

PRESS STATEMENT BY KWESI NYANTAKYI ON THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT BY ANAS AREMEYAW ANAS AND HIS TIGER EYE PI TEAM.

1. INTRODUCTION

Good morning media and fellow Ghanaians. Thank you for the opportunity you have offered to listen and consider my responses to the investigative report on corruption in Football in Ghana by Anas Aremeyaw Anas and his Tiger Eye PI team.

From the outset, let me state that I do not support corruption in any form. It is counterproductive and undermines the credibility of any endeavour.

In the same vein, I will condemn any premeditated and deliberately contrived scheme as well as any prejudicial piece of work undertaken under the guise of fighting corruption only for purposes of pursuing the private agenda of people intended to tarnish my reputation and cause disaffection for me among members of the general public.

2. APOLOGY,

I wish to first and foremost render an unqualified apology to the following very distinguished personalities. They are;

- i. H.E the President of the Republic of Ghana.
- ii. H.E. the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana.
- iii. H.E the former President of the Republic of Ghana.
- iv. Ministers and Deputy Ministers of State.
- v. Senior Government Officials.
- vi. Members of the NPP and NDC, and
- vii. The Football Family.

I owe them my deepest apologies because in my interaction with the supposed Sheikh from Qatar and his agents, I made comments that were not responsible having regard to my stature and experience. Those comments resulted from a poor exercise of discretion arising on the spur of the moment and in the circumstances in which I interacted with the supposed Sheikh and his agents. I think I was carried away by the lies represented to me. I am deeply sorry for the inconveniences my unguarded utterances have caused you.

I also apologize to well meaning and discerning Ghanaians, who I have by virtue of my indiscretion offended.

I extend the same level of apology to my family, friends and associates for the anguish and hardship this issue has created for them.

3. FACTS

In or about September 2017, Mr. Abdulai Alhassan (Mr. Alhassan), then Chairman of the Northern Region Football Association called and informed me that a certain Sheikh Al-Thani of Qatar (Sheikh) had expressed the interest in sponsoring the Ghana Premier League for \$5m per annum for 3 years. Mr. Alhassan explained that information about the Sheikh's interest in sponsoring the Ghana Premier League got to him from a certain Mr. Ahmed Hussein Suale (Suale) who is based in Qatar and Dubai. Mr. Alhassan told me that he knew Mr. Suale in Tamale and believed that the offer was genuine. He further informed me that Mr. Suale had been working with the Sheikh for at least 7 years for which reason the offer was worth considering.

Based on the representations Suale, Alhassan and I met at Coco Vanilla (a restaurant at Adjiriganor, Accra) where we discussed the subject. During the meetings Mr. Suale confirmed to both Mr. Alhassan and I that:

- (i) Sheikh Al-Thani wanted to set up an oil refinery in Ghana.
- (ii) That as a businessman, Sheikh Al-Thani had similar investments in Cote D'Ivoire, Botswana, Lesotho and other parts of Africa.
- (iii) The Sheikh Al-Thani was the majority shareholder of their family business known as MedGulf Construction Limited.

Mr. Suale further said that in 2016, Sheikh had initiated a similar move to establish an oil refinery in Ghana. He had held discussions with the previous Government.

Mr. Suale then told us that the Sheikh gave \$8m in financial support to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) political party and then President John Mahama in December 2016 for the General Elections.

Mr. Saale also said that the Sheikh was ready to offer financial support to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in mitigation of expenses incurred in the run up to the 2016 General Elections. He then sought our advice.

I responded by saying that if Sheikh Al-Thani spent \$8m on a party that had lost Elections, it made sense to spend the same amount or more on the party that won the election. I further stated that the President, Vice President, Ministers and Deputy

Ministers all came out of a costly election so in making the provision to offer financial support to the party, he should donate to the NPP party:

- \$5m in the name of (not to) the President
- \$3m in the name of (not to) the Vice President
- \$2m in the name of (not to) Minister and
- \$1m in the name of (not to) Deputy Minister

I advised that these amounts should be paid to the NPP subject to the political parties law. These statements were made in the spirit of a general discussion and were made believing that all present were genuine and credible. Subsequently, Suale and I met the supposed Sheikh in Dubai where I was tricked to repeat the donations in the name of the above officials. I did not know that I was being recorded. I certainly would have exercised a better discretion if I knew I was being recorded.

I would request that, Tiger Eye does us a favour by playing the full videos/audios of all the meetings held with Suale. The only occasion I met the supposed Sheikh was the meeting in Dubai. The video/audio presented to the public cannot be appreciated outside the context of all the meetings and discussions held.

