiction of the

ICC but if any US national is arrested or brought before the ICC, Washington reserves the right to use military force to rescue the detainee!

Furthermore, Washington has threatened reprisal against any country that cooperates with an ICC warrant against a US citizen. The George W Bush administration stated this categorically as US policy on ICC against the backdrop of the Anglo-American clique's horrific war crimes in Iraq, and the US never resiled from it.

By the way, there has been no referral by the UN Security Council or General Assembly to the ICC. So, who organized this arrest warrant? Britain—who else? The Brits bullied the ICC judges who are highly vulnerable to blackmail, as they draw fat salaries and would sup with the devil if it helped secure extended terms for them at the Hague. This becomes yet another case study of the piecemeal destruction of the UN system by the Anglo-Saxon clique in the recent years. Suffice to say, the drone incident and the ICC warrant vitiate the climate for any dialogue between Moscow and Kiev. Evidently, the Anglo-Saxon clique is worried like hell that China might spring another surprise as it did by mediating the recent Saudi-Iranian deal. In a meaningful remark, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Friday that Xi's visit is partially to promote “peace.” Beijing has already released a [“peace plan” for Ukraine](#), a 12-point agenda for “a political resolution of the Ukraine crisis,” which is on Zelensky's desk in Kiev although the West studiously chose to ignore it. In a phone call on Thursday, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang told his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba that Beijing hopes “all parties will remain calm, rational and restrained, and resume peace talks as soon as possible.”



Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping in a meeting in February 2022. The Anglo-Saxon clique is watching with dismay the talks in Moscow between Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. To be sure, Moscow and Beijing have decided to stand together to bury the US hegemony

The [Chinese readout said](#) Kuleba discussed “the prospect of peace talks ... and noted that China's position paper on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis shows its sincerity in promoting a ceasefire and an end to the conflict. He expressed the hope to maintain communication with China.”

Unsurprisingly, Biden is paranoid about China's push to mediate between Moscow and Kiev. The point is, he and Zelensky are [locked in a deathly embrace](#)—the corruption scam involving the activities of Hunter Biden in Kiev is hanging over the father's political career like the Damocles' sword, while on the other hand, Zelensky is also fighting for political survival and is increasingly daring to act on his own accord.

Disregarding Western doubts about the wisdom of holding the shattered frontline city of Bakhmut in Donbass, Zelensky is digging in and keeping up an attritional defense that may drag on. ([Politico](#))

Evidently, Biden is acting like a cat on the hot tin roof. He can neither let go Zelensky nor can he afford to be locked into a forever war in Ukraine while Taiwan Straits is beckoning him to a greater destiny. Beijing's stance has visibly hardened lately and the scorn that the US poured on China's national pride by shooting down its weather balloon has only exacerbated the distrust.

Similarly, the nadir has been reached for Russia with the Reaper drone provocation and the Anglo-Saxon clique's ICC scam.

Xi has chosen Russia for his first visit abroad in his third term also, the war in Ukraine notwithstanding. While announcing Xi's visit to Russia, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said, “As the world enters a new period of turbulence and change, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and an important power, the significance and influence of China-Russia relations go far beyond the bilateral scope.”

Again, Biden would have thought he was putting Putin on the mat with the Reaper stunt and the ICC scam. But Putin is nonchalant, choosing last Sunday day to make his [first-ever visit to Donbass](#). Putin toured Mariupol, the port city that was bitterly contested by the NATO operatives in league with the Ukrainian Neo-Nazi brigade, drove a vehicle along the city streets, making stops at several locations and surveying reconstruction works. It is a defiant signal to Biden that NATO has lost the war.

**MK Bhadrakumar** is a former diplomat. He was India's ambassador to Uzbekistan and Turkey. The views are personal.

# New UN Report Shows Major Setbacks In Maternal Health

The world is facing major setbacks in maternal health, a new [report](#) by the United Nations (UN) agencies warns. Data collected by the UN shows that 287,000 women died during pregnancy or childbirth in 2020. The numbers indicate that after progress had been made in the period from 2000 to 2015, maternal mortality indicators stagnated in the four years that followed. In some regions, like North America, they actually got worse. The United States saw an increase of the maternal mortality ratio—the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births—in the period between 2000 and 2020, going from 12 to 21 deaths per 100,000 births. Since maternal deaths are largely preventable, especially

where health services are easily accessible and of good quality, the negative trend should be taken as another warning to make health care available to everyone in the US. “Equity in healthcare gives every mother, no matter who they are or where they are, a fair chance at a safe delivery and a healthy future with their family,” said Catherine Russell, executive director of UNICEF, during the [announcement](#) of the report. Yet many women have little or no access to essential health care during pregnancy, including at the primary level. This has led to extreme regional disparities. Sub-Saharan Africa recorded 70% of all recorded maternal deaths. Nigeria accounted for more than one fourth of the

global number of maternal deaths, with 82,000 women losing their lives at childbirth or during pregnancy. In other regions, like in West Asia and North Africa, indicators improved, but the experience of women living in situations of conflict and occupation marred the progress achieved. For example, the maternal mortality ratio in Palestine decreased from 62 to 20 between 2000 and 2020. In Israel, the ratio went from nine to three in the same period, illustrating the extreme differences in access to health care for those living under Israeli occupation. By allocating more resources for nutrition, sexual and reproductive health services, and



*(Photo: UNICEF Europe and Central Asia). The numbers from a report by UN agencies indicate that after progress had been made in the period from 2000 to 2015, maternal mortality indicators stagnated in the four years that followed*

community-based primary health care, countries could ensure improvements in maternal health, said the UN agencies' leads. The sooner heads of state recognize this and move towards strengthening women's health services—including by

training and employing more midwives—the better, their report shows.

