

## PRESS RELEASE

### SHOOTING OF THE PILGRIMS OF MPUASU-JAPEKROM TRADITIONAL AREA AT NEW DROBO AND THE SECURITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE JAMAN SOUTH MUNICIPALITY – NON-RESIDENTIAL CITIZENS OF MPUASUMAN-JAPEKROM TRADITIONAL AREA

**Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press, Good morning.**

We have called the attention of Ghanaians to a very serious security development in the Jaman South Municipal Area, specifically between Japekrom and New Drobo (Drobo). These matters resulted from the shooting of the Youth Chief of Japekrom and two other people, a Senior High School student and a one-year-old baby who were all part of a peaceful procession during the Celebration of the Munufie Festival by the People of the Mpuasu-Japekrom Traditional Area.

#### **2. THE MUNUFIE FESTIVAL**

The activities marking the Annual Munufie Festival of the people of Mpuasu-Japekrom Traditional Area involved a visit to Mpuasu, the ancestral home of the people to perform a spiritual bath. This year's activities involved the commemoration of our ancestral journey, a showcase of the coming and settlement of the people of Mpuasu-Japekrom in present day Japekrom. This event, which took place on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2018, takes place every 5 decades (50 years) and it involves walking on foot from **Krobuo** on the main Japekrom-Sampa road to Japekrom. Over 1000 residents and non-residents of the Traditional Area, including men, women, young, old and children participated in the historic walk.

Unfortunately, this peaceful walk ended in bloodshed. Unknown assailants fired gunshot from a storey-building at the roadside (eyewitness and police accounts) into the crowd, killing three (3), including a **one year old baby**. Over 25 people suffered gunshot wounds while other hundreds sustained various degree of injuries as they run for their lives. Some of the pilgrims, including old women had to hide in the bush from about 5:20pm when the crime occurred till 10:00am the next morning, when they had military escort to their homes.

#### **3. THE SECURITY SITUATION**

We commend the Interior Minister and the Brong-Ahafo Security Council for the prompt action taken to prevent mayhem in the municipality. We thank the Brong-Ahafo Regional Minister designate, Hon Evans Opoku Bobie for his visit to console with the Chiefs and

people of the Traditional area. We also commend the security agencies for their effort to control the situation.

**The issue at hand is a criminal matter and should not be clothed and swept away under the guise of non-existent chieftaincy and land litigation**, as some people want the world to believe. **The people of Mpuasu and Drobo have different ancestry and so have no traditional links**. And when there was land litigation, the two traditional areas trusted our legal system and resorted to the law courts. **Without any bloodshed the Supreme Court of Ghana has since 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015, settled the land issues**. It is therefore sad for anyone to create an impression that there is war in the area. Video evidence available on media platforms that covered the program shows men, women, school children and babies taking part in the procession. **For those who are attempting to justify this barbaric killing with the excuse of self-defense, we want to ask;**

- **Does anyone go to war with women, children and with bare hands?**

#### **4. THE MUNICIPAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**We believe the Municipal Chief Executive of the Jaman South Municipality, Hon. Alhaji Abuu, is complicit in the brutal shooting incident**. The Police who have been protecting the procession since it began were, all of a sudden, withdrawn by the MCE for a meeting. Suffice to say the shooting happened within five minutes of the withdrawal of the police force. Sadly, the MCE has admitted in a radio interview on Accra FM (100.5) that:

- I. He had in his possession a pump action gun.
- II. He went home when the walk started.
- III. Hon. Alhaji Abuu could not deny instructing the police to leave the scene.
- IV. The MCE had confessed that the Municipal Police Commander had asked him, as the head of the Municipal Security, to call for re-enforcement to assist the police to superintend the walk.

As the head of Municipal Security Council and MCE, Hon. Alhaji Abuu, should provide answers to these questions:

- A. Where exactly was he during the event: his office, his residence or the crime scene?
- B. Where was the gun in his custody at the time of the shootings?
- C. Why will the MCE go home when he saw the pilgrims walking towards town? Did he go for his gun?

