

SETH TERKPER

He Says Passage Of 3 New Taxes Draconian



Former Finance Minister, Seth Terkpe

Former Finance Minister, Seth Terkper has described Government's passage of revenue measures as draconian and having technical defects. The bills which were passed in Parliament over the weekend were; the Income Tax Amendment Bill, the Excise Duty

Amendment Bill, and the Growth and Sustainability Amendment Bill which are expected to generate about GH¢4 billion annually. Speaking on Accra based JoyNews' Upfront programme last Thursday, he said that "I say there are technical reasons, past and present

why it is draconian. A measure that was in SMCD 5 (Supreme Military Council Decree 5) is being brought back in this day and electronic age." According to him, per the tax, "any business that does not declare profit in five years would have to pay a certain tax compulsorily."

cont. on page 3

Moscow Calls Out US' Rules -Based Order In Europe

page 9

Melcom Mall Outdoors Hallab Gourmet 1881

...To Promote International Tourism Traffic

page 2

TUC Demands Reinstatement Of Workers Sacked By Sunon Asogli Power Limited



Ignatious Baffour-Awuah, Minister of Labour Relations

The Trade Union Congress (TUC), Ghana, has asked the management of Sunon Asogli Power Ghana Limited to reinstate the three local union leaders of the company whose appointments were wrongfully terminated by April 3, 2023.

Cont. on page 3

Nungua Traditional Council mad at Sowah Din Family, Land Commission over boundary demarcation



page 5

The INSIGHT

— EDITORIAL

PROSECUTE THEM!

The 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'.

Melcom Mall Outdoors Hallab Gourmet 1881

...To Promote International Tourism Traffic

Melcom Mall has outdoored its newest franchise called Hallab Gourmet 1881, a popular Lebanese sweets and food which is the first to be established in Africa. The Hallab Gourmet 1881, originates from the ancestral Lebanese city of Tripoli. With its 140 year old heritage, this family owned and operated business has passed down through generations, and has become a pioneer in the world of oriental sweets that is widely recognized internationally as the leading brand for Lebanese premium sweets. They focus on hand crafted high quality sweets and food in a modern setting at competitive prices. The new franchise is at Spintex which now hosts the largest Melcom Mall, Hallab Gourmet 1881 in Ghana and West Africa.

A statement issued by Melcom said the Hallab Gourmet 1881 will continue to enhance and offer their customers' expectations to maintain their loyalty. "We have put in place a well-structured food safety and quality management system which complies with not only FDA regulations but meets international standards in order to serve our customers with a consistent supply of premium quality products to meet your lifestyles".

"With the official opening of the first Hallab Gourmet 1881, this new magnificent edifice, Melcom Mall, is quickly becoming the preferred destination, offering a variety of tantalizing specialized services for families and friends to relax and enjoy." "The Melcom Brand has without doubt become the game changer in the retail space in Ghana, chalking success in service delivery, range and convenience nationwide.

"We have improved upon our infrastructure and built super structures that have ensured we have maintained our lead as the Retail Giant offering the best value shopping experience.

The Melcom Group Family has grown to an amazing

- (1) 59 Melcom Stores
- (2) 5 Melcom Mini's

- (3) 12 Cash 'n' Carry's
- (4) 13 Pizza Huts

And many other divisions and subsidiaries offering quality products and services. '

"Here in Accra on the Spintex Road, we have recently opened the Melcom Mall, with our new flagship store. This is the largest single retail store, not only in Ghana but in the West Africa sub-region, and is considered by many as comparable to any of the best in the world".

"Melcom is now pleased to add a new and exciting experience to our hospitality business by adding an exciting experience to our services for the benefit of everyone who desires quality and variety.

With the official opening of the first Hallab Gourmet 1881, this new magnificent edifice, Melcom Mall, is quickly becoming the preferred destination, offering a variety of tantalizing specialized services for families and friends to relax and enjoy.

THE INSIGHT

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SETH TERKPER

He Says Passage Of 3 New Taxes Draconian

from front page

Mr. Terkper added that the above-mentioned are measures that were replaced under the economic recovery programme and Structural Adjustment Programme in Dr Botchway's era. He maintained that the industry will struggle to operate now that these measures have received parliamentary blessing. The House on Friday had government try enormously to have the bills passed to boost its quest to secure an International Monetary Fund (IMF) Programme. An Economist Prof Stephen Adei, responding to the passage said the new measures were necessary for the nation's survival.

"At this moment, if we don't close the debt, everybody will pay taxes one way or the

other. Because, when inflation continues as it is, we are actually paying taxes. People don't know that rising prices is the same as paying taxes, so that is the way government will get the taxes by letting the prices rise by themselves, and higher inflation leads to higher tax collection," he added. Meanwhile, the Minister for Information, Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah, has defended the decision of the government to introduce the three new revenue measures (taxes). According to him, the taxes were needed to increase Ghana's tax-to-GDP ratio, which is woefully inadequate compared to that of other countries in the West African sub-region and the world.

