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GALAMSEY FIGHT AND NDC'S RENEWED ATTACK ON GOV'T AND MY PERSON

My attention has been drawn to the scathing attack on my person by the National Communications Officer of the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), Sammy Gyamfi in his press conference that responded to President H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo's renewed assurance in the fight against illegal mining. In that press conference aired on various media platforms on Thursday 6 October 2022, Mr. Sammy Gyamfi malign and traduce me by referencing a rather doctored and propaganda-induced documentary authored by Tiger Eye P.I's Anas Aremeyaw Anas.

Sammy Gyamfi stated the documentary provides evidence of me "demanding and collecting bundles of money, bribes and abusing his office to facilitate illegal mining activity". He continued to speak certain untruths about the works of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM) where I served as a Secretary. Ordinarily, I wouldn't have responded to this matter given the fact I have long been exonerated by the Criminal Investigation Department of the Ghana Police Service on this fraud allegation leveled against me.

I am glad the President in his address at Manhyia Palace on Wednesday 5 October 2022 charged that we as Ghanaians and all other stakeholders tackle this galamsey menace without any partisanship and other political favours. I therefore will proceed in all candidness and truth about my work at the IMCIM and other matters including the infamous "missing excavators saga" which is being bandied around to defame the government of President Akufo Addo and the NPP. As put by Sammy Gyamfi, the impression following the Anas' documentary, indicated that I "compromised the government's effort in fighting galamsey."

My silence on these matters had reached its peak.

I speak the truth as a Ghanaian and sworn on my reputation to avert the minds of the good people of this country to the facts of these matters so that we can finally put an end to this political game-play.

We are in a digital age, and the internet never forgets hence the need to clear every iota of untruth about these matters.

Posterity will always be the judge.

Allegations of Fraud

1. The public has been misled to accept and believe the narrative put by Anas Aremeyaw Anas about the money I was seen taking in the video.
2. As I have said countless times, that money was not a bribe, and I did not make any demands whatsoever from any operative or beneficiary of illegal mining while I served on the IMCIM.
3. The money in question was a donation from the NPP Chairman of the Ashanti Region, Bernard Antwi Boasiako alias Chairman Wontumi, to the then NPP Western Regional Organiser, Abdul Ganiyu for a party event organised in the Western Region.
4. For the malice and character assassination that Anas and his sponsors had in mind, the public was denied the audio recordings and full disclosure of the purpose of that money handed to me.
5. It was uncovered that a former employee of the IMCIM, Francis Owusu Akyaw, whom I fired for unsatisfactory conduct sponsored the video recording of the documentary.
6. Francis Owusu Akyaw admitted to the Police of having commissioned that recording.
7. His nomination for the parliamentary candidate in the Juaben Constituency was subsequently declined as a result of this.
8. This same Francis Owusu Akyaw is a named beneficiary of a mining firm [DML, as named in the leaked will] co-owned by the late Sir John of the Forestry Commission.
9. On 18 July 2021, I petitioned the National Executive Committee of the NPP about the activities of some party people that are comprising the effort in the galamsey fight. The President and his Vice, the Chief of Staff, the General Secretary of the party, and the Chair of the National Council of Elders were all copied in this letter.
10. The CID conducted a thorough investigation into this matter by inviting all actors captured in the video including the author, Anas Aremeyaw Anas.
11. The Special Prosecutor then, Martin Amidu also advanced his investigations, where I, the person sponsored by Owusu Akyaw to take the secret recording, Anas and his lawyer, Kissi Adjabeng [now the Special Prosecutor] were duly interrogated.
12. All evidence, as suggested by Anas and his team made no proof of me taking a bribe nor circumventing the process in the issuance of licenses and permits to miners, as in the case of ORR Resources.
13. I believe Mr. Martin Amidu concluded his investigations into the matter, and duly captured his report and findings in his handing over notes to his successor, Mr. Kissi Agyabeng.
14. It will be recalled that Mr. Amidu indicated in his report on the corruption risk assessment on the Agyapa Deal that there was an "issue of identity" in the corruption allegation against me.

