



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Wednesday, 12th February, 2025

The House met at 2.00 p.m.

[MR SECOND DEPUTY SPEAKER
IN THE CHAIR]

PRAYERS

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, with your indulgence, we will skip the item numbered 2. We also do not have any communication from the Presidency and no formal communication from the Speaker has come to us, so let us turn to the item numbered 5, *Correction of Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND
THE OFFICIAL REPORT

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: We will begin with the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Page 1...7—

Mr Abdul-Fatawu Alhassan: Mr Speaker, I was actually present yesterday, but I have been captured as one of the Members who were absent. So, can that be corrected? It is the item numbered 4(8) on page 7, “Mr Abdul-Fatawu Alhassan, Yendi constituency”.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: All right.

Table, coincidentally, I have also been marked absent; look at the item numbered 4(9).

Mr A. Alhassan: Mine is numbered 4(8).

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, number 4(9), I have also been marked absent, so kindly take note of it.

Page 8...10—

Mr Frank Afriyie: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity, and with your leave, may I invite you to the item numbered 9(i), line 4, on page 10. The letter “i” is omitted from the word “Minister” in “Deputy Minister”, so if you could kindly take note.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Table, kindly take note of it.

Yes, Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, on the same page 10, the item numbered 8(vi), I recall the Hon Member for Akim Swedru came under Order 93(1), and the Speaker gave directives. Firstly, the Speaker lamented the issuance of a statement by the Ministry of Roads and Highways on the same subject matter, and urged the Ministry to correct that and directed the Ministry to do the needful. Coincidentally, the Hon Minister was here, and he is here this morning too. I do not find the directive of the Speaker

here. I think it was an important directive of the Speaker himself which should reflect in the records.

Mr Speaker, I know the *Official Report* will capture verbatim, but this is a summary of the high point and, since there was a Member coming under Order 93 during a Statement, I consider the directive of a Speaker as an important matter which should find expression in even the summary, that is the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Well, the Minister himself is here, but conferring with my advisors, I am told it was not an express directive, but it was more or less an advice that the Minister should address some of these things. That is the advice the Clerk to Parliament is giving me. So, the advice will be captured in the *Official Report*. Minority Chief Whip, I believe it is part of the reasons the Minister is here. I think he will address it.

2.10 p.m.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I am not litigating this matter. Everybody knows in this House that I am a man of peace—[**Some Hon Members:** *Eii!*]—I am only drawing the attention of the House that even if it was an advice—Mr Speaker

I would not push further but the Speaker's advice should find expression in the *Votes and Proceedings*; that is the word from the Rt Hon Speaker. The Speaker's advice should find expression in the *Votes and Proceedings*. If it is a

case that the House wanted it to be discounted, then, that is alright. But the Speaker's advice—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me hear your Colleague, the Second Deputy Majority Whip.

Mr Richard Acheampong: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, the Minority Chief Whip is right for raising the issue. But if you read the last line, let me quote;

“He called on the Ministry to reconsider the decision in order not to undermine the authority of Parliament.”

In a form of an advice, the Rt Hon Speaker was not directing the Ministry to do A-B-C-D but he brought it to his attention to reconsider the earlier decision taken by the Ministry. At least, the issue has been mentioned here and the verbatim of what the Rt Hon Speaker said would be captured in the *Official Report*. So, I think everything is captured here. I do not think we should belabour the point.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: My friend from Sissala, please, do not begin anything that would degenerate the House into—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, what my Colleague said in his concluding statement is not in reference to the Rt Hon Speaker; it is referenced

to the Member who moved the Motion. We are not litigating but what is the practice? The Speaker's counsel would be ignored by the *Votes and Proceedings*? You are saying that it was not an expressive directive but it was the Speaker's counsel. I think it should find expression.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Table, just take note.

Hon Minister for Roads and Highways.

Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. As of how Members and the public view my good friend, the Minority Chief Whip, whether a man of peace or a man of other things, I would leave that to the public.

Mr Speaker, yesterday, when my good friend, the Hon Member who raised the issue got up and the Speaker gave him the opportunity to explain, the first thing I did was to commend him and say that the point he raised was legitimate. Mr Speaker, however, there was a reason for the suspension at this stage because, he just brought it saying that, he was bringing something to the attention of the House, I left it there. It was the Minority Chief Whip who thought there was more meat on this and started adding all other angles. Mr Speaker, what he did yesterday was actually misleading. In fact, he misled the Speaker. And when I tried to say that what we are doing at the Ministry is to resolve an internal issue within the law; he disagreed by—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minister, I wish we could revisit this issue after going through the *Votes and Proceedings*. Let us finish the *Votes and Proceedings*. I would give you the time to—

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I would not come back. I just want to conclude that what the Ministry did was actually in compliance with a directive from the Labour Commission when the staff of the Ministry took the matter for arbitration. So, the Ministry is not in breach of any law, rather we are complying with a directive which says, henceforth, cease the implementation for now and resolve the issue. So, there is nothing more for me to report to the House until we complete the process of arbitration with the agencies. I would urge him to stop bringing this matter up. There is nothing in it for him to gain. I have the ruling of the Labour Commission here but I decided not to make an official statement—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minister, it is this House that passed the law and sitting here, I could recount the contribution you made to that particular Bill. So, if the Bill has been passed into law and a private entity went to court with the view that probably, the implementation is coming across—I do not think the House would be obliged just to take directives from a private entity. Yes, it is an entity so far as the House is concerned. Let us resolve this issue. I would have wished we do not bring in this matter. Yesterday, the Speaker said that we should re-look at it. I mean, let us consider it in that way,

than to say that it is based on the Labour Commission's directives. I do not think it will sit well with the House, that the Labour Commission is actually directing us that we should not implement that particular idea.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, just for clarification, when a portion of a law which borders on employment of Ghanaian workers raises concerns, and these group of workers did the right thing by going to the Labour Commission, not a private entity, and this House created the Labour Commission and gave them a mandate to resolve issues like this, and the Labour Commission says their case is right; rather than ruling, "I am directing the Ministry to go with you to resolve the issue". How can that be interpreted as Labour Commission trying to usurp the powers of this House?

Mr Speaker, I beg to differ. I think Labour Commission is within their right to try as a way of resolving the issue peacefully direct that the Ministry sits down with the aggrieved parties to resolve the issue. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that is exactly what we are going to do and report back to the House.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Mr Mahama Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I think that we must understand the architecture of governance. If this House passes a Bill which becomes an Act of Parliament, very often we would have transitional provisions. So first we

have to look at the transitional provisions and find out what the transitional provisions say. Because we are seeking to merge institutions and create an authority, I expect that in the transitional provisions we would have provided a road map towards the implementation of the legislation.

Secondly, if an institution of State has issues with the implementation of the Act and takes some measure, it is not for this House to resolve that conflict. This House is not in a position to resolve conflicts. A Member of Parliament could ask a Question and the Minister could come and answer the Question. He could make a Statement and the Minister would comment on the Statement and this House would comment on the Statement.

Once it is a law, then it is left to individuals to go to court to seek mandatory orders for the implementation of the provisions of the law. So, we cannot turn this institution or this Parliament into an institution that seeks to enforce the law by itself. We cannot do that. So, if you ask a Question, the Minister would come and answer the Question.

If an individual feels there is an issue, he could go to court and try and enforce the provisions of the law because it is now a law. If the transitional provisions provide a road map, we could question the Minister as to whether or not the road map is being properly followed. I think that is how it should be. We should not turn it into a banter in this Chamber.

2.20 p.m.

Mr Annoh-Dompseh: Mr Speaker, I am just a bit surprised by my Colleague and friend's statement on whether there is something in there to exploit. It is far from that. Yesterday, he was here when the Speaker counselled him. I have no interest in this subject matter. Mr Kwame Agbodza, with the greatest respect to you, I have no interest in it. What is there that I am going to gain from it? Nothing. We just thought that your Statement was unfortunate and the Speaker has counselled. We are correcting *Votes and Proceedings*. I am not raising Statements. I am not coming under Order 93(1). No, it is *Votes and Proceedings*.

I am saying that to the extent that the counsel came from the Speaker, it should find expression in the *Votes and Proceedings*. If I say this, where have I gone wrong for you to say that there is nothing in there for me to exploit? What am I exploiting? I think that was an unfortunate statement coming from him. I would not do that to him. I would never do anything to him. And he is getting a bit personal about this matter. Mr Kwame Agbodza, it is not about you. It is about the separation of powers.

We cannot pass a law and he would decide when to implement it or not, and the Speaker has said that if one has a difficulty, come back to the House. It is as simple as that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well—

Mr Annoh-Dompseh: *[Interruption]*— Well, the Majority Leader is being too sensitive to this matter. I would never harm him.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well

Page 11—

Mr Philip Fiifi Buckman: Mr Speaker, I am sorry to take us back; at page 7, the item numbered 15, respectfully, I remember Hon Kwabena Okyere Darko-Mensah was in the House, but he has been marked absent.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Is he your friend?

Mr Buckman: Mr Speaker, yes, we are neighbours. He is from Takoradi and I am from Kwesimintsim; we are neighbours, so I should know.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Table, that is right. Yesterday he was here so kindly take note of it.

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, at page 11, the item numbered 3, “Ernest Brogya Gyamfi” is a very good friend. His Gyamfi is G-e-n-f-I, not “Gyamfi”. Then, if we come to the item numbered ii, it reads,

“The Rt Hon Speaker read a communication from H. E. the President, dated Sunday, 10th February, 2025...”

Mr Speaker, if we go to the preceding page, under the item numbered 9, “Communication from the President”, Sunday is captured as 9th February, and I think that that Sunday was 9th. So, the Table should take note of the item numbered ii at page 11; it should be “Sunday, 9th February, 2025”.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon Member for Kwadaso. Yes, Hon Member for Afadjato South?

Mr Frank Afriyie: Mr Speaker, still at page 11—I am a bit surprised that Prof Nyarko has not seen this—the item numbered 2, the list of Deputy Ministers-designate, the name “Ebenezer Oklety Terlabi”, the “Ebenezer” has been wrongly spelt. Please, take note.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Table, kindly take note of it.

Page 12—

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah: Mr Speaker, at page 12, the item numbered 10, Adjournment, reads,

“And at twenty minutes after twelve noon, the House was adjourned till Wednesday, 12th February, 2025 at mid-day.”

I believe we started after 12 noon, so we could not have adjourned

yesterday’s proceedings at 12 noon; if it can be corrected. It was after 5 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: All right; I think the Table have already taken note of that.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, he is right.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, thank you very much.

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, at the same page numbered 12, the fourth line of the second paragraph, reads, “...Government of the African Union from 16th to 17th February...”, but if we go to page 9, the Statement that was made by Hon Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah, the same duration for the 38th Ordinary Session of African Heads of States and Government is captured as “15th to 16th of February, 2025”. Now, if we come to page 12, it says “16th to 17th February”, but if we go to the official website of the AU, it is supposed to be “15th to 16th February”, so I suggest that we amend the “16th to 17th February” as captured at page 12.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, are you talking about the President—

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, if you will permit me, it reads:

“The communication further indicated that H. E. the President will also participate in the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government

of the African Union from 16th to 17th ...”

I am saying that the duration of the programme is “15th to 16th February”, so I am surprised that he would be there till 17th February for the same program.

[Pause]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I am told that the President would actually go there on the 16th. Probably, the session would start on the 15th, but he would be there on 16th and return on 17th, so we are capturing what the President’s communication said.

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, then we need to get the right rendition. If he is going there on 16th and coming back on 17th, it must be clearly stated. This is because if we go to the website of the AU for this particular program, it is 15th to 16th, so if he would stay a day beyond, we need to be clear on that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, what I am saying is that though the website may capture 16th to 17th February, but the President, in his own wisdom, is going there on the 16th, so we cannot begrudge him. Probably, the 15th is the welcoming session and he may not take part. He may probably take part from the actual business. Yes, Is it the same issue? Very well, Hon Members, let us take the last page, page 14—

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, it is rather page 13. Mr Speaker, at page 13, the item numbered 1, Opening, reads, “The

Committee met on Friday, 7th February, 2025 at 10.25 a.m....”, and if we go to page 14, under Closing, it reads, “The meeting ended at 11.09 p.m.”

Mr Speaker, this is strange, so we need to check the time of the meeting, when it started and ended. I suspect that the meeting ended at 11.09 a.m. and not p.m.; otherwise, it means they spent the whole 12 hours there.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I am told it is correct because of the scuffle that took place on that very day. So, from the Table, they captured it right.

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, please, indulge me; this was a meeting to consider modalities for considering the Nominees of the President for the position of Ministers and Deputy Ministers, so how can it go beyond that? This is completely impossible. Please, the “Opening” reads:

“The Committee met on Friday, 7th February, 2025 at 10.25 a.m. and held discussions on modalities for the consideration of H.E the President’s nominees for Ministerial and Deputy Ministerial appointments.”

Mr Speaker, and there was conflict there?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I am advised by the Table that it is correct, so let us take it as it is.

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, I am guided.

2.30p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, in the absence of any further corrections, the *Votes and Proceedings* of 11th February, 2025 is hereby adopted as the true records of proceedings.

Hon Members, we have three *Official Reports* to consider and please check on your—So you can take the *Official Report* from—[Pause]

Hon Members, I am told the first one which is 21st January, 2025 is loaded in the system. So, we take the first one which is Tuesday, 21st January, 2025. It is loaded in the system.

[No correction was made to the *Official Report of Tuesday, 21st January, 2025.*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Please, let us take the *Official Report* of Tuesday, 28th January, 2025. That one is also loaded in the system.

[No correction was made to the *Official Report of Tuesday, 28th January, 2025.*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: The last one is the *Official Report* of Wednesday, 29th January, 2025. That one is also loaded in the system.

[No correction was made to the *Official Report of Wednesday, 29th January, 2025.*]

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu — rose —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Deputy Minority Whip. Give me a second.

Hon Members, we have in our midst at the Speaker's Gallery, our colleagues, research staff from the Parliament of Uganda. They are here to undertake studies in our Parliament. They have been here since Monday and will leave on Friday. So, they are here to witness how our proceedings are undertaken. Without much ado, I will mention their names. They are being led by Mr Kassim Mwanika, a research officer; Mr Julius Mulongoti, a research officer; Ms Nora Namayanja, a research officer; Mr Innocent Nyamujunga, a research officer; Mr Julius Odong, a research officer; and Mr Daniel Emasit, a research officer. [Hear! Hear!]

Yes, lady and gentlemen, you are welcome. I understand you are already feeling the Ghanaian hospitality. Feel at home and take the good name of Ghana back to Uganda. We were there couple of years back and studied how Ugandan Parliament operates. You are welcome once again.

Yes, let me come to you Deputy Minority Whip.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: - [Expunged by Order of Mr Speaker].

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Majority Leader, let us hear you.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, first and foremost, you have to give an Order directing that everything that he has said

should be expunged from the records of the House. This is because the Standing Order under which he comes says and I read; “By the indulgence of the House and leave of the Speaker...”

Mr Speaker, who has indulged him to say all the things that he has said? You have not granted leave. When did Mr Speaker grant leave? We were all sitting here; the Speaker has not granted leave. The House has not indulged Alhaji Habib Iddrisu, then he goes on such a mission. Mr Speaker, let us respect the rules of this House; we are not in a jungle.

2.40 p.m.

This is Parliament. Mr speaker, there is a limit to what we should tolerate in this House. We must be decent when it comes to our rules. The rules allow you to make such a statement but the rules give you conditions and it says, “...the indulgence of the House or by leave of the Speaker”. He has not sought the indulgence of the House or obtained the leave of the Speaker and then he goes on a mission of saying what he wants. He is a senior Member of the House.

So, Mr Speaker, I insist that everything that he has said should be expunged from the records and until he has obtained your leave and the indulgence of the House, I do not think that it should stand as part of the records of this House. The matter that he wants to discuss, I have no personal issue with it whatsoever. I am a human rights activist and if any human being's rights have been violated in this country, I

would be one of the first to stand up for that person, but there are rules and let us respect the rules.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. We would have to expunge the statement from the records.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, let me hear you.

Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, we must be tolerant to hear ourselves. The Majority Leader was heard in silence and he raised an important issue and it is important that we all comment on it so that the Chair can be guided.

Mr Speaker, to enable you to grant leave, you must know the matter to be raised. What the Member has just done—Respected Hon Colleague, Kwame Agbodza, you and I come a long way.

Mr Speaker, I am happy to learn from the Majority Leader and the jurisprudence of this House would always guide me and I would not allow my ego to stand in my way when I have to even say sorry; this is a learning Chamber. It is my contention that the prayer of the respected Majority Leader is not well grounded in law and even in our procedure. The applicant needs your leave and rightly so, but to seek your leave, he must lay a foundation. You as the Chair must know the grounds upon which he mounts his application. What he simply said was that a respected member of the political class of this country of which you and I are

members, had his house raided by agents of the State.

Mr Speaker, all he is seeking to do is to draw your attention to that—

Mr Mahama Ayariga — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Majority Leader, I would come back to you, let us tolerate him. You are a Leader and he is also a Leader, let him finish and I will give you the opportunity to speak, please.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: So Mr Speaker, the application was to seek your leave and in seeking your leave, he needs to make known to you the exact matter—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, I will come to you. Please allow the Majority Leader to speak.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I would yield.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, some of us have been in this Chamber for close to two decades. He should not use subtle means to have recorded what he wants to say that we are objecting to and that is exactly what he is doing and I would like caution him on that. He can argue the legal points but keep the facts out of the matter. If there is a ruling on the legal issues, then he can introduce the facts on the Floor.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Yes, Minority Leader?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, it appears that the Right Side of the House is now made up of the notorious reckless hecklers. Now, we have seen the notorious reckless hecklers who have not gotten Mr President's attention, but it is all right, the House has noticed them. And this is where we get all the empty seats. There are legal issues and this is important for learning so pay attention. Their Leader has raised an important legal issue and they should pay attention; this is the time for them to learn.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Majority Leader was right in saying that I needed to argue the legal grounds without necessarily going into the fact—I meant the Back Benchers, not you, you are a Leader, you are not part. [*Uproar*]

Mr Speaker, do you see their behaviour? When we do it to them, they would be crying; we can do it—We listened to their Leader and if they do not want us to talk, they would see. We also have a Backbencher misbehaving. [*Uproar*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order!

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Ayariga, you need to talk to your people. We would not allow them to do this.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Hon Members, please. Hon Acheampong, please.

[The Speaker rises to be heard in silence pursuant to Standing Order 126]

Hon Members, please, even if you have an issue, allow the Chair to call you. We need to have a very—Hon Members, Order! Dr Sandaare, resume your seat, please.

Dr Sebastian Ngemenenso Sandaare: Mr Speaker, I am not notorious, everybody knows I am a gentleman.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, please, let us be tolerant a bit. Please, let us allow the Minority Leader to have his bite. I will give you the opportunity to speak. Yes, Minority Leader, let us hear you.

2.50 p.m.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, it is the case of the applicant in the matter before us, Mr Habib Iddrisu, Member of Parliament for Tolon and the First Deputy Minority Whip, that an application is seeking your leave. It is on a matter of national important.

Mr Speaker, to enable him mount the application, he laid a foundation by giving you the background to the matter upon which he seeks your leave. The rule is that one cannot place something on nothing. There is no way you would be well disposed to grant him leave unless, at least, you know the fact upon which the Hon Member mounts his application. And what is his application? His application is to the effect that grant him leave to raise this issue that occurred yesterday. And what

is the issue? The issue is that State Security Operatives raided the residence of Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, a former envoy and a former Minister for Finance who is out of the jurisdiction and actually sought the leave of the Chief of Staff.

Mr Speaker, this country's democracy has well advanced. We cannot do this to ourselves as a political class; we cannot target each other only after elections. All the Hon Member is trying to say is that grant him leave to proceed to raise this matter. I am happy that my respected Colleague makes the point that he is a human rights activist, and he would not, in anyway, be against this matter being raised on the Floor.

Mr Speaker, so, if it his contention that the leave must be sought by, at least, giving you the headline, then after that he raises the matter properly, I agree, and that I always see him with his Standing Order. I have read the rule. Order 93(1) reads:

“Statement by a Member

By the indulgence of the House and the leave of Mr Speaker, a Member may explain a matter of personal nature or make a Statement on a matter of urgent public importance...”

Mr Speaker, he is right. The Hon Member did not err; he only laid the foundation, and he is now bringing the matter to the fore for all of us to have a bite. We cannot allow a change in political power to lead to violence in the country. We cannot allow a situation

where when there is a change in government, political opponents would be blackmailed. That is all his point, so grant him the leave for him to proceed. At least, sufficient foundation has been laid.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well Majority and Minority Leaders, I think we need to help the House with regard to Standing Order 93(1). Is it the case that if a Member would like to raise an issue the Member may consider urgent, does he have to—When you say “by the leave of the Speaker”, does it mean that the person should have already discuss it with the Speaker? I would want us to—Because it is something that is actually emerging, and we have to actually lay this fairly to the understanding of all of us, so, that going forward, we would know how to work.

Yes, Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, Order 93(1) cannot be read in isolation. Let us go to Order 93(2). Order 93(1) says:

“By the indulgence of the House and leave of the Speaker, a Member may explain a matter of personal nature or make a Statement on a matter of urgent public importance, at the time appointed for Statements under Order 67.”

Mr Speaker, this is the first time a Statement is mentioned in that Order. Then Order 93(2) says:

“The proposed Statement shall be admitted by the Speaker with or without modification.”

What does the proposed Statement refer to? Where else is a mention made of Statement? It is the Statement in Order 93(1) because that is the first time there is a mention of a Statement.

Mr Speaker, I have been in this House and each time there is a matter of urgent public importance that a Member intends to make a Statement of, the Member goes to see the Speaker and intimate to the Speaker that there is this matter of urgent public importance that he or she intends to make a Statement on. I have done it several times, and, each time, the Speaker would say I should go ahead because he would admit it. Then the Member rises and, pursuant to that Order, make the Statement.

Mr Speaker, ideally, the Statement should be in writing, but, sometimes, the matter is so urgent that the Member has not written it, but he confers with the Speaker, and when the Speaker sees the urgency of the matter, he is convinced that it is a matter of urgent public importance, and he would give the Member leave. When the Member rises, then the Speaker would say I gave this person leave to make a Statement of urgent public importance or a matter that is personal to that person. That is how we have handled it in the past. So, please, a Member cannot ambush Mr Speaker whilst he is sitting in the Chair and start narrating anyone's story and say that he is laying the foundation;

meanwhile, that matter has become records of this House.

Mr Speaker, that is why I insist that Mr Speaker must order that whatever they have said in relation to the subject matter be expunged from the records because they have no leave to make those Statement. They have no leave to allow those matters to be captured in the records of the House. If you grant it, they can make the Statement, and if they make the Statement, we would all comment on it. I am ready to comment on that Statement.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well

Let me—

Mr Alhassan Tampuli Sulemana: Mr Speaker, I am grateful—

3.00 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I am allowing this because we are all learning from this because it is becoming an issue, so it is not just because of today's issue. This thing is reoccurring; I want us to be clear about it, so, that going forward, if you have any urgent issue, you would know how to go about it. That is why I am allowing this discussion.

Mr A. T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, I have no doubt about the legal ingenuity of the distinguished Gentleman and Leader of the House, the Member of Parliament for Bawku Central, but, on this occasion, he refers us to Order

93(1), but the interpretation that he gives to Order 93(1) is restrictive by his own reading. Let me take you back, with your indulgence, again.

“93(1) By the indulgence of the House and leave of the Speaker, a Member may explain a matter of personal nature or...”

So, it is disjunctive.

“...or make a Statement on a matter of urgent public importance...”

So, one does not necessarily have to come by way of a Statement. The matter that we are talking about is a matter of urgent public nature. It is a personal nature that we can relate to.

Mr Speaker, everyone knows what happened in this country yesterday. Thugs raided the residence of the former Minister for Finance and it is of a public nature.

Today, the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) also granted a press conference and addressed the same matter. So, it not something that can be hidden. We have to discuss this matter. I do not know what they are afraid of.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member! Hon Member!

Mr Tampuli: In any event, the rule says that “the leave of the Speaker”, the leave can be express or implied, and I take it that the fact that you have granted the Member for Tolon and First Deputy

Majority Whip the opportunity to proceed, it means that you have impliedly granted him leave.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: No, that is not it.

Mr Tampuli: Mr Speaker, that is the issue—[*Interruption*]. So, by implication, you have granted him leave. So, the matter before this House is why the former Minister for Finance's home was raided. Any of us can be a victim to this situation and we need to discuss it and put it on record.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, there is no doubt about that event. But I want the House to be clear on Order 93(1). That is my position and that is what I want us to discuss—

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I made the application, so let me clarify. To clarify this application, even yesterday, a similar application was made when the Speaker was presiding.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Who gave that?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: It was yesterday. He made the application. Hon Kennedy Nyarko Osei made the application—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: To who?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: When the Speaker was presiding on the road toll matter under Order 93(1)—He was here; the Minister for Roads and

Highways was also here yesterday when the Speaker granted that leave.

Mr Speaker, I sought your leave in my introduction. I said “Mr Speaker, with your leave”. Parliament is governed by the Constitution, Standing Orders and our practices—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us move slowly.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Yesterday, the same Standing Order 93 (1) was raised and the Speaker granted it. He raised a matter about the road toll that we were correcting in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Mr Speaker, I am completely in place. I am not out of order. The Majority Leader ought to understand how I came by my application. To the effect that, it is a matter of urgent public importance. If I do not lay the foundation, how would you know my matter is urgent? I need to lay the foundation, so that when leave is granted, then I can make my application.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: No, you see, you need to lay the foundation—

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: So, is it the case that yesterday the Speaker granted the same thing and today, the Second Deputy is not going to grant it?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Today we are not granting it.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I do not think so.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I just want the House to be very clear on this matter. Because Order 93—“by the indulgence of the House” when that is said, it means at least the Leadership on both Sides should first be in agreement. Secondly, “by the leave of the Speaker”, means at least the Speaker should be in the know. So—Are you aware of it?—*[Laughter]*. Hon Members, the exercise we are doing is good for the House. Nobody should take it—We have to be clear on this. So, Hon Majority Leader—

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, in all sincerity, while sitting there, he signalled me to check my phone and that he was sending me a WhatsApp message—*[Interruption]*—No, in all sincerity, Hon Members, hold on, we relate at that level. He signalled me to check my phone. When I checked, there was a message from him that, he intends to raise the issue of the matter and I told him that I did not know anything about it. Then he sent me photographs and a video. While I was looking at the photographs and the video, the First Deputy Minority Whip was already on his feet, making the Statement.

Mr Speaker, I am aware that he wants to make the Statement, but I have not given any indication whether or not I have accepted it.

Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I have been a former Leader in this House. I noticed that on countless

occasions this morning, our respected Colleagues opposite got the microphone and started speaking without your authority. I thought Leaders were supposed to guide them.

The last Statement made by the Deputy Minority Whip, you did not give him the opportunity. Imagine if everybody starts putting on their microphones to speak.

Mr Speaker, secondly, let me remind him that nobody made any Statement about road tolls here yesterday. He can go and check the records. So, I do not know where they got their Statement about road tolls from. Because nobody made any such Statement.

Mr Speaker, while the respected Leader was speaking, out of nowhere, he got up and mentioned my name and said “you, Kwame, and whatever”. I want to encourage you to caution him. If you would allow me, I think it is a very important Statement made by my Colleague. I would seek your indulgence at the right time to explain to you how in 2017, the whole of Adaklu Kodiabe was raided by National Security because I come from Adaklu Kodiabe. The whole town was raided by the National Security.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minister, please, do not take us back.

Mr Agbodza: I can even give you the name of the National Security operative — Mr Appiah caused Adaklu Kodiabe to be raided in 2017—the whole town was on lockdown because I am a Member of

Parliament (MP) from Adaklu Kodiabe. I would, at the right time, seek your indulgence to bring this issue to you. So, if today, an individual, Mr Ken Ofori Atta has his house raided, consider that versus the whole of Adaklu Kodiabe being raided. Is the law only good when it comes to your Side?

Mr Speaker, raiding either Ken Ofori Atta's residence or Adaklu Kodiabe is legally wrong. But let them know that what is good for the goose, is good for the gander.

Thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Speaker, Hon Members, now my Ruling—All right you can speak. Hold on, Hon Members, let me take the Hon Member for Manhyia South.

Nana Agyei Baffour-Awuah: Mr Speaker, thanks for this opportunity.

We appreciate the fact that the interpretation of the Standing Orders lies in your bosom. We accordingly are grateful for the opportunity to contribute—*[Interruption]*. We are accordingly grateful.

Mr Andrew Dari Chiwitey: — *rose*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Andrew Dari Chiwitey, please take your seat.

Nana Baffour-Awuah: Mr Speaker, we are accordingly grateful that you are indulging our opinion before you give a ruling on this matter.

Mr Speaker, very respectfully, with the Standing Orders, there is one fact to it; which is that where timing is of essence, it says so. Therefore, there are times when the Standing Orders require that prior notice is given. Where prior notice is not required, it is also stated. In the specific matter of Order 93(1), you would realise that it is an exceptional circumstance, because it talks about the procedure for dealing with Statements in the House. But, when it comes to Order 93, it is a matter of notwithstanding Orders 91 and 92.

3.10 p.m.

Mr Speaker, Order 91 expressly states the procedure for adopting or dealing with Statements in this House by the Speaker. Order 92 deals with ceremonial speeches. Then, when we come to Order 93(1), it talks about the indulgence of the House and the leave of the Speaker. In other words, notwithstanding the provisions of Order 91 and 92, by the indulgence of the House and the leave of the Speaker, a Member may explain a matter of personal nature, and that is in urgent situations. Mr Speaker, if the interpretation being put to it by the learned Leader of the House, very respectfully, were to hold sway, it would mean that urgent matters cannot be dealt with, unless we can get the attention of the Leadership of the House.

Mr Speaker, in the circumstance of this matter, which has just come to our attention, that is the matter of the raiding of the house of Mr Ken Ofori-Atta. Mr Speaker, at what time are we going to

get to confer with the Leadership of the Majority? How do we deal with urgent matters in this circumstance? We are saying that—[**Some Hon Members:** Sit down!]

Mr Speaker, if this interpretation were to be adopted, it would defeat the purpose of Order 93(1). If the thinking of the framers of the law was that there should be prior agreement between Leadership and prior leave of the Speaker, that would mean that the word “prior” would have been put there, but there is nothing like that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you. I would take the last contribution from Hon James Agalga.

Mr James Agalga: Mr Speaker, the matter that has caught our attention is what meaning we ought to place on Order 93. To do that, Mr Speaker, I want to make it clear that we must read Order 93 as a whole to be able to construe its import. Now, the Majority Leader started off by making it very clear that the practice of the House, in relation to Statements of the nature that the First Deputy Minority Whip attempted to make, is that he would engage with Leadership and hold some prior consultation with Mr Speaker. When Mr Speaker grants him leave, at that point, he can rise, and when Mr Speaker allows him to make his Statement, he proceeds to make it.

Now, Mr Speaker, what is of particular importance is that— My understanding of Order 93 as a whole, when read, is that the Statement, no

matter how urgent it is, must even be scripted. Let me demonstrate that in a moment. Mr Speaker, allow me to read Order 93(1)—[*Interruption*]
—Mr Speaker, do I have the floor? Order 93(1) says:

“By the indulgence of the House and leave of the Speaker, a Member may explain a matter of personal nature or make a Statement on a matter of urgent public importance...”

And here, the matter the First Deputy Minority Whip attempted to make is not of a personal nature. I think the matter is settled; it is of urgent public importance.

Then Order 93(2) reads:

“The proposed Statement shall be admitted by the Speaker with or without modification.”

Now, Order 93(3), reads:

“The text of the Statement, as admitted, shall be read when a Member is called upon to make the Statement.”