Speaking in an interview on Kumasi-based Oyerepa TV on Monday, April 3, 2023, the

minister also clarified that despite the new names of the revenue measures, they are just an expansion of existing tax laws.

"These (the taxes) are existing laws that we are implementing to get more money for the government for the development of the country. These taxes have been expanded to include people who were previously not. "The tax-to-GDP ratio of Ghana is 13 percent and so we saw the need to expand some of these taxes. What we have done will ensure that we get a tax-to-GDP ratio between 16 and 18 per cent so that we can get closer to the 20 per cent target.

"We have not increased the taxes; we have only included people and items who were not included in these taxes. If you

take the Fiscal Responsibility Act which has now become the Growth and Sustainability Act, we have added mining companies and other who were previously not covered by the law," he said.

The information minister added that the new Exercise Duty Levy has included some goods that were not previously covered by the previous law and the Income Tax Law has been amended to ensure that wealthy people pay more taxes.

[Parliament](#) passed the three new tax measures on Friday, March 31, 2023, during an extended sitting of the House.

The said the taxes faced stiff opposition from the Minority Caucus in the House, but the Majority managed to marshal all their numbers on the day to get the taxes passed.

The three new taxes are: Excise



Former Finance Minister, Seth Terkper

Duty Amendment Bill 2022, the Growth and Sustainability Levy Bill 2022, and the Income Tax Amendment Bill 2022.

The bills were presented to [Parliament](#) as part of the government's plans to mobilize about GH¢4 billion in domestic revenue annually.

They are also crucial to helping secure board approval for the US\$3 billion [International Monetary Fund](#) (IMF) program after a staff-level agreement was reached late last year.

TUC Demands Reinstatement Of Workers Sacked By Sunon Asogli Power Limited



Ignatious Baffour-Awuah, Minister of Labour Relations

from front page

"We are serving notice that if by April 3, 2023, the three local union leaders who have been dismissed are not reinstated, and the various acts of intimidation and victimisation by the company have not ceased, the TUC and all its affiliate unions shall have no other option but to advise themselves," the Union said. Dr. Anthony Yaw Baah, Secretary-General, TUC Ghana, speaking at a press conference in Accra, said the management of the company terminated the employment of three of the Sunon Asogli Power (Ghana) branch union leaders, including the Union Secretary, the Assistant Secretary, and the Chairperson, for the reason that

they had joined a trade union and been elected to lead workers at the enterprise level. "We cannot stand by and watch these violations and abuses of workers' rights go on after 66 years of independence from colonial rule.

"These workers have not committed any crime and have not broken any company rule; they are being abused by their Chinese bosses and Ghanaian collaborators," he said. Dr Baah said over 68 workers of the company took the decision to join the Ghana Mineworkers' Union in February 2021. It said the Union and the workers went through the necessary legal processes to acquire a Collective Bargaining Certificate that empowered the Union to represent and negotiate with the company on behalf of the workers. He said the company, through its lawyers, demanded to know the names of the workers as a condition for the recognition of

the Collective Bargaining Certificate issued by the Labour Department.

The situation led to misunderstanding and ended at the National Labour Commission, and the Commission on two occasions directed and ruled that the names of the workers did not arise at this stage and that the certificate was properly and legally acquired, so the company should comply and enter negotiations with the Union. The TUC Secretary General said that based on the company's intransigence and refusal to comply with sections 102 and 111 of the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651), a notice of intention to embark on strike was served by the Union on both the company and the National Labour Commission.

The National Labour Commission summoned the parties to appear before it on March 1, 2023, given the essential nature of the company's operations. It said the company failed to

appear before the Commission but got its lawyers to send a note to the Commission, indicating that their unavailability was because they were appearing before another high court.

He said the Union had evidence of query letters being issued to its members, who were all off duty and had attended a meeting at the instance of the Union on Friday, February 13, 2023, after work (5:30pm) in a public space close to the company's gate to fraternise and to inform them of an impending election of their leaders at the enterprise level. He said following the absence of the company, the Commission rescheduled the hearing to March 8, 2023, but directed both parties to "stay all ongoing and/or any intended action(s). The actions of the Commission referred to, were the "intended strike by the complainant Union, the issuance of queries, and the request for responses to same by the respondent

management, including any other action(s) that may be directly or indirectly related to the issue(s) in dispute."

He urged the company's authorities to resolve the issue as early as possible in keeping with Section 162 (1) of the Labour Act (2003 Act 651) to avoid any further escalation with unpredictable consequences.

When contacted by the Ghana News Agency, the management of the Sunon Asogli declined to comment on the matter.

