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LEGAL AID BOARD

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Treatment of NPP supporters by NDC supporters/state authorities

The Ghanaian Chronicle reports:

"Scores of supporters of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC), last Wednesday took the law into their hands, and subjected one Mrs. Juliana Martey, a former Constituency Women's Organiser of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), to severe beatings, after she refused to hand over the key to a public toilet she was operating .

The hooligans, who were led by one Teye Narh and Rose Mamley Okli, Akwanor 'A' Polling Station Secretary and Akwanor-Mampong Electoral Area Assembly Member respectively in the Lower Manya Krobo District, declared an 'Operation take over all public toilets' in the area.

In a bid to bring the operation into reality, the self-styled "Rambo" NDC members moved from one toilet to the other to take over their operations, but received stiff opposition when they reached that of the former NPP Constituency Women's Organiser. For challenging their unlawful demands, the NDC thugs subjected the poor woman to severe beatings until good samaritans intervened to save her life."(Ghanaian Chronicle (Accra) (20 April 2010) *Ghana; NDC Gangsters Strike Again*)

Another report from the Ghanaian Chronicle states:

"Reports reaching The Chronicle, at press time last night, indicated that violence had broken out at Akwatia in the Eastern Region, where a re-run of the constituency election is to be held tomorrow.

Supporters of the two dominant parties contesting the election - the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) - were said to have gone on a rampage, smashing the windscreens of several cars.

Unconfirmed reports say two people have lost their lives.

The situation has compelled the authorities to impose a dusk to dawn curfew on the town. Myjoyonline had earlier reported that with just two days to go for the Akwatia parliamentary re-run, tension as mounting as the two major political parties, the NDC and the NPP make claims of being at the receiving end of the violent attacks.

There have been reports of increasing tension in the area for the past week, although the police have given assurance of the security of voters.

The New Patriotic Party General Secretary, Nana Ohene Ntow, claimed he was badly assaulted by supporters of the ruling National Democratic Congress, while police officers looked on yesterday.

He claims he bled profusely from the nose, after suffering beatings by supporters of the NDC.

Nana Ohene Ntow said he was driving into the Akwatia township to help the NPP's campaign, when he encountered a barrier mounted by NDC supporters with hundreds of policemen around.

'When I saw the police, I thought everything must be under control, I stopped at the barrier, next thing, the door of my car had been forced open, and someone hit me right on the nose. Right now, as I speak to you, I am just bleeding all over the place.'

He said people were banging on his car, while the policemen present, just watched unconcerned.

'I had to get out of my car and scream at the police, before one person stepped forward to try and push back the crowd. For me, that is a big shame for policing in this country today,' he said regretfully.

The NPP General Secretary said he was yet to report the matter to the police, 'because even moving around is a problem.'

The NDC parliamentary candidate, Baba Jamal, also claimed supporters of the NPP last night inflicted matchete wounds on some of his supporters." (Ghanaian Chronicle (17 August 2009) *Ghana; Violence Erupts At Akwatia*)

Another report by the Ghanaian Chronicle from BBC Monitoring states:

"The National Chairman of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Mr Jake Obetsebi-Lamprey, and his National Organizer, Alhaji Moctar Bamba, are accusing the ruling party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), and its founder, Jerry John Rawlings, for the conflicts going on in the north.

Whilst Jake is accusing the NDC government of complicity in the recent crisis at Bawku, which has led to the murder of Amadu Danladi, the Misiga polling station chairman of the party at Bawku, Moctar also claims the whole northern conflicts should be blamed on Rawlings.

In a statement issued in Accra yesterday, the NPP Chairman indicated that since January 2009, the NDC government had abandoned the even-handedness policy adopted by the NPP administration at peace-keeping, and provided tacit support for the Kussasis, acting under the umbrella of the NDC government, to visit violence on not just Mamprusis, but anybody perceived to be a leading member

or supporter of the NPP in that neighbourhood.” (Ghanian Chronicle (20 April 2010) *Ghanaian opposition blames ruling party for rise in violence in north*)

Another report by the Ghanaian Chronicle states:

“Supporters of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) clashed outside the premises of the Cocoa Affairs Court in Accra on Monday, resulting in casualties to both sides of the standoff.