Mr Speaker, the point I am making is that—[**Some Hon Members:** Read Order 93(4)]—Please! Mr Speaker, Order 93(3) talks about text—[*Interruption*]
—Well, let me read Order 93(4). It says:

“A Statement, other than a personal statement, may be commented upon by other Members for a

limited duration of time not exceeding one hour.”

This is about commentary, but, Mr Speaker, Order 93(3) talks about text, which means that the Statement must even be scripted. When the First Deputy Minority Whip stood up to make that Statement, he was not reading from a script. So, it is only the script, which is admitted by Mr Speaker, that can be read and commented upon. Let us not misconstrue the meaning of urgent public importance to mean that anybody can get up and take the House by surprise and ambush us with a Statement.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Hon Members, this is my ruling and it should guide the House going forward for the good of all of us. Henceforth—I am coming; please, allow me. Henceforth, any matter relating to Standing Order 93, if you are a Member, please, discuss it with your Leadership so that they would also share it with the other Side. I do not think that is anything difficult. Then, you should also share whatever you want to do with the presiding officer or the Speaker, so that it would go with the Standing Order 93. *[Hear! Hear!]*

With this—Hello? Hon Members, with this, now, I have taken judicial notice of the leave the Member is trying to seek from the Chair; the leave has been granted now. Meanwhile, I will order what he has already said to be expunged from the records and now, grant him the official platform to raise the issue—*[Uproar]*—Please, are you

listening to me? What I am saying is that I would order what he has already said be expunged from the official records and now grant him the floor to officially raise the issue. Now, I have taken delivery of the notice. That is my order.

Henceforth, this is how we are going to go. If you are coming with any Statement, which you consider to be urgent, please, discuss with your Leadership and share with the Speaker. Let us go by that, so that we avoid this. Now, I grant you the floor to do that—Hon Leader, that is my—*[Pause]*

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, let me say that as far as I am concerned, the Majority Side is not indulging them in this matter. So, there is the issue of the requirement of indulgence of the House, and this Side of the House is not indulging them to make this Statement on the Floor. *[Hear! Hear!]* We are not indulging them to make this Statement.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, thank you for granting me leave to make this—

3.20 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hold on. *[Pause]*

Hon Members.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, this is a House of records. I have paid attention to what is happening here this afternoon. Let it not favour somebody today to set a certain precedence in this House.

Mr Speaker, I have followed all the submissions of my respected Leader. First, he raises an issue of procedure. You made a ruling and we know that when the Speaker makes a ruling, the only way to challenge that ruling is to make a formal application.

Mr Speaker, he cannot on his feet pray for a variation of your order. If he says he wants to go strictly by the rules, we would indulge him. But let us be careful with the kind of precedence we are setting where some people would use shouting and all that to sway the Chair.

Mr Speaker, the precedence of this House, I remember in the matter of the vacant seats, Dr Ato Forson, Minority Leader (as he then was), raised the matter. There was nothing scripted. He raised it because to him, it was a matter of national importance.

Rt Hon Speaker indulged him and we debated. The Majority Leader himself, then contributed to the matter. And he did say that in fact, the matter was of urgent national importance.

Mr Speaker, if today they want us to go into a certain arena of jurisprudence, I do not have a problem. Bullying is part of the game. But they should know that when it gets to them, they would also take it. Because, they are smiling and I see them. They think that they are trying to sway you.

Mr Speaker, let us be careful the path we want to chart. I do not have a problem. In this game, we lose some and

we gain some. I do not have a problem. But they should know that if today, they now say that “with the leave of Speaker —”. When the Speaker granted him leave, the man was about to read his Statement again when Mr Ayariga got up again to challenge the Speaker; he wanted to arrest the Speaker’s ruling. Then Mr Ayariga now argues that “with your indulgence”. What is the meaning of indulgence? Does that mean prior approval of Members? What is indulgence? Look—

Mr Speaker, Mr Ayariga, the Harvard scholar—

Mr Speaker, this man is a Harvard scholar. He should not introduce anything that will create problems for this House. What is indulgence? Is he now saying that indulgence means that if the other Side of the House says that they would not accept, he cannot read?

Mr Speaker, be firm; you have granted him leave. You have said that the earlier submissions be expunged. We are not challenging you. Our friends must be tolerant. This is democracy. They are in Majority but, let us do the right thing.

Mr Speaker, you have made your ruling. Your ruling stands. If he wants to challenge it, he should file an application.

The Majority Leader cannot introduce his own form of jurisprudence to confuse this House. That is not the rule; that is not the law and that is not the practice.

Mr Speaker, you have ruled. Allow Alhaji Habib Iddrisu to proceed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, hold on. I would come to you. Let me give the Majority Leader—

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I am not challenging your decision. Your decision is to the effect that by Standing Order 93(1)—[*Interruption*]

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: — *rose* —

3.30 p.m.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I am not challenging your ruling. Your ruling is to the effect that for a Statement of urgent public importance to be made, there is the need for both Sides of the House to have conferred and agreed. You said that. And then you also indicated that in future, they should submit a copy or at least make known to the Speaker or the person presiding, the content of the Statement. So, I am simply pursuing your ruling. To say that we have not yet indulged him—Because he is saying that there should be indulgence by both Sides. I am saying that we have not indulged him.

Mr Speaker, let me say that—Let us go back to the interpretation section of the Standing Orders, Order 6 which deals with the question of leave of the House. Listen to what it says;

“Leave of the House or any expression of similar import means permission or consent given by the House.”

So, I am saying that the words “indulgence of the House and leave of the House” are of similar import and so, what our Standing Order says is that such matters must be with the consent of the House.

Mr Speaker, ordinarily, when it comes to Statements, we always vest the discretion in the Speaker. We have never come to this House to say that we must grant leave before the Speaker admits a Statement to be made and I am not about to begin that tradition.

Mr Speaker, I have a problem with matters that are ordinarily the subject of press conferences to be made the Business of this House. There are some matters that are press conference matters; matters that need to be dealt with the press as a press conference not to make it the subject of debate in the House.

Mr Speaker, if they make a mistake and make a Statement on Mr Ken Ofori-Atta in this Chamber, they have no idea the commentary that would be run on Mr Ken Ofori-Atta in this Chamber. Mr Speaker, can they control the commentary that we on this Side of the House would run on Mr Ken Ofori-Atta? Mr Speaker, they would have exposed him to that because even today, when the OSP organised the press conference, they made some statements, admitted that there were charges related to the man and that he was under investigation.

Mr Speaker, so, I am saying—
[Interruption]—Exactly what I said, Mr Speaker, that they should not expose the man. Do not make a Statement on him because the Standing Orders say that—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Leader, I could confer from what you are saying that the indulgence of the House is now granted.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I am saying that we have always granted discretion to Speakers to admit Statements and authorise Statements to be made. We have always granted the discretion and we are not about to stop it but I am warning that it is a very slippery ground because the same Standing Orders say that if it is a matter of urgent public importance, we have a right to comment on it.

Mr Speaker, do they want us to run commentary on the man? That is the question.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Leader, I think there is a caution. If—

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: We are ready.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You are ready.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, Mr Ken Ofori-Atta is not here himself; they cannot grant consent to commentary being run on the man in the Chamber. Mr Ken Ofori-Atta is not in this Chamber so they cannot make a Statement on Ken Ofori-Atta and

expose him to commentary when he is not here unless he is here to give consent. He has to give consent; they cannot give consent that there should be commentary run on the man when he is not present to respond and there are matters—

Mr Speaker, today, I am saying that the Office of the Special Prosecutor said they are investigating him; do you want us to interfere with the investigation by running commentary on him? Is that what they want us to do?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Habib Iddrisu, if you are minded to raise your Statement, you can go ahead.

STATEMENT

Statement on the Unjust Declaration by the OSP on Ken Ofori-Atta

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu (NPP — Tolon): Mr Speaker, I rise to express my profound concern and to formally condemn the recent actions taken by the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) in declaring Mr Ken Ofori-Atta a wanted fugitive. The basis for this declaration rests solely on the assertion that Mr Ofori-Atta has not responded to requests to appear before the OSP in person. However, evidence provided by his legal representatives unequivocally demonstrates that Mr Ofori-Atta is currently outside the country on a scheduled and medically necessary review.

His lawyers have duly informed the OSP through an official correspondence

and with the explicit approval of both the former and the current Chiefs of Staff that he is receiving essential medical care abroad.

It is both disheartening and unjust that such well-documented evidence has been disregarded in favour of a hasty and unilateral declaration that tarnishes not only the reputation of a former public servant but also, the integrity of our legal and administrative processes.

The principles of natural justice and due process demand that before any declaration of fugitive status is made, a full and thorough verification of the circumstances be conducted. In this instance, the OSP's failure to acknowledge the valid and documented explanation provided by Mr Ofori-Atta's legal team is alarming. This omission not only undermines the rights of an individual who has rendered distinguished service to our nation, but also calls into question the procedural rigour with which our justice system is being administered. When the machinery of justice is allowed to operate without strict adherence to established protocols, the risk of arbitrary and politically motivated decisions become all too real.

I must emphasise that the actions of the OSP, in this case, are not merely a procedural misstep, but they represent a significant breach of the trust that the citizenry place in our institutions. The OSP was established to safeguard the rule of law; to ensure transparency, and to hold accountable those who have betrayed the public trust through acts of

corruption or malfeasance. Yet when an institution charged with these responsibilities bypasses the fundamental principles of fairness and due process, it risks eroding public confidence in the entire system of justice.

In *Republic v. Director of Prisons; Ex Parte Yeboah* (1984) JELR 69291 (CA), the Court of Appeal of Ghana reaffirmed the principle that no person should be subjected to unlawful detention or unjust treatment at the hands of the state. The court held that the exercise of state authority must be guided by fairness, legality, and due process. Any deviation from these principles amounts to an abuse of power and a violation of the rights of the individual.

It is incumbent upon us as Members of Parliament to demand that our oversight bodies investigate these actions thoroughly and take appropriate remedial measures to ensure that such lapses do not recur.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Mr Ofori-Atta's situation emphasises the importance of clear communication and coordination among state institutions. Prior notification of his medical departure was not only a legal requirement, but also an act of transparency expected from a public figure. His adherence to this protocol should have been acknowledged and factored into any subsequent decisions regarding his status. Instead, the OSP's precipitous declaration has generated unnecessary controversy and distraction at a time when our nation cannot afford

such divisions. The misapplication of power in this instance serves as a stark reminder of the dangers inherent when executive agencies act without sufficient oversight and accountability.

The implications of this incident extend beyond the individual involved. They strike at the very heart of our nation's commitment to justice, accountability, and the rule of law. When institutions like the OSP deviate from their mandate and operate in a manner that appears arbitrary, they jeopardise our collective efforts to build a society based on fairness and respect for the rights of all citizens. It is imperative that we, as Parliamentarians, hold these agencies to the highest standards and ensure that every action taken in the name of justice is both transparent and justified.

I call upon the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to immediately initiate a comprehensive review of the procedures followed in this instance. This review should aim to determine whether the OSP acted in accordance with legal and ethical standards when it declared Mr Ofori-Atta a fugitive. Should it be found that due process was not observed, I urge the Government to take decisive corrective action, including the retraction of the unwarranted declaration. Such steps are necessary not only to restore confidence in our judicial system, but also to reaffirm our commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of every citizen.

Moreover, this House must use this opportunity to reiterate our collective

responsibility to ensure that no public official, whether current or former, is unfairly targeted or subjected to actions that undermine their legal rights. Let us be clear: the pursuit of justice must always be balanced with respect for due process, and any deviation from this principle, can have far-reaching consequences for our democracy. Mr Speaker, we must stand united in our resolve to protect the integrity of our legal institutions and to ensure that every individual is treated fairly under the law.

In conclusion, I reiterate my call for accountability and transparency. The actions taken by the OSP in this matter are deeply troubling, and they must be addressed with the utmost urgency. We owe it to our citizens, and to the legacy of our nation's commitment to justice, to ensure that such abuses of power are not repeated.

Mr Speaker, I urge my fellow Members of Parliament to join me in condemning this overreach and in demanding a thorough investigation into these matters. Together, we can and must safeguard the principles of justice and fairness that are the cornerstone of our society.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

3.40 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, this is a Statement on our own Member who was a former Minister of State. So, I would be guided by Order 93(5), that nobody would be allowed to

speak more than five minutes, and the comment should not generate debate—

Hon Members, I would go by our own Standing Orders, and I would take three from each Side; then I give the Leadership one each. So, that is three Members from each Side and one each from Leadership from both Sides.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, we have 10 Members on this Side who are ready to comment—Yes, 10 Members!

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, I cannot take 10.

Mr Ayariga: If they do not have anybody who wants to comment, that is up to them, but we have 10 people who want to comment. I cautioned him, Mr Speaker, and he said he was ready for it. So, 10 people would comment from this Side.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I will vary my orders; I will give five each, including Leadership.

So, I will begin with Hon John Abdulai Jinapor. Your contribution would be not more than five minutes.

Minister for Energy and Green Transition (Mr John Abdulai Jinapor) (MP): Mr Speaker, let me thank you for this opportunity.

Mr Speaker, let me start with a *Ghanaweb* report, and it is dated Friday, 28th July, 2017.

“AK47 wielding corps raid John Jinapor’s home.

Five police officers believed to be from the National Security on Friday raided the home of former Deputy Energy Minister, Mr John Jinapor, in search of documents related to the controversial US\$550 AMERI deal.”

Mr Speaker, this very House approved the Africa and Middle East Resource Investment (AMERI) deal—*[Interruption]*—Mr Speaker —

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh —
rose—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: What is it?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I thank you.

Earlier, I had tried to catch your attention. I think it is important we set the parameters right. Let it go into the records that nobody is afraid of this subject matter, and the Leader said that he is cautioning, but nobody is afraid. Nobody has anything to hide—*[Interruption]*—Now, the point I want to make is that when we are debating, we make reference to other sources of information. Let it be put on record that any matter that anybody wants to reference should be tabled—*[Interruption]*

Mr Speaker, if our Colleague has some source of information, let that information be tabled before he can proceed on the same subject matter. He cannot just get up and say that “*Ghanaweb*”. He should table it—*[Interruption]*—No, he should table; anybody cannot just get up and say “*Ghanaweb*”.

Mr speaker, I insist that he tables it; then we can take his source seriously.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon John Jinapor?

Mr J. A. Jinapor: Mr Speaker —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You have already spent one minute—

Mr J. A. Jinapor: Mr Speaker, that is most unfair. You cannot do this to me.

Mr Speaker, the Minority Chief Whip is a Leader, and he should know that when something is public record, especially in this House, we do not tender in any evidence. Prof Mike Oquaye, then Speaker, made a ruling on the matter in this Chamber; the Minority Chief Whip was seated here. Prof Mike Oquaye wrote to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in respect of this matter. So what other evidence does he want me to tender in when it is captured in the *Hansard*? If anything is captured in the *Hansard*, one does not tender in any evidence.

Mr Speaker, I am saying that, on that fateful day, when my house was raided by AK47 wielding National Security

operatives, who banged on my door, creating fear and panic and sending my six-year-old child into a state of hysteria and a state of fear, we had Members here who never commented on it. And I commend Prof Mike Oquaye for that day when he stood up and ruled that what they were doing was wrong.

Mr Speaker, they took my phones and laptops to the United Kingdom (UK) to investigate me. Today, they are scared of a very simple matter. Let me explain something: The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) has declared Mr Ken Ofori-Atta as a fugitive. Mr Speaker, in our local language, fugitive means that *ɔde ne ho aka nwura*—*[Laughter]*—Or to put it simply, *w’agye bam*—*[Laughter]*—Or in the Hausa language *ɔtelɔ* or to put it in a simpler way, *yaagudu*—*[Laughter]*— It is as simple as that.

Mr Speaker, we should not be afraid of accountability. As public officials, when they took my laptop, it got to a point that they could not open the iPhone. I told them I was willing to come and use my fingerprint. It was there and then they told me that the phones had be taken to the UK. I had to give them the password. Eventually, the very AMERI I was accused of, a Minister was dismissed because it came here padded by almost US\$800 million.

Mr Speaker, on this auspicious day of reckoning and accountability, the only thing I can say is that we wish the man in white the best of luck.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: The five minutes is up.