Source -- GNA The Union cautioned the management of Sunon Asogli Power (Ghana) Limited to refrain from any further acts of intimidation, fear and panic being unleashed on its members in the company and stop the abuse of the rights of their employees for belonging to a union of their choice.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Progressives Outraged As Labour Party Executive Blocks Corbyn From Re-Election On Party Ticket



Jeremy Corbyn. (Photo: via Facebook) Since he became leader of the Labour Party in 2020, Keir Starmer has been sidelining leftist leaders like Jeremy Corbyn and their supporters within the party

The Labour Party National Executive Council's (NEC) decided on March 28 to not endorse its former leader and current MP Jeremy Corbyn as a party candidate in the upcoming general elections. A motion pushed by Labour Party leader Keir Starmer was approved with the support of 22 against 12 at the NEC. Supporters of Corbyn within the party and in affiliated organizations and trade unions have strongly condemned the NEC's decision and stated that

such a move weakens the Labour Party's fight against the Tory government and derails the British working class's pursuit of social justice. Corbyn has served as the Labour MP for Islington North for the last 40 years. Starmer had [announced](#) his plans to deny Corbyn a party ticket earlier in February. Starmer has been using accusations of anti-semitism made by mainstream pro-government media against Corbyn to sideline him and his supporters within the party, and to give the party a 'business friendly' face. In October 2020, Corbyn was [suspended](#) from the party when he challenged the report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on antisemitism inside the Labour Party during his tenure as

leader. Even though the party decided to reinstate him after three weeks, Starmer never reinstated the party whip to Corbyn. Many in the party and outside believe that the accusations of antisemitism are a thin cover for pushing out anyone who is critical of Israel and supportive of the Palestinian struggle for liberation, or has any socialist leanings. On March 28, in response to the NEC's decision, Corbyn [said on Twitter](#): "I have spent my life fighting for a fairer society on behalf of the people of Islington North, and I have no intention of stopping now." Corbyn stated that "the NEC's decision to block my candidacy for Islington North is a shameful attack on party democracy, party members

and natural justice. When I was leader of the Labour Party, I was determined to build a member-led movement that gave hope to a new generation. Today's disgraceful move shows contempt for the millions of people who voted for our Party in 2017 and 2019, and will demotivate those who still believe in the importance of a transformative Labour government." "Now, more than ever, we should be offering a bold alternative to the government's program of poverty, division and repression. Keir Starmer has instead launched an assault on the rights of his own Labour members, breaking his pledge to build a united and democratic Party that advances social, economic and climate justice," he added.

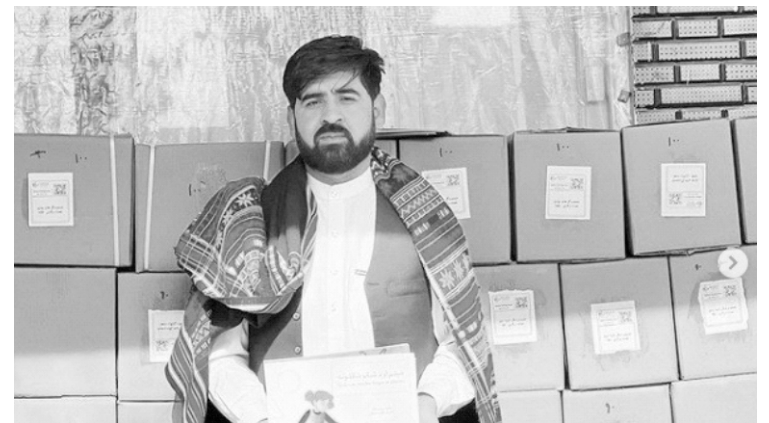
Morning Star [reported](#) that representatives of trade unions including the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF), Communication Workers Union (CWU), Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA), and Unite the Union voted against the ban on Corbyn in the Labour Party NEC. On Tuesday, Nadia Whittome, a young MP from the Labour Party, said that "it should be up to local members in Islington North to decide who represents them. The motion to ban Jeremy Corbyn from restanding is divisive, an attack on party democracy and a distraction from the vital task of getting the Tories out. I hope it's withdrawn or rejected."

Afghan Activist Matiullah Wesa's Arrest Invokes Widespread Condemnation

Taliban authorities has detained Matiullah Wesa, a prominent activist who has been advocating for the education of Afghan children since 2009. His arrest has invoked widespread condemnation from activists and human rights defenders, with UN Special Rapporteur Richard Bennett calling for his "immediate release." "Alarmed by reports that [Matiullah Wesa] famous educator esp. for [girls], leading civil society member & founder of [Pen Path], has been arrested in Kabul by the Taliban dfa (*de facto* administration). His safety is paramount & all his legal rights must be respected," Richard Bennett [tweeted](#). A prominent campaigner and a leading member of Afghan civil society, Matiullah Wesa has been running an educational

organization called [Pen Path](#), which has been creating educational opportunities for thousands of girls across Afghanistan by launching libraries and helping to reopen closed schools in rural areas. The activist has been locally campaigning and partnering with the elderly in at least 20 of Afghanistan's 34 districts, in pursuit of [distributing](#) education materials and reopening schools. "We have been volunteering for 14 years to reach people and convey the message for girls' education. During the past 18 months we campaigned house to house in order to eliminate illiteracy and to end all our miseries," Matiullah [wrote](#) three days before he was arrested. His arrest comes amid the beginning of the new year

