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Cantonments road closed for 2 months for drainage and traffic management works









For business or leisure, there's always a little something extra.

"You are a wounded snake" - Martin Amidu tells Special **Prosecutor Agyebeng**

■ormer Special Prosecutor Martin Amidu has broken his silence since petitioning President Akufo-Addo for the removal of his successor, Mr Kissi Agyebeng.

In a statement, Mr Amidu criticized Mr Agyebeng and those defending the Office of the Special Prosecutor's (OSP) investigation of former Minister for Sanitation, Cecilia Abena Dapaah, who has been accused of money laundering by the office.

asserted his unwavering He commitment to defending the Constitution of Ghana. Describing Mr Agyebeng as an 'inexperienced and incompetent neophyte' and citing multiple alleged violations of the constitution by the Special Prosecutor, Mr Amidu stated that he could no longer continue in his role.

"My personal right to defend the 1992 Constitution and the due process of law guaranteed under it cannot be subjected to intimidation by any media house or any group of fellow citizens.

"Kissi Agyebeng is a wounded snake whose head needs to be decoupled from the OSP before the OSP infests the body politic with the very poisonous corruption the OSP was established to prevent and investigate, thereby destroying

the 1992 Constitution," part of the statement by Mr Amidu, dated May 23, 2024, reads.

He added, "Those who nominated Kissi Agyebeng can continue to protect him, but I will not stop defending the basic ethics and principles of law enforcement and the 1992 Constitution, which I have done throughout my adult life as a citizen of Ghana.

President Akufo-Addo has forwarded a petition to remove Mr Kissi Agyebeng as Special Prosecutor to the Chief Justice.

The petition dated April 30, 2024, was submitted by former Special Prosecutor Martin Amidu and sent to Justice Gertrude Torkornoo on May 6, 2024.

Mr Amidu cited procurement irregularities in acquiring vehicles for the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) and alleged misconduct involving judges and the administration of justice.

Additional accusations included violations of citizens' rights through arrests and detentions. breaches of the right to information, and inappropriate staff appointments.

Following Article 146 of the Constitution, Chief **Justice** Gertrude Torkornoo is assessing whether there is sufficient initial evidence to form a committee for Agyebeng's potential impeachment.

She has requested that the Special Prosecutor respond to the issues raised in the petition.

Source: The Independent Ghana | Amanda Cartey



Martin Amidu, Former Special Prosecutor

Somé SHS assistant headmistress, 3 others arrested for stealing food items

The Assistant Headmistress, matron, cook, and bursar of Somé Senior High Sshool (SHS) in Agbozume, Ketu South Municipality, have been arrested for allegedly stealing food supplies intended for the school's boarding students.

The bursar and matron were apprehended by an alumni and an assembly member as they departed the school premises on Friday, May 24.

They were found with a bag containing food items and the trunk of a car also held some of these items. Subsequently, the assistant headmistress was taken into police custody for further investigation.

Among the confiscated items were canned tomatoes, mackerel, cleaning supplies, insecticide spray, and various other goods found in the possession of the

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File photo

Somé SHS assistant headmistress, 3 others arrested for stealing food items

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matron.

"This has been going on for a long time, and this arrest will bring some change. There are mixed feelings in the school following the arrests. The police have been to the school to conduct investigations,

and the storekeeper has been invited for questioning."

According to sources, the four suspects are scheduled to appear

in court on Monday, May 27, 2024.

Source: The Independent Ghana | Phoebe Martekie Doku

No GHC49bn has been released to contractors - Chamber of Construction Industry tells Finance Minister

■ hief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ghana Chamber of Construction Industry, Emmanuel Cherry, has responded to Finance Minister, Dr. Mohammed Amin Adams' claim of government GH¢49,000,000,000 disbursing to contractors, stating his unawareness such disbursements.

During a recent press briefing, Dr. Adams attributed the cedi's depreciation partly to payments totaling around GH¢49 billion to contractors and \$400 million to Independent Power Producers (IPPs), leading to speculative dollar accumulation.