The two groups engaged in the pelting of stones at each other, after they had gone to the court in connection with the trial of the embattled NPP radio panelist, Nana Darkwah Baafi, who made an inflammatory statement against former President Jerry John Rawlings on Accra-based Top FM radio station - that he burnt down his own house.” (Ghanian Chronicle (Accra) (18 March 2010) *Ghana; This is Irresponsible Behaviour*)

Another report by the Ghanaian Chronicle states:

“The police have increased their presence at the Konkomba market in Accra, following Tuesday's deadly clashes which claimed three lives. About 50 armed men have been sent to the area to mount 24hour surveillance.

A visit to the area yesterday by these reporters revealed that calm had returned, as people were seen going about their normal duties. Some policemen were seen patrolling the area in vehicles, whilst others, including those said to be detectives were on foot patrols.

Most residents in the area were tight-lipped in commenting about the incident, for fear of being attacked. Those who mustered courage to speak with the paper, pleading on condition of anonymity, said the violence was the result of a long standing misunderstanding between the Andani and Abudu ethnic groups in the Dagbon traditional area in the Northern region.

Though the misunderstanding between the two factions is deep-rooted in ethnicity, some people have linked it to the political differences between the two factions.

‘I have never witnessed an Ashanti or Mossi person who belongs to the NPP or NDC being attacked by either of the parties. The whole conflict involves the Dagombas’, said a resident.

The latest clash is believed to have erupted as a result of a battle over a disputed place of abode.

The place was reportedly occupied by people suspected to be supporters of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) who were allegedly chased out of the area by their opponents in the National Democratic Congress (NDC), after the party lost power in the 2008 general elections.

This, according to sources compelled the supposed NPP supporters to re-organize themselves to stage a comeback, in a bid to reclaim their properties. 'The NPP returnees had come to reclaim what they perceive as their personal belongings.'" (Ghanaian Chronicle (27 April 2009) *Ghana; After Tuesday's Bloody Clash, Police Tighten Security at Konkomba Market*)

Media Foundation for West Africa (Accra) reports:

"Alexander Adu Gyamfi, a sympathizer of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) was on May 24, 2010 arrested by the police in Kumasi, Ghana's second largest city, for describing the country's President as a "chimpanzee" during a radio discussion programme.

Gyamfi, who is popularly known as 'High Priest' was a panelist on the morning show on the Kumasi-based Fox FM, in which his co-panelist from the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) raised concerns about the negative propaganda that he claimed were being waged against Nana Akufo-Addo, a contender for the NPP presidential candidature in party's primaries slated for August 2010, and that this negative campaign in the NPP would help the fortunes of the NDC in the 2012 general elections.

The police said during Gyamfi's arrest that it was in his own interest and to protect him from angry NDC youth who had besieged the radio station to register their displeasure following his 'insulting' comments. Chief Inspector Mohammed Tanko, the Ashanti Regional Public Relations Officer of the Police, who was speaking on Joy FM radio station, said 'We did not arrest him for insulting the President.' 'We arrested him for offensive conduct contrary to section 207 of Ghana's Criminal Code'." (Media Foundation for West Africa (Accra) (26 May 2010) *West Africa; Opposition Party Sympathizer Arrested for Calling President Mills a "Chimpanzee"*)

This report also states:

"This is the second time that the police have arrested an NPP activist over comments made on air. On February 18, Nana Darkwa, was arrested by the police and remanded in prison custody for two weeks over comments he made on a radio station allegedly accusing Ghana's former President Jerry John Rawlings of setting fire to burn his (Rawlings's) own house. The case is in court." (Ibid)

By contrast, the ACCRA Mail reports:

"The ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the main opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), have launched a peace initiative on the Wa campus of the University for Development Studies (UDS) to help manage conflicts in the North.