(Nowruz) and a day after a [group of women demonstrated](#) against the prolonged ban on education for Afghan women and girls. Taliban security officials dispersed the group by firing in the air and detaining three of them, as reported by [Khaama Press](#). Attaullah Wesa, the activist's brother, was [quoted](#) by *AFP* and *Khaama Press* saying that Matiullah Wesa was beaten up and then bundled into a vehicle by some unknown men close to their house in the Khoshal Khan area, west of Kabul city. Taliban authorities have reportedly rejected Attaullah Wesa's allegations, and have not yet confirmed that he has been detained. This is the third consecutive year during which the Taliban has not



Matiullah Wesa. (Photo: via Social Media) Matiullah Wesa is a prominent education activist and has been running an educational organization for nearly 14 years

reopened girls' schools beyond the sixth grade. Earlier, on February 3, another activist, Professor Ismail Mashal, was arrested while distributing free books in Kabul. An outspoken critic of the ban on education for Afghan women, he

had risen to prominence after he [tore up](#) his degrees during a live telecast show on *Tolo News* in solidarity with the women of Afghanistan. He was released on [March 5](#).

Ghana's Justice System Has Failed People Of Assin North - Mahama



John Dramani Mahama

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) flag-bearer hopeful, John Dramani Mahama has questioned Ghana's justice system in the case of Assin North constituency. He said the

plight on the system was depriving the constituent from representation at the Parliament of Ghana. "The justice system has not worked for constituent of Assin

North, and the plight on system of Justice has deprived people their MP representing them at the Parliament House", he said. The former president of Ghana made the allegation as part of his three-day tour of the Central Region to rally support from delegates for his upcoming presidential primaries at Assin Fosu. He noted that the motto of the country which was freedom and justice does not work for everyone due to manipulations and influence of some high authorities in the country.

He stated that, "In Ghana our motor is freedom and justice and justice was among other values we hold dear as a country but, unfortunately, sometimes the justice system does not work for everybody".

He said with the Justice system, writs was supposed to remove injunction from person

restricted from performing their function could be delayed by tactical means, a situation he described 'unfair'.

The writ by the Assin North Member of Parliament (MP) James Gyakyé Quayson had been pending at the court for about a year now and that had reduced the size of the minority by one vote in Parliament.

He however, called on that person responsible for the Assin North case to speed up proceeding to help the people to be represented.

"Whoever responsible takes steps to ameliorate the situation as early as possible so as the people could be represented", he added. In an interview with Ghanaweb, James Gyakyé Quayson, the restrained MP stated that though proceedings were influenced by high powers, he was confident in the court.

He said the constituency believed and voted for him, therefore the

back and forth could not stop him from serving the people. Quayson noted that at the end, the constituent suffers the process more because they are deprived representation in Parliament. "It's the constituent that was missing out a lot, deprived of representation and that was not right", he told the reporter. The MP was surprised about the situation that he followed all rules and regulation, qualified by the Electoral Commission and accepted by the people. He said all resources have been withheld and receive nothing to serve his people due to the injunction.

A Cape Coast High Court on Thursday January 07, 2021 placed an interlocutory injunction restraining on the Assin North MP from holding himself as an MP of the constituency due to attack on his eligibility to contest the election.

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Nungua Traditional Council mad at Sowah Din Family, Land Commission over boundary demarcation

The Nungua Traditional Council has expressed diapiointment over an ongoing land demarcation exercise around the Nungua Imanjor Lands by the Sowah Din Family of Teshie and the Land Commission without their concerns. Speaking to the media in Accra, the Oblantei Mantse of Nungua Traditional Area, Nii Bortey Okplen Dzalesene II, said his reaction is in relation to media report that the Sowah Din Family has trespassed on a parcel of land which falls within the Nungua Stool Lands all in the name of demarcation. According to Nii Okplen, the law mandates that in a situation of land demarcation, all parties that fall within must be notified but in the case of the Sowah Din Family of Teshie the major party is sidelined. "I cannot fathom their reason but this has made me have a foul suspicion about the intention behind their action," he stated. At any boundary demarcation, all the interested parties inputs are require to ensure peace prevail at the end but unfortunately, the Sowah Din people of Teshie didn't follow this procedure and "we think is an unfair exercise." "What makes the situation more

dangerous and deliberate is the involvement of the Land Commission, the body responsible for land administration in the country who ought to have known better."