"We have paid contractors. I want to say that the complaints of no money and no money, and no money, we don't hear that anymore because we have paid and paid contractors. As of now, to date I think we have spent some GH¢49 billion. Same time last year, we did GH¢41 billion and so this demonstrates there's a lot of cedi liquidity in the market and we have seen some people looking for US dollars to buy with the cedis that we have put out there.

"And so these are some of the reasons including the payment to IPPs (Independent Power Producers). You will recall that we started negotiating with them as a result of which we had to make a bullet, one-off payment amounting to some \$400 million and so they all put pressure on the cedi," Dr Adam said.

However, Mr. Cherry expressed surprise at these figures, stating that the chamber had not received such amounts for construction projects.

He described the minister's claim as shocking and unexpected. Speaking to the media, Mr. Cherry

emphasized the need for further investigation into the matter within the industry.

"In the roads and the building sector, if we should lump together the amount the minister has mentioned now, I don't know where exactly he is getting his figures from. So it is something that has hit us as a shock and a surprise," he said.

Mr. Cherry highlighted the existing debt owed to contractors by the government and Cocobod, estimating the total owed to be less than the mentioned GH¢49 billion.

"But as industry players we are also bent on doing our further checks into the books and to find out what exactly is the minster driving to. Because if it is about roads and that of building it is very outrageous for us to say that the Minister of Finance will come out and dangle these figures into the public space."

"If the minister claims that such an amount of money has been paid to the contractors then why are contractors not on site? Why have they moved from site? Why are they not working? That is the question we need to ask ourselves because as we speak today, road fund, government is owing contractors GH¢6 billion as we speak today.

He called for a thorough examination of financial records to ascertain the accuracy of the minister's statements.

"The GOG, five-point-something billion. Cocobod has paid some GH¢1 billion this month and we are hoping that they will continue. So therefore their portfolio also reduces a little bit. We are looking at barely GH¢4 billion in total.

"So in fact the debt portfolio that you and I've been talking about, it is not up to that magnitude. Which means there is another leg of construction that is going on that the minister is trying to speak to that we don't know. We need to interrogate the books properly and come out with the accurate figures accordingly because this is very outrageous to us," he added.

Source: The Independent Ghana | Phoebe Martekie Doku



Emmanuel Cherry, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ghana Chamber of Construction Industry

Former NDC MP, Mathias Asuma Puozaa, dies at age 76

For Dafiama-Bussie-Issa, who sides with the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Mathias Asuma Puozaa, has passed away.

The retired educator, aged 76, passed on at the 37 Military Hospital in Accra, where he had been receiving medical care, according to sources close to the family.

The deceased entered office after winning the 2004 general elections. He served three consecutive terms in parliament before stepping down in January

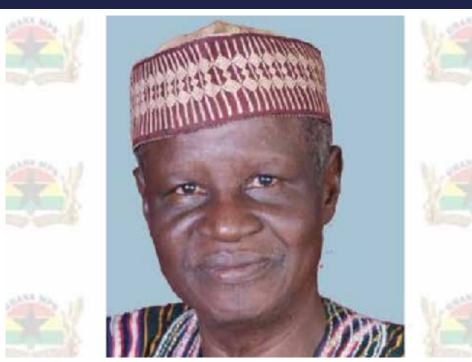
2017.

During his tenure, he notably chaired the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education. Born on January 10, 1948, Asuma hailed from Touri-Daffiama in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

He graduated from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, with a Master of Science degree in Community Education.

Details regarding his funeral arrangements are yet to be announced by the bereaved family.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Mathias Asuma Puozaa, Former NDC MP

There is no judgment debt, we must chase SML for monies it didn't earn - Manasseh Azure

nvestigative journalist Manasseh Azure Awuni has stated that Ghana would not incur any financial obligations if it terminates the revenue mobilisation transaction between the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) and Strategic Mobilisation Ghana Ltd (SML).

Instead, he suggests that the country should pursue SML for funds it did not earn, as well as officials responsible for significant financial losses due to the contract.

While audit firm KPMG has noted that the contract between the GRA and SML can be terminated by either party, it also stated in its full report on the contract that such termination could have financial implications for the Government of Ghana (GoG) and the GRA.

