

# GHANA

## Back Into The Colonial Fold



**President Nana Akufo-Addo**

*By Abena Osegu Boateng*

**N**ana Addo Dankwa-Akufo-Addo is most certainly an extraordinary President. He has done what no Ghanaian President after independence in

1957 has had the guts to do. Akufo-Addo has managed to take Ghana which led the independence struggle in Africa south of the Sahara back to the colonial fold. One of the very first acts of his

government was to enlist Ghana in the community of former French colonies, the Francophony in addition to getting stuck in the British Commonwealth.

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## Pensioner Bondholders Warn Govt

...Issue Threats To Picket Over Failure To Fulfil Promise

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### Palestinian Ambassador

Presents Rice To Over 600 Ghanaian Families On The Occasion Of Ramadan



**T**he Palestinian Ambassador to Ghana, H. E. Abdalfatah Ahmed Khalil Alsatarr, has gifted over 600

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### Okoben Mining CEO Rubbishes Accusations Of Involvement In Galamsey Related Health Hazards

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# The INSIGHT

## — EDITORIAL

### ADDRESS THIS FUNDING GAP!

**T**he Ghana AIDS Commission is not happy about its dwindling budgetary allocation.

Officials of the Ghana AIDS Commission who appeared before the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament a fortnight ago were full of lamentations that they received only GHC3 million instead of the GHC14 million budgetary allocation to them in 2022.

According to the officials the funding gap or challenge greatly affected their work as it had dire consequences on the delivery of its mandate.

Clearly, the funding bottlenecks accounts for the recent rise in cases of HIV/AIDS infections in the country since monies needed to embark on sensitization programmes are not forthcoming as expected.

This development justifies the saying that you cannot eat your cake and have it which means that rise in infection need be blamed on reduced funding.

The rise in the cases of HIV infections in the country is very worrying as measures needed to address the canker appear to be suffering funding challenges and this must be of concern to all

The Ghana Aids Commission and several world bodies and stakeholders succeeded to a large extent in creating the awareness of condom use and abstinence in time past but 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 the government in spite of the economic challenges should provide the commission with the needed funding in a bid to address this menace.

## Palestinian Ambassador Presents Rice To Over 600 Ghanaian Families On The Occasion Of Ramadan

*from front page*

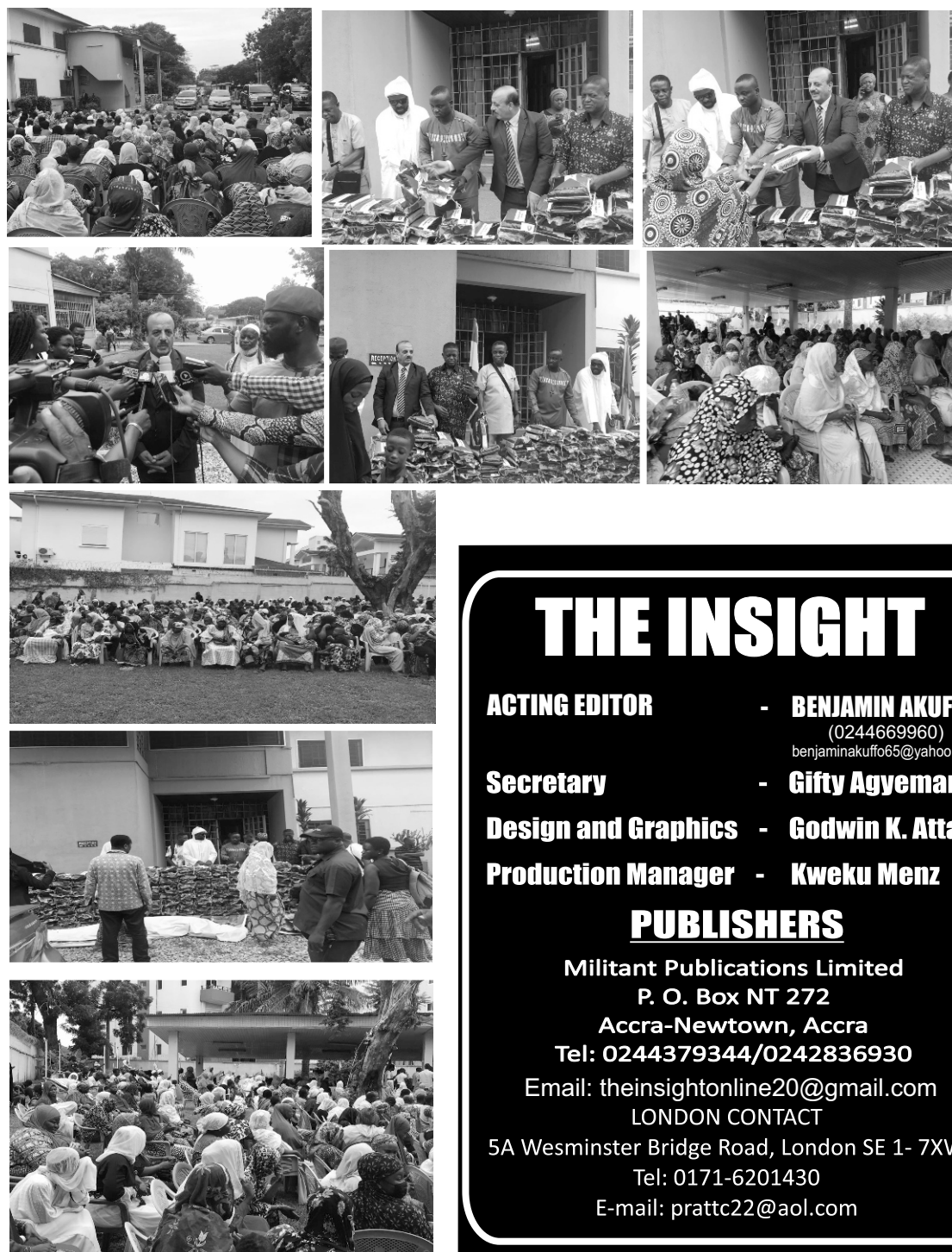
bags of rice to some Ghanaian families who are predominantly from Muslim communities to support them in this period of Ramadan (fasting). The donation which took place at the Palestinian Embassy last Friday saw over 600 people mostly women receive a bag of rice each in a bid to help them break the fast in the holy month of Ramadan. The Ambassador who could not hide his joy when he presented the hundreds of bags of rice with the assistance of Sheikh Arimiyaw Shaibu, the Spokesperson to the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Dr. Osman Nuhu Sharabutu and some pastors said in

