

NDC, NPP Trade Blows Over Bryan Acheampong

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**Kwame Pianim, the renowned Economist**

KWAME PIANIM

He Says Ghana Is Being Recolonized Over Govt's Incompetence

Kwame Pianim, renowned Ghanaian Economist and statesman, has expressed worries over government's measures to salvage the country's deepening economic challenges.

According to him, the empowerment

of foreign officials to manipulate and determine what government must do and the persistent resolve of the government to seek help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an indication of government's

incompetence and symbolizes neocolonialism.

Speaking on Accra based Joy News programme, Newsfile, Kwame Pianim explained: "We have a Finance

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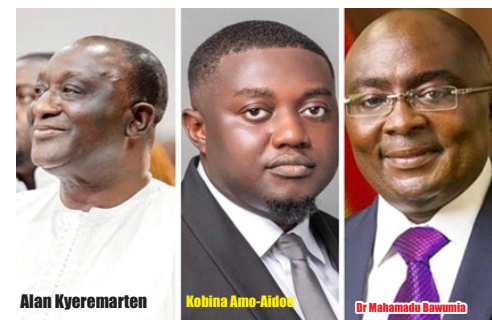
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The INSIGHT

— EDITORIAL

THIS IS WORRYING!

Recent happenings in the state of Palestine regarding the annexation of lands and the committal of atrocities by Israeli forces to say the least is highly repugnant.

Never a day passes without one form of violence or assault being perpetuated by Israel against the people of Palestine.

These acts including seizure of Palestinian lands have been carried out with the highest level of impunity, apparently due to the support provided by America.

Across the West Bank and other occupied territories, there have been protests over plans by Israel to annex more of such lands.

Clearly, this show of impunity and disregard for international law is highly condemnable and unacceptable.

There is no denying the fact that the Israeli authorities' constant destruction of Palestinian homes in Occupied West Bank for new Jewish settlement has been done with the full support of the United States, in spite of persistent international condemnation of such lawless and dastardly acts. Apart from the West Bank's Area C, Gaza has also been turned into a huge killing field as Israel has over the years committed acts of genocide with impunity.

Nobody has been spared the atrocities of the Zionist state which has killed women and children, the old and the young, abled and bodied persons and people with disability.

We firmly believe that Israel is emboldened to carry out these atrocities because of the support it receives from the US and its surrogates around the world.

Undoubtedly, what the world expect to see is the easing of tension and an end to the brutalities in Palestine.

It's Time For Others To Sacrifice For Unity In NPP, Says Kobina Amo-Aidoo



With the internal presidential primaries drawing near, calls are being made for others to sacrifice their personal ambitions and seek the overall interest and unity of the party going into the 2024 elections.

This call is being made by Mr Kobina Amo-Aidoo who is also known in close circles as KobbyChina to party leadership as it is becoming more evident with the growing number of presidential aspirants going into the delegates conference.

If everyone put something on the table, we soon shall have enough to sustain all of us and be able to build for generations.

However, if everyone tries to selfishly take from the table, soon we shall have nothing left on the table and we shall see a broken party.

To a large extent, few powerful leaders are taking up all opportunities and holding the majority at the grassroots to ransom with empty promises of temporal materials that don't seek to build capacity but rather enslave.

For us to have any significant change in our society, and for us to safeguard the future of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), all of us must develop and grow the habit of building and sacrificing for the collective good.

Alan John Kwadwo Kyerematen who has served diligently from the inception of PFP through APP to now NPP has shown

commitment and has the appeal amongst the average Ghanaian and can maximize the gains in continuity to break the 8.

Ghana's new transformational and revolutionary thinking leaders who bring a fresh plate of appeal and ideas to the table are not refined clichés who cannot inject change.

It would only inure to the interest of Ghanaians and the NPP to present a winnable candidate against John Dramani Mahama (JDM) of the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

THE INSIGHT

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KWAME PIANIM

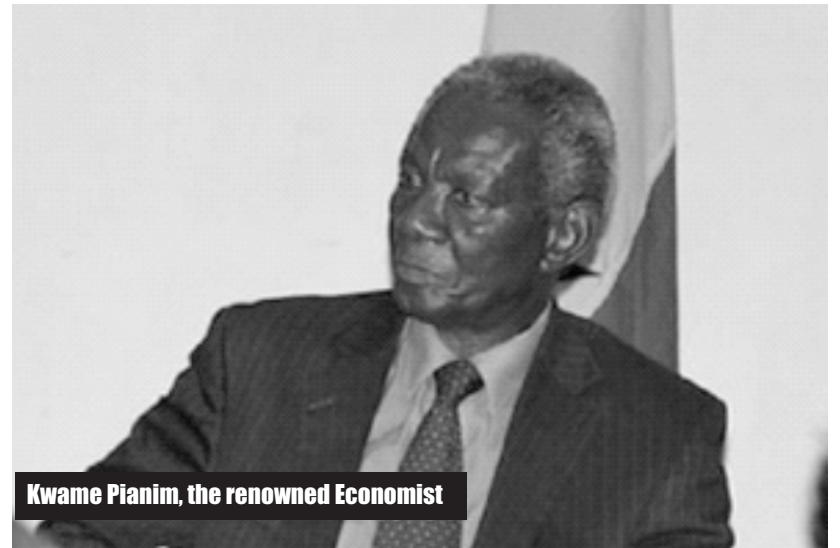
He Says Ghana Is Being Recolonized Over Govt's Incompetence