"Upon termination, GoG and GRA remain liable to settle SML for services already completed but not yet paid. GoG and GRA are not entitled to a refund of any compensation already paid to SML, regardless of the termination cause."

"If GoG or GRA terminates without a cause, it becomes liable to pay SML an ROI equivalent to the fair value of SML's investment in the contract," it stated.

But Mr Awuni in an interview with the media on Thursday said, "I don't see where there is judgment debt. The liability comes when the company is able to demonstrate how much they have spent and how much they are losing.

"The SML report even before the full one came out, the presidency said the KPMG tried to get SML to actually tell us or give evidence of its investments into this contract, the company couldn't justify that. We also know that over a billion cedis has already been paid to this company. So if there is any money to be taken, Ghana should be chasing SML for money the company did not earn and not the other way round."

"SML takes revenue from fuel that

is [taken] from all the depots in this country, a percentage. But the report said their metres are not yet working in some of the depots.

"Ghana should rather go to SML and chase them for money and the state and public officials that caused these huge losses to the state should be facing the court."

Source: The Independent Ghana



Manasseh Azure Awuni, Investigative journalist

MTN scratch cards to be phased out by July 2024

Starting June 30, 2024, MTN Ghana will gradually phase out the scratch cards introduced in 2020, with full discontinuation taking effect from July 1, 2024.

As per a statement released by the company on May 23, 2024, the Chief Sales and Distribution Officer, Samuel Addo, emphasized that customers holding unused MTN scratch cards after July 1 will no longer be able to recharge them.

However, the value of these scratch cards can be redeemed through credit transfer at any MTN Customer Experience Centre.

MTN's decision is in line with its strategy to lead digital

solutions in Ghana and support the government's digitalization agenda.

Mr Addo stated that discontinuing scratch cards aligns with their environmental protection goals, encourages digital usage among customers, and enhances customer service efficiency.

"The phasing out of the scratch cards is one of the avenues to help us protect the environment, empower customers to drive digital usage, and make customer service delivery more efficient."

MTN encourages customers to utilize existing digital channels like MoMo, Ayoba, and the myMTN app for recharging purposes.

Furthermore, as part of its

commitment to environmental sustainability, customers will receive a 50% bonus on all recharges made via Mobile Money.

"As part of our commitment

towards a clean environment, customers enjoy 50% bonus on all recharges done via Mobile Money."

Source: The Independent Ghana | Phoebe Martekie Doku



MTN scratch card

We have not approved any body enhancement product - FDA

he Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) has issued a stern warning to the public, advising against the purchase of body enhancement products.

This alert comes in response to concerns raised after certain butt enlargement products were found being advertised.

The recent spotlight on unauthorized drug sales, sparked

by Fella Makafui's purported arrest, has intensified scrutiny, especially towards celebrities involved in such practices.

Of particular concern are butt enlargement items, including those allegedly promoted by singer Yaa Jackson. A social media post highlighting Yaa Jackson's activities prompted public outcry, with many calling out authorities for inaction.

In response, the FDA cautioned against buying such products and assured ongoing investigations to crack down on them.

"Thank you for the alert. We appreciate vigilant individuals who report such concerns. While our team investigates further, we emphasize that the FDA has not approved any product for body

part enlargement. The public should refrain from purchasing this and any similar product," their response read.

Additionally, the FDA clarified its stance on products making spiritual claims, addressing inquiries about items like the 'kayamata' men-charming potion.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Campaigns must be done in a civilised manner to ensure peace - NCCE tells political parties

The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) has urged political parties to maintain tolerance and conduct their campaigns with civility to ensure peace before, during, and after the 2024 election.

Garu District Director of the Samuel Commission. Akolgo, emphasized the crucial role of political parties in maintaining peace ahead of the election. He urged party leadership to cultivate tolerance and promote peace.

Mr Akolgo stressed the importance of political parties being civil and respectful in their communication to foster peace and tranquility.

The call was made during an Inter-Party Dialogue Committee (IPDC) meeting in Garu, which brought together stakeholders including security agencies, political parties, the Electoral Commission, women, youth, persons with disabilities, and others.

Organized by the NCCE as part of the European Union-sponsored project "Preventing and Containing Violent Extremism (PCVE)," the meeting aimed to raise awareness about violent extremism and promote security consciousness, social inclusiveness, community cohesion, situational and awareness for peace building and sustainable development.

