

# BRYAN ACHEAMPONG

## IDEG Says His Comment On Election 2024 Is Tantamount To Coup D'etat'



**Bryan Acheampong, Minister for Agric**



**Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey (IDEG) Director**

The Executive Director of the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey has condemned recent comments by the Minister of Food and Agriculture, Bryan Acheampong saying it is tantamount to a coup d'état. According to Dr. Akwetey Bryan Acheampong's comment is unacceptable and must not be justified since it can potentially

cause violence in the country. It would be recalled that Bryan Acheampong while addressing some party faithful after a health walk through the principal streets of Mpraeso in the Eastern Region stated that the ruling New patriotic Party (NPP) would not hand power over to the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC).

The statement has since sparked outrage among opposition parties and civil society groups, who see it as a threat to Ghana's democracy.

Speaking in an interview with Accra based Peace FM over the issue, Dr. Akwetey stated that Bryan Acheampong's comment is unacceptable and can potentially cause violence in the country,

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## Danger

New Harmful Mosquito Breed Pops Up



Mosquito / File Photo

The Ghana Health Service has identified an invasion of a new kind of mosquito that is more harmful than anopheles. The new breed is known as Anopheles stephensi, and it is a malaria-transmitting mosquito, according to the GHS. According to the report, the new breed is highly invasive, spreads

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## Trouble Looms

...As Minister Drops Hint Of Another Domestic Debt Restructuring



**Ken Ofori Atta, Finance Minister**

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# The INSIGHT

## — EDITORIAL

### PROSECUTE THEM!

**T**he call by a section of the public for persons behind government's payroll fraud or 'Ghost Names' to be prosecuted

is a suggestion in the right direction.

The prosecution of these individuals most of whom are public servants has been long overdue. Despite the introduction of electronic payment system, the fraud still goes on, an indication that the crime is being perpetuated by a well-organised criminal network.

Clearly, should the state agencies especially the Office of the Special Prosecutor and the Auditor General up their game by ensuring the prosecution of these criminal gangs and thieves as suggested, instead of the existing arrangement of surcharging them, this nation-wrecking practice will grind to a halt.

There is no denying the fact that the 'soft' handling of these 'thieves' behind the 'ghost names' is what has emboldened them and made their exorcism difficult.

There certainly has to be a shift from surcharging to prosecution. Until that is done, eradicating this canker which only enriches these few individuals in our society will be difficult, if not a mere rhetoric.

With the level of technological advancement, there cannot be any excuse for allowing 'Ghosts' in the government's payroll.

The ghosts have to be hunted out and the only way to do that is to prosecute the individuals behind the 'mystery' of 'ghost names'.

# Danger

## New Harmful Mosquito Breed Pops Up



### Mosquito / File Photo

*from front page*

quickly, and can adapt to a wide range of climate conditions. GHS has also established a foothold in Tuba and Dansoman, according to the GHS.

As a result, it has issued a warning to residents to take precautions.

The *Anopheles stephensi* first invaded Africa in 2019, the countries include Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria and unfortunately confirmed in Ghana just this March.

This breed produces both *Plasmodium Falciparum* (the deadliest species of plasmodium which causes malaria) and *P Vivax* Malaria parasites.

Also, a recent mathematical modeling study by the World Health Organization showed the spread of *An. Stephensi* and the implication for malaria transmission and control in Africa.

One study projected that *An. stephensi* could put an additional 126 million people in Africa at risk of malaria if the mosquito vector were to spread unchecked.

The statement also reveals that this breed is resistant to multiple insecticides which makes control very difficult. It is not known yet what really can kill it.

Meanwhile, the GHS has set up a task force, to implement a number of measures including the removal of water collection

points in and around homes and communities to minimize the breeding sites. Avoiding mosquito bites by using insecticide-treated mosquito nets is also a measure that has been advised to boost prevention. Meanwhile, Ghana has become the first African country to approve a new malaria vaccine from Oxford University as part of efforts to combat the disease. MOSQUIRIX from British drug maker GSK, was last year endorsed by the World Health Organization.