- D. Why did the MCE ask for a meeting with the police at the critical moment and in the middle of the walk exposing the over 1000 unarmed men, women, young and old to the assailants?
- E. Couldn't Hon. Alhaji Abuu suspend the so-called important meeting for just 20 minutes for the police to escort the pilgrims to their destination?

**Ladies and gentlemen, by his own account and actions and the account of numerous reporters who were covering the historical walk, Hon Alhaji Abuu, the Municipal Chief Executive Officer of Jaman South is directly complicit in the orchestrated barbaric attack on innocent men, women and children and has no credibility to continue in office as MCE of the Jaman South Municipality.** The hands of the MCE are soiled with the blood of his own 42-year-old Muslim brother, Nana Attah Sina (Mmerantehene of Japekrom), the blood of a 15-year-old Gold Track SHS student, and the blood of a **one-year-old baby**.

**Consequently, we ask the MCE, Alhaji Abuu to resign honorably or be sacked by His Excellency, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana.**

**The MCE's continuous presence as Head of the Municipal Security Council has the potential to impede or undermine the integrity of the ongoing investigations by the security agencies and the provision of justice.**

## **5. THE INVESTIGATIONS**

We call on the Police to expedite action on their investigations and bring the murderers to book to calm the nerves of grieving family members. It is instructive to note that Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 2018 is exactly two weeks following the incident and no arrests have been made. The storey-building from which the guns were fired has an owner and occupants and it is amazing that the Police has detained none of these.

We call on all peace loving citizens of the Jaman South Municipality, Ghanaians and the civilized world to condemn this shameful, barbaric, cruel, inhumane and criminal attack on our innocent men, women and children and the hilarious justification. This disgraceful atrocity should not be entertained in a 21st century society.

## **6. UNPROSECUTED ATROCITIES BY NEW DROBO (DROBO)**

We wish to state the underlying basis for our frustration and call for the murderers to be arrested and prosecuted accordingly.

- I. It would be recalled that, on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004, Yaw Tawiah, a prominent associate of the Drobohene shot at natives of Japekrom whose farmland at New Drobo was being encroached on by unknown settlers from the latter community. The said case is still under lock at the Attorney General Department at Sunyani. **No Prosecution**
- II. Fast-forward 2016. During the Munufie Festival celebration of that year, the friendly and diplomatic attempt to invite the Drobo Traditional Council to the festival was met by the fatal beating of the messenger sent by the Omanhene of Mpuasu-Japekrom and the customary schnapps smashed by Yaw Tawiah, among others. The case has since stalled at Berekum Circuit Court-**No Prosecution.**
- III. On the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018, the people of Drobo assaulted the family and property of the Pastor of the True Faith Church, burning down his church, destroying his house and chasing the inhabitants into the bush. Reason: the Pastor was praying for Japekrom. **Not a single person has been arrested.**

**Unfortunately, the Pastor's wife lost her twin babies consequent to the disturbances.** As we speak, the Pastor and his family are refugees in Japekrom. **Again, no one has been prosecuted since August 2018.**

## **7. PROPOSALS FOR PEACE**

Ladies and gentlemen, **MPUASUMAN NEEDS JUSTICE**, and we are calling for justice to enjoy our freedom. We pray and appeal to the National Peace Council, the Brong Ahafo Regional House of Chiefs, the National House of Chiefs, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of the Interior, the Counsel of State, and ultimately, the Office of the President, to treat with all seriousness, this deliberate act to murder innocent people and other atrocities meted out to our people and also the underlying cause of all these security issues. This is the only way of ensuring lasting peace in Jaman South.

In conclusion, we add our voice to the call by the Okatakyie Amoa Aturu Nkonkonkyia II, the Omanhene of Mpuasu-Japekrom Traditional Area, for the youth of Mpuasuman to remain calm to allow the security men to conduct their investigation.

**LONG LIVE MPUASUMAN!**

**LONG LIVE JAMAN SOUTH MUNICIPALITY!!**

**LONG LIVE GHANA!!!**