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Minister who borrowed and Parliament that supported him to borrow. We have now somebody from the US treasury sitting in the Ministry of Finance to hold Ken Ofori-Atta's hand. Ken told me once – we went to school with these same white boys – we are just as good as them.” He added, “Now he has somebody sitting there, holding his hand, giving him tutorials to in what? And we have somebody being paid by a Swiss fund sitting in the Bank of Ghana. Our governor was out giving advice to other countries. And we are being recolonized.” The economist blamed corruption and reckless spending on the side of the

government for the country's woes and is of the view that no country should pardon Ghana of its debts, rather, the country must develop payment programs that would compel the country to pay. This Kwame Pianim believes would deter subsequent governments from economic mismanagement and corruption. This will not be the first time the former government appointee under John Agyekum Kufour is criticizing the Akufo-Addo government. In January, he suggested that Ken Ofori-Atta was the worst finance minister the country has had. Speaking in an interview on Okay FM on Monday, January 16, 2023, Pianim

said that it is only under the leadership of Ofori-Atta, as finance minister, that Ghana has defaulted in the payment of its debts. He added that Ofori-Atta is solely responsible for the economic mess the country finds itself in because he failed to listen to advice. “This past December, we told the whole world that we can't pay our debts. In the first few years of Nana Ofori-Atta, we warned him of the rate at which he was borrowing but he did not listen, saying that he knew what he was doing. We told him that he is going to lead the country into a ditch, and now we are in it. “We are now trying to get the country out of the ditch, and he is saying it is God's doing... the country has always run at a loss in budgets he (Ofori-Atta) has



Kwame Pianim, the renowned Economist

prepared. He said he will use the E-Levy to resolve the country's challenges, it was given to him, and nothing happened,” he said in Twi. Asked whether Ofori-Atta is the worst finance minister Ghana has ever had, he said, “Am I the one you are asking?” “We have been declared bankrupt;

Ghanaians are suffering; pensioners are crying because of the haircuts they are receiving. Some of them are saying this is more than a death sentence and they will die if they don't take blood pressure medications,” he said.

CODEO Blasts EC

...Urges It To Repair Dwindled Image And 10% Credibility Stake



Jean Mensa, Chairperson of the EC

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) has said the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) must work harder to salvage its dwindling image over the years. This comes on the back of CODEO demanding the immediate resignation of two out of the three newly appointed

commissioners to the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC). President Akufo-Addo on March 20 sworn into office Dr. Peter Appiahene, Haji Salima Ahmed Tijani and Rev. Akua Ofori Boateng urged them to uphold diligence in executing their mandate. Commenting on the development on Starr Fm last Wednesday, the National Coordinator for CODEO, Albert Arhin stated that two newly appointed members of the EC whose credibility are being questioned must resign in their own interest. “This is coming from the Star Ghana and the rest and this is how the CSOs see it, they see it as something that will not augur well for the Electoral Commission. Because the image has dwindled, the EC now has 10 percent of confidentiality with regards to the

way the people see it. “This is the background I was talking about how within time the EC has been falling in terms of credibility. So this is a typical case of credibility to let go. The CSOs will meet and depending on whatever happened there may be the next phase of what will come,” Mr. Arhin stated. He continued: “But you cannot force anybody to resign can you? You cannot force the President to let them resign or whatever and even with case of the people who have already being appointed they have to go through a whole lot of process but we have come out in the public, we have come out with the bare fact about the implications and what the EC can do it image and the overall security of the country. Maybe

the people themselves will see that they are treading on dangerous grounds and resign in their own interest.” However, speaking at a press conference on Wednesday, Rev. Dr. Fredrick Degbey, a leading member of the election observer body said their partisan stands will affect the EC's credibility. “We are painfully aware that voluntary and constitutionally grounded revocation of these unfortunate and democratically problematic EC appointments by the President is extremely unlikely. However, nothing stops the affected appointees, namely Dr. Peter Appiahene and Hajia Salima Tijani from voluntarily and honourably resigning from the EC. “This will be in the supreme interest of our country's continued democratic progress, election peace and credibility and indeed overall national interest,” Rev Degbey stated. He further indicated that “Dr. Appiah-hene is a senior lecturer at the University of Energy and Natural Recourse where he heads the department of

Computer Science and Informatics. We also learn that Dr. Appiahene holds a PHD in Computer Science and an MPhil in Information Technology in both the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Since the announcement of his appointment he is a member of the EC, social media posting has revealed that Mr. Appiahene is an activist of the New Patriotic Party in the Bono Region. “In one social media post in 2021 Dr. Appiah-Hene is featured on an NPP flyer as one of the six prospects for the position of the Bono Regional Minister. The commenter who put out that post states that the Bono region and the NPP party need much more vibrant and energetic leaderships to help to take the region to the desired growth and urged all in the region to rally behind Dr. Appiah-Hene.”