Mr J. A. Jinapor: Mr Speaker, to wind up, the former Minister for Finance should come here and settle the scores as far as we are concerned.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Five minutes is up.

Thank you.

Mr J. A. Jinapor: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. [*Hear! Hear!*]—

3.50 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Bimbilla, you have five minutes.

Mr Dominic Bingab Aduna Nitiwul (NPP — Bimbilla): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, we are building a democracy. The Hon Member who just spoke said gun wielding policemen raided his home. That is what a democracy is: policemen. My Brother, we do not use soldiers to raid somebody's home in a democracy— [*Uproar*]

I would wait. [*Pause*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I am not giving the floor to anyone on a point of order, please. Let us tolerate each other, please.

Mr Nitiwul: Mr Speaker, let those who stood up be informed that by 4 a.m. on the 7th of January, there was no Minister for Defence in Ghana; let them be informed. Let them be informed that nobody in Ghana — tell the gentleman here that he has just been nominated Deputy Minister of the Republic of Ghana. He is no more in opposition to be shouting; he should respect himself. He is in Government today.

Mr Speaker, let them know that by 4 a.m. when soldiers and police entered here to keep order, there was no Minister for Defence in Ghana — [*Uproar*]— they should educate themselves. I want to repeat to my Colleague that in a democracy, we do not use soldiers to raid someone's home, especially when the person has said he is not in the country and would report when he gets back. Mr Ofori Atta wrote to the OSP that he was not in the country; he had received the invitation and would come back and report to them for any investigation. They have no right to send soldiers to raid a man's house when he is not there; when he has told them that he is out of the country. It is worse than armed robbery.

In fact, I have seen pictures of Richard Jakpa, who has just been forgiven of his sins, raiding someone else's house. What business has that man in the house of a man who has travelled outside? This is not the democracy we are building. It is wrong for John Mahama, who just won an election, to try to use soldiers to intimidate people. We would not agree today; we would not agree tomorrow.

We are not cowards; we would account to anybody who wants us to account.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the former Minister for Defence in his concluding statement mentioned one Mr Jakpa and said that somebody who has just been forgiven of his sins. Mr Speaker, he has never proven that the man committed a sin, so he cannot say that somebody who has just been forgiven of his sins. Nobody forgave him of any sin because nobody proved any sin. Mr Speaker, the man is not here and he should withdraw that part of his statement.

Mr Nitiwul: Mr Speaker, the appeal application against Richard Jakpa and the current Minister for Finance was withdrawn by the current President. Allow the courts to deal with the matter and let us see whether they have sinned or not.

Mr Speaker, they should allow the courts to deal with the matter and let us see whether they have sins or not. If he wants me to withdraw the word “forgive” I will withdraw the word, but I said allow the courts to decide whether a man is guilty or not.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Now, Hon Member for Bolgatanga Central.

Mr Isaac Adongo (NDC — Bolgatanga Central): Mr Speaker, I am very sad that in our country, the biggest perceived enemy of our economy is being defended the way my Colleagues

are doing [**Some Hon Members:** Ei!] and everybody knows —[*Uproar*]—

Osahen Afenyo-Markin —*rose*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Adongo, how did you come by that? That he is the biggest — [**Some Hon Members:** Withdraw!]

Mr Adongo: Mr Speaker, if it will make him happy, I would withdraw but the truth is that —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon Members, please, let us be guided by our Standing Orders. This comment should not generate any debate so please, make a statement that will not invite any other person to come and challenge your statement.

Mr Adongo: Mr Speaker, you allowed very contentious debatable issues to be raised here and you are now asking me to respond to debatable arguments without debate? Is that what you are saying? You admitted all the debatable documents that he presented here. But I want to say that if you as a Ghanaian respect yourself and Ghana has gone into debt restructuring and been embarrassed globally, who did that? Ken Ofori-Atta did that. Ghanaians who bought our bonds went into a Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP), who did that? Ken Ofori-Atta. And so if they get up to defend this person who has robbed us of our peace and happiness, and you expect me to debate this in a manner which is not debatable, I beg to differ.

Mr Speaker, the truth is that the OSP has made it very clear that the State did not send anybody to Ken Ofori-Atta's house and that it was staged by Ken Ofori-Atta's people.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hold on. Yes, Minority Leader?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, with respect, let the records reflect that this Side of the House brought this matter up questioning the mode of the action taken by state security operatives. The argument being made by my Colleague is to the effect that the man has committed some crimes and we are defending him.

Mr Speaker, let it be known by him that as he is now in this Chamber, he is aspiring into public office; he is seriously lobbying to be made a deputy minister. He has not even been recognised; it is some of these unguarded statements that is why he has not been recognised. Mr Speaker, we are talking about the mode of the raid. We are not saying that if the State has evidence against Ken Ofori-Atta, they should not try him. If indeed there is an issue against him, the State can try him then he can have access to his lawyers, but they cannot accuse him of being guilty.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, I will come to you. You would have your time so that you can address all these things.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, he has to withdraw that part of his

submission [**Some Hon Members:** No!] —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, which part? Go on.

4.00 p.m.

Mr Adongo: Mr Speaker, these are my views. The Minority Leader cannot tell me what to say in this House; he does not dictate to me what I say in this House. And I am saying that when, as a Government, they decided to violate the Public Financial Management Act with impunity, this day was coming, and it has arrived.

The Public Financial Management Act, 2016, is very clear that one cannot commit this state to a multi-year contract without the Minister for Finance himself issuing a commencement certificate. Yet, after he issued a commencement certificate, he was still drawing on the Contingency Fund, as if he did not know about the project? He thought he could do that as long as he wants? —*[Interruption]*— Yes, but the subject is that the Office of the Special Prosecutor has spelt out the reason it is looking for him, and I am discussing what the OSP is calling him for.

That, when he decided to engage in multi-year transactions and refused the approval of Parliament, knowing very well the implications in the Public Financial Management Act, he knew that he would answer for it one day. And that—Is the Minority now asking us to do what? Not to discuss a fugitive? We

should not discuss a fugitive? Is that what the Minority is asking? Or I should clean him up even though he is a fugitive? So, when the Minority came here, they knew that the product they were selling, they could not sell it, and we warned them; yet, they did? — *[Interruption]*—The Minority can warn me as long as they want, but the important thing is that the OSP has stated that it did not send anybody to Mr Ken Ofori-Atta's house. Why are they running away?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr Adongo.

Yes, Mr Kennedy Nyarko Osei?

Mr Kennedy Nyarko Osei (NPP — Akim Swedru): Mr Speaker, I have come in peace.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You said you have come in peace?

Mr K. N. Osei: Yes.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well; let us listen to you.

Mr K. N. Osei: Mr Speaker, God willing, Ghana would be 68 years this year. Mr Speaker, we have seen governments change all the time. The wrong yesterday is not right today. If we are building a society, if we are building a country, if we are building a nation, we cannot and should not allow some of these ills to go on in our society. All of us seated here are politicians. Tomorrow, it could be you. Today, they think it is Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, so it is all

right, I would speak against it. If it was meted out to them—The fact that a similar issue or the same thing was done in 2017, does not mean that we should repeat same this time—*[Interruption]*—They should listen to me.

Mr Speaker, I am sad for Mother Ghana. I am sad for us as politicians. Because tomorrow, it would be the turn of one of us, and I cannot sit because I am on the opposite Side, so I would sit down and watch them being treated this way.

Mr Speaker, if we want to build a democracy, let us use the laid down procedures. I am not speaking to shield anybody. The laws are clear that if anybody is found guilty of committing any crime, there are laid down procedures to deal with such matters. We do not use the Rambo style action to go to somebody's house.

I have a message for the President; President Mahama should listen to me. Mr President, Ghanaians voted for you massively so that you come and unite this country. They did not vote for you to come and divide this country. If the President wants to leave a legacy, long after he has left office, then I am begging him to use the laid down procedure to address some of these matters and stop the *buga buga*. It is not going to help this country.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you Hon Member.

Let me come to the Hon Member for Bole/Bamboi.

Alhaji Yusif Sulemana (NDC — Bole/Bamboi): Mr Speaker, I am one of those who believe that what is wrong yesterday is also wrong today. What I have read is that the OSP has said that the raiding we are all talking about is something that was staged. I listened to him; so, for me, for us to use this precious time discussing something that has been staged, then I think we need to have a second look at what we are doing.

Mr Speaker, I listened to my senior Brother, the former Minister for Defence, and I was a bit sad. I followed him and the former Minister for the Interior, and my good Friend and Brother, the former Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, and also, Mr Albert Kan-Dapaah. I followed the four of them outside of here on that faithful day, and I doff my hat for Mr Albert Kan-Dapaah when he shouted, “Do not let them enter!”. Mr Nitiwul shouted, “Let them enter!”, and they entered.

Mr Speaker, he is now telling us—
[Pause]—[Uproar]

Mr Nitiwul: Mr Speaker, first of all, the Hon Member knows me very well, and he knows that where I come from, I am not a coward and I cannot be a coward—[Uproar]—Otherwise, I cannot go home—[Uproar]—Mr Speaker, I want to repeat that I am not a coward; I can never be a coward; otherwise, I cannot go home. He knows where I come from, and let me tell him that he has no evidence, not a single shred of evidence.

I want him to withdraw that statement because it is a direct attack on my person, my family, my tribe, where I come from, and he is putting people in danger for no reason. He does not have any evidence, so he should withdraw it. It is very unfortunate that he will make a statement against Mr Ambrose Dery who is not here to defend himself. Make a statement against me and I can defend myself. It is wrong, and he has no evidence. Hon Members heard it; it is very unfortunate. When the soldiers came, did he know where I was? Did he know where I was that day?

[Uproar]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members!

4.10 p.m.

Mr Nitiwul: If you are using soldiers to intimidate Ghanaians, including going after my car, that is not democracy. They made soldiers chase after me and that is not democracy. Do not accuse me. [Interruption]—Alhaji Sulemana has no evidence. He should withdraw it.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I would cede the seat to the First Deputy Speaker. Meanwhile, Alhaji Sulemana, you may continue.

4.10 P.M. — [MR FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

Alhaji Sulemana: Mr Speaker, I started by saying that the former Minister for Defence is my Brother and

indeed, I know where he comes from. Where he comes from is where I also come from, so we are brothers. We are the same people. So, I was shocked that day when he ushered in the military men to come and kill his own brothers—*[Uproar]*—

Mr Speaker, he is saying that there was no democracy at that time, and that there was no Government in place and he was not a Minister at the time so, he was not bothered about whatever happened. This is what he just said.

Mr Speaker, the very people who did that are still in the system; we have their pictures. On this day, I would want to call on you to order an investigation, so that we would get to the bottom of this issue. I am a Muslim; a serious and pious Muslim, so, the last thing I would do is to tell lies about my own Brother. I have said what we call the Kalima—I believe in Allah, and I believe in his prophets. And the next thing to believe in is to ensure that I do not tell lies about respected people like my Brother.

I only want to put on record that on that day, I followed Mr Nitiwul. My Brother, the Hon John Abdulai Jinapor, Hon Ambrose Dery and Hon Albert Kan-Dapaah were coming from here down to this point when Hon Kan-Dapaah insisted that they should not allow the military men into the Chamber. However, Mr Nitiwul said they should. Indeed, they entered and he followed them. Mr Speaker, what I want you to do is to call for a video. He wants me to come with evidence so call for a video and we would see him ushering in the military men.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Alhaji Sulemana: Mr Speaker, on this note, I am calling for an independent investigation to ensure that we get the truth of whatever happened on that day. Once we get the truth, he would cease to call for evidence. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Nitiwul: Mr Speaker, somebody has accused me that I have brought soldiers to come and kill —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, you do not have the floor. Resume your seat. Hon Nitiwul, resume your seat. Hon Member for Mpraeso, you have the floor.

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (NPP — Mpraeso): Mr Speaker—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us remind ourselves about Order 129 and conduct business in an orderly manner. I would not hesitate to apply the rules. Hon Davis Ansah Opoku, you have the floor.

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, Members in this House who have followed my proceedings, or my actions in the media would certainly know that I was one of the few MPs who stood up and said that Mr Ken Ofori-Atta must go. I am not here to defend him. But we need to ensure that as a country, the rule of law always reigns supreme. I am a bit surprised that

Members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) are today defending actions that they were crying over some time back. In fact, I heard my good Friend, Hon John Abdulai Jinapor and Mr Kwame Gbewaa Agbodza make claims that in 2017, their houses were raided at Adaklu and all of that. Is that a justification why we should allow same to be repeated this time? [*Uproar*]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order! Order!

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, when H. E. John Dramani Mahama was campaigning, he said he would reset Ghana. Is that the reset we see today? That lawlessness is reigning supreme over everything that we do in this country? That today, Mr Richard Jakpa can walk into the house of Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, raid his house, and pick documents when he has no warrant?

Mr Speaker, we all heard the Special Prosecutor today. He declared Mr Ken Ofori-Atta as a fugitive. I wonder the legal basis for which the Special Prosecutor declared Mr Ken Ofori-Atta as a fugitive. A fugitive is someone who has escaped from custody or is evading a lawful arrest warrant. What warrant does the Special Prosecutor have to say today that Mr Ken Ofori-Atta has escaped from this country? We all know that one of the reasons the former Minister for Finance had to quit his job was because he was not feeling well. So, if the man travels out of this country for medical reasons, and knowing very well there has been enough communication between him and the Special

Prosecutor—did the Special Prosecutor hold this press conference just to embarrass the man? The Special Prosecutor declared the man as a fugitive. That is what Hon John Abdulai Jinapor said. The Hon Majority Leader said nothing about it. Hon John Abdulai Jinapor said the man has been declared a fugitive and we know the definition of a fugitive. Has Ken Ofori-Atta—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I recognise the Majority Leader.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, we need to be cautious. The Hon Member who just spoke said the Special Prosecutor organised a press conference to embarrass the former Minister for Finance. This House should not interfere in the work of the Special Prosecutor. We should not intimidate the Special Prosecutor. [*Uproar*]

Mr Speaker, secondly, the former Minister for Defence said soldiers were sent to the residence of the former Minister for Finance. Nobody has tended evidence in this Chamber that soldiers were sent. They are talking about one Mr Jakpa. The man is not a soldier; the man is retired. He left the army and he is an officer, I believe, of the National Security of the State. So please, let us not sit here and say things that would dent the image of the men and officers of the Ghana Armed Forces in uniform. So, let us be careful when we say that soldiers were sent there, because no soldier was sent to the residence of the former Minister.

Mr Speaker, please, let us be cautious.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, I recognised the Hon Majority Leader on a point of order. Are you also up on a point of order against a *Point of Order*?

4.20 p.m.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect, take it easy.

He did not say he was up on a point of order. He did not say so. And please, he made an intervention for the good of the Minority and I am back on the same level.

I agree with the Hon Leader of the House that we should tread cautiously; rightly so. But, we have heard a Colleague make a statement for *Hansard* that the respected Senior Member sent soldiers here to kill us; those were the words. Mr Speaker, in the same spirit, we need to be careful.

Secondly, I have publicly acknowledged the diplomacy of the Majority Leader and I have no reason to doubt him, but I always act in good faith. I shared with him, although privately, but I would tender it in since it has been raised; videos of soldiers in uniform raiding the residence of Mr Ken Ofori-Atta.

Mr Speaker, indeed, he is right in saying that the man spoken about as the one leading the team is now a civilian; that is true. Mr Richard Jakpa who works with the National Security and

indeed, the one who led the soldiers is a state security operative. But Mr Speaker, the point is very clear that —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Are you very sure that he is a state security operative?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, he said so. It is not coming from me. The Majority Leader confirmed it. These are the words of the Majority Leader; they are not mine. So, he has confirmed and says that Mr Jakpa is a state security operative; it is not coming from me.

I have shared the videos with the Majority Leader, and I was fair in my dealing with him by telling him that this is a matter that I wanted to raise. So, Mr Speaker, let us be guided by what he has just told us and allow our Colleague to proceed. I have received a signal from my respected Colleague who has just been nominated as a Deputy Minister that he wants to withdraw that aspect of the submission — [**Some Hon Member:** Oh!] He said so. Mr Speaker, I will not impose anything on him. He signalled that in view of the caution from the Leader, he wants to withdraw his submission. If he wants to withdraw it, that is his matter. I am only telling, Mr Speaker, that that is the signal he is giving me.