spite of the brutalities by Israel against the Palestinian people, they have had to support some Ghanaian families since it has always been their desire to do so.

The Palestinian Ambassador who is also the Dean of Arab Diplomatic Missions in Ghana called on Ghanaians to support one another out of their widow's mite since it is a blessing to always give unto others in need.

The Ambassador in response to a question about Israeli atrocities in occupied State of Palestine slammed the Jewish State for the killing of hundreds of Palestinians over the past few months.

These are some pictures taken during the presentation last Friday;



## THE INSIGHT

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# GHANA; Back Into The Colonial Fold

from front page

Indeed, the stupidity of this move is explained publicly as a consequence of the Ghanaian leader being a fluent French speaker who was educated partially in France. Last week, Akufo-Addo played host to the Vice President of the United States of America (USA), Kamala Harris and completely surrendered the management of the Ghana economy to Uncle Sam. At the end of the visit which was officially styled as a charming offensive, it was announced that the US government has appointed a resident economic advisor to Ghana to help fix West African country's economy. Woow!

In ordinary language, from now on the Ghanaian economy will be run by somebody appointed by the Government of the United States of America which overthrew the Government of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, on February 24, 1966. As a fact, Ghana's current economic difficulties spring from very bad advice given by the US to the puppets it installed in power in 1966. These puppets were told to jump into the road to neo-liberalism, to privatize state enterprises, to devalue the national currency, to remove subsidies on social services, kill the nuclear power project with the Soviet Union and to make education a privilege

and not a right.

After more than 60 years of religiously following advice from the United States of America, Ghana has become bankrupt unable to pay her loans and generate resources for her own development. Ghana today is also host of a US military base which is part of the infrastructure for imperialist intervention in Africa.

Under the agreement allowing the US army to operate from Ghana, US soldiers have more privileges than Ambassadors and High commissioners under the Geneva Convention. They don't need visas and passports to come to Ghana. All they need is their US army



President Nana Akufo-Addo

identity cards.

US soldiers can also not be put on trial in Ghana for killing citizens or destroying their properties. They are also entitled to the free use of frequencies for communications.

If you think Nana Akufo-Addo has done the unthinkable already, just hold on a minute. Can you believe that on a recent

visit to the US capital, Washington the Ghanaian President actually asked his masters in Washington to help him to fight the Wanger Group, the Russian private security firm in Burkina Faso? Is there still any doubt that Akufo-Addo has handed Ghana back to colonizers and imperialists? Poor Ghana!