Nii Okplen said "the Commission and the Sowah Din people must come again because boundary demarcation is not done by one party and we must be involved." He said the Supreme Court has settled all land disputes within the Nungua Traditional area and "so when it comes to demarcation, what judgment are they depending on without consulting the interested parties."

Nii Okplen said for the sake of peace and the fact that this is a season where all political parties are keen on electing flag bearers for their various parties, "we charge the Lands Commission to do the right thing because we don't want anything to trigger the peace."

"We are Ga people and so we need to meet and resolve the matter than one party in connivence with Land Commission without recourse to the consequences," Nii Okplen stated. "We don't want to believe that the



Commission is in bed with the Sowah Din people of Teshie because we know they know better and are responsible for the land issues in the country."

Nii Okplen challenged the Sowah Din Family, Lands Commission to follow the example of a similar boundary demarcation between the Nungua people and Tema where both parties met with the commission and even though the process has not been completed peace has been restored. "We want the Lands Commission and the Sowah Din Family to follow the example of Nungua Traditional Council and Tema who are currently following the due process to to resolve the issue," Nii Okplen stated.

Duffuor Promises Decent Livelihood For NDC Workers And Cadres

Aspiring presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Dr. Kwabena Duffuor has promised party executives under his leadership he will ensure all party workers are well paid and also institute a pension scheme for the cadres and aged members of the party. Interacting with branch and constituency executives on the second day of his campaign in the Volta region, Dr. Duffuor said "We will build party offices for each region and all constituencies across the country and pay the workers and executives. "The cadres who formed the party for us we have to honour them. What most of them are going through now is not fair. We should be able to put in place a pension scheme for the aged and cadres so that



they can pay their medical bills and have a decent livelihood," Dr. Duffuor said. He further said these initiatives will make the party stronger and attractive not only to the children and grandchildren of these individuals but the majority of Ghanaians. Making the NDC stronger and more attractive. The former Governor and Finance Minister is on a three-day campaign tour of the Volta region. He has already visited Central Tongu, North Tongu, South Tongu, Akatsi South and Anlo constituencies.

SADR-Venezuela: 11 Cooperation Agreements Signed In Different Sectors

The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and Venezuela have signed eleven (11) cooperation agreements in different sectors, sanctioning the talks of Sahrawi President, Brahim Ghali and Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro in Caracas. During his state visit to Venezuela last Tuesday, President Ghali held one-on-one talks with his Venezuelan counterpart, Nicolas Maduro, subsequently extended to delegations from both countries. The talks culminated in the signing of 11 cooperation agreements between SADR and Venezuela in different

sectors including higher and basic education, culture, health, agriculture and water. The agreements signed also cover the abolition of visas for holders of diplomatic and special passports, in addition to the signing of a political memorandum on strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two parties. Speaking at the end of the signing ceremony of the agreements, President Maduro indicated that the agreement in the education sector provides internships for university positions for hundreds of students from the SADR who will soon arrive in Venezuela. For his part, the President of the Republic affirmed that this state visit "has an added value because it coincides with the

celebration of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries". "Our peoples are working to strengthen this relationship through this fruitful official visit, not only through these important agreements between the two parties, but also through Venezuela's commitment to intensify solidarity and support for the just cause of the Sahrawi people." The President of the Republic, Secretary-General of the Polisario Front, Mr. Brahim Ghali, began Sunday a state visit to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, at the invitation of its President, Mr. Nicolás Maduro.



The President of the Republic is accompanied by an important delegation comprising members of the National Secretariat of the Polisario Front, Mohamed Sidati and Fatima al-Mahdi, respectively Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, as well as the Adviser to the Presidency of the Republic, Abdati Breirika,

the Ambassador in charge of Latin America and the Caribbean, Mohamed Zroug and ambassador to Venezuela, Mohamed Salem Rgueibi. Venezuela recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as an independent state in August 1980 and in December 1982 the two countries established diplomatic relations, it should be recalled.

Ukraine, Iraq And Libya Happier Countries Than Ghana - World Happiness Report 2022



By Agnes Enyonam Gaga

Last month, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a United Nations global initiative, published the 2022 World Happiness Report. The World Happiness Report is released every year around March 20th as part of the International Day of Happiness celebration. The World Happiness Report 2022 ranked 146 countries based on three broad indicators: life evaluations, and positive and negative emotions. Under these

three indicators, the report looks at various factors that influence the three main indicators: income, healthy life expectancy, social support, freedom to make life choices, trust, generosity, GDP of a country, and perceptions of corruption. While rankings like these are not definitive, they provide some insight into the factors contributing to citizens' perceived happiness in different countries. As usual, countries from Northern Europe, Finland (1st), Denmark (2nd), and Iceland (3rd), have dominated the Happiness ranking, followed by mostly developed economies, including Germany (14th), the

