



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MINISTRY
OF
LANDS AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

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DIGITAL ADDRESS: GA-110-0371

KINDLY QUOTE THIS NUMBER AND DATE ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE

MY REF. NO. _____

YOUR REF. NO. _____

DATE.

16th July, 2024

PRESS RELEASE

**RE: ALLEGATIONS OF STATE CAPTURE IN RESPECT OF PUBLIC
LANDS**

The attention of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources has been drawn to allegations by the Hon. Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa in respect of certain public lands which he alleges are evidence of state capture by the current Government and its officials. The Ministry welcomes any such interest and intense scrutiny of transactions relating to the public lands of our country, as it is the best way of protecting public lands for the benefit of the Ghanaian people.

By article 257(1) of our national Constitution, public lands are vested in the President of the Republic, on behalf of, and in trust for, the people of Ghana. In the spirit of transparency and accountability, the Ministry wishes to set the records straight in respect of the public lands to which the said allegations relate.

A. THE PARKS AND GARDENS LAND AT CANTONMENTS

1. The Parks and Gardens land situate at Cantonments, opposite the Head Office of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) was acquired by the State in 1894, by a Certificate of Title, dated 23rd August, 1894 for Hausa Reserve.
2. Subsequently, by a Certificate of Allocation dated 2nd October, 1952 the land was allocated to the Director of Agriculture, which was later succeeded by the Department of Parks and Gardens.

3. On 16th August, 2012, the then Deputy Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Elvis Afriyie Ankrah, on behalf of the then Minister, wrote to the then Chairman of the Greater Accra Regional Lands Commission, requesting to sell two (2) acres of this land to enable it raise funding to resource the Department of Parks and Gardens. The letter stated that the Department was "***in dire need of office infrastructure and other working tools***" and "***the agency wishes to sell two (2) acres of land it is currently occupying at Cantonments ... to enable it raise the needed funding to resource itself.***"
4. The letter indicated the support of the Ministry of Local Government, noting that "***the Ministry has received a number of interests in the land over the years,***" and that "***proceeds from the sale shall be used to provide Parks and Gardens with a new office, staff bus, some tractors, water tankers and the needed hand tools it is currently in dire need of, to restructure and reposition itself as a viable government agency.***" The said letter requested the support of the Lands Commission for this transaction.
5. Subsequently, by a letter dated 19th February, 2013, the then Chief Director of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Nana Oduro Kwarteng, submitted further information on the proposed transaction, together with supporting documents, namely:
 - A copy of a Public Private Partnership (PPP) Agreement, dated 23rd July, 2012 between the Ministry of Local Government Rural Development, and Akumbami & Associates, in respect of the land; and
 - A complete set of drawings for the New Offices of the Department to be constructed under the Agreement.

6. The Greater Accra Regional Lands Commission, at its meeting held on the 17th April, 2013, considered the application and deferred same for further clarification.
7. By a letter dated 22nd April, 2013, Akumbami & Associates wrote to the Greater Accra Regional Lands Officer, indicating that Wontirim Company Limited is a subsidiary of Akumbami & Associates, and that the grant of the lands in question should be made to Wontirim Company Limited.
8. By a letter dated 4th October, 2013 the Lands Commission, as part of its due diligence, sought the advice of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice on the PPP Agreement and the proposed grant of the land to Akumbami & Associates to finance the construction of a new office complex.
9. In its response dated 13th June, 2014 the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice granted approval for the PPP Agreement, and authorised the grant of a lease over the land to Akumbami & Associates or its subsidiary.
10. Earlier, by a letter dated 22nd November 2013, from the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly, the Assembly approved an application for sub-division and re-zoning of the Parks and Gardens site.
11. By letter dated 13th October 2016, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development reaffirmed its commitment to the PPP Agreement.
12. Pursuant to the above, by a lease dated 29th November, 2016, Government granted two (2) acres of land occupied by Parks and Gardens at Cantonment to Wontirim Company Limited, a subsidiary of

Akumbami & Associates, for a term of fifty (50) years. The parcel of land, the subject matter of the Hon. MP's allegation, was therefore, sold in the year 2016, and certainly not under the current administration.

13. Wontirim Company Limited, having obtained the above lease, assigned a portion of its interest to Dani Ike Real Estate Developers Company Limited.

14. For the avoidance of doubt, the lease and/or sale of the land at Cantonment allocated to the Department of Parks and Gardens, the subject matter of the Member of Parliament's allegation, commenced in the year 2012, and concluded in the year 2016, through a fifty-year lease granted to Wontirim Company Limited on 29th November, 2016, and subsequently assigned to Dani Ike Real Estate Developers Company Limited.