## THE INSIGHT

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## IDEG Says His Comment On Election 2024 Is Tantamount To Coup D'etat'

*from front page*

calling it a "coup d'état in the making." He called on the police to immediately invite the minister and investigate the matter. "What they reported that he has said that 'we won't hand over' is tantamount to a coup, okay, because in our constitution, if you claim you won't hand over after losing an election, it is a very serious matter. "Or anybody who wants to use force to take power is

criminal behaviour, it can cause conflict and it can affect the whole country, especially the presidency. "For me, the reason why I think they need to go to the police is that such a statement can cause conflict in the country," he said. Dr. Akwete added that it is important that the police take the matter seriously and investigate it thoroughly because Ghana's democracy must

be protected at all costs. The opposition NDC has also condemned Bryan Acheampong's statement, as the party has called on the government to take swift action to address the matter and ensure that the upcoming elections are free and fair. Bryan Acheampong is on record as saying the governing NPP will do everything within its means to win the 2024 general elections. According to him, the NPP is not ready to hand over power



**Bryan Acheampong, MP and Dr. Emmanuel Akwete (IDEG) Director**

to the National Democratic Congress (NDC), therefore, his party will go to the election fully prepared. He stated that the NPP has the

men to match the opposition boot for boot during the 2024 polls.

## Peace Council To Meet Political Parties, Security Agencies Over Inciting Comments



**NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL**



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

*The Council's intervention comes amid growing concerns over the potential for political violence*

The National Peace Council has expressed concern over the increase in incendiary comments made by politicians and has announced plans to engage with political parties and security agencies to address the issue. The Council issued a statement following

comments made by Abetifi Member of Parliament, Bryan Acheampong, suggesting that the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) would not relinquish power to the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) and would do everything possible to remain in power.

Rev. Dr. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi, Chairman of the Peace Council, has thus called on politicians to exercise restraint in their comments ahead of the 2024 general elections. In an interview with Citi News, he said, "We've received some footage by several political actors from both the NDC and

the NPP that we think need to be addressed, and we want to appeal to the political actors to be careful and guard what they say and how they say it.

"Our intention is to invite the parties to the table to review the things we discussed and see the challenges that we have now and see what we can do going forward." Dr. Adu-Gyamfi also revealed that the Council has scheduled a meeting with security agencies next month to address potential conflict issues. He emphasized that these meetings would be

continuous, adding, "We've also scheduled a meeting with the security agencies which will be coming on next month to look at the things that we need to address between now and the next elections." Regarding the Abetifi lawmaker's comments, Dr. Adu-Gyamfi stated that if someone makes a criminal statement, the responsibility falls on the security agencies to take appropriate action. The Council's intervention comes amid growing concerns over the potential for violence in the lead-up to the 2024 general elections.



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Junior Doctors In England Intensify Protests Demanding Pay Restoration



**Picket line outside the Royal London Hospital. (Photo: via Michael Andrews/Twitter). Junior doctors in England, like other workers of the National Health Service (NHS), are struggling due to low wages, overwork, and soaring inflation. They are demanding a salary hike to compensate for the 26% cut, since 2008, in take-home wages for the highly qualified workforce**

**A**round 60,000 junior doctors in England have gone on strike for the second time this year. The 96-hour walkout began last Tuesday, April 11, demanding pay restoration. Junior doctors affiliated

to the British Medical Association (BMA) marched in Trafalgar Square, London, on Tuesday and are likely to continue the strike and picketing outside hospitals till this week.

The striking doctors are demanding

a salary hike to compensate for the 26% cut, since 2008, in take-home wages for the highly qualified workforce. Doctors called on the Tory government to come to the negotiating table and try to solve the grievances of doctors and hospitals which have remained unresolved for long.

*MorningStar* reported that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has ruled out talks with the junior doctors until they call off the strike and abandon their starting negotiating position for a 35% salary increase. Junior doctors in the country, like other workers of the National Health Service (NHS), have complained of low wages, overwork, and soaring inflation.

They had earlier gone on a 72-hour –strike on March 13, demanding a 30% wage hike, when the government failed to come up with a good enough offer to compensate for the fall in their real wages since 2008. They are also demanding investments in the NHS, which would make working conditions bearable and address the high rates of burnout and emigration.