Mr Akolgo acknowledged that disagreements are normal but emphasized the need for dialogue to resolve differences and prevent escalation. He highlighted the challenge of violent extremism and the importance of not allowing extremists to exploit volatile situations to destabilize the country.

"I appeal particularly to political parties to always resort to the use of dialogue in settling differences to promote peace and social cohesion, free, fair, and peaceful general elections this year," he added.

The Garu District Chief Executive, Mr. Haruna Ali, emphasized the critical importance of peace in accelerating the development needed in Ghana. He urged Ghanaians to remain vigilant and safeguard the country against the threats of terrorism.

"I made a solemn promise to the political parties that government will take the necessary measures to preserve their safety, and security in the upcoming general elections. We recognise that we must prevent and combat violent extremist groups and terrorists who threaten the security of our country, and protect our national interests from such attacks," he said.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Mr. Victor Gakpey, the Garu District Police Commander, provided training on monitoring reporting threats and vulnerabilities to violent extremism. He also discussed detecting youth radicalization, signs of recruitment, with empowered participants mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms.

Mr. Gakpey urged the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities to the security agencies.

Mr. David Amoah, the District Source: The Independent Ghana

the Director Electoral of Commission, advised political parties to avoid making negative comments that could incite tension and undermine electoral process.

He assured the parties that the Commission Electoral create a conducive environment for free, fair, and transparent elections. Mr. Amoah encouraged parties to focus on constructive campaigning, presenting their policies and visions in a way that promotes unity and respect among voters.



Mr. Haruna Ali, Garu District Chief Executive

Accra FM presenter invited by CID over Hopeson Adorye's dynamite detonation interview

The Accra Regional Police Command has requested the management of Class Media Group's Accra FM to release its host, Nana Otu Darko, for questioning.

This request is part of ongoing investigations into statements made by politician Hopeson Adorye during an interview on the station's political talk program.

During the interview, Mr Adorye alleged that the governing New

Patriotic Party (NPP) had directed him to detonate dynamites in the Volta Region to intimidate supporters of the main opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) and deter them from voting in the previous elections.

As a result of these allegations, Mr Adorye, a prominent member of the Movement for Change, was arrested and subsequently arraigned in court. He was charged

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Nana Otu Darko, Radio Presenter at Accra FM

Accra FM presenter invited by CID over Hopeson Adorye's dynamite detonation interview

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by the police with the publication of false news.

On Thursday, May 23, the Dansoman District Court granted Mr. Adorve bail, set at GH¢20,000 with two sureties, one of which must be justified.

Following Mr Adorye's court appearance, Criminal

Investigations Department (CID) issued a request to Class Media Group, asking them to release the host, Nana Otu Darko, to aid in their investigations.

The request from the CID was delivered to the media organization on the same day, Thursday, May 23, highlighting

the urgency and importance of the investigation.

According to the CID, the involvement of Nana Otu Darko, the host of the show, is crucial in uncovering the context and veracity of the statements made by Mr. Adorye, as the police continue their probe into the potentially inflammatory allegations.

"It would be appreciated if the host could be released to report at Accra Regional CID on Friday, 24 May 2024 at 10 am with a copy of the audio and video recording of the aforementioned programme to facilitate investigations", the letter said.

Source: The Independent Ghana

Cantonments road closed for 2 months for drainage and traffic management works

The Ministry of Roads and Highways, through Department of Urban Roads, has announced a substantial disruption to traffic flow on Cantonments Road in Accra, effective from Sunday, May 26th, until Monday, July 29, 2024.

This interruption is necessary for drainage and traffic management enhancements along the section of Cantonments Road stretching from the Police Station to Danguah Circle.

Part of a broader initiative, these improvements aim to upgrade the drainage system and ensure safer pedestrian access near the Police Hospital.

In collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, the project is being undertaken with support from the International Hospitals Group Ltd (IHG).

objective is to bolster infrastructure and safety measures

around the Police Hospital, thereby creating a safer and more efficient environment for both pedestrians and drivers.

