



18th October, 2023

NDC THUGS ASSAULT ON CITI-TV JOURNALISTS

The Socialist Movement of Ghana's attention has been drawn to an incident that occurred during the NDC Odoodoodiodio Parliamentary primaries for the 2024 elections. This event was held at South La, Accra on Saturday 14 October. Disputes between supporters of the different candidates and those managing the process became violent. The election was called off. Widely circulated TV footage shows some of individuals destroying furniture at the premises and attacking one Ms. Akosua Otchere of Citi FM/TV who was there as a journalist professionally covering the event. The NDC thugs molested her physically and seized her mobile phone.

This attack comes barely a week after NPP thugs invaded the premises of UTV forcibly to silence critics of their Party and government. We have already commented on that event.

SMG condemns the conduct of the NDC thugs involved in this incident - just as we condemn the NPP thugs' assault on UTV the week before. Our solidarity goes out to Ms Otchere and to all journalists who have faced similar abuse.

Political Party violence is simply unacceptable. There appears to be a growing sense that Party membership or activism somehow elevates people above the law and confers the right to impose their will on others by force within and outside their Parties. We condemn this contemptuous attitude bred by impunity over the years. It is particularly heinous coming from institutions created to offer development-term leadership to the nation. Such acts deepen public apathy and disengagement from electoral and other partisan processes. They explain in part why so many people are confirming disinterest in voting in 2024. We demand that Party leadership takes steps to instill a new culture in activists.

We note that in the Odoodoodiodio case responsible officials of the NDC at regional and national levels have also condemned the conduct displayed and promised to act against the perpetrators. We welcome this attitude and wait to see what concrete action NDC takes. We expect that, without prejudice to whatever internal sanctions are applicable, culprits will be handed over to the police.

We also note media reports that the thugs who attacked UTV last week have been summarily tried and convicted but that the fine imposed on them was a pittance and not a sum that is likely to provide a deterrent to future misconduct. We call for Parliament and the judiciary to review criminal sanctions applicable in these cases. It is well known that the individuals and institutions that use these militias

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have no difficulty raising relatively small amounts to pay these fines. It is worth considering whether a mandatory custodial sentence should be imposed in cases of “political” violence.

We call on citizens to guard our democratic rights firmly against all organized anti-social violence – especially if perpetrated by Political Parties.

Blaise Tulo Jnr
for General Secretary