On April 12, British Medical Association (BMA) Chair of Council Professor Philip Banfield said that “in the face of a constant refusal from the Health Secretary Steve Barclay to agree to further talks and put forward a credible offer which could bring an end to the

dispute, we believe that working with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) provides the most realistic chance of a successful outcome to the negotiations.

“We have always said we will get round the table for talks with Mr Barclay any time; a credible offer from him could result in strike action being called off, but despite months of trying, he remains seemingly intransigent and inflexible to all our attempts to reach a settlement.” On April 11, Member of Parliament from the Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn expressed his solidarity with the junior doctors and tweeted, “when you stand by striking healthcare workers, you stand up for the future of our NHS.”

### Paramilitary Violence Continues To Plague Colombia

**D**espite important advances towards peace made by the government of Gustavo Petro, violence continues across Colombia. The Colombian human rights organization, the Institute of Development and Peace Studies (INDEPAZ), reported that between April 1 and 11, ten people were murdered in three massacres, eleven social leaders were assassinated and one ex-combatant was killed. The alarming number of deaths is one of the highest death tolls registered during a period of ten days this year. While there has been a noted decrease in the killings of environmentalists, land defenders, human rights defenders, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, peasant and social leaders since the start of the year, human rights organizations have sounded the alarms following this latest bout of violence. On April 11, three peasants were killed by a group of unknown men in El Tambo, Cauca in the 30th massacre of the year. In these 30 massacres, 98 Colombians have been slaughtered. On the same day, an environmental defender, Diana Carolina Rodríguez Madrigal, was beaten to death when

she was on her way to her home in San Cayetano, Norte de Santander. A peasant leader and member of the Colombian Communist Party Carlos Julio Tautiva Cruz was also murdered by armed men, who attacked him inside his house in the Lagunilla village in Sumapaz, Bogotá, and the bodies of two social leaders, María Cecilia Cuenu Cuenu and Juan Hilario Banguera Colorado, who had been missing since March 31, were found dead with signs of torture near the Palanquera stream in Guapi, Cauca.

According to INDEPAZ, Cuenu Cuenu and Banguera Colorado were the 47th and 48th social leaders to be assassinated in 2023, and the 1,456th and 1,457th since the signing of Havana peace agreements in November 2016.

The Colombian Communist Party (PCC) condemned the assassination of Tautiva Cruz and demanded justice. “Criminal hands took the life of one of our comrades, Carlos Julio Tautiva Cruz (Yuyo), and caused serious injuries to Nubia González in

the town of Sumapaz in Bogotá. Yuyo was a historic peasant leader, music artist and a peacemaker. We demand justice!” the PCC tweeted. The Union of Agricultural Workers of Sumapaz (SINTRAPAZ) also rejected Tautiva Cruz’s murder. “The agrarian union organization rejects the tragic events that took the life of our comrade and friend Carlos Julio Tautiva Cruz and caused damage to the integrity of his daughter-in-law Nubia Gonzalez Salazar. We urge the authorities, through the activation of the protocols and the rigorous investigation, to promptly find the whereabouts of the criminals, do justice and make reparations to the community of Sumapaz, the Tautiva Cruz and Tautiva Mora families and other family friends for the opprobrious events that occurred,” said SINTRAPAZ in a statement. Likewise, on April 9, INDEPAZ reported the murder of ex-FARC guerrilla fighter Diego Mauricio Mejía Rojas in the Puerto Asis municipality in the Putumayo department. He was shot dead by armed men riding a motorcycle. He was a part of the reincorporation process and was working as a guard with the National Protection Unit

(UNP).

According to INDEPAZ, with Mejía Rojas’ assassination, the number of ex-combatants killed since the signing of peace agreements reached 354.

Deputy Sergio Marín of the Comunes Party, which was formed as a part of the 2016 Havana peace agreements, condemned Mejía Rojas’ murder, stating “they continue to extinguish the lives of those who work for peace.” The Security and Protection for Peace Workers Union (SINTRASEPAZ) also rejected Mejía Rojas’ homicide. “Our colleague Diego Mauricio Mejía Rojas, a bodyguard with the Specialized Sub-Directorate of the UNP, was murdered in Puerto Asís, Putumayo. Diego was a peace signatory and protected other peace signatories. Our condolences to family, comrades and friends,” SINTRASEPAZ wrote in a tweet.