*People's Health Dispatch* is a fortnightly bulletin published by the [Peoples Health Movement](#) and *Peoples Dispatch*. For more articles and to subscribe to *People's Health Dispatch*, click [here](#).

# Tension At TaTU As Students Threaten Mayhem Over Fee Increment



*Some students of Tamale Technical University*

There is growing tension at the Tamale Technical University (TaTU) after a week-long protest against plans by the management of the university to increase school fees by 15 percent intensified last Friday, March 17, 2023. The Students' Representative Council of the university announced a total boycott of all academic activities “with immediate effect” on Friday morning, adding that it will

not back down until their “legitimate concerns are met”. When [GhanaWeb](#) visited the campus on Friday, all lecture halls were empty with just a few students loitering around with no signs of any academic activity ongoing. The SRC President of the Tamale Technical University, Seidu John-Paul told [GhanaWeb](#) that they decided to boycott academic activities

because the management of the university was inconsistent on the matter of fee increment.

“In his [Registrar of TaTU] address, he stated that there [will be] nothing like school fees increment this academic year, so he was able to calm the student populace down, we boycotted classes but his word calmed us down, so we opened classrooms for tuition.

“After that, management invited us, so we were there and so we met with the VC and some management members of the school, the VC stated that there is going to be school fees increment whether we like it or not,” he told [GhanaWeb](#).

Some of the students who spoke on condition of anonymity said there were widespread rumours that

some aggrieved students plan to forcefully implement the boycott and deal with defiant students and lecturers.

“Aside from the SRC's notice, we also heard this morning that some [students] will go round and make sure they stop any lecturer from lecturing. They even said they will use force if need be,” one of the students said.

The TaTU chapter of the Technical University Teachers' Association (TUTAG) in a notice to its members intercepted by [GhanaWeb](#) advised all lecturers to stay away from the lecture halls until the matter is resolved. The circular, titled “Notice to TUTAG Members on the ongoing threat of demonstration and boycott of lectures by SRC” said, “We are unable to predict the

reaction of the students to the lecturer if they are on rounds to stop their colleagues from partaking in ongoing lectures”.

“We, therefore, entreat all our members to suspend any ongoing or intended lectures until we communicate to you after monitoring the stability of the situation,” the circular added.

The students started boycotting lectures at the beginning of the week to protest against the plans by management to increase their school fees.

**--Source GhanaWeb**



# Tax Haven Investment Fund Charges Cuba For Alleged Debt From 1980s

By Gabriel Vera Lopes

Judge Sara Cockerill of the commercial division of England's High Court will have to decide in the coming weeks whether the investment fund CRF I Limited has standing to collect from the Cuban National Bank (BNC) and the state of Cuba. The legal dispute involves the fund, which is based in a tax haven and acquired Cuban debt securities in 2019, and, on the other side, the Cuban government itself, which accuses the alleged creditor of bad faith.

The magistrate's decision will respond to the lawsuit initiated by CRF I Ltd. in February 2020 in the London courts against the Cuban state. The court case ended its oral phase in early February this year, after both parties had presented their submissions. The litigation is being fought because the plaintiff CRF I Ltd. claims to hold two financial instruments of Cuban public debt contracted in 1984, after having acquired some of its securities in 2019. Meanwhile, the BNC and the State of Cuba maintain that this investment fund is not, and never has been, a creditor of the island, and that it is actually a vulture fund that is trying to legitimize its position as a creditor to demand that the country pay a debt that it does not own. Due to the complexity of the case, once the hearings are over, Cockerill warned that the decision will take time to evaluate and sentence. Once the judgment is handed down, there is a possibility that it could be appealed by one of the parties, taking the case to a second round of trial. Thus, it can take a long time for a final decision to be made. There are few precedents for cases involving the international, Cuban, and British legal frameworks. Therefore, the decision, if it becomes final, may set a precedent for future litigation in London courts, prompting experts in the field from around the world to follow the case closely.

"What is being discussed in the lawsuit is not whether Cuba has to pay. Because Cuba does not fail to recognize that it has to pay that debt. What is being discussed is whether the CRF I entity, as the vulture fund is called, is a valid creditor. If the court decides that it is a valid creditor, then we have to go to another trial where the merits of the case will be debated. That is, Cuba's duty to pay the debt, and that Cuba has not met the deadlines," says Ernesto Moreira, a law professor at the University of Havana, in an interview with *Brasil de Fato*. Currently, according to the latest report published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Institute of International Finance, the volume of debt issued by all countries is around 350% of the world GDP. According to the same report, this situation in the current context of economic recession could trigger a new global debt crisis.