Source: starrfm.com.gh



INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORT

Compiled By Peoples Dispatch

Finland Becomes 31st NATO Member, Russia Warns Of Escalation



Secretary General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg. (Photo: Getty Images/NATO handout). Despite Russia raising its national security concerns, the Cold War-era, US-led military alliance has consistently expanded around its borders since 1990

Finland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a full member on Tuesday, April 4, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced last Monday. Finland's President Sauli Niinistö along with his defense and foreign ministers were expected to join the ceremony at the NATO headquarters in Brussels, where US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was also due to be present.

Finland's accession was announced days after the Turkish parliament [approved](#) its NATO bid last week.

Turkey was the last country to approve Finland joining after President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that the country had taken steps to address Turkish concerns over its support to Kurdish activists and eased weapons exports to Turkey. Abandoning their decades-long policy of military neutrality, Finland and Sweden had applied for NATO membership in May 2022. Turkey is still holding back Sweden's membership approval, accusing it of sheltering Kurdish activists,

specifically, members of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). Turkey accuses PKK and other activists struggling for the rights of the Kurdish minority of indulging in "terrorist acts" in the country. Hungary has also [refused](#) to approve Sweden's membership bid over its criticisms of former Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's policies.

Finland will be the 31st member of NATO, which was formed as a military alliance in 1951 in the context of the Cold War to counter the rising influence of the USSR in Europe and elsewhere. NATO has expanded consistently even after the dissolution of the USSR and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. It has been involved in various invasions and wars in different parts of the world since then, including in former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya.

Russia, a successor state of the USSR, objects to NATO's eastward expansion on the grounds that it threatens its national security. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko responded to the news of Finland joining NATO by saying that his country will increase its forces on its borders

with the Nordic country. Finland and Russia share an over 1,300km-long border. Grushko claimed that if "forces and assets of other NATO members are deployed" in Finland, Russia "will take additional steps to reliably ensure Russia's military security," [RT reported](#).

Sanna Marin loses election

Days before Finland joined NATO, Prime Minister Sanna Marin who steered the process was defeated in the parliamentary elections with her party ending up in third spot. She resigned on Thursday. In the elections held on April 2, the center-right National Coalition Party led by Antti Petteri Orpo emerged as the single largest party in the parliament with 48 seats (10+) and 20.8% votes. The elections saw a voter turnout of 72.6%. The far-right Finns party, led by Riikka Purra, also increased its tally to 46 seats (7+), and remains the second largest bloc in the parliament, securing 20.1% of the votes. The National Coalition Party has indicated that Finland's support for NATO will continue. Sanna Marin's Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP) secured 43 seats (3+) with 19.9% votes. Its coalition partners including the

Centre Party, Green League, and Left Alliance faced setbacks and were confined to 23 (8-), 23 (7-), and 11 (5-) seats, respectively.

The Communist Party of Finland (SKP)'s Petra Packalén told *Peoples Dispatch* on April 4 that "the election results lead to the strengthening of conservative values and tougher politics in our country."

"Sanna Marin's social democrat government made a number of dubious decisions, such as joining NATO, the forced anti-strike law on carers and the introduction of the new version of "active model," which has increased conditions for both basic unemployment benefits and income related schemes, to the detriment of the unemployed. The upcoming government run by the Coalition Party will accelerate all this with more militarization and austerity-politics towards the working class. As many as four out of five future MPs would rather cut services than take on more debt. Radical right-wing will be normalized even more, resulting in growing racism and expanding patriarchy," she said.

Protesters In Tunisia Denounce Spate Of Arrest Of Opposition Leaders, Others

Hundreds of Tunisians last Saturday took to the streets in the capital Tunis to demonstrate against the arrest of 20 political opponents and critics by the government led by President Kais Saied in February. Over 300 members of the opposition participated in the protests, which were organized by the country's main opposition coalition, the National Salvation Front. These were the latest in a series of opposition protests taking place for more than a year and a half since the president seized virtually all power in the country in July 2021.

The protesters demanded that the government release the 20 people who were arrested and

have been kept under detention since February. Protesters were seen waving the Tunisian flag and holding up placards and posters with pictures of the detainees, raising slogans demanding their release. Among those arrested in February are opposition politicians, former ministers, businessmen, trade unionists, and the owner of a radio station. Protesters condemned the Saied-led government for the increasing attacks on basic freedoms and civil and political liberties, as well as the campaign against the opposition. They accused

the president of turning Tunisia into an autocratic and repressive state. At the time of the arrests, the government had claimed that those arrested were "terrorists" and part of a "conspiracy against state security." The arrests were widely condemned by Tunisian and international human rights groups, who urged the government for the immediate and unconditional release of those detained. Last month, Amnesty International called on the Tunisian authorities to release the detainees, saying that they were arrested on the basis of "unfounded

accusations."