The left-wing government of President Gustavo Petro and Vice president Francia Márquez, which took office in August 2022, has promised to achieve peace in the

country. The Petro-Márquez government has been promoting peace agreements with all irregular paramilitary and drug-trafficking groups willing to submit to justice. They have also vowed to fully implement the 2016 peace agreements.

According to INDEPAZ, over 20 irregular armed groups operating in the country have expressed their will to lay down arms, engage in dialogue and accept conditions in exchange for peace and definitive non-repetition of violence.

The government has already begun peace talks with at least three groups, including the Estado Mayor Central (EMC), and Segunda Marquetalia guerilla groups, and drug cartel Los Pachencas. It has also resumed the peace process with the National Liberation Army (ELN).

# NPP National Youth Organiser Invited By Police For Wearing Military Camouflage

The Upper West Regional Command of the Ghana Police Service has invited the National Youth Organiser of the ruling [New Patriotic Party](#), Abdul Salam Mustapha for questioning. According to a copy of the invitation letter sighted by Ghana Web, Mr Salam was to report to the Upper West Police Command last Friday "to assist in an ongoing investigation" in which he was seen wearing a military camouflage during a radio interview contrary to the law.

"You are respectfully invited to report to the Regional Police Command/Wa on 7 April, 2023 at 1100 hours to assist in an ongoing investigation in which you were seen wearing a military camouflage contrary to 'section 1 of the restriction on the use of military uniforms and equipment Act 1967, (NLCD 177) as amended by the restriction on the use of military

camouflage and equipment (Amendment) Act 2007, (Act 746)' while you granted an interview on Tuusung radio in Wa on 13 March, 2023 between the hours of 10:00am and 11:00am.

"I wish to kindly request you to bring along the said military camouflage long-sleeved shirt to aid investigation," the invitation letter dated March 31, 2023 said. Reacting to the letter in a Facebook post, the NPP National Youth Organiser confirmed receipt of the invitation and said he had arranged with the police to report himself to the Police CID headquarters on Thursday, April 13, 2023.

According to Salam Mustapha, the invitation by the police is a result of an equalisation attempt by the opposition [National Democratic Congress](#) who had some of its executives being invited by the police recently on similar grounds. "I received this letter from the Police

Commander to report to the Upper West Regional Police Command. Due to some family circumstances, I couldn't travel to Wa, but upon further communication, we subsequently have arranged for me to meet the police at CID headquarters tomorrow at 12 noon. I understand that the NDC petitioned the police to invite me because some officers of theirs were invited to answer questions on why they wore camouflage to campaign in the Ashanti Region. "I will honour the invitation tomorrow, but this equalisation attempt has failed. How the police failed to see the symbol of 'true religion' embossed on the shirt left breast pocket strikes me. How can a shirt bought in a shop in London with its label be described as a military camouflage?" he questioned in his Facebook post sighted by GhanaWeb.

## 8 NDC regional executives invited by police

Eight members of Ashanti region executives of the opposition [National Democratic Congress](#) (NDC) were recently invited by the Ashanti Regional Police Command for campaigning in the party's "Green Army" uniform. Confirming the invitation on Kumasi-based Abusua FM, the first Vice Chairman of the party, Captain retired Kwame Jabari said, they were ready to meet the regional police commander to justify the use of the uniform. "The camouflage was bought at Kumasi Kejetia Market which bears no military symbol of the Ghana Armed Forces to warrant this needless invitation. The camouflage is available on the market NPP people including their antinational Organizer and Youth Organizer Nana Boakye have all been wearing the camouflage so why us," Mr. Jabari asked.



Salam Mustapha, NPP National Youth Organiser

According to him, the Party will not be cowards to the police and military intimidation in Ashanti region for no wrong doing.

"They call us on the phone for a meeting after 9am, we are now going to meet as a party to make a decision on the invitation extended to us, either to honor the invitation or not. By our principle we will decide whether the invitation is intimidation tactics or not. If we deem it as intimidation we will not honor it if it is not we must honor it."

