

In case of reply the
number and date of this
letter should be quoted
Email:communication@mfa.gov.gh



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

P. O . Box M53
Accra, Ghana

Our Ref.:

TO ALL MEDIA HOUSES

PRESS STATEMENT

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration has noted with concern, the recent comments by Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, MP for North Tongu and Ranking Member of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the use of Ghana's Presidential jet by the President of Liberia.

In the latest of such utterances, Hon. Okudzeto Ablakwa sought to suggest that transporting the President of Liberia, His Excellency George Weah, aboard Ghana's Presidential jet to participate in the emergency ECOWAS Summit during the recent political crisis in Guinea, constituted an impropriety. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is common knowledge that as part of bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations, various friendly States provide assistance of different forms to each other. Thus, Ghanaian leaders have in the past, been transported to different parts of the world on the Presidential aircraft of other States.

It must be emphasized that the practice of sharing travel resources among West African Heads of State and high-ranking officials, is not a recent phenomenon. Indeed, in the past, some Heads of State have, in their capacity as Chair of ECOWAS, extended this courtesy.

It is a matter of public record that during his tenure, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo used to offer President Kufuor a ride aboard the Nigerian Presidential jet to regional Summits.

In view of the many threats to peace and stability in the region, Ghana has found it beneficial to our national interests, to lend state equipment for the promotion of peace and security in neighbouring countries.

This proactive strategy undergirds the tenets of Ghana's Foreign Policy, which include good neighbourliness, commitment to regional integration, mutual assistance, and the practical facilitation of African Unity.

Given the instability faced currently by some neighbouring states, Ghana's prudent facilitation of the participation of West African leaders in the emergency Summit held in Accra, is a reasonable investment which yields an incalculable dividend of continued peace and stability in our own nation.

In the wake of the recent political crisis in Guinea, the President of Ghana, H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in his capacity as Chair of ECOWAS, not only convened an emergency Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State, but also facilitated the travel of some of his colleague

0013542

Heads of State to and from Accra. This included President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone, President George Weah of Liberia and President Umaru Sissoco Embaló of Guinea Bissau, important stakeholders in the Guinea geopolitical situation.

This gesture went a long way to ensure the participation of almost all Heads of State in the sub-region, though the notice for the emergency meeting was very short.

In an era when Ghana's leadership and citizenry are championing a renewal of Pan-Africanism across the continent and the diaspora, (with free trade taking off under the AfCFTA), Hon. Okudzeto Ablakwa's insular posture comes as a surprise to the Ministry.

Indeed, our remit for regional integration remains a vital part of Africa's urgent quest for unity. Thus, we find any suggestion by the Hon. Okudzeto Ablakwa that the Government of Ghana's foreign policy initiatives, which foster African unity are irrelevant, rather strange.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration does not share this position, and wishes to note that Ghana has since independence, hosted and displayed very warm hospitality and provided support to our brothers and sisters on the continent, and continues to host migrants from all over the sub-region. Our record speaks for itself.

For instance, President Nkrumah is known to have supported Guinea with 10 million pounds in her time of need, and provided Ghanaian passports to Africans involved in the liberation struggle to enable them overcome immigration restrictions imposed on them.

In the light of the strenuous and concerted efforts by ECOWAS leaders to broker peace in the region, the Ministry finds it rather unfortunate that Hon. Okudzeto Ablakwa would seek deliberately to muddy the waters with these negative comments.

Moreover, the expectation that Ghana, as Chair, would bill the Presidents of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau while on a trip to participate in an emergency ECOWAS Summit, reveals an astonishing lack of understanding of the goodwill, camaraderie, and cooperation which exists amongst ECOWAS Heads of State.

The Ministry therefore wishes to assure the good people of Ghana that the Government of Ghana is not on a quest to dissipate wantonly State resources, but is focused on pursuing a pragmatic foreign policy which fosters regional integration and good neighbourliness in a climate of peace and stability. This ultimately inures to the benefit of Ghana and West Africa at large.

Furthermore, the Government of Ghana is committed to the noble objectives of the African Union, and will spare no effort in working towards a peaceful, prosperous, and truly United Africa.



ACCRA, 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021