Now, after the meetings at Coco Vanilla, Accra, Mr. Suale confirmed that Sheikh Al-Thani wanted to meet us in Dubai. They offered to provide pre-paid air tickets. Mr. Suale, however, subsequently advised that the Sheikh had requested that I pre-financed the trip and be reimbursed. I agreed and travelled to Dubai. I did not meet the Sheikh as promised. I paid for my ticket and hotel for the trip. Mr. Suale then arranged a second trip which was the only occasion I met the supposed Sheikh. Mr Soale provided me with an outboard air ticket (Dubai- Cairo) only contrary to an earlier agreement to finance an all round trip for me (Acc-Dubai-Acc). Its clearly discernible that apart from a partial leg of the trips I was owed for the rest of airfares, board and lodging which were incurred at the request of Mr Soale.

There was, however, a third trip the circumstances of which are unrelated to me personally although the Sheikh again requested through Mr. Suale that I pre-financed the trip to be reimbursed later. Since this trip does not relate to me personally, I do not think it necessary to disclose its details. I also paid for this trip.

It was during my second trip to Dubai that the Sheikh gave me \$40,000.00 as reimbursement for the air tickets I pre-financed for my two(2) trips and the third trip.

It must be emphasized that I did not receive any other monies from the

Sheikh for any other purpose.

I did not receive any monies for myself or on behalf of the President, the Vice President or any other senior Government official or the NPP. Let me also clarify that H.E the President, H.E. the Vice President, Ministers and Deputy Ministers and Senior Government Officials had no prior knowledge or subsequent knowledge of all the discussions contained in the video.

The money given to me was a refund for my expenses which I personally funded for the trip.

4.THE ALLEGED PAYMENT OF \$65,000.

From voice over commentaries on the video I was reported to have accepted \$65,000 in banknotes in October 2017 from a man claiming to be a member of the Qatari Royal Family (the Sheikh) who told me “that the money was for shopping” and that I then thanked the said man, “placed the banknotes into a black plastic bag” but “failed to report this large gift to the GFA” I vehemently deny the same, and wish to state that;

- i. it is completely false that I received \$65.000 from a person claiming to be a member of the Qatari Royal Family.**
- ii. It is also completely false that at the time the money was handed to me, I was informed “that the money was for shopping”.**
- iii In the context of (ii) above, it is therefore false that I was handed a “large gift”.**

I have already dealt with the circumstances under which I received the money from the Sheikh. Of key significance however, is the allegation that I received the sum of \$65,000.

Travel expenses for the three (3) trips

I came up to \$61,000.00 the breakdown of which is as follows:

- I. Cost of air ticket for two (2) trips, board and lodging -\$10.000**
- II. Cost of first-class air tickets for former footballer and two(2) others - \$26.000**
- III. Cost of board and lodging for the former footballer and two(2) others Burj Arab Hotel Dubai for five days -\$25.000**

Total cost= \$61,000.

Balance to be paid-\$21,000.

I was handed the sum of \$40,000 only in eight (8) bundles of US\$ 50 banknotes but not \$65,000 which both I and the Sheikh's agent understood to be reimbursement for the travel costs incurred by me, at the Sheikh's request. It is very easy to confirm how much was given to me from the video tapes. The money was exposed before I was tricked to put in the bag personally.

A critical review of the video clip will reveal that when the money was handed to me, there was no mention of shopping. A different video has a voice emerging from a faceless speaker saying "shopping for now". This insertion of an over riding voice was clearly an after thought.

Based on the agreement with Suale, the \$40,000 was a refund and not a gift or bribe. Its disingenuous to purport to donate a gift when the donor owes a lawful debt for cost of travels.

The question of public interest is: why Tiger Eye lied about the amount of money given to me. Why was the viewing public not allowed to perceive what they saw and heard on the video themselves? Why run commentaries to deceive the viewing public?

ii. **Namax**

It is again alleged from voices on the video that, I personally negotiated a \$15m sponsorship agreement between Ghana Football Association (GFA) and an apparent Qatari trading Company and that I intended that this money would be received by an agency named Namax, which is beneficially controlled by me. This is false.

At all times material to this matter I never negotiated any sponsorship agreement between the GFA and any Qatari Trading Company.

I met with the Sheikh's agent, Suale over a period of one (1) month and with the supposed Sheikh (only once) during which meetings, I advised that all sponsorships for the GFA are preceded by sponsorship proposals for which reason it was necessary for the Sheikh to present a written sponsorship proposal to the GFA for consideration.

I have no interest whatsoever in NAMAX. It is regrettable that Tiger Eye could not ascertain that from the most rudimentary of checks.

The mischief inherent in the suggestion that I advised that the sponsorship money be paid to an entity known as NAMAX is obvious when account is taken of the fact that

there was no sponsorship proposal sent to the GFA as advised. For this reason, no contract signed between the GFA and the proposed sponsor. The effect is that any discussion as to monies to be paid through NAMAX or the Savings and Loans company for or on behalf of the GFA was thoroughly pointless.

I recall, advising, when Suale suggested to me that the sponsorship money would most likely be paid in CASH to the GFA that because the anti-money laundering rules would not support his suggested mode of payment to the GFA, the following options could be employed:

- i. To open a bank account in Ghana to which the money should be paid, or
- ii. To deposit the money with a Savings and Loans Company with a letter detailing the purpose for which it was transferred.