# Trouble Looms

## ...As Minister Drops Hint Of Another Domestic Debt Restructuring



Ken Ofori-Atta, Finance Minister

from front page

The Minister for Finance, Ken Ofori-Atta, has hinted that there will be an imminent 2nd round of restructuring of the country's domestic debts. According to him, despite completing the restructuring of some GH¢98 billion worth of domestic debts in February, there are ongoing negotiations to restructure some additional GH¢123 billion domestic debt instruments. Mr. Ofori-Atta made this known during a presentation to stakeholders on macroeconomic developments and the upcoming public debt restructuring as part of

the ongoing IMF/World Bank spring meetings in the US. "In February we successfully completed the first pillar of our domestic debt exchange programme, we realized that there was no other alternative to a full domestic debt exchange," he told stakeholders. "The February DDEP covers GH¢98 billion of our domestic debt and we expect the rest of our debt instruments to be included in the perimeter of the domestic debt to be exchanged," he added. Amongst the debt instruments to be affected by the next round of

debt exchange are Pension fund holdings, coco-bills, US\$ local bonds, local currency loans, and Government's debt to the Bank of Ghana, totaling some GH¢123 billion. Ken Ofori-Atta however insists treasury bills will not be affected. "Talk of treasury bills, it has been excluded to preserve financial stability and ensure government funding." Government in December at the start of its first domestic debt exchange programme had indicated it could exchange more domestic debt stating "it intended to exchange domestic non-marketable debt and Cocoa bills, under comparable terms at a later stage". It would be recalled that the first domestic debt restructuring resulted in picketing and other agitations as some individuals began to withdraw their financial instruments and finances from some financial institutions. Clearly, trouble looms with the second round of debt restructuring.

## Health Directorate Advises Public Against Bad Eating Habit

Dr. Alfred Kwodwo Ampofo, the Techiman North District Director of Health Services has advised the public to control their eating habits and avoid unhealthy lifestyles as well. This would greatly help stem the outbreak in the district, he said, saying bad eating habits and unhealthy lifestyles were contributing to diabetes, hypertension, and tuberculosis in the area. Dr. Ampofo gave the advice when addressing the district's 2022 annual performance review meeting held at Tuobodom in the Bono East region. He said another health challenge in the area was the increasing rate of malaria among children and asked parents to allow their children to sleep under mosquito-treated nets. He also called on stakeholders to support the ongoing malaria campaign to help reduce infections, particularly among children and infants. Dr. Ampofo said the directorate was implementing a malaria prevention and care



programme, saying malaria remained one of the topmost childhood killer diseases and called for stakeholder support.

He explained the directorate reduced the recorded 6.2 percent cases of anemia in 2021 to 3.9 percent in 2022 while skilled delivery also improved from 29 percent to 31.9 percent within the same periods.

Sampson Addo, the Nkoranza South Health Information Officer said maternal health had improved in the area, saying about 60 percent of pregnant women in the district attended antenatal clinics. He called on the government to facilitate the completion of the Agenda 111 District Hospital in the area to help improve quality healthcare delivery.

Source -- GNA

# The Worsening Dilemma Of Oppressed Palestine And The Complicity Of The West

By Anas Seidu

It is 2023 and the plight of the Palestinians continues to worsen largely due to the prevailing geo-political interests, colossal level of militarization and clear bias of Western actors in the conflict.

It is almost seven decades when Israel was granted statehood by the UN in 1948. In effect, the two states solution proposed under resolution 181 did not only miss the mark in granting the Palestinians statehood, but has rendered millions of Palestinians who were inhabitants and dignified citizens of the land for centuries as refugees. They have become objects for target practice greater than Apartheid South Africa. Palestinians continue to confront force eviction and subject to series of inhuman torture, systematic cleansing and murder.

Apart from the series of UN resolutions passed, the intervention by the ICC to probe possible war crimes and human rights violations against the Palestinian women and children has been curtailed all due to the reluctance of the West in ensuring justice and peace. This impunity is a clear manifestation of the fact that the pride of the US, Britain and France as models of democracy, rule of law, good governance, fundamental human rights and freedom is honored more in the breach especially when the rights and dignity of a section of the international populace like the Palestinians are consciously trampled upon. The amalgamation of this conscious duplicity and wanton disregard for the sanctity of the lives of

the Palestinian women and children makes the future bleak for the oppressed. Fundamental human rights, justice and freedom in the eyes of so-called responsible adults like the p5+1 group of countries is a façade especially when it is against a particular race.