The NDC aims at pursuing the initiative through the party's chapter of the Tertiary Education Institutions Network on campus (TEIN) whilst the NPP is using the Tertiary Education Students Confederation (TESCOM) as the platform." (ACCRA

Mail (5 November 2009) *NDC and NPP Are Collaborating to Bring Peace to the North*)

The US Department of State Country Report states under the heading 'Freedom of Speech and Press':

"In February the director general of the state-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation gave a cease transmission order, thus cutting off the broadcast of a live program following a complaint of bias against the ruling NDC party made by the NDC communications chairman. The panel of one NDC and two opposition National Patriotic Party (NPP) members was discussing the president's state of the union address. The director general stated that the composition of the panel was not in the best interest of the station." (US Department of State (11 March 2010) *Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Ghana*)

This report also states under the heading 'Elections and Political Participation':

"After two unsuccessful bids for the presidency, John Evans Atta Mills, the NDC party candidate, was inaugurated as president in January following a narrow victory over the NPP candidate, Nana Akufo-Addo, in December 2008. The December 2008 elections also gave the NDC 115 seats, the NPP 108, minor parties three, and independents four seats in the new parliament. The December 2008 elections were generally peaceful and transparent. Activities at polling stations were observed by party agents and thousands of domestic and international observers. There were reports in some areas of voter intimidation and election irregularities, particularly in the regions of the country where the two main parties have their bases of support. However, the consensus of observers and the independent Electoral Commission was that these irregularities were insufficient to have altered the outcome of the election.

During the preelection period there were some incidents that involved violence. In September 2008 there were violent clashes in Gushiegu District in the Northern Region between NPP and NDC supporters when they attempted to erect campaign flags in the same location. The clashes resulted in six deaths and the burning of houses and vehicles. Also in September 2008 an NPP rally in Tamale was disrupted by gunfire, forcing the party's vice presidential candidate to flee. The incident led to attacks on NDC supporters returning from their own rally, and in the destruction of houses and vehicles." (Ibid)

Freedom House reports:

"While problems with voter registration and fighting between NDC and NPP supporters were reported before and during the vote, the election was ultimately viewed as a success by both domestic and international observers. Akufo-Addo won the first round with 49 percent, while Atta Mills took 48 percent. However, Atta Mills won the runoff with just 50.23 percent. His inauguration in January 2009 marked the second-ever peaceful, democratic transfer of power in Ghana. The NDC also won concurrent parliamentary elections, taking 114 seats as the NPP secured 107.

In August 2009, the parliamentary vote at six polling stations in Akwatia was rerun, since the initial results from December 2008 had been disputed. While the seat was awarded to the NPP candidate as expected, the unhindered rerun served as another demonstration of the stability of Ghana's democratic system.

After assuming office, Atta Mills faced the difficult task of fulfilling at least some of his campaign pledges while also steering the country through the global economic crisis. Nonetheless, some NDC supporters, backed by Rawlings, soon began complaining about the new president's inability to fulfill his promises or "support those who supported him" – a reference to the patronage networks that continue to underlie Ghanaian politics. Perceived corruption within the NPP was an important election issue, so Atta Mills's decision to investigate a number of former cabinet ministers and NPP officials for corruption was well received, though NPP officials alleged that the cases were politicized." (Freedom House (24 June 2010) *Freedom in the World 2010 – Ghana*)

This report also states:

"One of President John Atta Mills's campaign promises was to weed out corruption and improve governance. His predecessor, John Kufuor of the NPP, had a "zero-tolerance" policy on corruption, but his administration made less progress than anticipated. Critics often alleged that investigations were overly politicized, and corruption within the NPP government was believed to be extensive. The new NDC administration used the Bureau of National Investigation to examine corruption allegations against a number of former NPP officials, including Kufuor's chief of staff, the health and information ministers, and the foreign minister. While many Ghanaians supported these initial investigations, there were few real successes and no convictions by year's end." (Ibid)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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