Tunisia has been in the grips of a long-running political crisis since July 2021, when President Saied arbitrarily decided to dismiss the prime minister along with his entire cabinet, suspend the parliament, and assume all executive and legislative powers in the country. In subsequent months he took additional steps to consolidate his stronghold on power, along with weakening other state institutions and machinery, especially those which could oppose him. Opposition and human rights groups have since the beginning termed the



(Photo: Voice of Nigeria) The government led by President Kais Saied arrested 20 opposition figures and critics in February—including former ministers—on charges of terrorism and threatening state security

presidential actions as unconstitutional and illegal, amounting to a 'presidential coup'. Many among those who may have supported these actions in the beginning are also now part of the growing opposition nationwide.

After Condemning Treacherous Comments By Minister... Coalition Of Civil Societies Against Political Vigilantism Calls For The Arrest Of Bryan Acheampong

THE COALITION OF CIVIL SOCIETIES AGAINST POLITICAL VIGILANTISM (CCSAPVs) CONDEMNS THE TREACHEROUS COMMENTS OF HON. BRYAN ACHEAMPONG AND DEMANDS HIS IMMEDIATE ARREST

The Coalition of Civil Societies Against Political Vigilantism condemns the unfortunate and reckless statements made by Hon Bryan Acheampong, MP for Abetifi Constituency and Minister for Food and Agriculture at a keep fit rally at Mpraeso over the weekend. We believe his comments are incendiary, and have the propensity to foment vigilantism and political party hooliganism so we demand that the Ghana Police Service immediately picks him up for interrogation. We believe a legislator of high standing as himself should have been decorous and measured in his comments on that fateful day.

At the keep fit rally in Mpraeso, he said “NDC party will collapse. If the NDC dares to use threats, violence and foolishness in the 2024 elections, we will let them know that we have the men. We will show them that we have the men. We have the men! It will never happen that we, the NPP, will stand on a platform to hand over power to the NDC. It will never happen. We will make sure NPP remains in government at all cost”.

Which men is Bryan Acheampong referring to? The Ghana Police Service or the Ghana Armed Forces or the unscrupulous party para militias and vigilantes whom he oversaw to carry out the brutalities and bloodshed in the Ayawaso West Wuogon by elections in 2019?

He should come clear on the “men” he is referring to because he is neither the Inspector General of Police or the Chief of Defence Staff, nor the Minister of the Interior or Defence: he is the

Minister of Food and Agriculture, his ministry has no business with guns, riots, bloodshed, political party para-militia or vigilantes. He should stick to his day job for which he is paid with the taxpayer's sweat and toil.

The Coalition believes that Mr Acheampong has over the years demonstrated gross acts of indiscipline, lawlessness, violence and brutality. In the year 2019, while serving as a Minister of State at the Interior, he was implicated by the Justice Emil Short Commission in the wake of the bloodshed that marred the famous or rather infamous Ayawaso-West Wuogon by elections.

The Justice Emil Short Commission recommended that the Mr Bryan Acheampong be punished for his ultimate responsibility as Minister in authorizing an operation of that character on a day of an election in a built-up area. The NPP government responded by overtly rejecting and overruling the Emil Short Commission's recommendation on the premise that the Commission failed to state the basis for their recommendation.

Mr Acheampong much to the chagrin of many would be nominated for the position of Minister of Agriculture in 2023, go on to pass vetting and be approved by parliament despite numerous calls on the minority caucus of parliament to reject his nomination due to his history of brutality, violence and indiscipline. The minority caucus failed to heed to the cries and warnings of well-meaning Ghanaians and still gave him the nod which is failure to do due diligence on their part.

We believe that his appointment (though being of questionable repute and character) and his subsequent approval as a Minister of a very crucial ministry as the Food and Agriculture Ministry by parliament despite his tumultuous past is an indictment in the Coalition of Civil Societies Against Political Vigilantism's fight against elements of political vigilantism and hooliganism.

Nonetheless, his appointment is not surprising since the President, the leader of the NPP himself made similar comments at a delegates conference in Kumasi in 2021 that “he is determined to hand over power to an NPP government in 2025”. Lord Comney, Director of Operations at the Presidency and a patriarch of the NPP also said in an NPP conference in 2022 “the power I have, I will not hand it over today or tomorrow”.

The CCSAPV believes that the New Patriotic Party took power from the National Democratic Congress in a civil and bloodless manner hence, they cannot subvert the will power of the Ghanaian people or the sovereignty of the 1992 Constitution in the lose the 2024 general elections. We believe that such reckless and riotous comments have the tendency to incite chaos, lawlessness and bloodshed during the forthcoming general elections in 2024. The 2024 will be once again decided by ballots and not bullets and no actions or evil agenda of characters such as Bryan Acheampong or any other power drunk, divisive or incendiary figure in the NPP. The 2024 General elections is not a matter of NDC or NPP, it is the mandate and willpower of the good people of Ghana that shall stand.