Mr Speaker, let us be fair with each other. This democracy that we are celebrating today —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, conclude.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, once upon a time, we had 169 seats in this House. The Majority has made it; enjoy it, but let us be mindful that we are a family. I told the House some weeks ago, that we should learn from the Jinapor brothers. I rest my case.

Mr Matthew Nyidam — *rose* —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon Member. Hon Yusif Sulemana. – I will give you the floor.

Hon Nyindam, resume your seat.

Alhaji Sulemana: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to withdraw the words “he brought in military to kill his brothers”. My understanding of the role of the military is that they are trained to kill. [*Uproar*] That is where I was coming from.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Sulemana, are you withdrawing your statement? What are you doing?

Alhaji Suleman: So, I am withdrawing those words unreservedly. He is my brother and I will not do anything to hurt him. So, I withdraw those words. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the statement is accordingly withdrawn. Order! Hon Member, conclude. You have two more minutes.

Mr D. A. Opoku: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Chiwitey, can we have some order?

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, see how pleasant it is that as brothers, we are able to understand each other. That should be the spirit that we carry on in the administration of a government. Mr Speaker, we all have a right, and Chapter 5 of the Constitution guarantees our right as citizens. In fact, looking at Article 14 of our Constitution, it is very clear that no person shall be deprived of their liberty, except in accordance with the rule of law.

This morning, my little daughter came to me and asked me, “Daddy, is Ghana at war?” Because of the rate and the Rambo style by which they invaded Mr Ken Ofori-Atta’s house. Then I asked her, “Maame, why? What is happening?” Then she said “Daddy, get on social media.”

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I am not supposed to be interrupting you but you quoted a constitutional provision that we need to act in accordance with the law. Are we going to be able to establish whether they have acted in accordance with the law or not? Is this House going to establish whether they have acted in accordance with the law or not, having regard to the fact that justice emanates from the people of Ghana and it is exercised on their behalf by the Judiciary?

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, it is very clear that from all the statements we have read from the Special

Prosecutor that there is no warrant and people invaded the house of Mr Ken Ofori-Atta — Today, even the Special Prosecutor whom we all thought led that attack, is even running away from the fact that he led those thugs to Mr Ken Ofori-Atta's house.

Mr Speaker, today we have a former military person who has been caught on a clear video, invading the house of Mr Ken Ofori-Atta. Mr Speaker, that should not happen. I am saying that—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, did I hear you say he is running away from the facts? He made a categorical statement that the people are imposters.

Mr D. A. Opoku: Who made that statement?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: And that he did not authorise them, and you said he is running away from that particular fact? As if he authorised them and is now running away from them?

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, I appreciate your guidance, but we are all in the media space, and we know what is happening and what people are saying. I am saying that this morning, *The Herald* newspapers carried that the Special Prosecutor is the one who undertook this exercise. In his press conference, he denied that fact.

All I am telling my Colleagues is that we live in a country where a President has been given over 56 per cent of votes. He promised Ghanaians that he is going

to reset the entire system. But Mr Speaker, today, what we see in the administration of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), is more like a *coup d'etat* had happened in Ghana, and people's homes are being raided, and all of that. —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, conclude.

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, letters are being issued sacking civil servants in our country and this is something we have not seen before. Even directors of companies are being sacked.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, your time is up. I proceed to give the floor to Hon James Agalga.

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, in conclusion —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, your time is up. I proceed to give the floor to Hon James Agalga. Hon Member, resume your seat, please.

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, four minutes. Mr Speaker, you took all my time.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon James Agalga, you have the floor.

Mr James Agalga (NDC — Builsa North): Mr Speaker, the Statement made by the First Deputy Minority Whip was made in the realm of the purported violation of the rights of the former Minister for Finance. If my understanding of that statement serves

me right, Mr Speaker, then of course, we have a reason to ask ourselves which of the human rights provisions enshrined in Chapter 5 of the 1992 Constitution has been violated. That is the question. The maker of the Statement cited a judicial decision in support of the Statement.

4.30 p.m.

Now on that particular judicial decision, I did not hear him well, but he mentioned the Director of Prisons. That particular judicial decision relates to fair trial principles.

Mr Speaker, in the case of the former Minister for Finance, he is not on trial, so the principles enshrined in Article 19 of the Constitution would not apply to him for now. The closest we could come to, in terms of the human rights provisions in our Constitution, would be Article 15.

Mr Speaker, I would take you through, and I expect, with the greatest of respect, that the Minority Leader respect the fact that I am truly a human rights advocate, and he can bear testament to that fact. Let him not interrupt me when I am advancing my arguments.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, you are not interrupted in any manner, so address the Chair.

Mr Agalga: Article 15 talks about the respect for human dignity and this is what it says:

“1. The dignity of all persons shall be inviolable.

2. No person shall, whether or not he is arrested, restricted or detained, be subjected to—

a. torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

b. any other condition that detracts or is likely to detract from his dignity and worth as a human being.”

It goes on, but those are the relevant provisions I want to relate to.

Mr Speaker, the question is: has Hon Ken Ofori-Atta arrested? He is not in the custody of the police, so how do we start talking about a violation of his right to human dignity? The steps that have so far been taken by the Special Prosecutor—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Stephen Amoah, let us listen to him in silence.

Mr Agalga: Mr Speaker, the steps that have so far been taken by the Special Prosecutor is in accordance with law, as prescribed by Article 18 of our Constitution. That same Article 18 talks about the right to property and the fact that it should not be interfered with; a person's property right, home, *et cetera*. But Article 18 comes with an exception; where the state security apparatus decides to act in prevention of crime or in detection and punishment for crime, an exception is created under Article 18.

The question we should be asking ourselves is: assuming without admitting that the security agents stormed the house of Ken Ofori-Atta, we should ask ourselves, did they obtain a warrant from court? I think our Colleagues on the other Side should file an Urgent Question and determine for themselves whether they acted with a warrant or without a warrant before they draw certain conclusions.

Mr Speaker, the Special Prosecutor has spoken, and he said that he extended an invitation to Ken Ofori-Atta, and his lawyers offered to present themselves for questioning. He said lawyers are not the subject of the investigation, so he wants rather to talk to Ken Ofori-Atta. Could this be the reason agents of our state security apparatus stormed his home?

Mr Speaker, let me remark that when Hon John Jinapor's home was stormed, there was no prior invitation extended to him by any state security agency mandated to investigate any matter. Likewise, the home of Dominic Ayine, the current Attorney-General, was equally stormed. What was his crime? His crime was that he only wrote a legal opinion, and a legal opinion warranted the storming of his home without a prior invitation from the police. These are the facts we should compare and contrast. Having said that, I did indicate that, I, as a lawyer, a human rights advocate—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, conclude.

Mr Agalga: I was struggling to establish for myself which of the provisions of our Constitution have been violated; I found none. Ken Ofori-Atta could submit himself to the law for the purposes of investigation and when there are violations, I would be the first to speak for and on his behalf. Not until then, he should be law abiding and come home and engage with the Special Prosecutor, so that the allegations which have been levelled, could be dealt with.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, thank you very much. Your time is up.

Mr Agalga: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Your time is up.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Stephen Amoah, before you start, let me remind the entire House that we are operating within the ambit of Standing Order 93(5). You have the floor.

Dr Stephen Amoah (NPP — Nhyiaeso): Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Speaker, I would want to make it emphatically clear that Ken Ofori-Atta has not run away. I would like to advise this august House that our actions and omissions, over the years, have actually defined us, and we have given the public and the external stakeholders to always see us in different lenses. It is time we put an end to what we are doing to each other.

Mr Speaker, some of the description they have given—Some even went to the extent of saying that the economy that he left—In fact, I cannot repeat those evil words they used.

Mr Speaker, in 2016, the economy Ken Ofori-Atta inherited was growing at 3.4 per cent. The inflationary rate was 15.4; lending rate was about 40 per cent. But for COVID-19, by 2019, we were growing 7 per cent, and inflation was 7 per cent. Under Ofori-Atta, we have been able to implement one of the most enviable pro-poor policies on the continent of Africa.

How could they describe such a man, because of global crisis, your own former Minister for Finance—Do they know the description they are giving to this country? Do they know how they are placing Ghana on the globe because of politics? Do they know what they are doing to the country? Very soon, their Ministers would be leaving Ghana for places for international assignments, and this is what they would read from their own lips.

Mr Speaker, we should not allow this outmoded, colloquial, and primitive politics to continue to destroy our country—Mr Speaker, we are one people with one destiny as a nation; I am only advising the House—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Stephen Amoah, did I hear you say “primitive politics”?

Dr Amoah: No, I am talking about Ghana.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Would you consider withdrawing the words, “primitive politics”?

4.40 p.m.

Dr Amoah: Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, I have done so.

Mr Speaker, I think I have to make myself clearer here. I am not even speaking against one Side; I am talking about actions and inactions, omissions and behaviours that are dwindling the very reputation of this House. We have been doing this to ourselves for far too long. Now, every Tom, Dick and Harry out there, even if you are driving a Land Cruiser out there, they think you are a politician, whether NDC or NPP, and they do not respect us. This why I am bringing to our attention that we should not allow the propaganda or actions or omissions of yesterday to keep on destroying the very image and reputation of this august House. Is that what we want to do? This is the question I am asking.

Mr Speaker, are we teaching the younger generation what we are doing today? What does the Constitution say?

Article 18 (2). With your permission, I read;

“No person shall be subjected to interference with the privacy of his home, property...” Has that happened or not?

The very Constitution and laws that we made, are we undermining the same

laws because of politics? We should not sit here and because of politics, forget the fact that the same Ken Ofori-Atta made their family members enjoy free school; their nephews, children, aunties, friends, mosque members, church members among others. But for Ken Ofori-Atta, they would have been home.

Let us stop these things against either National Democratic Congress (NDC) or New Patriotic Party (NPP). Let us maintain our reputation as a House. Let us believe in the fact that we are one people with a common destiny as a country. We must stop all these things. That is what I mean. We should forget yesterday's politics because we are destroying each other and we call ourselves Hon Members.

We all deserve that, but please, Mr Speaker, what I am trying to tell the House is that sometimes, because of politics, we say these things as jokes but those out there believe in what we say, and disrespect all of us. Let us protect each other; let us keep the dignity of this House intact and portray to the people out there that yes, we have changed.

Mr Speaker, I am ending by telling each and every one especially my Hon Brothers and Sisters from the other Side to repent. These behaviours must be stopped. We do not do that to ourselves. Look at Hon Agbodza, very respectable; our Leader is also respectable and we are all respectable. But because of politics, should I call you a thief or other names, and when we go out there, we want people to respect us?

Mr Speaker, this should be the last time for all of us. Let us show love and have constructive discussions. Constructive conflicts; conflict C type and not A type.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, conclude.

Dr Amoah: Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to re-emphasise the point that until Mr Ken Ofori-Atta is proven guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction, he cannot be described and defined as somebody who is criminal.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.
[Hear! Hear!]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I proceed to give the floor to Mr Kwame Dzudzorli Gakpey.

Mr Kwame Dzudzorli Gakpey (NDC—Keta): Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity. Mr Ken Ofori-Atta is not above the law. When the Special Prosecutor read the Statement today, he talked about the National Cathedral, he mentioned Strategic Mobilisation Limited (SML) issues; those are the issues the Special Prosecutor is investigating. When they call upon Mr Ken Ofori-Atta to avail himself to the authorities to do the needful, he sent lawyers to represent him. Where is Mr Ken Ofori-Atta? He is outside the country. We call upon our former Minister for Finance to do the needful and come back to Ghana.

Mr Speaker, this is about public money, not personal money. He is not

above the law; the security agencies went to his house lawfully. What we should be looking at is to inquire as a House, as to whether they had a search warrant to go to Mr Ken Ofori-Atta's home. It is not about wearing white dresses; nobody is above the law. When you hold public offices, you need to be accountable. The day of accountability has arrived. We were in this country when Mr John Jinapor's house was raided; former Attorney-General's home was raided by the military, and Members were invaded in this Chamber. At that time, they did not have the locus to say and condemn it. Today, they have the moral temerity; the audacity to say that it is wrong. They have the moral ground to talk. They did not know the day of reckoning would come today.

Mr Speaker, here we are. This is what we call karma. Karma is real. Those days where Members of Parliament were being chased and prevented from performing their duties, here we are. So, all that I want to say is that Mr Ken Ofori-Atta is not above the law. He should submit himself and stop running away. He is out of the country. Please call upon him to come back to the country. He should not run behind the excuse of medical condition; he is fit for purpose and we are waiting consciously and patiently for Mr Ken Ofori-Atta to arrive in this country to submit himself for the needful to be done.

Mr Speaker, what is he running away from? The US\$58 million was sunk into the National Cathedral. The US\$58 million which can build roads in Kwesimintsim; is it not true? Hon

Opoku Ansah, is it not true? It can build hospitals, markets, and a lot of roads. We would have finished the Agenda 111 buildings. What are we talking about?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Gakpey, please conclude.

Mr Gakpey: SML, is it not true? Yes, the biggest hole Ghana has ever constructed. So, nobody is chasing the former Minister for Finance. He is supposed to submit himself to the authorities and do the needful, and he is not above the law.

Mr Speaker, he swore an oath to protect the public purse, and now, the day of accountability is here so he should just commit himself.

Thank you for the opportunity, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Now, Leadership of the House.

Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make my comments on this matter.

Mr Speaker, Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, a former Minister for Finance and former presidential envoy has contributed to nation building. In 2021, when His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo nominated him for the Ministry of Finance portfolio, this House had to wait, because he indicated he was unwell and seeking for medical treatment outside. In fact, Mr Speaker, when he even came, he was the only

minister whose vetting took two days and in -between, this House indulged him to enable him take some breaks so he could proceed with his vetting. Eventually, he left Government as a Cabinet Minister and for the records, on the 2nd of January, 2025, wrote to the then Chief of Staff that he needed to travel to Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, USA, for some medical procedure.

Mr Speaker, after President John Dramani Mahama had taken office, he again wrote to the current Chief of Staff in a letter dated the 22nd of January, 2025, indicating that he would again be absent from Ghana for the same purpose.

4.50 p.m.

Mr Speaker, in fact, in the said letter to the Chief of Staff, he attached a letter from the hospital that he was seeking treatment. Mr Speaker, indeed, the OSP wrote to him on 24th January, 2025. In fact, this is the first letter that he received from the OSP. In the said letter, Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, instructed his lawyers to respond, to let the OSP know that, indeed, he was out of the jurisdiction seeking medical treatment.

Mr Speaker, what happened yesterday by state security operatives, must be condemned by all of us. Hon John Abdulai Jinapor has narrated his own ordeal, but the records of this House would confirm that when that happened, Rt Hon Speaker Oquaye condemned that act. If, indeed, something had happened yesterday, it does not mean that we should continue today.

Mr Speaker, I have heard human rights activists, and respected lawyers for that matter, quote Article 18 of the Constitution to say that, that is not applicable in this case. Mr Speaker, I beg to submit that, that was a wrong appreciation of the law. Military men led by Mr Richard Jakpa, unlawfully entered the premises of Mr Ken Ofori Atta, searched his rooms—

Mr Fist Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, the unlawful entry is by your own determination.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, you know that by virtue of where we sit, we are able to do some background checks before we come here. I would not want to mention names, but when inquiry was made, it was obvious, and I state it for emphasis, that those officials from the State did not have any warrant. Mr Speaker, we should not encourage such an approach. We should not. Our democracy is still young.

Today, it is Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, tomorrow, it would be another person. Some of our Colleagues should not forget that only yesterday, it took the intervention of certain prominent Members of our Side to ensure that they were not mistreated. We would not mention names. They know, so these should be the voices of reason on this occasion. Some Members worked in the night to ensure that Members of the political class, who are Members of this House, were not mistreated.