## North-East Region Leads In Teenage Pregnancy - Ghana Health Service Reveals



The North-East Regional Director of the [Ghana Health Service](#) (GHS), Dr. Abdulai Abukari, has expressed concern about the high rate of teenage pregnancies in the Region. He said the GHS noticed that a high rate of teenage pregnancies was recorded among women at Ante-Natal Clinics (ANC) in the Region, which stood at 15.0 percent in 2022, the highest in the country as against 15.9 percent in 2021. He said for the past three

years, the Northeast was ranked either first or second as the Region with the highest proportion of pregnancies, which occurred in girls less than 19 years, "Between 15 and 16 percent of pregnancies in our Region involve young adolescent girls." Dr. Abukari, at a stakeholder engagement to find solutions to teenage pregnancy in the Region, said "It is sad to note that in 2022, 3951 adolescents registered their pregnancies at our health facilities which was

a slight decrease from 3,962 in 2021.

"Out of this figure, 100 of the adolescents were from the ages of 10 and 14 slightly dropping from the 2021 figure of 108.

"It is against this backdrop that as a Health Service in the Region, together with our partners and stakeholder, we have decided to organise this important meeting to solicit your views in addressing this menace," he said.

The meeting was aimed at outlining the unique characteristics of communities in the region that predisposed girls to early pregnancy and the associated challenges and finding solutions that are acceptable to all.

Dr. Abukari appealed to all stakeholders to support the GHS to address the teenage pregnancy menace in the

region.

He said teenage pregnancies were associated with risks including poor nutrition and anemia, unsafe abortions, and related complications such as death, stillbirths, and hypertension in pregnancy. According to the Director, "Where the period of pregnancy is uneventful, childbirth is usually associated with obstructed labour which can cause the death of the baby or mother, or lead to obstetric fistula.

"The chances that a teenage girl will die from pregnancy-related complications are 28 percent higher in girls less than 18 years of age than those 18 years and above. When young girls are fortunate to have an uneventful pregnancy and childbirth, their children are at increased risk of suffering from malnutrition or dying

before age five years."

The Regional Director said teenage mothers were at increased risk of getting pregnant in less than two years after their first pregnancy, which affected their quality of life and health negatively. He noted that female children of teenage mothers were at higher risk of getting pregnant as teenagers which perpetuated a vicious cycle of poverty and a less optimal quality of life. Dr. Abukari expressed gratitude to Plan International Ghana, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) for the commitment and financial support towards the fight against teenage pregnancy in the Region.

**Source -- GNA**



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

## Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

### Israel Bombs Syria Yet Again, Injuring Two Soldiers



*File photo. (Photo: Press TV). This is the second such strike on Syria in the past week. Israeli airstrikes on the Aleppo airport in recent weeks have caused delays in relief delivery to earthquake-affected regions in Syria*

Israeli warplanes launched fresh airstrikes near Syrian capital Damascus in the early morning of Thursday, March 30, injuring two Syrian soldiers and causing damage

to property, *Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA)* [reported](#). Quoting a military source, SANA reported that, at around 1:20 am on Thursday, “The Israeli enemy carried

out an aerial act of aggression with a number of missiles from the direction of the occupied Syrian Golan, targeting some sites in the vicinity of Damascus city.” The SANA report also claimed that Syrian air defense had intercepted some of the missiles. This has been the second such Israeli strike in the [past week](#).

Last week, Israeli airstrikes hit Aleppo international airport, impeding ordinary functioning for a time. Aleppo airport is one of the main sources of aid delivery to the earthquake-affected regions of Syria. Last month's devastating

earthquake in Turkey and Syria killed over 50,000 people—including over 6,000 in Syria alone—and caused a massive humanitarian crisis. Syria, which has been dealing with war and its effects for over a decade now, along with severe US and Western sanctions, has struggled to provide adequate relief to people and areas affected by the earthquake. Israel has attacked [Aleppo airport](#) at least three times since the earthquake, forcing the Syrian government to divert relief delivery to Damascus airport, hundreds of miles further away from the

affected regions. Israel has carried out hundreds of such strikes in Syria since 2011, when the war in the country began. It also usually does not acknowledge these strikes, which are illegal as per international law. However, on the rare occasions on which it does acknowledge such strikes, it calls them defensive strikes against Iranian and Hezbollah facilities. Both the Syrian government and Iran have denied the presence of Iranian forces in Syria. They have called the strikes a way for Israel to aid anti-government forces and prolong the war in Syria, which has already killed thousands and displaced almost half of the country's total population.

### Peru Announces Definitive Withdrawal Of Ambassador From Colombia

Peru's de-facto President, Dina Boluarte has withdrawn Peru's ambassador from Colombia following statements from Colombian President Gustavo Petro in support of ousted Peruvian President Pedro Castillo.

On Wednesday March 29, Peru's de-facto government, led by Dina Boluarte, announced the “definitive withdrawal” of its ambassador from Colombia following statements from Colombian President Gustavo Petro in support of ousted Peruvian President Pedro Castillo. The Peruvian Foreign Ministry, in a [statement](#), said that the decision was made in response to “the repetitive interventionist and offensive comments” from President Petro, arguing that he had been “distorting the reality” by ignoring what happened on December 7, 2022.