The Ghana Police Service must carry out its mandate of protecting lives and property and in this particular instance hold Bryan Acheampong's face to the fire for his riotous and reckless comments. Any individual who attempts to subvert the willpower of the people or the sovereignty of the 1992 Constitution must be made a scapegoat per the tenets of the law to serve as a deterrent to others who might want to try their luck. The rule of law must prevail. GOD BLESS OUR HOMELAND GHANA, AND MAKE OUR NATION GREAT AND STRONG!

Signed:

Eben Kwaku Fenuku
Chairman, CCSAPV.



Eben Kwaku Fenuku, Chairman, CCSAPV

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Ghanaians React To 10% Tax On Sports Betting And Lottery Earnings

The government of Ghana is due to implement a 10% tax on earnings from lotteries, games of chance winnings and sports betting at the point of payout.

As part of the government's efforts to expand the tax base and increase domestic tax revenue, gamblers should be ready to have 10% of their earnings withheld as tax should the president assent to a newly passed bill by [Parliament](#).

Multimedia Sports Journalist Fentuo Tahiri Fentuo explained the specifics of the aforementioned taxes, stating that they will be deducted from each individual's winnings prior to payout. “In case you missed it by the way, there's a new 10% tax on your winnings from betting slips. it will be deducted before the payout. Take note and stop fighting the betting companies,” he said in a tweet sighted by [GhanaWeb](#) Business.

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

The three new taxes are the Excise Duty Amendment Bill 2022, the Growth and Sustainability Levy Bill, 2022, and the Income Tax Amendment Bill 2022.

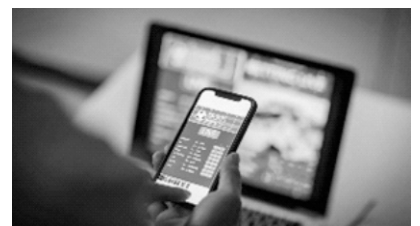
The bills were presented to [Parliament](#) as part of government's plans to raise

about GH¢4 billion annually in domestic revenue mobilisation.

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

As part of measures to meet the criteria set by the IMF to qualify for a bailout, the government has completed tariff adjustment by the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC), Publication of the Auditor-General's Report on COVID-19 spending, and Onboarding of Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) and Road Fund on Ghana integrated financial management information system (GIFMIS).

The government in justifying the introduction of the taxes said they are critical for recovery from the current economic crisis.



Sports betting lovers and lottery players will be subjected to the tax

Of Military Interventions, Assassinations, Economic Sanctions -- The Simple Reasons Why The United States Wants 'Full Spectrum Dominance' Of The Earth

By Roger McKenzie

Imagine the uproar if China or Russia—or any other country for that matter—said it aimed to exercise military control over land, sea, air, and space to protect its interests and investments. This amazingly has been the stated United States policy since 1997. Full spectrum dominance, as the doctrine is known, is the reason the United States behaves the way that it does on the international stage. The United States demands that the world bow down to its leadership. A failure to do so is met with the full force of the international military-industrial complex controlled by the US government. Enforcement has included everything from the funding of opposition forces in sovereign nations, the removal or even assassination of political leaders who refuse to toe the line, economic sanctions, and military intervention. Of course, there are choices to be made by the United States about which approach—or combination of approaches—it might take. There are also decisions to be made about the degree of action within each approach. But fundamentally the point is that Washington believes it has a right to

inflict on the rest of the world its interpretation of democracy—which seems to essentially amount to agreeing with whatever course of action the United States wants to take. So what is full spectrum dominance really for? There's a famous scene in the Oscar-winning film *Reds* where the great revolutionary journalist and activist John Reed, played by Warren Beatty, was asked at a dinner what the war in Mexico he had just returned from was all about. Before sitting down he said just one word: profits. The United States is interested in safeguarding the profits of monopoly capital, which carries politicians in Washington around in its pockets like loose change. The United States also will not tolerate others, such as China, muscling in on potential new markets or swaying people away from its sphere of influence. China is seen as the biggest threat to the profits of the companies that currently decide pretty much what we will eat and even when we can eat it. Anyone who expects the Chinese to simply sit back and take the provocations dealt out by the two-faced United States is living in cloud cuckoo land. China's State Council Information Office recently issued a [report](#) that accused the United States of being the world's biggest offender of human rights. In "[The Report on Human Rights Violations in the United States in 2022](#)," the

