



# NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS

## NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Our Ref: NDC/40/136R/02/003

Your Ref: .....

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Date: 11/03/2019

H. E. The President  
Jubilee House, Kanda  
Accra

Your Excellency,

**RE: PROPOSED MEETING OF NDC AND NPP ON DISBANDMENT OF  
POLITICAL VIGILANTISM: THE POSITION OF THE NDC**

Thank you for your prompt response. We are encouraged by your evident desire to push this initiative forward and to achieve peaceful, constructive, national politics in a Ghana that is safe and secure, within and without.

Your Excellency, in the interest of constructive dialogue, we will not, respectfully, dwell on the preliminary remarks in your letter and your unfortunate characterisation of our expressed concerns. Fortunately, the Short Commission sittings are televised, and all are free to draw their own conclusions from the testimony proffered to it. In spite of this caution, however we cannot restrain ourselves from drawing Your Excellency's attention to the recently broadcast documentary by Manasseh Azure Awuni of Multimedia Company on the activities of an illegal militia operating from Christiansborg Castle Osu, an annex of the Presidency. The unchallenged assertion in the documentary that these vigilantes are sponsored by the NPP and led by a personality who until recently, was your personal bodyguard, casts doubts on the

denials that the NPP neither sponsors these undesirables nor have they absorbed some of them into the statutory security services of Ghana

That this documentary has duly alarmed all Ghanaians, goes further to cement the need for Your Excellency to favourably consider the contents of our letter to you on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

Your Excellency, we would like in this letter to focus on the two substantive proposals set out in our letter that apparently troubles you. These are:

- a. Our proposal that we broaden participation in the process towards a solution to the crisis of political violence in our country; and
- b. Our proposal that the process be professionally facilitated.

We address each of these below.

### **Scope of Participation**

Your Excellency, our letter did not call for CSOs and other proposed participants to disband their militias. We obviously did not suggest that the National Peace Council has an armed militia. We rather called for wider participation in a citizens' process to end organised political violence. Our position on participation is actually quite simple: a lasting solution to the crisis of political violence requires that we involve all stakeholders. This is generally accepted as good practice. We define stakeholders to include all those who are affected by a policy; all those who will be involved in policy implementation; and all those who by dint of their work or expertise in the relevant area of policy have informed perspectives to contribute to policymaking. The stakeholders in the struggle against political violence cannot reasonably be limited to the two largest political parties. The list of stakeholders we proposed can of course be tightened or expanded. We however think it would be a tragedy to go forward on the narrow basis of only the two major political parties considering the gravity of the matters to be considered and the danger that the threat of unregulated use of force by unauthorized armed groups poses to civil society and, indeed, to those who bear arms lawfully as mandated by the 1992 4th Republican Constitution of which you are the principal guardian.

### **Facilitation**

Your Excellency, our position on facilitation flows logically from our position on participation. We are not looking at a principally juridical process. As indicated, we envisage a large and complex citizens' process. There will be several different stakeholders with different perspectives and priorities. The process itself will involve elements of goal-setting, fact-finding, confidence-building, reconciliation, policy



prescription and mobilisation of public opinion. These may require a combination of different approaches, techniques, and skills. With such complex processes there is a need to involve institutions or experts who specialise in process facilitation. This involves expertise in both the logical and psychological sub-processes required. Professional facilitators can ensure that all participants listen and are heard; that different perspectives and proposals are properly evaluated; that conflicts are analysed and understood; that individuals and institutional participants do not feel attacked; and that effective consensus is built towards clear actionable outcomes - all within a reasonable time frame. The sad fact is that this expertise does not reside in any meaningful way in the current political establishment as much as it does in civil society and in the international community. Indeed, a significant element of the crisis we currently face is the winner-takes-all culture of our national politics.

Your Excellency, NDC and NPP have indeed been the most successful parties of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic and have an absolutely critical role to play in achieving the change of direction needed. This can be reflected in the process we develop for this initiative. However, Your Excellency, our parties do not begin to represent the full scope of Ghanaian opinion as your letter suggests. An important driver of political violence is the fact that increasingly large sections of society do not feel represented by the political establishment and do not have faith in its constitutive institutions and their processes. The political establishment and the state itself are losing legitimacy. While it is in the partisan arena that violence has occurred most spectacularly (because of the typically high profile of the personalities involved), the truth is that the problem of citizens resorting to violent self-help is much wider. Some of the militias degrading our politics also provide "land guard" services to the highest bidders in our cities or double as galamsey or illegal logging enforcers in our rural areas. The same forces that "protect" prominent politicians are engaged in communal violence around chieftaincy disputes.

It is precisely this stark reality that provides compelling and persuasive argument that our two great parties cannot do it alone and that we need important assistance from the wider society to achieve lasting verifiable solutions that will assure peace and security to our citizens, our parties and our nation.

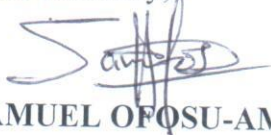
Your Excellency, we note also that the problems we face in Ghana exist to a greater or lesser degree in many other countries. Our attempt at a solution that goes beyond the legal process would be of interest to institutions involved in ensuring peaceful development across Africa. These include ECOWAS, the AU and various UN agencies. Ghana is a member of these bodies and is entitled to call on their resources to assist in resolving critical problems. This is not in any way a surrender of our

sovereignty or a declaration of a lack of faith in our own abilities. We see it rather as an act of responsible regional and international citizenship and transparency.

Your Excellency, it would be easy to test your belief that Ghanaians are happy to leave the question of political violence to be resolved bilaterally by NDC and NPP. We respectfully request that you invite the public and entities such as the Ghana Peace Council or the various expert institutions to weigh in on this debate. We have already begun to sound out other stakeholders and believe that there is considerable interest in participating in a process such as we have described.

Your Excellency, there is of course much to be done in order to get started officially. I believe that the people of Ghana deserve a more serious approach to this serious matter than a mere encouragement to the Chairmen of our respective parties to engage in telephone conversations. The NDC stands ready to commence detailed process structuring at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,



**(SAMUEL OFOSU-AMPOFO)**

**National Chairman**

**cc**

- 1. The National Chairman  
New Patriotic Party**
  
- 2. The Chairman  
National Peace Council**