The decision came days after Petro lamented Castillo's absence at the Ibero-American Summit. During the 28th Ibero-American Summit, which

took place on March 24 and 25 in the Dominican Republic's capital Santo Domingo, Petro said, “Today [Pedro Castillo] should have been here, [but] he is in prison. They took him out with a coup.” On December 7, 2022, Castillo was ousted in a legislative coup and subsequently arrested, after he tried to dissolve Congress and rule by decree. He has since been imprisoned in the Barbadillo prison in Lima. Since his forcible removal and illegal arrest, Petro has called several times for Castillo's immediate release and criticized the Boluarte government for violating his political rights. Petro has also been vocal against the [brutal repression](#) unleashed by the Boluarte government against the tens of thousands of Peruvians who have been in the streets for the past three and a half months demanding her resignation, the closure of the right-wing dominated Congress, advanced

general elections by the end of the year, and a referendum on a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. In February, the plenary of Congress, with 72 votes in favor, 29 against and 7 abstentions, approved a motion declaring Gustavo Petro a 'persona non grata' after he criticized the response of the Peruvian National Police to the ongoing social protests. The Parliament recommended the Interior and Foreign Ministries “carry out the necessary actions so that Gustavo Petro does not enter the national territory.” The Peruvian Foreign Ministry added in the statement on Wednesday that Petro's behavior has damaged the diplomatic relations between the neighboring countries. In the past months, the Boluarte government also announced the definitive withdrawal of the Peruvian ambassadors to



*Peru's de-facto President, Dina Boluarte has withdrawn Peru's ambassador from Colombia following statements from Colombian President Gustavo Petro in support of ousted Peruvian President Pedro Castillo. Photo: Infórmate Perú. The decision came days after Colombian President Gustavo Petro lamented former Peruvian President Pedro Castillo's absence at the Ibero-American Summit*

[Honduras](#) and [Mexico](#) due to similar statements made by Honduran President Xiomara Castro and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Peru has been maintaining bilateral relations with the countries through the chargé d'affaires. Additionally, in January, the Peruvian Congress also declared

former Bolivian President Evo Morales a 'persona non grata' and prohibited him from entering Peru, due to his comments rejecting the coup against Castillo. The Boluarte government's move to endanger diplomatic ties across the region has been widely condemned by social and progressive political leaders.



# St. Peters' Old Student Wins FHMS 2023 President's Scholarship Award



**E**lvis Emmanuel Owusu, an old boy of St. Peters Senior High School in the Eastern Region has been awarded the 2023/2024 Family Health Medical School (FHMS) President's Scholarship. The President's Scholarship Award was instituted by the Management of Family Health

University College to honour deserving Senior High School students who excel in the Sciences division of THE SHARKS QUIZ. The Quiz is an intense and exciting academic competition organized annually, and partly sponsored by Family Health Medical School. Elvis Emmanuel Owusu is the fourth beneficiary of the

President's Scholarship Award since its inception. His sterling performance caught the attention of Management of FHMS when together with his team mates, won the highly competitive 2022 Senior High School edition of THE SHARKS QUIZ. The Registrar, Mrs. Rita Kaine, expressed Management's delight to have Elvis enrolled on this year's undergraduate medical programme, and assured him of the Institution's preparedness to give him all the needed support to ensure his dream as a Medical Doctor becomes a reality. Expressing his appreciation, Elvis was thankful for the opportunity and honour done him by the Founders', Prof. Enyonam Yao Kwawukume and Dr. Susu Kwawukume. He said, his dream of becoming a Medical Doctor to

serve his community was happening because of this great initiative by them. He promised to be studious and dedicated to his studies to enable him achieve his dream. Meanwhile, the Family Health University College has recently launched the Family Health Medical School Endowment Fund. The Fund, among others, aims at providing financial support to defray tuition fees and other related expenses with regards to Medical training of qualified and brilliant but needy Ghanaians in the nation's Premier Private Medical School. Present at the presentation ceremony were the Dean, Dr. Charles E. Fleischer-Djoletto, the Registrar, Mrs. Rita Kaine, the Director of Academics & Students' Affairs, Dr. Emmanuel K. Labram, and an Assistant Registrar, Mr. Moses Paafio Kwao.

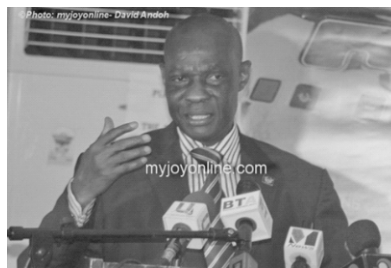
The Family Health Medical School is committed to the holistic training of Medical professionals in the advancement of human health. The School offers a six-year Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB) programme for SSCE and 'A' Level candidates, and a four and a half-year Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB) Graduate Entry Medical Programme (GEMP) for first degree holders in science-related disciplines. The Family Health Medical School has recently been approved by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduate (ECFMG), making its students and graduates eligible to apply for ECFMG Certification and United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE).