Chinese government said the United States "has sanctions in place against more than 20 countries, including Cuba since 1962, Iran since 1979, Syria since 2011 and Afghanistan in recent years." Calling the United States out as the most prolific enforcer of unilateral sanctions in the world, the report said Washington pursues power politics in the international community, frequently uses force, provokes proxy wars, and is a saboteur of world peace. The report added that under the guise of anti-terrorism activities, the US has killed some 929,000 civilians and displaced some 38 million others in 85 countries. Between 2017 and 2020, the United States launched 23 "proxy wars" in the Middle East and Asia-Pacific region, the report stated. The report said that violations of immigrant rights and the refusal of Washington to close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp created "an ugly chapter of unrelenting human rights violations." The report slammed the United States for holding up to 780 people at Guantanamo, most of whom were held without trial for years, while subjecting them to cruel and inhumane treatment. Essentially the United States will go to any lengths to enforce what it sees as its unipolar dominance of the world. As far as it is concerned, "might is right," and there are no consequences for its behavior. There is no legal redress as the United States is not



US troops on patrol in Iraq in 2006 (Photo: US Department of Defense). The United States demands that the world bow down to its leadership. A failure to do so is met with the full force of the international military-industrial complex controlled by the US

part of the International Criminal Court—which it lauds for threatening to prosecute Russian President Vladimir Putin, even though Russia is also not a signatory. It has a veto at the United Nations and much of the world relies on its military shield as well as the mighty dollar with which to trade. Given the cards stacked against those of us who oppose US full spectrum dominance and the seemingly invincible power of the biggest bully on the planet, the question is: What can we do? The answer to full spectrum dominance is full spectrum resistance and organizing. It is necessary to gear our efforts away from piecemeal change and toward revolutionary transformation. This will mean bringing together unions, climate activism, equality organizing, and a range of other social and economic movements in a serious change away from liberal posturing.

The guardians of capital are highly organized and put the resources where they need to go to protect and expand what they have. Activists generally just pretend that we are organized and fall out with each other at the first available opportunity. I am not arrogant enough to believe I have all the answers. But what I do know is that we have to gaze beyond the Global North for what radical transformation might look like. It really is time to shift the paradigm and bring movements together to work out how to pool our resources for real results—full spectrum resistance and organizing. **Roger McKenzie** is the international editor of the [Morning Star](#) newspaper. Follow Roger on Twitter at [@RogerAMck](#). This article was produced by [Globetrotter](#).

Socialist Party Of Zambia Attacked By Members Of Ruling Party, Dr. Fred M'membe Arrested

By Tanupriya Singh

On Saturday, April 8, members of the Socialist Party of Zambia (SP) were targets of a violent attack by alleged cadres of the ruling United Party for National Development (UPND) in the district of Serenje, Central Province. Shortly after, Zambian police arrested SP president Dr. Fred M'membe, even as the attackers remained at large.

According to the Zambian police and local media, violence had been reported in the district's Mwalilima and Kamalamba areas on Saturday as political parties campaigned ahead of a by-election for the Muchinda ward on April 20.

Speaking to *Peoples Dispatch*, M'membe described how SP members had been attacked in Kamalamba on Saturday afternoon. As per the timetable prepared by the Electoral Commission of Zambia, April 8 had been allocated to the SP for campaigning in the area. However, just as SP members were about to begin their public meeting, two vehicles with UPND cadres pulled up, "they descended upon us with stones and sticks. At least one person was carrying a catapult. We tried to evade the situation, and eventually the police arrived. We were being attacked, kicked, and punched in front of the police, they were incapable of doing anything," M'membe said. He added that eventually the police fired tear gas and it was then that SP members managed to reach a police post. The attack by UPND cadres left Preston Chinyama, a political advisor to M'membe, [badly injured](#). SP spokesperson Frank Bwalya also [stated](#) that other officials and residents had been

injured, and that vehicles had been damaged.

In the statement shared with *Peoples Dispatch*, M'membe added that UPND cadres carried out a second attack against the SP on Saturday at midnight, this time at the party's main campaign camp in Mwalilima, looting campaigning materials and foodstuffs.

'The attacked have been framed as the attackers'

On Sunday, the Zambia Police Service announced that police in Serenje had charged 64-year-old M'membe with "Unlawful discharge of a Firearm". He was also jointly charged with "Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm" along with two other "suspected" members of the SP, 62-year-old Saili Chita, and 41-year-old Daniel Mumba who is a part of M'membe's security detail. They were arrested for allegedly having assaulted nine suspected members of the UPND. Chita had been a former local deputy campaign manager for the UPND before quitting the party to join the SP. The police statement also noted that two members of the SP had been injured. While members of the party were immediately remanded in custody, the police said a "manhunt" was launched to find the suspected UPND members behind the assault. Though M'membe, Chita, and Mumba were released on police bond on Sunday pending court appearance, the police had allegedly been under pressure not to release them, with the senior police command, UPND cadres, and the District Commissioner locked in a meeting "for hours" at the Serenje police station, M'membe [said](#) on Twitter.

In an audio [message](#) shared on his Facebook page, M'membe said, "Let us not

allow ourselves to be deceived that political violence ended with the removal of the PF [Patriotic Front] from government [following the 2021 elections]...Today we were attacked, and after being attacked we have been framed as the attackers."

"I am being accused of assaulting someone, a UPND cadre, when I was nowhere near [the scene]. I saved a situation that could have ended in the death of a UPND cadre or a Socialist Party cadre."

