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The STAR would still Shine

This week has witnessed very high level interventions towards ensuring peaceful elections in Ghana. The controversy around the May 5 judgement of the Supreme Court was brought to a halt. In very clear language, The Supreme Court interpreted its own judgement and asked the Electoral Commission to execute.



Mr Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General of the United Nations gave a lecture on credible and peaceful elections, touching briefly on the devolution of democratic powers, as a choice option for ensuring inclusive governance. At the Civil Society front, the Coalition for Domestic Observers (CODEO) held an interactive session on Ghana's current political environment to further seek ways in which CSOs could help to ensure peaceful and credible elections.

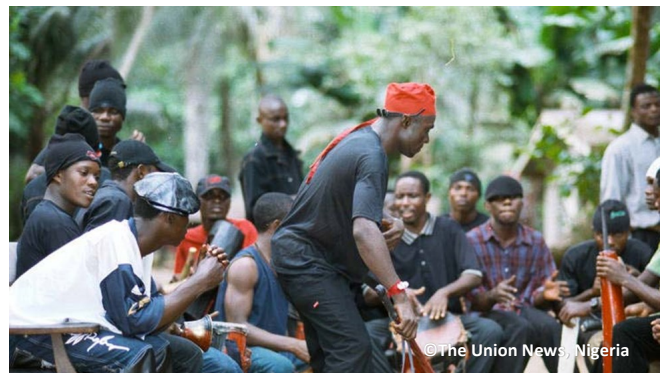
Several conferences, summits, talks, workshops and meetings around the issue of peaceful elections and credible outcomes are underway. Certainly we are all taking major strides to maintain the peace we currently enjoy. So, from my perspective, the Electoral Commission would execute as ordered; the Voters' Register would be rendered more credible; civil society would continue to mount civil pressure; all other key stakeholders would take concrete steps towards peaceful elections; voting would take place as planned; and the Star of Ghana would shine again.

Kofi Awity

Promoting Violent Free Elections: Disband Vigilante Groups Now! - Isaac Haruna

The recent proliferation of vigilante groups in Ghana's electoral democracy raises a fundamental question relating to how the key state institutions, such as the Electoral Commission (EC) and the Police, are able to deliver their electoral mandate without undue interruptions.

Vigilante groups are organizations that have no legal basis for operation but they, nevertheless, undertake roles that are, otherwise, the exclusive preserve of legal security authorities. The rise of vigilante groups in any political society is therefore an indication of weakening state security insti-



tutions and increasing decline of public trust and confidence in these institutions. Vigilante groups, the world over, evolve into quasi military arms (rebel movements) of political parties and in countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, these groups contributed immensely to the decades of war that weakened state institutions.

While all the six elections organized in Ghana, under the Fourth Republic, have not been without some form of violence, there have never really been vigilante groups that have been linked to political parties in the past. There is increased skepticism, about the ability of the EC and the Police to act impartially and professionally, fueling the resort to these vigilante groups who are resolute on protecting the votes, properties and lives of their political leaders.

The by-election in the Talensi District in the Upper East

“..Nevertheless, it is critical for the political parties to recognize and appreciate the National Election Security Taskforce as the election-related security authority that has the absolute monopoly over the use of force and therefore the exclusive right to protect the lives, properties and votes of ordinary Ghanaians and politicians alike. Attempts by vigilante groups, loyal to either the NDC or the NPP, to usurp this exclusive right will only produce undesired political and security consequences. Vigilante groups must be disbanded now in order to promote violent free elections in

Region of Ghana in 2015 is highly indicative of the dangers that these vigilante groups pose to the country's peace and stability. Vigilante groups, known as the Azorka Boys and the Bolga Bulldogs, who are allegedly affiliated to the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) respectively, brandished offensive weapons in the full glare of the security officers during the by-election. These acts culminated in pockets of violence and heightened public anxiety unnecessarily. Ahead of the 2016 elections, the operations of these forces have serious security implications in Ghana.

The onus therefore rests on the NPP and NDC to cooperate with the Ghana Police to disband all vigilante groups in the country. The establishment of the National Election Security Taskforce comprising different security agencies is an institutional novelty. Nevertheless, it is critical for the political parties to recognize and appreciate the National Election Security Taskforce as the election-related security authority that has the absolute monopoly over the use of force and therefore the exclusive right to protect the lives, properties and votes of ordinary Ghanaians and politicians alike. Attempts by vigilante groups, loyal to either the NDC or the NPP, to usurp this exclusive right will only produce undesired political and security consequences. Vigilante groups must be disbanded now in order to promote violent free elections in Ghana.

IDEG AND CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW-MULTI STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION (JUNE 17TH 2016)

-Mr. Kwesi Jonah

International Assistance Programs to developing countries are now going through comprehensive reviews to determine both the strong as well as the weak points and chart a new course for future assistance programs and international co-operation. While some development partners are withdrawing budgetary sup-

port, others are determined to hang on to it for the time being, yet others are stressing a bold new role for trade and direct foreign investment. It is again this background that Canada, under Prime Minister Trudeau is also reviewing its assistance programme in 38 countries including Ghana.

IDEG participated in Canada's International Assistance Review Multi-Stakeholders Consultation which took place at the Canadian High Commission in Accra on Friday June 17 2016.

The flow of Canadian assistance to Ghana over the past several years is averaged at \$80 million (US). This assistance to Ghana to Ghana is mainly grant based and about 80% is channeled through the government of Ghana, to support various sectors, including food Security and nutrition, water and sanitation, children and youth, sustainable economic growth, cocoa industry especially high value seedlings, good governance and decentralization. The rest passes through UNICEF and CSOs.

This is the assistance that the new Canadian government seeks to review in order to ensure greater effectiveness and benefit to the people of Ghana. The consultation process door is still open for innovative suggestions and prospective individuals, CSOs like IDEG as well as private sector operators are free to channel their views to the Canadian High Commission and the Canadian Development Assistance.

IDEG THIS WEEK - EVENTS

JUNE 20-24, 2016

Past Events

1. 2 Day NHIS review National stakeholder consultative forum. 21-22 June 2016, 9-4 each day, La Palm Royal Beach Hotel
2. Technical Consultation on Long term national development plan. 21st June

2016, 9am-3pm Accra International Conference Centre

3. High Level dialogue on Ghana's Public Financial management system. 23 June, 2016, 9:30am. Movenpick ambassador Hotel
4. Launch of the master of research and Public Policy. 23, June, 2016, 2:30pm, UG, Legon
5. Kronti and Akwamu lecture, 23 June, 2016, 5:30pm. College of Physicians and Surgeons

JUNE 27th –JULY 1st 2016

Events – Upcoming

1. First GII National Anti-Corruption Forum, 28th June, 2016, La Palm Royal Beach, Hotel

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