## Pensioner Bondholders Warn Govt ...Issue Threats To Picket Over Failure To Fulfil Promise

By Beverly Broohm

**P**ensioners Bondholders exempted from the government's Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP) have given the government a two-week ultimatum to pay coupon rates on matured bonds. They accused the government of defaulting in paying the yields. The Finance Ministry in a statement released on the 27th February, 2023 promised to honor coupon rates on matured bondholders who did not sign up for the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP). The statement said "in fulfillment of the assurance given by Government to bondholders who did not tender, the Ministry is

taking administrative steps to ensure that payments of coupons and principals of the old bonds resume by 13th March, 2023". Days after the assurance by government, some bondholders say they are yet to receive payment of coupons and principals on their investments. Speaking in an interview with Joy Business, Convener of the Pensioner Bondholders Forum and also a former Director-General of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Dr. Adu Anane Antwi said affected persons will resume picketing if the government fails to honor the claim. "If you exempt any bonds, you have effectively said as for your bonds, I don't have any problems paying so go and sleep anytime your coupon is due, just go to your



bank and it will be there, that is the dictate of the market and government is not doing that we have drawn attention of government to that, is the third time we are doing that," Dr. Antwi lamented. "We think that we will not allow it to continue and that's why we are saying if by 21st all these anomalies are not resolved for us to return to normalcy and get our coupons and principals as and when they are due, then we will resume our picketing" he added.

## John Mahama Announces Award Scheme To Push Up NDC Votes

John Dramani Mahama

**A**spiring Presidential Candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NOC), John Dramani Mahama, has announced an award scheme that will reward branches and constituencies of the party that work hard to increase the party's parliamentary and presidential votes in 2024. Mr. Mahama who has been insisting during his tour of various constituencies that his 2024 campaign will be anchored by the branches, said the award scheme is intended to both set targets for the constituencies and encourage them to meet the targets. "We are going to Institute a reward system for constituencies and branches. We'll give every constituency a target and if you meet the target and exceed it, the branch and constituency will be rewarded", he announced to wild cheers from the executives. John Mahama is currently on a

three-day tour of the twenty-three constituencies in the central region, campaigning ahead of the NDC's May 13, 2023, presidential primaries. According to him, the award scheme and branch level campaign will be supported with the needed campaign materials and logistics. He also cautioned constituency and regional executives against keeping campaign logistics and other resources, denying the branches where the real work of canvassing for votes take place. President Mahama says, he will decentralise his 2024 campaign, much more than he did in 2020, working together with the branches and constituencies to engage, mobilise and canvass for the votes. The former president has visited six other regions already, including the Volta, Bono East, Bono, Ahafo, Ashanti and Western regions.

# Call For The Removal Of Police Anti-Armed Robbery Squad Unit In Wa Intensifies

Following the killing of a 27-year-old Abubakar Shahid from Dondoli, a suburb in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region earlier this month by the Police, there are growing calls for the removal of the Police Anti-Armed Robbery Squad (AARS) that allegedly killed the deceased.

Abubakar Shahid was allegedly shot and killed by the Police Anti-Armed Robbery Squad on suspicion of being a member of an armed robbery gang said to be terrorising residents in Wa and its environs on Wednesday, March 8, 2023. This led to a serious protest by the family, residents from Dondoli as well as the municipality who flatly denied the allegations and called for an independent probe into the case to exonerate the deceased who they said had never involved in any criminal act prior to his unfortunate passing.

Calm has since returned to the municipality after the IGP sent a delegation led by the Director General of Police in charge of Operations, COP Christian Tatteh Yohuno, to calm the family while assuring them of carrying out thorough investigations into the case. The IGP has since set up two independent committees to properly probe the matter to bring it to a closure.

However, GhanaWeb's checks across the municipality among the youth has revealed incessant calls to ensure the AARS whose operation resulted in the killing of the deceased, Abubakar Shahid, and causing a lot of pains and discomfort to residents is moved away from the municipality or even out of the region.

They describe members of the unit as unprofessional and trigger-happy officers who take delight in flogging and punishing people for nothing. They alleged that the modus operandi of the AARS is using machetes to whip people sitting at night in their neighborhoods to enjoy fresh air before going to bed due to the extreme high temperature currently being experienced in that part of the country. They accused members of the Police unit of their weird dressing during their night operations that makes it difficult to differentiate them from thieves or ordinary persons.