He explained that he had fired a few shots to disperse the crowd, and that many had run away, but that "no one was aimed at, nobody was assaulted. But today, I am being framed and [there is an] attempt to make me out to be a violent person, which I am not. It won't work."

M'membe added that he had been the first one to go to the police to complain about the violence. "The UPND cadres who attacked us are not being arrested, they are not in any way being questioned...I was myself assaulted in front of police officers, I was threatened in front of police officers at the police station. This is the type of policing we are seeing today, when we complain about the structure of the police leadership...we were seen as being malicious, but this is what happens when you run the police in this way."

Meanwhile, *Serenje Radio 89.5 FM* also [reported](#) that three members of its staff had been attacked by suspected UPND cadres while on duty outside the



Members of the Socialist Party of Zambia were attacked by alleged cadre of the UNDP. Photo: Dr. Fred M'membe. According to the Socialist Party, their members were attacked at a campaign meeting ahead of a by-election in the Serenje district and SP President Dr. Fred M'membe was later arrested

Serenje police station on April 8. It added that the cadres had been "imported from outside" and attacked a journalist for filming their protest at the scene.

Condemnation

Zambia's Green Party strongly condemned the attacks and arrest of M'Membe. Speaking to *News Central TV*, the party's president Peter Sinkamba [said](#) that M'membe had been framed, "We have a situation where the police in this country have always wanted to side with the political party in government during elections. Because of this kind of behavior we have ended up having political violence reoccur every time there are elections."

He added, "Dr M'membe had a lawful permit to run the campaign yesterday but unfortunately they were confronted by members of the ruling party, the UPND." Sinkamba emphasized that the major problem in the incident was the failure of the police to discharge their duties under the Electoral Processes Act, "We have an electoral code of conduct which mandates the police to be impartial in their conduct." He added that it was also the

responsibility of the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to ensure that police do act in a partial manner.

The ECZ [condemned](#) the violence in Serenje in a statement, warning all participating political parties that they may face disqualification "should these acts of violence continue". The SP has held UPND leaders responsible for the attacks, and denounced their failure to condemn or stop the violence — "Don't believe or trust whatever UPND leadership says about them being against political violence. They support, encourage, and sponsor the violence of their cadres and supporters", M'membe said. "Violence is used as a tool to stop, paralyze, slow down or frustrate the campaigns of their opponents."

The 2021 presidential elections in Zambia had witnessed bouts of political violence including [attacks](#) on members of the SP. While president Hichilema has continued the neoliberal policies of his predecessors, with a new wave of [austerity-driven measures](#) being imposed at the direction of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the SP has forged an alternative political path for the people in Zambia, one that is [grounded](#) in addressing issues including [poverty](#) and access to education.

Remembering Gianni Minà, A Journalist Out Of The Chorus

By Maurizio Coppola

The first picture of Gianni Minà I remember, is the one I have from my childhood, when, during the football World Cup in Italy in 1990, he interviewed Diego Armando Maradona who, just hours before, eliminated Italy itself in the semifinals: a little, chubby and bald man with a mustache asking questions to my absolute idol. Already as a child I recognized that Minà was different from other journalists: the poetic words he used, the deepness of the questions he asked, the way he approached the world's most popular game as a social phenomenon situated in a world full of injustice and inequalities revealed its human, professional and political sensitivity. When I grew up and entered the comrades' world, Gianni Minà returned to be part of my life. In his 1995 published book *O Continente Desaparecido* (The Disappeared Continent) he interviewed Gabriel García Márquez, Jorge Amado, Eduardo Galeano, Rigoberta Menchú, Samuel Ruiz García, Frei Betto, and Pombo and Urbano, Che Guevara's fellows in Bolivia, and offered me a first understanding of the complexity of the continent. Then, from 2000 to 2015 Minà edited and directed the literary magazine *Latinoamerica e tutti i sud del mondo* (Latin America and all the souths of the world), a quarterly geopolitical journal with contributions of the most prestigious intellectuals of the continent. Thanks to his work, a whole generation of scholars and political activists learned about Latin America, a continent that was literally

desaparecido in Italy at that time. But Minà's engagement beside the people of Latin America in the struggle for social justice started way before. In 1978, while covering the 1978 World Cup as a reporter for the Italian public TV RAI, he was admonished and then expelled from Argentina for asking questions about the *desaparecidos* of the Videla military dictatorship to Carlos Alberto Lacoste, head of the World Cup organization, during a press conference, and then for trying to gather information about the countless disappeared young people. His deep love for the Argentinian people was replicated in many occasions, the last time in an [article](#) dedicated to Hebe De Bonafini two days after she died on November 20, 2022: *"The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in front of the Casa Rosada are one of the most distressing images of the last century for those with a true democratic conscience,"* Minà wrote, remembering the heroic struggle of all the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, which still continues today. Minà paid particular attention to Cuba, of course. In 1987, he spoke to Fidel Castro for the first time in a historic interview that lasted 16 hours; this conversation was adapted for a book. From that same interview was taken [Fidel racconta il Che](#) (Fidel talks about Che), a report in which the Cuban revolutionary recounts the saga of Ernesto Guevara for the first and only time. In the 1990s, just after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and in the middle of a changing world, Minà interviewed Fidel