I accordingly advised that the money would be transferred to the GFA only after the contract with the GFA is signed.

iii. Formation of a company as agent.

It is also alleged in the video, that I said I would form a Company to be an agency which would negotiate between the GFA and the Qatari Company and that this would be cool money. That I would charge between 20% and 25% with me and the Qatari Company agreeing whether various people would get a percentage with the effect that I would have benefitted by \$4.5m. The videos do not support this. The story is constructed with my voice recording from a different discussion on a most probably different subject. The point is credible if account is taken of the fact that basic arithmetics would have revealed that there was no way, assuming the allegation to be correct that I would have made financial gains in the sum of \$4.5m. By simple arithmetical calculation 20% of \$15m = \$3m and 25% of \$15m = \$3.7m.

I also reject all fabricated emails constructed from my account to implicate me in a wrong-doing. I have evidence that at least on five (5) occasions during the period under review, some person[s] gained unauthorized access to my email account.

The avowed aim of the Tiger Eye Team being mischief, my belief is that my email account was hacked with the deliberate aim of tarnishing my reputation.

iv. Memorandum of understanding{MOU}

It is also alleged in the video that Tiger Eye's investigations revealed that I drew up a Memorandum of Understanding to outline the sponsorship arrangement with Namax and signed as President of the Ghana FA. The MOU was between NAMAX and Medgulf Construction Company Limited. The GFA was no party to it. I had no

personal interest in the MOU. If my signature was cloned and pasted there, it had no legal effect. A poor understanding of legal instruments laced with mischief can only lead to the pointless argument canvassed therein. The point is obvious when account is taken of the description accompanying the signature. It is unthinkable that I will be signing a document in my capacity as the GFA President when the GFA is not a party to the document. As earlier indicated, what legal effect will such a document bear when I have no interest in NAMAX. Tiger Eye PI must explain the motive for this publication.

v. Middleman.

It was further added that I put myself as the middleman for the sponsorship deal with a view to taking a large commission that would deprive the GFA of which I was President of significant sums. This is ridiculous. Having advised that an agency be appointed to manage the sponsorship agreement between the GFA and the Sheikh (which is the usual practice) this accusation against me is without substance. I further advised that the cost of activation by the agent should not be part of the US\$15m proposed sponsorship amount. The MOU bears that out.

5.MOTIVE FOR THE PUBLICATION

Certainly a premeditated diabolic plan (confirmed by Tiger Eye) targeted at getting me out of the GFA. And to pitch me against our political authorities.

Why would Tiger Eye together with BBC try to make us believe the supposed investigation was carried out over a period of 2years when the first match was investigated on 19th of March 2017? Why was the video published a few days to the FIFA decision on the host of the 2026 World Cup? One objective of the exposé was to discredit me as a key supporter of Morocco's bid. How come Aden Range Marwa, the Kenyan referee, was tracked to no other place but Morocco by Tiger Eye?. These and other questions point irresistibly to motives than exposing corruption.

6. CONCLUSION.

Let me also confirm that there was a demand on me through a Lawyer to part with \$150k for Anas to drop the videos on me. I didn't have the said amount of money to meet his demand. Mahatma Gandhi once said "Journalism should never be prostituted for selfish ends or for the sake merely of earning a livelihood or, worse still for amassing money"

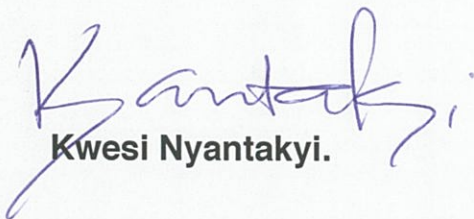
My humble request to the Ghanaian public now is that: having heard my side, whatever your view is, please ask Tiger Eye to let you have the benefit of the full videos devoid of his prior commentary and advice. You are capable of understanding things yourself. Unfortunately, I do not have a video to show you because I dealt with

people I trusted to be businessmen because they were introduced to me by a person I knew well. I have learnt the bitter lesson that the fact that you trust someone does not mean you must trust who they trust.

The videos showed by Tiger Eye PI exhibited common character traits that denied viewers the full benefit of the full story. The character traits are;

- I. One side prejudicial accounts were told without the benefit of the full raw detailed videos,
- II. Proceedings of meetings held by at least three were presented as though I was the sole lecturer in class. There were edited responses without the benefit of questions and contributions that elicited the responses.
- III. Shoddy work with cut and paste incoherent presentations
- IV. Tiger Eye resorted to twisting the facts through voice over commentaries and sub titling instead of allowing the videos to speak for themselves
- V. The videos were the outcome of an Orwellian as opposed to the work of a true Investigative Journalist. An investigative Journalist does real time investigations and not through the contrived scheme of entrapment. Mr. Manasseh Azure readily comes to mind as a good example.

I assure all my friends and loved ones that I am determined to deal with this matter in accordance with the law.


Kwesi Nyantakyi.