A resident, Abdul-Fatawu said, "We know that in modern standard policing, one can go undercover in any form or way to carry out investigations. But to have Police officers going out on night operations without wearing police uniforms, with most of them wearing ear rings, dreadlocks and masks on. So how do people know you are indeed Police officers when you stop them somewhere? What kind of policing is that? Are we in some kind of state of

emergency in this town? "We are now in the warmest time of the year and the weather here is always hot even at night. So most people look for some fresh air at night before going to sleep. But these members of the Police Anti-Armed Robbery Squad would often visit such neighborhoods sitting in relaxation and start assaulting, whipping people with their cutlasses and asking them to go inside and sleep as though the town was having a curfew of a sort. When we ask questions, they usually claim the commander here has no control over them unless only the IGP. They are always terrorising the people other than protecting them. How can the Police go on an operation in town without wearing uniform but are spotted wearing ear rings, dreadlocks, beard, masks and so on? We are calling on the IGP to remove them from the region as the regular Police officers here can protect us and provide order for the people," another resident, Isaac Kofi registered his frustration to GhanaWeb. Saaka Mahama also bemoaned, "It's disheartening and disgusting to say the least, how these officers are treating people in Wa. These Anti-Robbery unit guys treat people like animals. Before the recent killing of Shahid who everybody in town know as a good mannered person,



*Correspondence from Upper West*

responsible man and never a criminal, people were already complaining about their unprofessional conduct towards people. Because they wear masks and don't wear uniforms, it's difficult to identify them as Police especially when one of them offends you in anyway you cannot report the fellow. Who do you even report to, since they claim they're not under the control of the Regional Commander? Another issue is that their presence tends to give thieves an upper hand as people may mistaken thieves as the Police who mostly usually dress as ordinary persons. We are pleading to the IGP, the Interior Minister, Hon. Ambrose Dery and the National Security Minister to move this Police unit from the municipality.

Meanwhile, our attempts to hear from the side of the Police Command were unsuccessful.

But reacting to the calls, ACP Mr. Gabriel Prince Waabu, Upper West Regional Police Commander, in an interview with GhanaWeb's regional

correspondent, Ilyas Al-Hasan, pooh-poohed the assertions.

According to him, all the members under the Anti-Robbery unit are Police officers just like all other Police units arguing that the demand is tantamount to requesting for the removal of all Police officials from the municipality. He argued that the existence of the unit has significantly brought down cases of armed robbery and break-ins within the municipality.

He accused those engaging in the night sittings as mostly being the elements that are weed smokers and phone snatchers.

He wondered why people would stay up outside late in the night without caring about the whereabouts of their kids at that time.

ACP Prince Waabu charged the media to help in educating the masses to be cooperative with directives of the Police.

**Source --GhanaWeb**



# Okoben Mining CEO Rubbishes Accusations Of Involvement In Galamsey Related Health Hazards



**C**hief Executive Officer (CEO) of Okoben Mining Company Limited, Nana Okoben Amponsah has denied media reports which went viral on local and social media platforms that he is involved in illegal mining activities, popularly known as galamsey and its related activities which allegedly polluted the River Akonbra and caused environmental health hazards to the people in Prestea Huni Valley Municipality and Gwira Traditional Area. His denial came after the Western Regional Health Directorate of Ghana Service (GHS) headed by Dr. Yaw Ofori Yeboah was directed by the Western Regional Minister to write ill-fated letter on Thursday March 30, 2023 revoking the partnership award given to him (Nana Okoben Amponsah), saying he has respected the law of this country against all odds. According to him, the actions taken by the Minister and management of Western Regional Health Directorate to revoke the award honouring him would not stop him from supporting the people and institutions in his mining host communities within the Western Region. "I wish that the Western Regional Health Directorate led by its Western Regional Health Director of Ghana Health Service, Dr. Yaw Ofori Yeboah had commissioned full scale investigations into the matter and done proper due

diligence before it wrote such letter to revoke the partnership award given to me on Tuesday March 28, 2023 at the public event held at the Akoma Plaza Hotel in Takoradi. And we should let the law work," Nana Okoben Amponsah said this in a strongly worded press statement to respond to the revocation of the award presented to him by Western Regional Health Directorate. Nana Okoben Amponsah has also responded to the current speculation which has gone viral on local and social media platforms that he was arrested by the police for involvement in illegal mining activities. He stressed that "I want to tell the general public that I am not into illegal mining activities (galamsey). I have a large scale mining company which is called Okoben Mining Company Limited and I have been mining in the Western Region for over 25 years now and that I respect water bodies and environment." This is the full text of the Press statement by Nana Okoben Amponsah; My attention has been drawn to an ill-fated letter dated Thursday, 30th of March, 2023, from the Western Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service, signed by the Regional Director, Dr. Yaw Ofori Yeboah, and addressed to Nana Okoben Amponsah, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Okoben Mining Company Limited. According to the letter, which is on the official letterhead of the Ghana Health Service, the Western Regional Health Directorate has revoked the Partnership Award given to me on Tuesday March 28, 2023 at the public event held at the Akoma Plaza Hotel in Takoradi. The Western Regional Health Directorate made some unsubstantiated accusations against my person and company,