## The Two States Solution

On 29, November 1947, the UNGA passed resolution 181 adopting a plan of action to partition the British Mandate into two states, one Jewish, one Arab. The puzzle remains; for seven decades, when would the oppressed people of Palestine also be free to assert themselves as human beings just as the Zionists were given freedom? For how long would the Palestinian also realize his/her dream of sovereign independence?

The UN says Gaza is officially occupied by Israel. Israel rules over 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank for decades. Fourteen member-states of the UNSC voted and passed a resolution describing Israeli occupation of the West Bank as an illegal settlement with the US abstaining. According to the verdict of the supreme court of Israel "The Judea and Samaria areas are held by the state of Israel in belligerent occupation". These racist act and wanton disregard for the rights and dignity of the oppressed people of Palestine are carefully hatched from the egg of impunity that has eventually left academicians, policy makers, international institutions and civil society in a puzzle; When would the impunity stop?

## The Duplication of the Holocaust

Without a slight of doubt, the holocaust was barbaric and must be condemned in no uncertain terms by all and sundry. The life of a single Jew is precious like any other human being. The Holy Qur'an is the only Revealed Scripture

that indicates:

**"..whoever kills a soul unless for a murder or for corruption in the land-it is as if he had killed mankind entirely. And whoever protects a soul-it is as if he had saved mankind entirely..." Qur'an 5:32**

However, the premeditated, organized, large scale and conscious killing of the Palestinian women and children under intense occupation and blockade can be attributed as the duplication of the scenario of the Holocaust by Nazi Germany during WWII. To discover the reality, World War II was precipitated by Europeans, fought and concluded in Europe. For what reason should the people of Palestine bear the brunt of a war they were never parties to? This obsession and systematic use of Palestine for target practice is happening under the watch of members of the UNSC who claim to be models of human rights, freedom, custodians of international law, and champions of international peace, cooperation and security.

In July, 2011, South Sudan based on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) seceded from Sudan, declared independence and became the 193<sup>rd</sup> member state of the UN. The partitioning of India as a result of the agreement by Britain in 1947, led to the establishment of Pakistan as a sovereign state from India. Others like East Timor, Eritrea, Bangladesh, Panama all seceded from their respective countries of origin and are now sovereign entities with a permanent population, defined territories,



**Antonio Guterres, UN General Secretary**

government and ability to enter into relations with others states. The inability of the Palestinians to realize their sovereignty and political independence has been a major preoccupation in the minds of not only the Palestinians but people in both scholarly and policy discourse.

Injustice and oppression have been meted out to the people of Palestine for over seven decades. Millions of precious lives have been lost, valuable property destroyed whilst fear and panic continue to prevail in the region and beyond. At this crucial juncture, it is only the correct application of the principles of international law, justice, human rights and freedom by the international community led by the P5+1 group of countries that can establish lasting peace and security in the region and beyond. The two states solution must be practically realized for the Jewish and the Palestinian states to live in peace and harmony. War is indeed a hard moral problem and the world

cannot as a result of the inordinate foreign policy ambitions and interest of the US, continue to bear the brunt of this protracted conflict.

After the conscious failure to heed to the recommendations of the King-Crane Commission after WWII, the failure to fulfill the promise of establishing a Palestinian state is the fundamental plight of the Palestinians which has also posed a huge security challenge to the region from immemorial. To curtail the security challenge is obviously the realization of a sovereign Palestine. The UN must comprehensively engage regional powers like the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, all stake holders who are parties to the conflict to reach a common ground for the Palestinians to also have their state and cooperate peacefully with the Zionist state.

