



PRESS RELEASE

The attention of the Coalition of La Associations has been drawn to a Press Release dated 26th September, 2023 from the Ghana Armed Forces in relation to land in or around Kpeletso/East Airport, La.

The content of the said Press Release indicates that it was issued in reaction to a media report following the performance of customary rites on a parcel of land measuring about 114.52 acres in Kpeletso/East Airport. In the Press Release, the Ghana Armed Forces indicated that although they are aware of ongoing deliberations, no directives have been received from the Ministry of Defense nor any government agency permitting access to the La Stool. The Ghana Armed Forces therefore, by the release, take exception to the announcement made by the La Traditional Council.

The Coalition of La Associations (COLA) considers the release referred to above as unfortunate and misleading in all material respects. COLA wishes to state the following in response to the said publication:

1. The Military has occupied portions of land in or around Kpeletso/East Airport. Portions of the Land were acquired by Government between 1936-1944 while portions of the land occupied by the Military were purely La Stool land which was not the subject of acquisition.
2. A Petition was sent by the La Stool to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Lands Commission for the release of a portion of the land acquired. This was following an express affirmation by the government to release lands which had not been used for the purpose for which it had been acquired back to the pre-acquisition owners.
3. The then Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Mr. Asomah-Kyeremeh convened a meeting involving the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Lands Commission, the Ghana Armed Forces and the La Stool. Out of an area of 325 acres, it was agreed that the La Stool would retain about 250 acres.
4. Following a change in leadership at the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the assumption of office of the current Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Mr. Samuel Abu Jinapor, a new Committee was formed on 23rd April 2021.

The Ghana Armed Forces was represented on this Committee throughout its work until completion. The formation of this new Committee was widely publicized in the media. **The Committee duly carried out its mandate and delivered recommendations to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (“MLNR”) as far back as about August, 2022.**

5. At the conclusion of its work, the Committee agreed as follows:
 - a. That the La Stool will retain interest in a portion of the land measuring **114.52 acres** which represents a reduction from the previously agreed 250 acres.
 - b. That the Military will retain the remainder of about 211 acres which represents an increase from the previously agreed 75 acres.
 - c. In respect of an additional portion of land covering an area of approximately 140 acres (outside the area of 325 acres) which is La Stool land, which had not been acquired by Government, but which was being used by the Ghana Armed Forces, the Committee recommended that the Government takes steps to acquire the land (**measuring about 140 acres**) from the La Stool.

The Committee therefore completed its work and is defunct as at the time of the Press Release by the Military.

It could not have been true, as stated in the Press Release from the Ghana Armed Forces, that ‘there are ongoing discussions by a Committee set up by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources to deliberate and recommend possible measures to resolve the land issue.

6. The recommendations received approval from the Office of the Attorney-General as well as the Office of the President. A Memorandum of Understanding dated 1st December, 2022 was executed. Additionally, a Lease was signed in favor of the La Stool/La Traditional Council dated 19th December, 2022 in respect of the land measuring 114.52 acres.

7. On the 19th of May, 2023, the Ghana Armed Forces wrote a letter to the La Stool which stated as follows;

‘By way of update, I have been directed to inform the Council that Wednesday 07 June, 2023 at 10:00 Hours has been proposed for the Joint Team to jointly work on the demarcation of the boundaries between GAF lands and the Lands ceded to the Traditional Council’.

Representatives of the La Stool, Ghana Armed Forces and the Lands Commission jointly conducted an inspection and, **together**, planted pillars along the boundaries of the 114.52 acres of La Stool land. The area of 114.52 acres is therefore clearly demarcated on the ground.

The Ghana Armed forces is aware of steps commenced to acquire approximately 140 acres of La Stool Land at Kpeletso and also of the fact that 114.52 acres was ceded to the La Stool. Feigning lack of knowledge of the interest of the Stool therefore smacks of bad faith.

8. The present outcome, and the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, is the product of years of deliberation and the grant of mutual concessions. The Ghana Armed Forces, and their representatives were present and contributed actively to all discussions and deliberations, and particularly the work of the Committees which were set up. The Minister for Defence, Mr. Dominic Nitiwul was duly notified of the above events by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. The Letter communicating this is dated 1st March, 2023 and titled 'LAND IN LA TRADITIONAL COUNCIL OCCUPIED BY THE GHANA ARMED FORCES'. **Having been duly notified, the assertion by the Ghana Armed Forces to the effect that there has not been any communication to it from any government agency regarding the interests of the La Stool cannot be true.**
9. It is against this background that the La Stool and Traditional Council, on Wednesday, 18th September, 2023 performed customary rites on the land. The Ghana Armed Forces cannot pretend not to be aware of the deliberations and documentation executed in respect of the land.
10. It is the expectation of COLA that the Ghana Armed Forces will act in fairness and in accordance with the law and respect the rights of the La Stool for peaceful co-existence, since any action contrary to this would be unlawful, illegal, and will be a recipe for chaos.

Dadekotpon! Wuo Gbee, La Gbee!



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