Mr Speaker, let me remind Colleagues that today, if they are

praising the OSP, we should not forget that not too long ago, we had some of our Members at the receiving end of the OSP. Do not let us also forget that even the President himself became a subject matter of the OSP's investigation, and he was not happy with certain words used against him by the OSP. So, do not let us celebrate because today, it is Mr Ken Ofori-Atta.

Mr Speaker, all manner of things is being said; that Mr Ofori-Atta has done this and that. I listened to my Colleague from Keta and my respected Colleague from Bolgatanga Central, enumerate what to them amounts to offences, and they argued again, that the man has not been tried; therefore, there cannot be any human right abuse. Mr Speaker, if one invades somebody's home and raids it, Article 18 of the Constitution protects that person, except when the person is doing so lawfully.

On this occasion, there was no such law supporting their actions, so they should not be happy with it here. These four years would soon come. No Member—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I think—Hon Members, Order. That response was in respect of the allegation of breach of natural justice. You and I are very much aware that natural justice is in two main ways: the *audi alteram partem* and *nemo judex in causa sua*. But, actually, that is not in respect of the Constitution. The Statement states that there was a breach of natural justice.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, the contention here is that, the man's home was raided by state security operatives, rather unlawfully, and I dare contend that that conduct was unconstitutional; that is my respectful submission.

Mr Speaker, I have done a lot of follow ups on this matter and I regret to say that we are not sending the right signals to our electorates. The man has put the state on notice of his absence from the jurisdiction. He has made available his medical records, coming from a respected medical facility. Mr Speaker, today, I repeat that if our friends think that it is another person, so it is all right and they are describing Mr Ken Ofori-Atta in all manner or forms, let me remind them that, none can ever rule this country with perfection.

Mr Speaker, at the risk of being repetitive, Dr Stephen Amoah was clear in his language of submission that indeed, the successful implementation of the Free SHS was led by Mr Ken Ofori-Atta as the Minister for Finance. He made sure that he rolled out that all-important policy of Government. If they have any issue, they should follow the due process of law. It is not enough for National Security to raid his home. It is not enough to carry armed military men to his residence to terrorise his children and by extension, his neighbours.

Mr Speaker, we must, as a House, be united with one voice to condemn this act. Today it is Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, next, it would be other appointees; we must not allow this. Only yesterday, we saw

the Attorney-General apply to the court with an application we call *nolle prosequi* in law, which simply says that he is discontinuing certain cases. That is within his right as an Attorney-General.

Mr Speaker, what signal are we sending to the nation? That if it is the NDC in power, it is right? If it is the NPP in power, it is right? Mr Speaker, the political class of this country must rise above this.

I would conclude by saying that if, indeed—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Please, hold on.

Hon Member, will you—no, I mean you, you are looking back; it is you I am talking to. Will you listen to the Leader in silence? Why? Leader, continue.

5.00 p.m.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, Hon Member for Keta talked about karma and I agree with him. I have been reading a lot about karma; the wheels of karma indeed grind slowly but with great surety. They have quoted it today; enjoy it while it lasts.

Mr Speaker, today he says that we are reaping the fruit of the karmic effect of our actions so it should be so. They have just come into Government and there are a lot of projects they would want to undertake. They would be going to the Public Procurement Authority (PPA). Ministers would be making decisions; some will be good and some will be bad.

They would roll out policies for Ghanaians to benefit; some will pay and others will not. They would engage the business community, so they should bear in mind that this karma they have just referred to, four years from today—They can call it 50 or 60 years. So let us solve the problem now. Let us encourage state security agencies with the mandate to investigate and prosecute to follow the law.

Hon Nitiwul in his submission was very emotional because just a week ago, he had to invite the Leaders and the Clerk to intervene. Some people calling themselves state securities operatives chased him, a former Minister for Defence, and when they saw the car papers, they now realised that whatever information they had was wrong. A colonel had to come, and when he questioned them on who sent them, they could not mention any name. When we give certain wrong signals, some of those people at the lowest levels take advantage to harass people. Even senior members who give orders, when they realise that they are wrong, they are unable to even own up.

Hon Nitiwul, a former Minister for Defence suffered this just a week ago, and it took the intervention of Leadership and the Clerk to Parliament to sanitise the situation. Is that what we want? Mr Lord Commey's house was raided; they searched his house, took away all his cars and after three days, they said they were sorry and brought his cars back. Is that how we want to govern the country?

Mr Speaker, I shall conclude by urging my Colleagues to support this call to bring sanity to the country so that nobody will take advantage to unleash any violence on anyone. I rest my case, thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, before the Statement was made, I had cautioned that this Statement would generate commentary that would provoke debate in clear violation of our Standing Orders, and I cautioned that it is a Statement that would attract comments that would go to, perhaps, damage the reputation of somebody who is not in this Chamber. I cautioned but my Friends on the other Side insisted and made the Statement.

Mr Speaker, if one is a believer in the rule of law and knows the law, they know that if one claims that somebody has improperly searched their house or property, they go to court for them to declare that their property rights have been violated, that their dignity has been violated, and the courts are there to provide them with that service of making a decision as to whether indeed their rights have been violated. In court, the two sides will be there and they would all be heard, but if they choose to use a political platform like this one, Parliament, to raise matters that properly speaking are the business of courts, they would receive political responses. And that is what I see happening here.

Mr Speaker, as for me, what I hear being said here is that there is a certain class called the political class and that political class must take care of each other. What I hear being said in this Chamber is that taking care of each other means that we should not hold each other accountable. Mr Speaker, I have always contended that it would be the most dangerous thing that would happen to the democracy of this country if a certain group called the political class were allowed to conspire to protect each other because what would happen —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order!

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I am saying what I hear. There have been several referrals to a group called the political class. Did we hear that or not? Several times, there was a referral to a group known as a political class and several times, a call on members of the political class not to do this to each other. What do we mean by let us not do this to each other? Let us not, when there is a change in government, try to hold each other accountable, this way or that way. I take a position that indeed, the reason the voters go to vote for one political party as against the other is so that they would come and hold each other accountable.

The day that we stop holding each other accountable is the day the electorates will lose confidence in this democracy. And when they lose confidence in this democracy, that is the end of democracy in Ghana, so we must hold each other accountable.

When we vote for a new party and a party comes, they owe a duty to those who voted for them to hold those who have been taken out accountable. As for how they do it, it should be a matter of following due process and the law. Let us talk about *nolle prosequi*; I heard someone mention *nolle prosequi* and withdrawal of prosecutions.

Mr Speaker, if the Republic of Ghana prosecutes a citizen for eight years and is unable to convict that citizen, then there is a problem. How can the state mount a prosecution for eight good years with all the resources at the disposal of the state and yet, they are unable to convict the citizen or at least get a ruling on that citizen, whether they are guilty or not? So when they are unable and they try somebody for eight good years and they cannot secure a conviction, then clearly there is something wrong with the case.

5.10 p.m.

So if another Attorney-General comes and is convinced that he does not have a basis for the prosecution and enters a *nolle prosequi*, that is not a case of clearing people. The Minority had eight good years to secure a conviction and eight years, they failed. Clearly, there is something wrong, and that is what has manifested itself in a *nolle prosequi*.

Mr Speaker, let me say that we—I cautioned against making the Statement because I did not want us to go into a situation where we would be making unfair comments about somebody who is not in the Chamber to defend himself.

The facts are simple, that military officers, policemen and national security personnel invaded, entered and searched the private property of the former Minister for Finance. I would not run any commentary on that matter until I have conducted some investigations to ascertain what the facts are, and then I would come and apprise this House of exactly what happened so that we can be properly informed. If there is anything that we should condemn about what has happened, we can collectively as a House, condemn it. I cautioned that Hon Members should not make statements that would involve commentary that would undermine the image of someone because I would not be happy if it is done to me, and that is why I objected.

So, I am not going to join Colleagues to comment on the Statement except to add that the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) has been severally mentioned. This was an office that was established to investigate and prosecute alleged cases of corruption and abuse of office by public officers.

They have indicated that in this instance, they are investigating the former Minister for Finance for two stated matters which is, matters relating to Strategic Mobilisation Ghana Limited (SML). I am sure that Hon Members are all aware that it was a big issue in this country where it was alleged that there was some corruption scandal relating revenue assurance contracts awarded by the Ministry of Finance and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) to SML.

Secondly, there is this big issue of the National Cathedral which we all know the story, that some monies were paid for work that was supposed to have been done there and it is alleged that the work has not been done. So, the OSP is seized of the matter, is investigating the matter and wants the former Minister for Finance to appear before them for some investigations. They indicated that there are two other matters that they are investigating but they have not indicated exactly what those two other matters are.

Mr Speaker, let us be cautious not to make statements that would be prejudicial to the work of the Special Prosecutor. That is why I cautioned and advised that we should not raise the matter in this Chamber, but once we have made the issue a matter for discussion in this Chamber, we cannot also begrudge those who run commentary on the personality of the former Minister for Finance. But let me touch a little on this issue of using the military. I should not say this but I am compelled to say it. I have observed that for several years, a whole military battalion was placed in front of the Electoral Commissioner's house to protect her house at the time when Mr Nitiwul was the Minister for Defence. Did not Mr Nitiwul know that the police were available to provide security to the Electoral Commissioner?

Mr Nitiwul was the Minister for Defence and he placed a whole military battalion at the entrance of the Electoral Commissioner's residence and she was

guarded by soldiers who followed her all the time. — *[Uproar]*—

[Mr Dominic Bingab Aduna Nitiwul walked into the Chamber]

Let me repeat it while he is here.

He should sit down and let me repeat what I said in his presence. I am saying that he is very concerned about the use of the military to conduct searches in people's homes and I am reminding him that while he stood there as Minister for Defence, had oversight over the military, he used the military to guard the residence of the Electoral Commissioner; true or false? Mr Speaker, he used the military to provide personal security for the Electoral Commissioner.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Leader, I recognise Mr Dominic Nitiwul on a point of order.

Mr Dominic Bingab Aduna Nitiwul (NPP — Bimbilla): Mr Speaker, thank you and I want to thank the Majority Leader for dragging me back to the Chamber. It is true that on the advice of state security, we gave soldiers to certain categories of people including—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Mr Nitiwul, be guided by Standing Order 122.

Mr Nitiwul: Thank you. We did give to the Electoral Commissioner and the deputies. We gave to the OSP and also to the Speaker of Parliament. So, it is true but it was not just soldiers; it was

joint: soldiers and the police. So, that is true but that is different from—They were not a battalion. First of all, they were not a battalion of soldiers. A battalion of soldiers is 800 to 1000 soldiers. So, it was not a battalion. They were anything between three and four soldiers at a time.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: So, Mr Nitiwul, let me understand you. Mr Ayariga alluded to the fact that when you were Minister for Defence, they used soldiers to guard—

Mr Nitiwul: Mr Speaker, Mr Ayariga did say that I used a battalion of soldiers to protect the Electoral Commissioner.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I heard soldiers.

Mr Nitiwul: First of all, I never used battalion of soldiers to protect the Electoral Commissioner.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Mr Nitiwul, the word used is soldiers. I heard soldiers.

Mr Nitiwul: Mr Speaker, let me confirm again that the Electoral Commissioner enjoyed the use—Not just the Electoral Commissioner—The Electoral Commissioner, the Speaker, for about two years and the OSP. Up till now, the OSP enjoy the services of the soldiers and the police to guide them on the advice of state security. I wrote to them that at any time that we felt that circumstances demand that we withdraw either the soldiers or the police, we would do that and each of

them had between three to six soldiers, depending on the circumstances.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Mr Nitiwul, what is the point of order within the meaning of Standing Order 122?

Mr Nitiwul: So, the point of order is that I had at no point used a battalion to protect any individual.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Leader, please continue.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the simple point I want to make is that all regimes at all times have used the military, together with the police in certain operations. We agree that that is the case, so today, if one sees the military and the police working together, one cannot suddenly create the impression that something that is unacceptable has happened because we have used them together. Indeed, just night security, when we should be deploying the police, we often deploy them with the soldiers. So, let us not make it look like for the first time, something that has not been heard of is happening in this country simply because a joint military and police team have visited the residence of the former Minister for Finance.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Mr Yaw Frimpong, why?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I do not know what raid means and I do not know who was in the residence at that time.

5.20 p.m.

Mr Addo: —*rose*—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Yaw Frimpong Addo?

Mr Ayariga: I do not know who was in the residence at that time. That is why I said they should give me time to conduct some inquiries and later and brief the House. The first point I want to make is that they should not make it seem as if something unheard of has happened because soldiers and police personnel have visited the residence of a former Minister for Finance.

Mr Speaker, as for the issues that have been mentioned here: the conduct of searches, the prosecution of politicians, investigation of politicians—We have all gone through all of that, and we are here, including my very good self. The Special Prosecutor has investigated me and has taken me to court. I fought my case, and I won. So, I advise that if—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, please, address the Chair.

Hon Dominic Nitiwul, you are a senior Member of the House—

Mr Ayariga: I advise them that, instead of making it a subject of debate in this Chamber, they should go and answer the questions like some of us boldly and confidently did. We were investigated and arraigned. We responded to our charges, defended ourselves and got judgements in our

favour. Now, we are free people, and that is how a democracy functions. They should not make it look like, suddenly, a political class is under attack because institutions of state that are supposed to hold us accountable have activated themselves and are doing their work.

Mr Speaker, I do not know if there was any raid, but I know that police personnel, soldiers, or any member of the security agencies could be used at any time in an effort to engage in law enforcement. That is how I see it, but like I said, I would double check and come back to you with a report of exactly what happened.

This House has a duty to protect the human rights of citizens. If they check our old Standing Orders, they would know that we even have a Committee on Human Rights. The job of that Committee is to take on human rights complaints, investigate them and then take the appropriate decisions in respect of those complaints.

So, we have a human rights mandate. If anybody thinks that his or her rights have been violated and decides not to go to the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) or the high court to seek an enforcement of their rights, but chooses to petition Parliament, the Committee on Human Rights in Parliament has a duty to take on the petition, investigate it and then give an appropriate direction. Because we do not have a Committee yet, as the Leader of this House, I would look into the matter, get a report and present it to the House.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, this House is a house of debate, and we are guided by rules in the conduct of Business, be it Questions, Statements, Motions, Resolutions, among others. I must state that the manner in which the matter under consideration has been carried out, certainly, leaves much to be desired.

Hon Members, Order 93 is very clear on prior indulgence of the House and the leave of the Speaker in the Speaker's admission of Statements.

Mr Speaker in the Chair then indulged the maker of the Statement with caution that Hon Members be circumspect and measured in their pronouncements. Unfortunately, in my opinion, some Hon Members certainly went overboard. Rules are made to guide proceedings. Where there are no rules, the Speaker is enjoined to provide appropriate interventions.

I urge Hon Members to be on the guide accordingly for order, decorum, and decency to characterise proceedings on the floor of this House. We must also be cautious to uphold the right of persons who do not have audience on the floor of the House in the conduct of our proceedings. They may not have the opportunity to be heard on the floor of the House.

Hon Members, regarding the issue relating to the former Minister for Finance, I am aware it is a subject matter of investigation by the Office of the

Special Prosecutor. The Office of the Special Prosecutor is established by the Office of the Special Prosecutor's Act 2017 (Act 959).

Hon Members, the law mandates the Special Prosecutor to investigate specific cases of alleged corruption or corruption-related offences involving public officers and persons who have been entrusted with prominent public functions in Ghana or outside Ghana. I would, therefore, urge the Special Prosecutor to operate within the ambit of the law. We are all not above the law. Therefore, as Ghanaians, we must respect each other and operate within the ambit of the law.

I thank you for the opportunity.

Hon Members, we have two other Statements to take. One is in the name of Hon Mohammed Amin Adam, Member of Parliament for Karaga, on the policies of the new Trump Administration in the United States of America and their implications for Ghana's economic development. The other one is a Statement by Hon Nana Osei-Adjei, MP for New Juabeng North Constituency, on the impact of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) shutdown on Ghana's economy.

Hon Members, if it pleases the House, we may want to take the Statements together and take contributions on them. I would, therefore, call on Hon Mohammed Amin Adam to present his Statement.

5.30 p.m.