for the [second time](#), a historic record that still today forms young generations. In an article published on his [website](#), he praised the capacity of the Cuban people to develop vaccines against COVID-19 despite the blockade that has lasted for over 60 years. Additionally, Minà supported the *Let Cuba Live* solidarity campaign. It was in 2003, and on his return from the Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, when Minà interviewed Hugo Chávez. One year later, in 2004, he spoke to the then-leader of the EZLN [Subcomandante](#) Marcos. In these stories, he showed the depth of the Zapatista movement and of the Bolivarian revolution, their projects and programs were outlined, showing how, over time, they have transformed—and are still transforming today—Chiapas, Venezuela and all of Latin America, offering seeds of hope to save themselves from the crimes of imperialism and neoliberalism. Minà proposed the Chavez interview to the public TV RAI, but it was rejected. Years later Minà explained: "They no longer wanted me because I interviewed Fidel, Lula and Chavez. Whoever says something that diverges from the US way of thinking, risks being isolated." But Minà didn't bend to the blackmail of those in power. He remained an upstream reporter and never gave up his critical voice. In his last published article bearing the title [Pace](#) (Peace), Minà took a side in the ongoing war in Ukraine.



Gianni Mina with Fidel Castro. (Photo: via giornalistitalia). On March 27, 2023, Gianni Minà died aged 85. Minà was not simply a journalist, he brought the voices of Latin America and of its social redemption into Italy

Paraphrasing Fidel's *Doctors and not bombs*, Minà formulated a pungent critique to the warmongering politics of Western governments and to the rhetoric of mainstream media: "You cannot bargain with peace, it is not one option among others. Peace has to be embraced without ifs and buts, even at the cost of losing." To this morally decadent Western world, Minà highlighted the struggle of a whole continent, Latin America, for a good life for all, as [Gabriel García Márquez](#) did in 1982 when awarded the Nobel Prize ("However, in front of oppression, plunder and neglect, our response is life."): "Yet that continent, voiceless since immemorial time, unlike us westerners, now reduced to alienated consumers even of wars, exporters of an emptied democracy, of which we no longer even know the meaning, is always

in search of the 'buen vivir', in a circular dimension, which produces well-being for all, spiritual and material, without excluding anyone." On March 27, 2023, Gianni Minà left us. He died after a short heart disease. That same open heart with which he practiced his profession as a journalist and with which he conducted interviews with the most important personalities of the second half of the twentieth century, betrayed him. Today, I imagine Minà somewhere, continuing conducting his interviews with Fidel Castro, Diego Armando Maradona, Gabriel García Márquez, Hugo Chavez, Muhammed Ali, and many others, always with his notebook in his hands and the smile on his face as only for people who know to sit "on the wrong side, because all the other seats were occupied."

Reporters Without Borders Barred From Visiting Julian Assange



RSF Secretary-General Christophe Deloire and Director of Operations Rebecca Vincent speak to reporters (Photo: RSF). The NGO was barred from visiting Assange in Belmarsh after months of preparation because Prison Governor Louis "received intelligence" that they were journalists

Two leaders from NGO Reporters Without Borders (RSF) were barred from visiting imprisoned journalist Julian Assange on April 4 in Belmarsh Prison. RSF Secretary-General Christophe Deloire and

Director of Operations Rebecca Vincent were not able to carry out their visit with Assange, a visit which had taken months to secure. Belmarsh Prison Governor Jenny Louis denied their visit at the last minute because she had "received intelligence" that the two were journalists. "We followed all of the prison's procedures and rules. We arrived early with all documents. But we were told at reception that we would not be allowed in," [tweeted](#) Vincent.

The RSF leaders have made it clear that they are not in fact journalists. "[RSF] defends journalists. Some of my colleagues have journalistic backgrounds. But we work as an NGO to support journalists," [wrote](#) Vincent. "Our prison visit would be as an NGO, not journalistic." April 5, will mark 13 years since WikiLeaks published the infamous ["Collateral Murder"](#) video, which showed the US

military killing of 12 civilians including two Reuters journalists in Baghdad. "What has happened this morning is a shameful act and it is actually part of a pattern," [said](#) Assange's wife Stella outside of the prison. She was allowed her visit with Assange while Deloire and Vincent were barred. "This is a political persecution against a publisher who was only doing his job." According to RSF, the NGO has

already faced extreme difficulty in monitoring Assange's extradition proceedings, precisely for the [opposite reason](#) as supposedly why their visit was barred today: because they are an NGO and therefore not permitted to register for accreditation as journalists. RSF also chronicled how the UK government has twice rejected their petitions to not extradite Assange, with tens of thousands of signatures.