Missing Excavators and Prof Frimpong-Boateng's Dealings

1. Until January 2019, all confiscated earth-moving equipment was in the custody of Operation Vanguard. All confiscated equipment was parked at the various premises of the District Assemblies.
2. Reports filed by Operation Vanguard indicated they confiscated 258 excavators throughout their operations at the time.
3. In addition to this, Operation Vanguard removed 211 control boards of excavators which they were unable to evacuate from the mining sites.
4. It is not true, that 500 excavators were seized during the 2-year ban, as earlier reported by the Chairman of the IMCIM, Prof Frimpong-Boateng. The misinformation on the part of the Chairman, and his reluctance to correct the misinformation smacks of a deliberate agenda to discredit persons assigned to this task.
5. As Chair of the IMCIM, Prof Frimpong-Boateng was privy to every report about the confiscated equipment, and as such wasn't expected to have committed such a blunder.
6. On the 6th February 2020 following this blunder, I addressed a letter to Prof Frimpong-Boateng suggesting measures in dealing with the misinformation and the resulting political mess. The President, Chief of Staff, and all members (Cabinet Ministers) of the IMCIM were duly copied in this letter.
7. Prof Frimpong-Boateng must clarify matters regarding administrative decisions and directives he gave Ekow Ewusie in the handlings of the excavators.
8. It is equally important that he is made to answer all other allegations in this matter, and the dealings of Symphony Mining Limited, and River Restoration Limited during the days of the IMCIM.

Involvement of MMDCEs in Galamsey

1. Sammy Gyamfi avers the then Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Hadjia Alima Mahama stated she had knowledge and evidence of MMDCEs who were complicit in the illegal mining activities.
2. It is rather unfortunate such misinformation has been allowed in our media space. I was present at the retreat for MMDCEs where the Honourable Minister is reported to have made that statement.
3. In nowhere did she suggest there was evidence to reports [speculations/rumours] of the involvement of MMDCEs in illegal mining.
4. The Minister briefed on the happenings on the ground, cautioned the MMDCEs not to act in a manner that will thwart the effort of the government, and did add that any person complicit in this illegal business shall be uncovered soon and made to face the full rigors of the law.

The Successes of the IMCIM

The IMCIM which was commissioned by the President in 2017, is one of the most responsive and innovative measures ever taken to address the menace of illegal mining in Ghana. The IMCIM was composed of 10 cabinet Ministers; with representation from the Lands and Natural Resources, Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Water and Sanitation, Local Government and Rural Development, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, Regional Re-organisation and Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, Interior, Defense, and Information.

1. The committee offered practical solutions for regularizing and sanitizing Ghana's small-scale mining industry.
2. The roadmap which was produced and commissioned by the President offered curative measures to restore water resources and degraded lands, deepening transparency in the mining licensing regime and permits.
3. It developed the blueprints for the Community Mining Programme, and the Alternative Livelihood Programme.
4. Instituted an enhanced surveillance mechanism via the Galamstop to provide real-time data on compliance of mining firms or groups across the country.
5. As part of the IMCIM's surveillance strategy, a total of 655 earth-moving equipment were tracked.

The government knowing all these cannot allow the NDC to continue to mislead and court negative emotions of the people against it, in this galamsey fight. The NPP government under President Akufo Addo has demonstrated commitment to dealing with the crisis, however, there have been some shortcomings resulting from the negligence and self-centeredness of persons entrusted with the duty of sustaining the effort in eradicating illegal mining.

It's about time we revisit the recommendations of the IMCIM, and operationalize all infrastructure that has been left dormant.

We can win this fight!

Charles Cromwell Nanabanyin Onuawonto Bissie
Former Secretary-IMCIM