15. The allegations that the said land has been granted by the current administration to cronies in what has been described as state capture are, therefore, false.

B. THE JUDICIAL SERVICE LAND

16. The land around 5th Circular Road, Cantonments and occupied by the Judicial Service, is a public land acquired by the State in 1920 by a Certificate of Title, dated 7th June, 1920 for Government services.

17. The land, with bungalows thereon, was subsequently allocated to the Judicial Service by the Ministry of Works and Housing.

18. By a letter dated 4th August 2014, Frimps Oil Company Ltd applied for the grant of portions of the land in extent of 0.90 acre situate at Cantonments for a residential building.
19. At the time of the application, the land had bungalows on it occupied by Justices of the Superior Courts.
20. The Ministry of Works and Housing, in support of the application stated that the land has been earmarked for redevelopment and may be granted, subject to the payment of the cost of the replacement of the bungalows.
21. The Lands Commission, on 8th May, 2015, requested for Ministerial approval to grant the land to Frimps Oil Company Ltd. This was in conformity with an earlier Ministerial Directive that mandated the Commission to seek the written approval of the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources before granting any public land.
22. By a letter dated 2nd June, 2015, the then Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. Nii Osah Mills, granted approval for the land in question to be granted to Frimps Oil Company Ltd.
23. By a letter dated 3rd June, 2015, the Lands Commission made an offer of the land, measuring approximately 1.39 acres, which includes the 0.90 acres occupied by the Judicial Service to Frimps Oil.
24. Frimps Oil, by a letter dated 6th June, 2015 accepted the offer, and on 13th July, 2015, a lease was executed over the land in favour of Frimps Oil Co. Ltd for a term of fifty (50) years. The parcel of land, the subject matter of the Hon. MP's allegation, was therefore, sold in in the year 2015, and certainly not under the current administration.

25. By a letter dated 27th June 2017, the Office of the President directed the Lands Commission to withdraw the lease executed in favour of Frimps Oil Co Ltd, together with twenty-three (23) other leases.
26. Subsequently, on 22nd September, 2017, the then Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. John Peter Amewu, constituted a Committee to investigate issues pertaining to the Accra Redevelopment Scheme.
27. Following the submission of the Committee's Report, the then Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, by a letter dated 28th December, 2017, directed that the lease granted to Frimps Oil Co. Ltd. in the year 2015, together with seven (7) other leases that had been cancelled pursuant to the directive of the Office of the President, be restored, and the lease was accordingly restored.
28. On 28th August 2020, Frimps Oil Company Ltd. petitioned the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Justice on its inability to have vacant possession of the land over which the lease had been granted, due to the continues occupation of the land by some Superior Court Judges.
29. On 28th January, 2023, Frimps Oil Company Ltd. wrote to the Judicial Service to vacate the premises and deliver vacant possession to the Company.
30. In response to the demand to deliver vacant possession of the land, the Judicial Service, on 8th May, 2023, wrote to the Ministry of Works and Housing complaining about the demand of Frimps Oil. Company Ltd.
31. In its response, the Ministry of Works and Housing confirmed the lease of the land to Frimps Oil Company Ltd. as far back as 2015, and

promised to find a suitable alternative accommodation for the affected Judges.

32. Dissatisfied with this response from the Ministry of Works and Housing, the Judicial Service, on 7th July, 2023, instituted an action against the Lands Commission, Frimps Oil Company Ltd. and the Attorney-General for a declaration that the purported lease of the land to Frimps Oil is unconstitutional and unlawful. The action also seeks an injunction against the Lands Commission from leasing or selling any land occupied by the Judicial Service.
33. Based on the above, the Ministry of Works and Housing wrote to the Lands Commission not to transfer any property occupied by the Judicial Service to third parties.
34. At the instance of Her Ladyship the Chief Justice, Justice Gertrude Araba Esaaba Sackey Torkornoo, officials of the Judicial Service, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Works and Housing, the Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice, and the Lands Commission, met to find an amicable solution to the impasse. This matter is still pending awaiting such amicable resolution.
- 35. For the avoidance of doubt, the lease and/or sale of the land at Cantonment allocated to the Judicial Service, the subject matter of the Member of Parliament's allegation, commenced in the year 2014, and concluded in the year 2015, through a fifty-year lease granted to Frimps Oil Company Ltd, on 13th July, 2015.**
36. The allegations that the said land has been granted by the current administration to cronies in what has been described as state capture are, therefore, false.