STATEMENT**The Implication of the New Trump Administration on Ghana's Economic Development**

Dr Mohammed Amin Adam (NPP — Karaga): Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to make a Statement on this all-important subject of the implications of the policies of the New Trump Administration in the United States on Ghana's economic development.

Mr Speaker, the reinstatement of Trump's Administration policies, including freezing funds to United States Agency for International Development (USAID), imposing tariffs on major trading partners, mass deportations and withdrawing from the Paris Accord on Climate Change, poses significant challenges for many countries, including Ghana.

USAID has been a crucial partner in Ghana's development, funding numerous projects in healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Freezing these funds to USAID implies that Ghana would lose US\$150 million annually.

With a national budget already very tight and the Government's plan to scrap some taxes, I am wondering how this funding gap is going to be done. But, this is an indication of the fact that we are already feeling the effects of the policies of the Trump administration. This could lead to reduction in Development Aid exposing essential projects to face cutbacks or

cancellations, affecting sectors critical to Ghana's growth.

While tariffs directly imposed on Canada and Mexico may not immediately affect Ghana, secondary effects could arise. The global trade disruptions that arise from tariffs on major economies can lead to shifts in global trade partners and patterns, potentially reducing demand for Ghanaian exports. Countries affected by United States of America (USA) tariffs might seek new markets, increasing competition for Ghanaian products. This action could also lead to changes in trade dynamics which could disrupt supply chains that Ghanaian businesses rely on.

The mass deportation of immigrants from the USA could have several repercussions for Ghana. Remittances from Ghanaians living in the U.S.A contribute significantly to the local economy.

Deportation could reduce this valuable income stream. Also, an influx of returnees might strain social services and job markets, necessitating urgent policy responses. So far, it is reported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the number of Ghanaians affected by the deportation programme is negligible. However, given Ghana's stability, other African citizens deported to their countries that are politically unstable, could escape this instability to Ghana.

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that the new Trump Administration will bring a shift in policies and priorities, both

domestically and internationally as we are already witnessing, which will affect policy choices in developing countries like Ghana. However, every coin has two sides.

Therefore, the effects notwithstanding, Ghana stands poised to capitalise on several opportunities provided by Trump's policies for economic development. By strategically aligning with the administration's policies, Ghana can foster growth, attract investments, and strengthen its economic ties with the USA.

One of the key areas where Ghana can benefit is through enhanced trade and investment relations. The Trump administration's focus on bilateral trade agreements presents an opportunity for Ghana to negotiate favourable terms that boost exports and attract American investments. By emphasising sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and technology, Ghana can position itself as a valuable trade partner.

Ghana's agricultural sector has immense potential for growth, and the Trump administration's policies could provide a significant boost. By increasing access to the American market, Ghana can export more cocoa, coffee, and other agricultural products, thereby generating foreign exchange and supporting rural development. Additionally, collaboration on agricultural technology and best practices could enhance productivity and sustainability.

The Trump administration's focus on reviving American manufacturing can be leveraged by Ghana to attract investments in its own manufacturing sector. By promoting joint ventures and partnerships, Ghana can benefit from technology transfer, skills development, and job creation.

Special economic zones and industrial parks can be established to facilitate these collaborations, creating a conducive environment for American businesses to invest in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, due to Ghana's non-aligned status, the benefits of the new USA policies particularly, President Trump's preference for bilateral partnership should not overshadow our quest to harness the potential of multilateralism. We stand at a crucial juncture where we can harness the power of multilateralism to drive our economic agenda while fostering a robust relationship with the USA under the new Trump administration. Multilateralism, with its emphasis on cooperation among multiple countries, can offer Ghana avenues for sustainable development, international partnerships, and economic resilience. Simultaneously, maintaining a positive relationship with the USA can provide bilateral benefits that further our national interests.

Multilateral engagements, particularly through organisations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the United Nations (UN), can provide Ghana with

platforms for economic collaboration and development. By participating actively in these organizations, Ghana can attract investments, secure developmental aid, and benefit from shared resources and expertise.

Through multilateral frameworks, we can access larger markets and negotiate favourable trade agreements that enhance our economic standing. For instance, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) creates a single continental market that can boost intra-African trade and attract foreign investments. Leveraging such multilateral agreements, we can strengthen our trade ties while negotiating bilateral deals with the United States that align with our economic goals.

Mr Speaker, permit me to add that multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) can continue to provide Ghana with financing for critical infrastructure projects. These projects, ranging from transportation networks to energy facilities, are essential for Ghana's economic growth. By securing funding and technical assistance from these institutions, Ghana can build the infrastructure needed to support its development agenda and attract further investments, including from the USA.

Mr Speaker, the new Trump administration's policies present numerous opportunities for Ghana to enhance its economic development. By strategically aligning with these policies

while embracing multilateralism, Ghana can attract investments, boost trade, develop infrastructure, improve education, and promote tourism. It is crucial for Ghana to actively engage with the USA, leverage its strengths, and build partnerships that drive sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

By maintaining a balanced approach that combines multilateral engagements with strong bilateral relations, Ghana can navigate the complexities of international diplomacy and achieve its development objectives. This strategy will enable Ghana to benefit from the collective strength of multilateral cooperation while reaping the rewards of a positive and productive relationship with the United States.

Mr Speaker, let me conclude by drawing attention to key strategic interventions Ghana needs to adopt to position itself to withstand the effects of President Trump's policies.

To mitigate the impact of potential trade disruptions, Ghana should expand market access by seeking new trade agreements and partnerships with other regions, such as the European Union, Asia, Middle East and Africa; and also promote export sectors by investing in and promoting sectors with high export potential, such as agriculture, textiles, and technology.

To reduce dependence on international aid and imports and to fortify Ghana's economic resilience, the Government must support local

industries to encourage their growth, fostering self-reliance and job creation. The government should also continue to invest in critical infrastructure to support efficient production and distribution of goods.

Ghana should explore diverse funding avenues to replace potential shortfalls from USAID by promoting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through the creation of a favourable investment climate, focusing on sectors with high growth potential. The Government should engage with international financial institutions, fostering public-private partnerships, and tapping into diaspora bonds, which can provide the necessary capital to sustain growth initiatives in healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

Building strong diplomatic relationships can help counterbalance the adverse effects of USA policies. For example, Ghana's continuous active engagement in the African Union, the United Nations, and other multilateral organizations can elevate Ghana's global standing. There is also the need to continue to forge alliances with countries that share similar development goals to facilitate collaborative efforts in addressing common challenges like climate change, debt distress and poverty alleviation. To address security concerns exacerbated by USA policies, Ghana should enhance Regional Cooperation by collaborating with neighbouring countries and regional bodies such as ECOWAS to improve intelligence sharing and border security.

Government must also invest in Human Security by focusing on education, healthcare, and social services to create a stable society that is less susceptible to extremist influences.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Dr Mohammed Amin Adam. I will now call upon Nana Osei-Adjei.

5.40 p.m.

STATEMENT

Impact of USAID Shutdown on Ghana's Economy

Nana Osei-Adjei (NPP—New Juaben North): Mr Speaker, I am very grateful for the opportunity given me to make a brief statement on the impact of USAID shutdown on Ghana's economy.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid. Responding to the pledge of former President Barack Obama, in his 2013 State of the Union's Address, to join with other allies to eradicate extreme poverty in the next two decades, USAID adopted its mission statement to partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient democratic societies, while advancing the security and prosperity of the United States and beyond. USAID operates in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.

Mr Speaker, permit me to list some of the interventions USAID has made over

the past years in Ghana in a number of areas such as health, agriculture, education, and governance. In terms of agriculture, through its Feed the Future initiative, USAID has supported smallholder farmers, especially in northern Ghana, where poverty and malnutrition are prevalent. The programme has increased food production, improved market access, and built resilience among farmers. Without this support, many will struggle to sustain their livelihoods.

Beyond agriculture, USAID has been instrumental in strengthening Ghana's democracy, rights, and governance. It has played a critical role in ensuring free and fair elections, improving local governance, and enhancing accountability in public institutions.

With the Donald Trump Administration sounding war drums on the shutdown of the operations of USAID worldwide, opinions have varied, with some expressing little surprise at the turn of events. The cut in the funding will affect the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which provides vital HIV prevention care and treatment services. A decrease in development assistance could severely disrupt vital initiatives, which are essential in addressing Ghana's public health challenges.

PEPFAR, which operates largely through USAID, provides antiretroviral treatments to thousands of Ghanaians living with HIV/AIDS. If these funds disappear, countless people could lose access to essential healthcare, reversing

years of progress in disease control. USAID has been a lifeline in fighting malaria, improving medical health, and funding life-saving vaccines.

Mr Speaker, again, permit me to say that USAID's shutdown would likely have a negative impact on Ghana's economy, potentially leading to decreased investments in critical infrastructure and many more, not to leave out the many NGOs that rely on USAID for support. In view of this, I call on all stakeholders, including us, Members of Parliament, as leaders, to take a critical look at this issue.

Mr Speaker, in Nigeria, in response to this directive from the Government of the U.S., the Nigerian Government, through the Federal Executive Council (FEC), approved US\$1.7 billion for healthcare reforms and NGN4.8 billion for HIV treatment. Like the response of the Nigerian Government, other African nations should seize this moment to look inward and begin the journey toward self-sufficiency in critical sectors.

Mr Speaker, during the commissioning of the National Vaccine Institute in Ghana by His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the former President of the Republic of Ghana, on Wednesday, 10th May, 2023, he highlighted his Government's determination to ensure that Ghana is never again a victim or pawn of the international vaccine order.

The National Vaccine Institute is thus, expected to operationalise Government's vision of securing the

much-needed vaccines through domestic vaccine development and manufacturing in short, medium and long-term phases. The Institute was given some seed money to coordinate and facilitate the capacity of domestic pharmaceutical companies to fill, finish, and package mRNA COVID-19, malaria, and tuberculosis vaccines.

Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo went on to explain that vaccine nationalism played out by the developed world during the COVID-19 pandemic was a wake-up call for Ghana to take its destiny into its own hands. As if he knew that this would spring up again in the foreseeable future; thanks to the former President for this foresight.

Mr Speaker, while Ghana and Africa still have a long way to go, timely and decisive leadership could set the continent on the right path, reducing years of over-dependence on the US and other foreign donors. It has always been said by renowned scholars and leadership consultants that no country can build a sustainable future by relying solely on foreign aid. Ghana must take proactive steps to secure its progress and reduce its dependence on external support.

One critical step is domestic resource mobilisation. The Government must strengthen tax collection, close loopholes, and reduce losses to ensure that essential programs such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure are funded from within. Additionally, public-private partnerships (PPPs) must be expanded to encourage businesses to

invest in key sectors like healthcare and education to ease the burden on Government's spending. When the private sector is engaged, development becomes more sustainable. Beyond this, Ghana must diversify its partnership.

Finally, Mr Speaker, while the US has been a key ally, it is essential to engage strategically with other players like the European Union (EU), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and emerging global economies. This will ensure continuous support while reducing dependency on any single donor.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for this opportunity. The good people of New Juaben North are grateful. [*Hear! Hear!*]

5.50 p.m.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. I would open the floor and take comments subject to Order 93(5).

Yes, Hon Second Deputy Majority Whip?

Mr Richard Acheampong (NDC — Bia East): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the Statements made by our Colleagues.

Mr Speaker, this is more of a research paper, and I think after commenting on it, we need to archive and publish it.

The first one came from the former Minister for Finance. He has done

extensive work and has researched into it. If one reads the document, it is very insightful and educative, likewise my Hon Colleague who just finished reading his Statement.

Mr Speaker, on the issues raised by the former Minister for Finance, he has also provided an antidote to deal with the matter which tells us that at least he knows the challenges ahead of us and has provided some information. If we take all of the issues on board, we can address them.

Mr Speaker, I must say that history is repeating itself. COVID-19 exposed our medical system in this country. We said among one another, that we should invest so much in our health facilities, and there was even a mantra, “Ghana beyond aid”. Let us look within, develop our own nation, and our own economy so that there would not be any attractive venture for our youth to travel outside the country to seek for greener pastures. This is because if we read the Statement, he is talking about deportation. So, if we are able to develop our own nation and our youth would just travel for fun or holidays as tourists, there would be no motivation for someone to stay abroad or to even talk about deportation. But no matter what, there would be one or two found in that instance.

So, what are we doing to ourselves? We talk of import substitution. What are we providing and producing locally? The question is, are we also consuming what they are producing? We behave as if we do not care about what is happening around us. Yesterday, there

was The Speaker’s Breakfast Prayer Meeting and he made mention of everyone patronising perfumed rice—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, remember you are speaking within five minutes.

Mr Acheampong: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

So, I think this sanction or the withdrawal of the USAID support has come at the right time because the Minister for Finance is about presenting his budget to the House. Yesterday, the President issued a Statement calling on the Minister for Finance to provide a funding gap to deal with this situation so this would feed into our budgeting and our plans. So, we need to be disciplined; let us cut the waste like H. E. President John Dramani Mahama said, let us cut unnecessary travels; first class. Business class can be used so that we can make some savings.

Mr Speaker, if we are not disciplined and unable to cut expenditure — because in the Statement, he talked about revenue mobilisation. How do we raise enough revenue and increase expenditure?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, conclude.

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, I would conclude by saying that just few months ago, our Colleagues were attacking us to approve about US\$300 million tax exemptions. So, if we raise revenue and on the other hand, give

freebies to other people, how do we get enough revenue to deal with such a situation? So, we need to be disciplined; I am talking about fiscal discipline so that at the end of the day, we would have enough revenue in the kitty to deal with such unforeseen shocks and contingencies.

We cannot speak to matters like this and go to sleep. We need to put in place measures to address them.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Patrick Yaw Boamah, you have the floor. Five minutes.

Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah (NPP — Okaikwei Central): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Let me put it on record that nobody travels first class in this Chamber so when one is speaking, one is sending messages out there for them to attack us again. This is because apart from Emirates airline, no aircraft or airline has first class services in Ghana. Hon Acheampong has to be very careful.

Mr Speaker, I would mention five things that would affect some of President Trump's executive orders and its effect on Ghana and Africa as a whole.

First is the suspension of foreign assistance programme which the President promptly directed the Minister for Finance to look for the

funding gap for the US\$156 million that the USAID was providing to Ghana. My calculation here is GH¢2.4 billion. Mr Speaker, it is going to be a challenge.

Second is the external revenue service; there is going to be tax calculation distortions that would hit Africa because of remittances and other issues that would come our way.

Third is the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. Mr Speaker, United States alone contributes 14 per cent of the world's carbon emission after China and it is an issue that we need to look at critically especially where the Ministry of Energy is now known as the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition while we are seeking to trade in carbon under that programme within the Paris Agreement.

Mr Speaker, fourth, is the withdrawal of the United States support from the World Health Organisation which is going to affect Africa and Ghana. The US contributes US\$ 1.24 billion to the World Health Organisation and those programmes are partly funded or has far reaching implications on our health delivery system.

Mr Speaker, last but not least is the energy emergency programme. The USA is now going to explore more oil and gas and that would in effect drive down the prices of oil and gas globally. Ghana is a net exporter of finished petroleum products. We produce only 120,000 barrels of crude oil a day; that is chicken change compared to the over 1.4 million barrels that the Nigerians

produce. If the little that we are producing, the USA is going to increase their production levels and it would drive down prices, then we are not going to gain the kind of money or revenue that we are seeking to derive from it. And that would create a funding gap in our Budget. So, we expect to hear some of these interventions from the Minister's Budget come the end of March.

Mr Speaker, our Colleague spoke about 1D1F programmes and the fact that we need to look into import substitution. It is a call in the right direction. This House did not approve the tax incentives for the 1D1F programme. We were seeking a total of about US\$100 million not US\$300 million.

My Colleague was a member of the Finance Committee which I chaired and we did not ask for US\$300 million. We drove down the prices, took out raw materials and focused on equipment. All in all, Mr Trump and his administration are telling us something that we must take on board, that we must generate revenues within our borders; grow our local industries; create the jobs that are supposed to be created by the private sector that government cannot absorb; and deal with all the unemployment levels that we see on our streets. We must be creative in our ways and ensure that this country does better than we are seeing today.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: It is now the turn of Hajia Laadi Ayii Ayamba.