**Anas Seidu is the CEO of Al-Mustapha Research and Resource Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, Peace and Security, Ghana-ARRIPS**

# Brazil's Lula Criticizes The Hegemony Of US Dollar In State Visit To China



**Lula is welcomed by Dilma Rousseff at the headquarters of the New Development Bank in Shanghai, China. Photo: Ricardo Stuckert. On his first day in the country, the president also visited Huawei and had meetings with executives from other companies**

By Mauro Ramos

The president of the New Development Bank (NDB), Dilma Rousseff, last week received the president of the Republic of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva for the inauguration ceremony at the head of the bank. This was the first activity on the official agenda of the president during his state visit to China.

Lula and Rousseff held a closed-door meeting with directors of the financial institution before starting the ceremony. First to speak, Rousseff, who was one of the founders of the BRICS bank, talked about the need to expand the institution's capacity.

"It is fundamental to expand the bank's reach and impact. On the one hand, we have expanded the number of member countries, strengthening our cooperation platform. On the other hand, we are financing key development projects. From sanitation to social and digital infrastructure," Rousseff said.

The New Development Bank was established in 2014 at the sixth BRICS conference in Fortaleza and has an authorized initial capital of USD 100 billion (about 490 billion Brazilian reals).

In October 2022, the bank announced that it will lend USD 30 billion to support the overall growth and sustainable development projects of the countries it finances over a five-year period.

40% of these loans are set to go to climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. Other important areas are clean energy, transportation infrastructure, urban development, water resource management and sanitation, and social and digital infrastructure. About 30% of the loans will be made in the currencies of the bloc's member countries.

President Lula gave a 15-minute speech in which he said that the "New Development Bank meets all the conditions to become the great bank of

the Global South." "For the first time, a development bank of global scope is established without the participation of developed countries in its initial phase. Free, therefore, from the shackles of conditionalities imposed by traditional institutions on emerging economies. And more: with the possibility of financing projects in local currency."

After reading the speech, Lula took off his glasses and addressed the audience for another 15 minutes, this time without a script. The president said that the bank arose from the dialogue he had with the presidents of Russia, China, India, and South Africa prior to the G7 meetings, to which the presidents of emerging economies were invited. In this context, Lula was cheered when he criticized the hegemony of the dollar in the world economy and the role of international financial institutions commanded by the Global North.

"A development bank has to have more functions, not just one. Every night I ask myself, why are all countries obliged to make their trade backed by the dollar? Why can't we trade in our own currency?" said Lula. "A president cannot govern with a knife in his neck," he defended, in reference to the conditionalities imposed by institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

## The expectations on the State visit

Lula brought to China an important delegation with 19 federal deputies, seven senators – including the president of the Senate, Rodrigo Pacheco – five governors and seven ministers, including Fernando Haddad, Minister of Finance, Marina Silva, Minister of Environment, and Paulo Teixeira, Minister of Agrarian Development and Family Agriculture. The delegation also includes representatives from trade union centrals and the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST).

One of the members of the committee was federal deputy Jandira Feghali of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), who, in a conversation with *Brasil de Fato*, stated that the trip is fundamental for the country's reindustrialization objectives.

"Brazil needs to generate a national development project, Brazil needs to add value to its industrialization, it needs to generate employment. So, Brazil cannot avoid a great negotiation and construction of agreements with a country like China, which is leading the way in innovation, science, and technology," said the

congresswoman.

After the meeting at the headquarters of the New Development Bank, Lula and part of his delegation headed to Huawei's innovation center in Shanghai. Among those present was the governor of Bahia, Jerônimo Rodrigues of the Workers' Party of Brazil (PT), who has been in China since the end of March, when the state visit was canceled due to the president's mild pneumonia.

Last week, the governor signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the company to expand agreements between the state and the technological giant in areas ranging from education to public safety.

Lula also met with executives from BYD, the electric car manufacturer that surpassed Tesla in sales last year, and with China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), a Chinese state-owned infrastructure giant.

On Friday April 14, Lula and his ministerial team will meet with the president of the state-owned energy company State Grid, Zhang Zhigang, one of the companies likely to be part of the major agreements to be signed.

The agenda continues with a meeting with the chairman of the National People's Assembly of China, Zhao Leji, at the Great Hall of the People, and a flower laying ceremony at the Monument to the Heroes of the People in Tiananmen Square, the square of Heavenly Peace.

