***GJANEWS/GS/030***

**NEWS RELEASE**

**GJA Calls For Circumspection In Reportage On Late John Kumah**

**ACCRA, March 15, 2024 (GJA) – THE Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) is deeply concerned about unprofessional media reportage surrounding the death of the former Deputy Minister of Finance, Dr John Kumah.**

Although the media have a duty to inform the public about happenings in the country, including the death of the Member of Parliament (MP) for Ejisu, the GJA is extremely worried about, and disappointed in, the manner sections of the media have handled their reportage without due regard to the sensibilities and emotions of the bereaved family.

Having monitored the media space over the past one week following the death of the Ejisu legislator, and after a national executive meeting on **Thursday,** **March 14,** **2024** to review same, we hereby call on the erring media entities to stop their unprofessional reportage and attend their duty with the highest sense of circumspection, decorum and responsibility.

We urge the media to avoid partisanship, parochialism, ethical misconduct and anything untoward that may hurt emotions of people or the peace of the country.

Also, journalists must refrain from engaging in unhealthy discourses that have the tendency to create tension and disturb the peace of the country.

**Captain Smart & Oheneba Asiedu**

In calling the media to order, the GJA finds it necessary to cite two broadcasters whose pronouncements on the death of Dr Kumah have particularly been an apology to ethical journalism – Blessed Godsbrain Smart a.k.a. Captain Smart of ***Onua TV***, an Accra-based radio station, and Oheneba Asiedu of ***Wontumi Radio/TV*** based in Kumasi.

In a scientific world, and as generally acknowledged worldwide, the means to establish cause of death is through autopsy or *post-mortem* by qualified medical officer(s).

Thus, the claim by the two broadcasters that the late MP died of food poisoning, without recourse to such well-established scientific verification, is unethical, dangerous and could lead to unimaginable and undesirable repercussions.

Article 6 of the GJA Code of Ethics provides: “A journalist recognizes the public’s right to fair, unbiased, accurate, balanced and comprehensive information”.

Also, the choice of words by the two broadcasters such as ‘dogs’, ‘stupid’ and ‘silly’ to describe people on radio and television is vulgar, repugnant and pathetic debasement of ethical journalism.

Article 24 of the GJA Code of Ethics provides: “A journalist shows good taste, avoids vulgarity and the use of indecent language and images”.

Indeed, the use of vulgar and indecent language is not only an insult to the targets of their venom, but also to their audience to whom they owe a duty of decency and decorum.

The GJA calls on owners of media organisations, especially ***Onua TV*** and ***Wontumi Radio/TV***, to rein in their unprofessional employees, while advising the general public not to patronize media programmes and platforms that are ethically unwholesome.

**John Kumah’s Family**

The GJA extends its deepest condolences to the family of the late deputy minister and MP for Ejisu for the loss of their dear one.

We pray for divine strength to enable them to go through these difficult times, as they make preparations to find a resting place for the late MP.

The GJA, however, advises the family members to desist from making public pronouncements, especially in the media, that could generate reactions to aggravate their hurt, emotions and sensibilities.

We also call on the general public to respect the privacy of the bereaved family and refrain from comments that may aggravate their pain.

**Politics of Death**

Furthermore, the GJA calls on the general public, especially politicians, not to politicise the death or circumstances surrounding the death of the late Ejisu MP.

We should lend our thoughts and energies to discussing and planning a befitting burial for Dr John Kumah because as a member of the Executive and Legislature, he deserves one.

**END**

**SIGNED:**

**Kofi Yeboah**

**(General Secretary)**