United States of America (16th), and the United Kingdom (17th). Turning to the happiest countries in Africa, Mauritius (52nd) ranks as the happiest country, while Zimbabwe (144th) is the least happy country, as it struggles with high poverty levels. According to the report, Libya (86th), Ukraine (97th), and Iraq (107) - countries plagued by political instability and conflict - are happier places to live than Ghana (111). Ghana has decreased in ranking from the previous year, where it fared 95th out of the 149 countries surveyed in the 2021 World Happiness Report. Factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which impacted various aspects of the country, can be attributed

to the decrease in the Happiness Ranking. One plausible reason Ukraine, Iraq, and Libya may be happier countries than Ghana is the level of social support. According to the report, Ukraine, Iraq, and Libya ranked higher than Ghana regarding social support, which refers to strong social networks and access to social services like healthcare and education. This suggests that citizens in Ukraine, Iraq, and Libya may feel more connected to their communities and have better access to resources that contribute to their overall well-being. Another factor is economic prosperity. While all these countries are considered

developing nations, they have varying levels of income and wealth. Despite the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and political instability in Libya and Iraq, these countries have a higher level of income and wealth (World Bank Data) than Ghana. Happiness is a complex and multifaceted concept that cannot be reduced to a simple ranking. While the World Happiness Report can offer some insights into the factors that contribute to happiness and help governments shape policies to improve the happiness of their citizens, it is up to everyone to determine what brings them happiness and fulfillment in their own lives.

Moscow Calls Out US' Rules-Based Order In Europe



As with the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the Russian decision on tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus is retaliatory, drawing attention to the US missiles stationed close to its borders

By M. K. Bhadrakumar

Baroness Goldie is an experienced Scottish politician and life peer who served as Leader of the Scottish Conservative Party from 2005 to 2011 and as the UK's Minister of State for Defense since 2019. She is nothing like Liz Truss who often had to swallow her indiscreet words betraying ignorance. Certainly, Baroness Goldie understood perfectly well the implications of what she put down in a [written statement](#) at the House of Lords on March 20 in her answer to Lord Hylton's seemingly innocuous question: "To ask His Majesty's Government whether any of the ammunition currently being supplied to Ukraine contains depleted uranium." (By the way, [Lord Hylton](#) is one of 92 hereditary peers elected to remain in the House of Lords; he is currently the longest-serving Crossbench member of the House of Lords, since 1968, and is a dynamic campaigner for peace and the interests of the vulnerable and the marginalized.) Baroness Goldie's answer was: "Alongside our granting of a squadron of Challenger 2 main battle tanks to Ukraine, we will be providing ammunition including armor piercing rounds which contain depleted uranium. Such rounds are highly effective in defeating modern tanks and armored vehicles." It is a fair guess that the UK Defense Secretary Ben Wallace

kept 10 Downing Street informed—and even more important, had prior consultations and concurrence with his US counterpart, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin—before the above announcement by the UK Government. Both Wallace and Austin are military people and understand why ammunition tipped with "depleted uranium" is needed in the current stage of the proxy war in Ukraine [if at all Kiev is to mount](#) a credible enough counter-offensive in spring when the tide of the war is distinctly turning in Russia's favor in Donbass. Equally, both must be well aware that the [legality of the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia](#) is still an open issue. In response to NATO's bombing campaign, former Yugoslavia instituted proceedings before the International Court of Justice on April 29, 1999, against the 10 NATO members directly involved in the attack—Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the UK, and the US—citing a series of violations of the law of nations (which included the obligation not to use prohibited weapons.) Although the ICJ rejected Belgrade's request for provisional measures, it, nonetheless, declared itself profoundly concerned with the use of force by Western powers in Yugoslavia, which "under the present circumstances ... raises very serious issues of

international law." Suffice to say, the cases brought by Yugoslavia against the NATO respondents still remain on the ICJ's docket although the petitioner got dismembered. Make no mistake, Washington and London are consciously repeating the war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. The Anglo-Saxon clique's core objective is a calculated escalation of the proxy war that is certain to draw forth a robust reaction from Moscow, as predictable as night follows day. Indeed, that is precisely what happened when Russian President [Vladimir Putin announced on Saturday](#) that Russia will deploy its tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. Putin linked this to a request from Belarus in reaction to Baroness Goldie's statement in London a week ago. More importantly, Putin also drew the analogy of the US placing its nuclear weapons on the territories of the allied NATO countries for decades. The [EU and NATO went ballistic](#) after Putin's disclosure. EU's chief diplomat Josep Borrell said on Sunday that Moscow's decision was "an irresponsible escalation and threat to European security." He promised to impose "further sanctions" against Belarus! A NATO spokeswoman called Moscow's decision "dangerous and irresponsible." Interestingly, though, the Biden administration [neatly side-stepped the issue](#), focusing instead that the US has not seen any signs that Russia has moved nuclear weapons to Belarus or anywhere else! In good measure, National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby added, "We've in fact seen no indication he (Putin) has any intention to use nuclear weapons, period, inside Ukraine." But then, Putin also made it clear that Russia would first