PRISONS SERVICE LAND AT ROMAN RIDGE

37. The land located at Roman Ridge, and occupied by the Prisons Service, forms part of a parcel of land acquired in 1946, by Certificate of Title dated 20th December, 1946 for the University College of Gold Coast, now University of Ghana.
38. By a Certificate of Allocation dated 28th June, 1950, that portion of the land was allocated to the Director of Prisons.
39. Since the 1960s, portions of the land have been carved out for residential and other purposes.
40. Government granted a lease over portions of the land, to one Prof Appiah-Adu in the year 2005. However, the Prison Service prevented the Lessee from taking possession of the property, leading to a protracted dispute between Prof. Appiah-Adu and the Prison Service.
41. Prof Appiah-Adu commenced an action in the High Court against the Prisons Service in Suit No. LD/0706/2021, for recovery of possession for which he obtained judgment on 31st March, 2023.
- 42. For the avoidance of doubt, the lease and/or sale of the land at Roman Ridge, allocated to the Prison Service, the subject matter of the Member of Parliament's allegation, was made in the year 2005, and certainly not under the current administration.**
43. The allegations that the said land has been granted by the current administration to cronies in what has been described as state capture are, therefore, false.

C. PARKS AND GARDENS LAND AT WA

44. The land in question, located at Dobile/Kambalipaani Residential Area in the Wa Municipality, forms part of land vested in the President of the Republic, under section 10 of Administration of Lands Act, 1962 (Act 123), the applicable law at the time, with notice of occupation dated 27th November, 1973.
45. By a Certificate of Allocation, the land was granted to Parks and Gardens for user rights only.
46. On 19th July, 2019, one Seidu Mohammed Kiram applied for a portion of the land, measuring approximately 0.44 acres, which was at the time undeveloped.
47. An inspection conducted by the Lands Commission in August 2019, following the application, showed that the place was undeveloped, but occupied by ruminant dealers, whose activities ***“made the whole environment nasty, nuisance and rampant for other social vices especially in the night.”*** It was, therefore, recommended that the land be granted to an investor who will develop it to acceptable standards.
48. The Lands Commission, then applied to the Wa Municipal Assembly for rezoning of the land for commercial purposes. The Assembly rezoned the land for commercial purposes.
49. On 27th January, 2020, the Lands Commission made an offer to Seidu Mohammed Kiram, which offer was accepted, leading to the execution of a lease dated 1st July, 2020 in favour of Seidu Mohammed Kiram for a term of fifty (50) years.

50. The Wa Municipal Assembly approved Mr. Kiram's application to use the land for a fuel filling station.
51. The land has since been developed into a filling station serving the needs of the people of Wa and its environs.

D. THE DU BOIS CENTRE

52. The land occupied by the Du Bois Centre was acquired in 1897 by a Certificate of Title, dated 20th December 1897 for Government purposes.
53. The site is currently being occupied by the Du Bois Centre, and the Lands Commission and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources has no pending application for the grant of this parcel of land to any third party.
- 54. For the avoidance doubt the land occupied by the Du Bois Centre, the subject-matter of the Member of Parliament's allegations, has neither been sold nor leased to any private entity.**
55. From the foregoing, it is clear that the lands, the subject matter of the Member of Parliament's allegations, were not sold and/or leased under the current administration, and the allegations of state capture are, therefore, false.

E. CONCLUSION

56. To ensure that the President of the Republic, in whom public lands are vested, discharges his constitutional duty in an informed manner, on 17th August, 2021, a Policy Directive was issued to the Lands Commission, with the approval of the President of the Republic, pursuant to article 258(2) of the Constitution, to "***refer all transactions relating to the grant of any interest in public land to [the office of the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources] for prior approval.***"
57. The directive, further, added that "***Any deed executed without the approval of the President through the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources would be deemed void as same would have been done without the authority of the President in whom these lands are vested.***"
58. This, we believe, is the best way to ensure the efficient management and utilisation of public lands in the public interest.
59. The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources wishes to assure the general public that the Government of President Akufo-Addo is committed to an efficient and effective land administration that is anchored on the highest standards of integrity, transparency and candour, in the public interest. The Ministry will, therefore, continue to work with all stakeholders to deliver an effective, transparent, responsive and orderly land administration which is above board and steeped in integrity.

END

SIGNED

**HON. SAMUEL A. JINPOR, MP
MINISTER**