6.00p.m.

Hajia Laadi Ayii Ayamba (NDC — Pusiga): Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Speaker, let me first congratulate the makers of the Statements and I would wish to start with the issue of deportations which is of much interest and very important because we do not know what would happen to our brothers and sisters who would be caught in the USA.

It is most unfortunate, Mr Speaker, that this policy has come to hit. It might not be only Ghana and I know for sure it would not be only Ghana, but we are bothered about our own country. I am so happy to have heard from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, who has come out to say that, from the records in the Ministry, there are 150 persons who are currently supposed to be deported and he has also made it clear that they should report to the various offices where they would get some kind of support to enable them come.

Thank God, Mr Speaker, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama has already spoken about the 24-hour economy. Let us embrace what we have no matter how many we are, no matter how little we have. Most people go out to do menial jobs. If one is in their own country and they decide—or the country comes together, and works towards development and most of the youths are employed, I do not think that anybody would wish to go and be in that cold,

running here and there, working and not even—Some of them doing works that they have not even dreamt of.

My prayer is that, they should come home safely. The greatest problem I have is those who might not even hear this. They might not even know and some of them would be in fear, so I want to urge the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration to let the message go down well that anybody, even if that person thinks he or she is not part of the 150 persons, that are already registered, the person should report, after all that person is a Ghanaian. We should appreciate our own country and I think that that policy is wake up call to us.

We should not think that when people work somewhere, it is rosy and we are run there to go and benefit. Like someone said somewhere that, if they bring those same category of people from America or other developed countries for instance into Ghana and give them two years, they would change Ghana to be better and to be like those countries which we are running to.

If we are sent there, because we are not ready to work and take up issues by ourselves and ensure that we eat what we grow, wear what we manufacture, appreciate what we have, and that we are ready to live within our means, we would still turn those countries to places that nobody would want and we would still be running back to our own countries where they have taken and made better. Mr Speaker, I am happy that the Minister for Foreign Affairs and

Regional Integration, Mr Ablakwa is up and doing.

The issue of USAID, with all the medications and what have you, yes, it would affect us but what have we been thinking? What have we been doing? We need to work harder; we need to appreciate ourselves; let us work together. The Region must be integrated.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, conclude.

Ms Ayamba: African countries must come together and ensure that we are each other's keeper. If we are each other's keeper, Mr Speaker, I believe that we should be able to get all the drugs that we think we need.

Also, Mr Speaker, last but not least before I take my seat, let us appreciate our local persons who provide certain medications. Let us make sure we work on them so that they would be able to support us with some locally produced medications which readily help, and I am sure it would go a long way. As for me, I do not blame President Donald Trump for what he has done. He has only woken us from sleep. Let us wake up from the slumber, let us work and let us keep together and Insha Allah, we shall be well.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. —[*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. I will give the floor to Rev John Ntim Fordjour.

Rev John Ntim Fordjour (NPP — Assin South): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I rise to comment on the two Statements that are on the floor and to commend the makers of the Statements, the Hon Mohammed Amin Adam, Member of Parliament for Karaga and the Hon Nana Osei-Adjei, Member of Parliament for New Juaben North for bringing to the fore, President Donald Trump's policy implication on Ghana and the shutdown of USAID and its potential impact on Ghana respectively.

Mr Speaker, since the establishment of USAID by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the Agency in my view has served its mandate truly and fulfilled their mandate of assisting humanitarian interventions across health education and many sectors particularly agriculture in many countries.

If it has come to a point where a new president deems fit to take the country on a new direction in their national interest, it is important that we in Ghana also reposition the fundamentals of our economic decisions to be resilient to absorb the potential shocks that these decisions would have on us.

Experts have predicted and rightly so, the makers of the Statements have also corroborated. Millions of Ghanaians that are going to be impacted adversely by these decisions by the President of the United States particularly across the sectors of agriculture, education and health. This year alone, as the figures have been indicated, Ghana requested in

partnership with USAID's intervention a total of 137.7 million dollars and out of these 16 million dollars relates to education.

It is important that recognising the critical roles that the partnerships Ghana had underway with USAID relating to sustainable agriculture, supporting farmers to improve their yields in health sector, very important critical programmes on HIV prevention and ensuring that the key diseases are fought and treated and in particular in education, having traversed from transition to English plus to now the Strengthening Accountabilities in Ghana's Education System (STAGES), the G-to-G agreement.

It is expected that, the first budget of President Mahama in 2025 should be responsive and should be robust enough to be nuanced to respond to the shortfalls that stare us in the face, the shortfalls that need to be addressed. We expect that to find expression in the Budget that is to come.

Particularly on health in the year 2015 when the early grade reading assessment indicated that in primary 2 learners across the country, only 2 per cent of them could read at grade level. It took the intervention of the partnership between Ministry of Education and USAID's transitions to English plus which was part of their learning activity to ensure that phoenix-based approaches and interventions were deployed across the country in very key schools. Teachers were trained in those phoenix-based approaches, teaching

and materials were produced and by those interventions, supporting other interventions of the Ministry and Ghana Education Service (GES), we were able to improve upon reading abilities of our learners and by the year 2023, when the National Satellite Test was conducted, we saw an improvement from 2 per cent of pupils at primary 2 reading in 2015 to 38 per cent and that was a significant improvement. That programme was taunted globally as the best reading programme.

Now we graduated from there and in September my boss here, the former Minister for Education, a Member of Parliament for Bosomtwi, Dr Osei Adutwum, launched in conjunction with USAID the G-to-G level partnership agreement which is Strengthening Accountabilities in Ghana's Education System (STAGES).

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, conclude.

Rev Fordjour: My Speaker, in conclusion, all these are very important but it shows that we as a Government at this point without having control over the decisions of other countries particularly very key development partners must take steps to prioritise funding to these critical education interventions to ensure the seamless implementation to augment on the gains to ensure that the decision taken by President Trump do not halt our gains that we have made.

Lastly on deportation, the official numbers that have been put by Ministry

of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration stand at 156, potential Ghanaians that face deportation. But, however the numbers, —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, your time is up.

6.10 p.m.

It is important that they are assisted with consular services to be deported in dignity, not in chains. They are facing traumatising experiences having been separated from their families with no hope of ever seeing them again. This is the time we would call on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure that they safely return our people, and I thank you with these few words.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, you have the floor.

Mr Sebastian Fred Deh (NDC — Kpando): Thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, I can only make a very brief contribution to the Statements that have been made, but I would focus on the one that was ably done and so deeply researched by the former Minister for Finance. I really enjoyed that work, and I actually focused on the areas that he ended his note on where he mentioned that there needs to be some level of deep focus on social interventions, and I heard clearly the mention of education. I want to associate myself deeply with that comment and state that all the interventions that we need to move this country forward and expand our

economy are linked to one important ingredient, which I call Technical, Vocational and Skill Training (TVET). I am happy that my seniors, both Rev Ntim Fordjuor and the former Minister for Education are here, and I believe they would associate themselves with my mention of TVET.

I say so because it is a known fact that education is key to development, but the master key to development is TVET, and if this country would expand all that we need to be able to grow this economy, I believe that skills development is critical. All the industries that we need to have a high level of skills to be able to uptake the various technologies that will expand our economy. And if this would develop, this has to do with how we are able to finance our TVET education in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, this is a very good and pragmatic way of improving upon our export development, and that is why the one key policy that has found great expression in the National Democratic Congress (NDC) manifesto, which is being implemented now, is the 24-Hour Economy policy, the export development drive, the improvement in apprenticeship and the modernisation of same. These are critical ingredients that I believe that if we pursue and put some more funding in this, that they do not suffer, this country would improve economically. This country would have the necessary impetus to export and get the necessary foreign exchange that would drive the economy. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Now, Leadership?

Ms Patricia Appiagyei: Mr Speaker, I am yielding to the Hon—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, you have the floor for five minutes.

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama (NPP — Walewale): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I will also want to join the other Colleagues to thank the maker of the Statement for such a thorough Statement, well researched by the Hon Member for Karaga, ably supported by also the Hon Member for New Juaben North.

Mr Speaker, I would focus on the gap and the implication of that gap on Government fiscals. The maker of the Statement has stated clearly that this decision by the United States government and President Donald Trump to cut 98 per cent of USAID funding to developing countries has come with its own implication. And in Ghana, annually, we are going to have a shortfall of funding of about \$150 million.

Mr Speaker, let me put this in context. The Hon Member Okaikwei Central posited that we would have a shortfall of about GH¢2 billion. This is equivalent to falling short of the amount we earn from e-Levy. In other words, the Government would need a revenue handle, like the e-Levy or similar methods, to replace the funding gap. The GH¢2 billion shortfall would have

to come on the back of the fact that the Government is already doing away with several revenue handles.

Mr Speaker, many youth programmes, for instance the youth empowerment programme by USAID, are going to be cancelled. The agriculture programme, like the support programme for farmers in the north, is going to be cancelled. Educational programmes, such as the Teaching and Learning Material (TLM), by the United States Government is going to be cancelled. This is the implication of the action by Donald Trump. And this, we must note, is coming to bite the Ghanaian economy. We are going to face the reeling effect of that action.

Mr Speaker, what can be done to ameliorate this situation? The maker of the Statement ably, competently, and brilliantly submitted the proposed solutions. I would go with one of the measures he mentioned: multilateralism. He highlighted the fact that we can still have relations with our development and multilateral partners, such as the African Development Bank and the World Bank. Once we get this relationship ongoing, they can come in to fill in the US\$150 million funding gap that is being created due to the United States Government policy decision to stop funding to developing countries.

Mr Speaker, last but not least is the Government's own measures to —

Mr Acheampong —*rose*—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Acheampong, are you on a point of order?

Mr Richard Acheampong: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: On what order?

Mr Acheampong: Order 125 of our Standing Orders

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Order 125 or 122?

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, 125—Anticipation. Our rules are very clear. The Hon Member is contributing to a Statement, and we know making a comment should not provoke further debates. He is anticipating that we would cancel education and health, please.

Mr Speaker, the Government would present its Budget by the first week in March. Let us wait; even if USAID is cancelling or withdrawing its support, let us see what is in the Budget; the kind of provision this Government would make in their Budget. So, they can withdraw their support to us, but we would cancel anything. He is creating fear and panic among the public; our rules are clear.

Mr Speaker, they can cancel their programmes and withdraw their funding, but we would make enough provision to deal with those issues. So, Order 125 is clear; he should not anticipate anything which has not been

brought before this House; we can do that outside this House. The Budget has not been presented, and we do not know the kind of intervention this Government would provide. By 27th March, 2025, there would be a Message on State of the Nation, so he would be comforted.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, be guided. Please, proceed.

6.20. p.m.

Dr Mahama: Mr Speaker, safe to say that that was not what I said. The Hon Member did not get the import of my point. And I am assuming he could have sought a clarification to what I stated. For the sake of the record, I stated that, due to President Trump's decision to stop funding, there are ongoing projects by the USAID which include Teaching and Learning Material support to schools (TLM Plus)—My last check shows that USAID is present in over 48 districts.

Those activities would be cancelled because the funding method by the United State Government would not come. So, they are stopping their funding, they are cancelling these programmes with the Government of Ghana and that is a statement of facts. It is not anticipating anything.

Mr Speaker, so Order 125 is moot. It does not apply in this case. I was concluding. Let me conclude by saying that we would need to look at how we can generate—And I would support any move by Government to the extent that

it is consistent with the Government plan and manifesto, to be able to fill in the funding gap. Because the good people of the North benefit greatly from the United States Aid. For instance, the Drought Support Program supports us a lot, especially when we are engaged in farming during the dry season or when we are hard hit by drought.

So, Mr Speaker, I want to thank the maker of this Statement, and to state that Government must have to come with a concrete and cogent action plan to fill in the gap and to support the development of the country.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Majority Leadership?

Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan (NDC —Cape Coast South): Mr Speaker, I would like to add my voice in thanking the former Finance Minister and my brother, the MP for New Juaben North, I believe. I do not think what is happening in the United States should come as any surprise to anyone. We have always known that Donald Trump is an inward-looking President. Donald Trump is an anti-globalisation President and we just have sat down and done nothing for a very long time, expecting that the result would be the same. The situation we are in now—and I do not even know why we are—The Minister for Finance is here. The donor funding that comes into the budget is very small. It is not much, so I do not know why we are even making—You know, we actually have to find 150 million and I

believe that the Finance Minister would find it. That is not the problem.

The problem is the impact that Trump's policies would have on us. Some are primary effect and others are secondary. Mr Patrick Boamah talked about oil production. That would have a primary impact on us, because global prices of oil will go down and therefore, we will not be able to get much revenue from the little oil, 120 barrels a day or that 1,000 barrels a day that we export.

But also, this is a tremendous opportunity for us as a country. Yes, we are not going to—Whatever happens in terms of the tariffs or the Paris Agreement or withdrawal of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or whatever Trump chooses to do, it is not going to affect us directly, but it will have a secondary impact on us. The remittance is not going to be much. So far, we have talked about 150 people being brought back home. That is not going to change the numbers in terms of the remittances that we get into that country very much.

But what is actually going to have impact on us has to do with trade. At the moment there is something happening that we need to wake up to. As Ms Laadi said, this is actually a wake-up call for us because a lot of the money that comes into this country, there is 150 million that comes into the budget, and the other ones that goes to various departments and agencies that the Ministry of Finance most of the time do not even know about—That turns out to be what they call the Internally Generated Fund.

A lot of these moneys are actually being misused. They are not used effectively, and some of the people crying as a result of these free moneys, they call it, that come in and get misused.

What we should wake up to now is that because of the tariffs that especially Asian countries and China, are going to be paying, they are beginning to move their productions from China into other countries, especially Africa. A lot of African countries such Rwanda, are benefiting from this. We are here, the headquarters of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) is here, and we are doing very little. So, a lot of these companies are basically moving their machines from China and other places to relocate themselves to places where they would pay much lower tariffs.

In Africa, we have various agreements with the United States to be able to send things there on low tariffs. A lot of cotton garment businesses are moving. If one goes to East Africa at the moment, a lot of garment companies are moving from China to relocate to Rwanda and other places because of the low tariffs on things like African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and things that people are able to send.

These are the things we need to look at and I know you do not like to hear 24-Hour Economy —*[Hear! Hear!]*—But the 24-Hour Economy, is going to be a vehicle. If this Government targets some of these companies that are relocating to Africa and encourages them with tax incentives and other incentives, some of

them, the raw materials are here, that is why they are relocating. So, if we can provide the raw materials, we can give them cheap labor, we can provide sufficient energy and efficient energy, and we can do all the things that would enable these companies to set up here, we can industrialise or we will become the serious manufacturing economy that we should be to be able to take advantage.

So we should not just be crying about what is going to happen to us because we would not get US\$150 million to waste, or we would not get money going into various departments and agencies, but we should look at the opportunities that this creates.

As I have said, someone gave us a signal that Donald Trump is not a president that looks at things globally, he is an inward-looking President. You keep hearing, “America first, America first”, and now Ghana is crying that Ghana is last. The man had told us already.

So Mr Speaker, this is an opportunity for us, as a wake-up call, to look at things differently and inwardly. As the President said, he has charged the Minister for Finance—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, conclude.

Mr Ricketts-Hagan: The President said that he had charged the Minister for Finance to fund this gap. The US\$150 million or so that we need to fund is not a big deal. The Minister for Finance knows that the donor money that comes into our budget is infinitesimal; it is very small and should not shake anyone up anyone. It is a wake-up call for us to find ways of building our own economy. Eight years ago, we were told “Ghana Beyond Aid” and today, Ghana still has not gone beyond aid. Those are the things we need to wake up to and try and address them.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, it is now 26 minutes after 6:00p.m. Having regard to Standing Order 56(2), I proceed to adjourn the House till Thursday, 13th February, 2025, at 12 noon.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was adjourned at 6:26 p.m. to Thursday, 13th February, 2025 at 12 noon.

Editor's Note

This *Official Report* was corrected by the House on 21st February, 2025, as follows:

Column 21, paragraph 1, line 7

“important” was corrected to

“importance”