complete construction on a storage facility in Belarus for the tactical nuclear weapons by July 1. Kirby was fudging. What is the game plan? First, the Anglo-Saxon clique would hope that the issue will create further disquiet and insecurity in Europe vis-a-vis Russia and would rally European countries behind the Biden administration at a time when fault lines were appearing within the transatlantic alliance over a protracted war in Ukraine that might be catastrophic for European economies. However, Washington is hard-pressed to respond to Putin's remark that Russia is only doing something that the US has been doing for decades. The point is, a mutual commitment not to deploy nuclear weapons in third countries was one of the proposals Moscow made to Washington in December 2021, alongside a commitment that Ukraine would not join NATO. The US ignored it and instead precipitated, with great deliberation, the Russian special military operation in Ukraine. The crux of the matter is, as with the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the Russian decision on tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus is retaliatory, drawing attention to the US missiles stationed close to its borders. (An estimated 100 nuclear weapons are stored in vaults in five European countries—Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.) Worse still, the US practices a [controversial arrangement known as "nuclear sharing,"](#) under which it installs nuclear equipment on fighter jets of select non-nuclear NATO countries and trains their pilots to carry out nuclear strikes with US nuclear bombs. This is happening when the US, being a party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has promised not to hand over nuclear weapons to other countries, and the non-nuclear countries in the NATO's sharing arrangement have themselves

promised not to receive nuclear weapons from the nuclear weapon states!

The [NATO declared last year](#) that seven of its members contributed dual-capable aircraft to the nuclear sharing mission. These countries are believed to be the US, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey and Greece. And all are signatories to the NPT! Welcome to the "rules-based order"! What is perfectly permissible to the West is forbidden for Russia! Finally, the diplomatic pirouette by Baroness Goldie has yet another dimension: Britain's decision to send depleted uranium weaponry to Ukraine is confirming its reputation as the most reckless and unscrupulous state in the whole NATO alliance.

There is no question that depleted uranium munitions are radioactive and toxic and their heavy use in the Yugoslavia and Iraq wars has been linked to birth defects and cancers. It has been tied to "the highest rate of genetic damage in any population ever studied" in Fallujah, the city subjected to two brutal US sieges during the invasion of Iraq. The toxicity of depleted uranium munitions has been accepted by many NATO countries and the European Parliament has called for its use to be banned. Following the death of 366 Italian soldiers with conditions linked to the substance, Italy legislated in 2019 to make it easier for veterans to sue for damages to exposure. Why is the UK behaving like an outlier? It appears to be creating conditions in Europe to justify the basing of nuclear-armed US bombers at Lakenheath in Suffolk, which were removed in 1991 in line with the Intermediate Nuclear Forces treaty. The peace movement in the UK is moribund. Count on the warmongers and Russophobic elites in the UK to seize the Russian retaliation in Belarus to demand yet another tit for tat escalation. Expect the US bombers to return to Lakenheath in the near future. **MK Bhadrakumar** is a former diplomat. He was India's ambassador to Uzbekistan and Turkey. The views are personal.

In Split Decision, US Apex Court Rejects Steven Donziger's Review Plea Despite Irregularities

By Anish R

The Supreme Court of the United States has rejected a review petition by environmental lawyer and indigenous rights advocate Steven Donziger against a 2021 ruling by a federal judge convicting him of contempt. The decision to reject the petition was delivered on Monday, March 27, based on a split verdict with two of the nine justices dissenting with the decision.

Donziger was held guilty of six charges of criminal contempt by senior district judge Loretta Preska of the US Southern District Court of New York in July 2021. In October 2021, he was sentenced to six months in prison, even after having spent more than two years in court-imposed detention that was [deemed illegal](#) by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Currently disbarred from practice since 2014, Donziger argued that the judicial process violated his constitutional rights, since it was a court-initiated prosecution, overriding the district prosecutor's decision. He also argued that the appointment of private prosecutors by the presiding judge in a separate lawsuit that he was fighting against Chevron was unconstitutional.

The petition argued that this violated the cardinal principle of separation of powers as outlined in the US Constitution, whereby prosecutions are usually led by the executive, through either the District Attorney or the US Attorney General, and not the judiciary. Despite irregularities galore throughout the contempt proceedings, the Supreme Court ruled against his petition, with only justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh dissenting. Interestingly, Gorsuch and Kavanaugh are Trump-era appointees and conservatives, while the three justices appointed under Obama and Biden administrations to the court were part of the majority decision. The Court's decision upheld a 2022 decision by the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York in response to Donziger's appeal against his contempt petition. The 2022 decision, arrived again by a split verdict of 2-1, held that courts have the authority to prosecute individuals under certain circumstances in the manner they deem fit. In his [dissenting opinion](#), Justice Gorsuch pointed out the inaccurate application of a tenuous judicial precedent by the appeals court, and went on to

state that the Constitution "does not tolerate what happened here." "However much the district court may have thought Mr. Donziger warranted punishment, the prosecution in this case broke a basic constitutional promise essential to our liberty," read the dissenting opinion. "In this country, judges have no more power to initiate a prosecution of those who come before them than prosecutors have to sit in judgment of those they charge."