Okoben Mining Company Limited in the letter, which has since gone viral on social media platforms. The letter read in parts; "The Western Regional Health Directorate routinely honours individuals for their support to the health sector as part of our Annual Performance Review process. Your name was submitted among others for consideration this year. "However, following the award presented to you on Tuesday March 28, 2023, we have received numerous complaints with copious evidence against you and the operations of your company, Okobeng Mining Company Limited. "This includes environmental degradation which has significant implications for health. We have also cited petitions by chiefs and the youth of the area against your company for the acts that run counter to the principles behind our award. "In view of the above revelations and misrepresentations made to the media, we hereby revoke the award presented to you on Tuesday March 28, 2023 and disassociate ourselves from the operations of your company," the letter indicated. I declare unequivocally and emphatically that I, Nana Okoben Amponsah, have received an award from the Ghana Health Service in the Western Regional Health Directorate in Takoradi for my modest contributions to society in the area of health care development, particularly to the Western Region's healthcare delivery system. It is important to note that I was recognized and praised by the Health Directorate for my exceptional role in supporting healthcare delivery in the Western Region. The Western Regional Health

Directorate noted in the accompanying citation to the award, which was presented by the Western Regional Minister, Kwabena Okyere Darko-Mensah, that I had been a pillar of support in the Prestea Huni Valley enclave for many years. Out of my own generosity, my business finished the Bogoso Maternity Ward, as well as other social and infrastructure projects in the Prestea Huni Valley Municipality and the Gwira Traditional Area in the Western Region. The Maternity ward, which can accommodate about 15 expectant moms, has a washroom for each bed, and provides a generator. I also bought a brand-new Toyota Hilux for the Prestea Maternity Hospital and Prestea Senior High School. In addition to the initiatives mentioned above, my company has extended a pipeline with water flowing to a maternity home, all these were borne out by my decision to give back to society. My company has also modestly contributed to road construction. When we saw that the roads within Bogoso had become unmotorable, we reshaped these roads, and these include Prestea-Kutokro road, Epo- Denranpong road, Aboso- Atwebona, Anyinase-Weoso-Mentu. Saint Augustine Senior High School was not left out of my outfit's benevolence. I also assisted in the school to complete its dining hall, and built a science laboratory and administrative block for the Takwa Fiaseman Senior High School, my alma mater, in addition to the purchase of a Toyota Hilux pickup. I can only praise God Almighty for the support to society I see an attempt to defame me and my company as one man's hatched job to court disaffection for me, hence, the revocation of the award amidst unfounded

allegations. Facts and evidence available to me indicate that the Western Regional Minister, Mr Kwabena Okyere Darko-Mensah, masterminds the decision by the Western Regional Health Directorate to revoke the Partnership Award I received. After presenting the award to me, the Minister quickly reverses his decision to direct the unlawful arrest of Nana Okoben Amponsah at the event. I'd also like to stress that I was not arrested for engaging in illegal mining activities, as reported by the gutter press. Our mining operations have not resulted in environmental degradation and the allegations leveled against the company by chiefs and youths were fabricated libelous stories. I dare anyone who knows the concession to go and verify how my business conducts responsible gold mining activities and whether or not its mining activities are destroying water bodies, as my detractors say. I obtained various licenses from the Minerals Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency to mine gold at Dominase, and the company works in accordance with the Minerals and Mining Act of 2006. (Act 703.) I would like to say that the unlawful small scale miners who are indiscriminately mining gold resources from communities such as Bamiankor, Ayinase, Amgbasea, Akango, Dualle, and Akosono in the Evalue-Ajomoro-Gwira Municipality are polluting the Akonbra River and other water bodies. I'm saying that the residents of these areas can attest that my company's activities do not add to the pollution of the Akonbra River and other nearby streams and rivers.

# Why Conservatives In The US Want The Cuban People To Overthrow Their Own Government—Or Else

On March 28, just two days after Cuba held national elections, conservatives in the US Congress successfully pushed through legislation in the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee that would codify into law Cuba's designation as a [State Sponsor of Terrorism](#). The "Fighting Oppression until the Reign of Castro Ends Act" (FORCE Act) was introduced by Representative Maria Salazar, a conservative and daughter of Cuban exiles from Miami. A Senate version of this bill has been introduced by Senators Rick Scott, Marco Rubio, and Ted Cruz. Within the next few weeks, the entire House of Representatives will vote on the bill.