In the afternoon, before the expected meeting with his counterpart Xi Jinping, Lula will meet with representatives of the All China Federation of Trade Unions and China's Prime Minister Li Qiang. *This piece was first published in Portuguese at [Brasil de Fato](#).*

# Mahama Challenges Journalists To Fact Check 'Dog Meals' For SHS Students

The Presidential candidate hopeful of the Opposition National Democratic Congress, NDC, John Dramani Mahama has challenged the media to fact check his comment about poor feeding of Senior High School students.

Mr. Mahama came under verbal attack by the governing New Patriotic Party when he said even dogs will reject food being served students under the Free SHS program. Speaking to delegates in New Juaben North and South as part of his three-day tour of Eastern region which ends on Thursday he explained that "recently I spoke about poor quality of meals for students in Senior high schools. But the NPP insulted me. I want Journalists to fact check. This is a challenge

to you (Journalists). Go to the SHS students to ask them about the quality of food being served. And as I said with apology that the food being served the children in school not even a dog will eat that food in the house. Journalists go to the schools to interview the children and see for yourself if these are the kind of food Senior High School students deserve to eat". He said the poor implementation of Free Senior High School has impaired quality education at the secondary level however government is reluctant to listen to stakeholders for review of the policy.

According to Mr. Mahama, the constitution envisaged these challenges reason it prescribed

a progressively free education which the NDC started. However for populist agenda to win election, Akufo Addo decided to implement the policy wholesale hence the serious challenges affecting the policy.

"When you came everything Free SHS. Now the children can't go to school to learn. They go to school three weeks and come home. Their meals are bad. I have seen videos where food were being shared to students, the quality can't be compared to what we feed them at home". "Parents are spending more on children now than when they were paying fees. That is why we have called for consultation with stakeholders to review .But they went round to say I sad I



**John Dramani Mahama**

will cancel it .That is the propaganda they did in 2016. But we started Free SHS with day students .At our time, day students were not paying schools fees in secondary school. We announced we were going to start with boarding

students so in the first year September we selected 140,000 boarding students for Free SHS so how can I cancel it ". Mr.Mahama said. **Source:** [starrfm.com.gh](http://starrfm.com.gh)

# JB Alleged Killer's Mini-Trial Over, Court Delivers Ruling April 18



**The late J.B Danquah-Adu**

The High Court in Accra will on April 18, 2023, determine the admissibility or otherwise of the charged and cautioned statements obtained from Daniel Asiedu, the man who has been accused of killing late Member of Parliament (MP)

for Abuakwa North, Joseph Boakyeh Danquah Adu. The substantive trial before Her Ladyship Justice Lydia Osei Marfo of the Criminal Division of the Accra High Court has been put on hold for a mini-trial following an objection raised by the

defense.

Asiedu alias Sexy Don Don through his lawyers led by Lawyer Yaw Danquah has alleged he did not give the charged and cautioned statements which the prosecution sought to rely on in the trial voluntarily. Per the law, the court is obliged to conduct a mini-trial to ascertain the veracity of the allegations raised before the substantive trial proceed. It was the case of Sexy Don Don that the investigators subjected him to various degree of threat, coercion, and intimation and violently abused him into accepting whatever was thrown at him.

He also accused the investigators of forcefully holding his hands to sign

those statements and also pushing him into thumb-printing them.

He, therefore, urged the court not to admit those statements which were going to be tendered into evidence by Chief Inspector Augustine Nkrumah. Prosecution's argument But, his allegations were strongly disputed by the Prosecution led by Mrs Sefakor Batse, a Principal State Attorney who called the investigators and independent witnesses who were present when those statements were taken to court to testify.

It was the case of the prosecution during the mini-trial that the accused person voluntarily gave his

statements to the police in the presence of an independent witness who in turned explained to him in the language he understood. The prosecution pointed out the inconsistencies in the testimonies of the accused person during the cross examination. Vincent Bossu, the second accused, who has been charged together with Asiedu for abetment also gave a similar account and was subjected to cross-examination. Following the conclusion of the mini-trial, Justice Osei Marfo has fixed April 18 to deliver her ruling after which the substantive trial would resume. Sexy Don Don is also separately facing the charge of robbery. **Source:** [starrfm.com.gh](http://starrfm.com.gh)