The contempt charges are related to Donziger's legal battle representing thousands of indigenous Ecuadorians in a landmark lawsuit on corporate pollution in Ecuador. In 2011, over 30,000 inhabitants of Lago Agrio in Ecuador won billions in damages against Chevron, for the large-scale pollution of the town and its adjoining forest by one of its subsidiaries Texaco.

Contempt case where court is both "accuser and decisionmaker"

A notable argument in Gorsuch's dissent is how the appeals court's decision "allowed the district court to assume the "dual position as accuser and decisionmaker"—a combination that "violat[es] the due process" rights of the accused," which effectively echoed Donziger's argument.

Senior Judge Lewis A. Kaplan of the



(Photo: Raul Coto Batres/In These Times). Environmental lawyer Steven Donziger is widely known for representing thousands of Ecuadorian villagers in a multi-billion corporate pollution lawsuit against Chevron

Southern District Court of New York had initiated the prosecution against Donziger in 2018. Kaplan was the presiding judge in the lawsuit by Chevron, which in 2014 held Donziger guilty of bribing Ecuadorian judges based on a witness who later admitted to falsifying his testimony. Kaplan's decision not only blocked the execution of the Ecuadorian Supreme Court ruling that demanded USD 9.5 billion in damages to inhabitants of Lago Agrio, but also ordered Donziger to pay USD 800,000. In 2016, after losing an appeal against the judgment, Donziger was ordered by Kaplan to surrender all his electronic devices to Chevron, which he refused and tried to appeal against, over concerns of surrendering confidential data about his clients in Ecuador. For refusing to comply with the order, Kaplan held him in contempt of the court and referred the matter to the

district attorney.

In turn, the district attorney for Southern District Court of New York "respectfully declined" Kaplan's referral to prosecute Donziger. However, overriding the prosecutor's decision, Kaplan took the unprecedented move to not only prosecute him but also to appoint a private law firm. The law firm Seward & Kissel was later found to have worked closely with Chevron just months before they were appointed to the case. Kaplan also reportedly handpicked Preska to preside over the case, instead of allowing for the case to be assigned randomly as per the rules of the court.

Donziger, nevertheless, served his prison sentence, much of it under house arrest. He spent a total of 45 days in prison and 993 days under house arrest before being released on April 25, 2022.

Mosquito, Ayariga, Amoabeng Speak On Trans-Political Business Leadership In Ghana



Participants in group photograph with organiser, Nii Marmah Boye after the forum held in Accra

The Founder of the Society Influencers Foundation in Ghana, Nii Marmah Boye, has led a national discourse on how Ghanaian businesses can grow irrespective of the political party in power. The discourse was themed: 'Trans-Political Business Operations in Ghana' and took place at the University of

Ghana (UG) Business School (BS) in partnership with the Society Influencers Foundation on March 29, 2023.

Speaking with the media on the sidelines at the dialogue, Nii Marmah Boye noted that businesses that are purported to be associated to a political party that is not in power get victimised by the governing party.

In seeking for a lasting solution to this problem, he said, he decided to hold a national dialogue with stakeholders.

"We decided to hold this dialogue because it's time we see Ghanaian businesses grow

to the international market. "We can't continue to collapse local businesses because they are perceived to be affiliated with a political party that is not in power," he said. "It must stop!"

Nii Marmah Boye also encouraged local businesses to operate legally, abiding by acceptable standards, to avoid issues with the governing party.

"I want to take this opportunity to encourage local businesses not to involve themselves in situations that will affect their businesses negatively.

"Sometimes, officials collapse businesses for reasons that do

not need them to close down their businesses, however, since a fault has been detected, they will stand on it to make a case," he said. He took the opportunity to call on leaders to encourage the local growth and participation of Ghanaian enterprises in the African and international markets rather than frustrating their operations. "We've heard on record how businesses are being frustrated due to the current business environment.

"Our environment doesn't encourage growth.

"You have to lick boots before you can succeed in business in

Ghana. Why should we do this to ourselves?

"It is time governments create the enabling environment to encourage business growth in the international market," he declared.

"We are looking forward to hosting an all-female panel in our next series since this was all male and then we end with presidential aspirants to get their commitment so that we can hold them accountable if any of them assumes power and tries to touch any business illegally," he said.

Source: [classfmonline.com](https://www.classfmonline.com)