Cuba was included in the highly-politicized US State Sponsors of Terrorism List in January 2021, during the ultra-conservative Donald Trump presidency. This designation has wreaked havoc on the lives of the Cuban people, as many companies and financial institutions in other nations refuse to do business with Cuba for fear of retaliation by the US. As a result, Cuba continues to suffer shortages in raw materials and the daily necessities of life such as medicine and fuel. Right now, Biden can remove Cuba from this list with a [stroke of his pen](#). If passed, Salazar's bill will make removal nearly impossible.

Salazar's bill would prohibit Cuba from being removed under the State Sponsors of Terrorism list unless the nation meets [three impossible criteria](#): "release all political prisoners and allow for investigations of Cuban prisons by

appropriate international human rights organizations," "transition away from the Castro regime to a system that guarantees the rights of the Cuban people to express themselves freely," and "commit to holding free and fair elections." Essentially, Salazar is demanding that the Cuban people overthrow their own government and overturn the Cuban political system which has been built by the people and for the people over the last 60 years. The triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959 brought significant gains in healthcare, social rights, and the material conditions of Cuban people in general. Pre-revolutionary conditions included [high infant mortality](#), [60% literacy](#), [diseases of poverty](#), and [sexual exploitation and trafficking](#).

Representative Carlos Giménez of Florida, a supporter of the FORCE Act, denounced Cuba for "harboring fugitives of the American justice system and for unlawfully sentencing thousands of political prisoners in kangaroo courts in the aftermath of the July 11th, 2021 Movement." Yet, the United States has been lambasted for decades for its detention and torture of [various political prisoners](#), many of whom are part of the Black liberation struggle. Cuba provided asylum to one of those prisoners, Assata Shakur, a Black liberation fighter who was captured and nearly killed by US police. To this day, the US government, furious at her successful escape, [demands her extradition](#). Salazar's implication that

Cubans cannot "express themselves freely" goes against the experiences of many on the island, especially as the nation recently passed the world's most progressive [Family Code](#), paving the way for the rights of LGBTQ, elderly, and disabled people, as well as women and children. The Cuban people did not merely vote for the new code, they had a [key role in creating it](#) through the popular consultation process.

One central accusation of the FORCE Act is that Cuba does not already hold "free and fair elections." Cuba held national elections on March 26, and over 75% of the eligible population turned out to vote. An impressive feat in any context, especially as the turnout for the last US presidential election was 66.2%, which was considered a [record accomplishment](#). And yet, US mainstream media coverage of the Cuban elections [highlighted only the voter abstention](#) of 25%, despite the fact that there was higher turnout than the previous two years as the pandemic took a toll on voter turnout.

Criticisms of the Cuban electoral process that originate from Washington or Miami often point to the lack of campaigning or the fact that candidates run unopposed, as well as claims that the Communist Party dominates the political system. However, the cycle of endless campaigning in the United States often ensures that only those with the most disposable income



**Children part of the youth organization José Martí Pioneers volunteer to watch the Cuban polls during the November 2022 municipal elections. Republican politicians want to keep Cuba on the State Sponsors of Terrorism unless Cubans "transition away from the Castro regime"**

succeed by projecting their message as loudly as money will permit. "Money in politics" has become a hot button issue in the US, with progressives such as Bernie Sanders launching [initiatives](#) against the blatant inequality inherent in the campaign cycles. Candidates run unopposed during only the final part of the electoral process, but they are initially [nominated from the communities they originate from](#), or from grassroots organizations of women, peasants, workers, and others. "That is the success of our vote," Lázara Vivian Urrutia Nápoles, general secretary of the Federation of Cuban Women's Bloc of District 80 Playa, told *Peoples Dispatch* during the municipal elections of November 2022. "Precisely the unity that is chosen from the base, from the community." In other words, Cuban people do not simply vote in candidates at the very last part of the electoral process, like in the US. Cubans are involved in the electoral system from the very beginning through community and organizational nominations

of candidates.

Voters can be as young as 16 and candidates themselves can be as young as 18. Candidates do not have to belong to the Communist Party. Once elected, members of the National Assembly do not receive a salary for their work as political officials, they must continue their daily lives as workers, alongside the rest of the Cuban population.

This year saw [record diversity](#) in candidates, with the highest number of Black people, women, and young people running in Cuban history. Most of the candidates are women, and 98 out of 470 are under 35. "Since [Moncada](#), [Cuban revolutionaries] empowered [women], and that is why we have so many women today nominated in all spheres of the Revolution. In all the economy of the country, women are present," said Nápoles. "The Revolution has always taken into account children and youth, and it is the youth that really leads all the processes or the continuity of the processes we have."

A [campaign](#) has been launched by US peace groups to call on elected officials to oppose the FORCE Act.