## What is CRF I Ltd. and what does it claim?

CRF I Ltd. is an offshore investment fund incorporated in 2009 in the Cayman Islands, a British overseas territory in the Caribbean, famous for being a tax haven. The fund's chairman is David Charters and it is currently part of the London Club, an informal group for private international lenders. This investment fund claims that in 2019 it bought the rights to the debts incurred by the Banco Nacional de Cuba (BNC) with Crédit Lyonnais and Istituto Bancario Italiano in 1984, when the BNC was a central bank. The loan was taken out in German Marks, a currency that no longer exists, being declared in default by Fidel Castro's government after the fall of the Soviet Union.

In those years, this debt was incurred for the equivalent of USD \$15 million. According to

CRF I Ltd.'s own calculations, the sum of the debt is now about USD \$78 million, with interest.

As proof of the purchase made in 2019, the investment fund claims to have a document issued by a former BNC employee, who allegedly gave the Bank's—and therefore the Cuban state's—consent for his rights as a creditor to be transferred in favor of CRF. At the same time, the fund claims to have tried to negotiate with Cuba after it obtained the debt bonds. The tax haven-based fund accuses the Cuban government of having refused to negotiate a "rational and mutually convenient agreement." This version has been repeated by most of the international press.

## Why doesn't Cuba accept the CRF as a legitimate creditor?

Cuba argues that the CRF I Ltd. has never been a creditor of the country, nor is it at present. Havana argues that it has never gone into debt with the investment fund (an issue the two sides maintain). Furthermore, it argues that obtaining ownership of the debt in 2019—which CRF claims to have—was not valid because it did not comply with the corresponding legal requirements and also used illegal mechanisms to obtain this documentation. According to the Cuban government, the debt contracted with Crédit Lyonnais and Istituto Bancario Italiano in 1984 by the Banco Nacional Cubano (BNC) was made at a time when the institution acted as a Central Bank and had powers to act on behalf of the Cuban state. However, when subscribing to these two financial debt instruments, which are the subject of the lawsuit, it was agreed that if creditors wished to assign their rights as creditors of these public debts, they would have to inform the BNC and the Cuban state to obtain their consent.

In 1997, Cuban regulations



*Cuban pesos in Havana - Yamil Lage / AFP. Understand the legal dispute involving a vulture fund and the Cuban National Bank that may impact international law and economics*

reformed the BNC, obliging the organization to request authorization from the Ministry of Finance and Prices and the Council of Ministers to approve the cession of public debt and guarantees granted by the State. In this regard, the Cuban state claims that the debt ownership documents held by CRF I Ltd. are not valid, since these documents do not have the institutions' endorsement. The document presented by CRF I Ltd. bears only the signature of Raúl Olivera Lozano, who was the director of operations of the Cuban National Bank. Lozano would have signed the authorization to unilaterally assign the creditor's rights without the consent of the Cuban state, as established by Cuban law.

Lozano has been serving a prison sentence in Cuba since 2021, after being found guilty of corruption for receiving bribes—and CRF I Ltd.'s promise of a £25,000 payment—in exchange for illegally facilitating the process of transferring creditor rights. Raul Olivera Lozano himself testified to this effect, virtually, during the trial in London.

## Is CRF I Ltd. a vulture fund?

Vulture funds are hedge funds. They engage in buying subprime debt securities at below par values. They then litigate in foreign courts for payment for these securities above the value at which they were purchased. Hence their speculative nature.

The chairman of CRF I Ltd, David Charters, told the press he would not admit to the label "vulture fund" as the investment group he chairs is significantly smaller than the powerful Elliott

Management—which in 2016 litigated against Argentina in a landmark case. However, vulture status is not determined by the size of the group, but by its activity. During the trial, CRF I Ltd. consultant Jeetkumar Gordhandas admitted that he asked the National Bank of Cuba (BNC) to recognize his investment fund as a creditor of Cuban sovereign debt "with the sole purpose of initiating the present legal action to force its payment." Gordhandas' statements came after 11,000 new documents belonging to the investment group, which had not been disclosed before, were made public. Among the documents was a communication from a CRF executive informing his clients that the purpose of acquiring the two Cuban debt securities was to sue the country and force it to pay. In the same communication, it was stated that the lawsuit would close Cuba's access to international financial markets, as it would show the Cuban state as a bad faith actor unwilling to negotiate.

After the oral phase of the trial, Cuban Justice Minister Oscar Manuel Silvera told the Financial Times newspaper that Cuba is willing to talk with legitimate creditors about the payment of its foreign debt. "The position of our country is that we recognize our legitimate debts and our legitimate creditors. Our position is, first of all, to recognize them, to be transparent, to always talk to our creditors and to seek mutually favorable terms to meet these obligations," Silvera stressed.

*This article was originally published in Portuguese on [Brasil de Fato](#).*