During this period, motorists and all road users intending to utilize Cantonments Road are urged to adhere to traffic management signs placed along the route.

The Police Motor Traffic and Transport Department (MTTD) will be strategically positioned to

assist motorists as needed.

The Department of Urban Roads acknowledges any inconvenience resulting from these necessary development works. Ing. James Amoo-Gottfried, Director of the Department, assures the public that these enhancements will yield significant long-term benefits for the community.

Source: The Independent Ghana







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Business

Ghana's public debt hits GHC658.6bn; each Ghanaian now owes GHC19,671

hana's public debt increased by GH¢46.4 billion in the first two months of 2024, reaching GH¢658.6 billion (\$53.1 billion), according to data from the Bank of Ghana.

This total public debt stock is equivalent to 62.7% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The Central Bank's May 2024 Summary Economic and of Financial Data revealed that the country's debt, which ended 2023 at GH¢611.2 billion, increased to GH¢626.0 billion in January 2024 and further to GH¢658.6 billion in February 2024.

With a public debt of GHC 658.6 billion and a population of 33.48 million, the average Ghanaian owes approximately GHC19,671.45.

The rise in public debt was attributed

to the cedi's depreciation and increased government borrowing on the domestic market.

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In the first two months of 2024, domestic debt increased by GH¢18.5 billion, while external debt rose by GH¢28.9 billion, primarily due to the cedi's depreciation.

The Central Bank data showed that the external component of the total public debt stood at \$30.6 billion (GH¢350.3 billion) in February 2024, representing 36.1% of GDP.

Domestic debt was GH¢278.7 billion in February 2024, also about 36.1% of GDP.

The report also indicated that the government's fiscal operations were on target, with the deficit-to-GDP ratio standing at 2.6% in the first quarter of 2024, compared to a deficit of 1.8% of GDP during the

same period the previous year. Additionally, the primary balance recorded a deficit of 1.4% of GDP in March 2024.

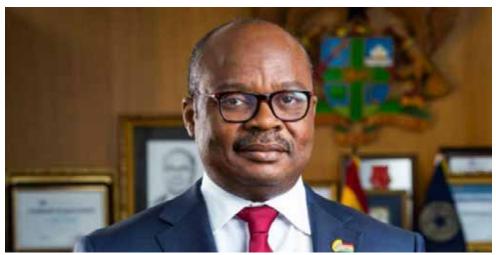
In December 2022, Ghana halted interest payments on loans to its external creditors due to economic difficulties.

Subsequently, the country received

a Memorandum of Understanding from its bilateral creditors regarding the restructuring of a portion of the external debt.

After successfully negotiating a deal with the bilateral creditors in January 2024, Ghana is currently in negotiations with bondholders.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Dr Ernest Addison, Governor of Bank of Ghana

Dollar appreciation, seasonal demand for forex, payment of contractors to blame for cedi depreciation - Finance Minister

The government has revealed why the value of the Ghana cedi has been weakening in recent times.

Engaging the press today, Minister for Finance, Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, provided three reasons behind this unsatisfactory development that poses a threat to businesses in the country.

He noted that the strengthening of the dollar on the international market, seasonal demand for forex and the recent payment of contractors worth over GHC40 billion has caused the value of the cedi to fall.

The Ghanaian cedi has depreciated by 14.2% as of May 2024, according to Finance Minister Dr. Mohammed Awal Amin.

Despite this depreciation, Dr. Amin emphasized that currency remains strong during an engagement with the media on the current state of the media on Friday. Dr. Amin highlighted that the cedi's depreciation against the US dollar has decreased from 54% in November 2022 to 27.8% by the end of December 2023.

He noted that the cedi's stability has persisted into 2024, with the cumulative depreciation reaching 14.2% as of May 20, 2024, compared to 20.7% recorded in the same period in 2023.

There have been numerous concerns from stakeholders in the financial sector over the weakening of the local currency.

Chamber of Petroleum The Consumers (COPEC) has alerted the public to anticipate higher fuel prices at the pumps in the coming weeks due to the depreciation of the cedi.

This warning follows increases in fuel prices by some oil marketing companies, despite earlier projections that prices would decline from mid-May. The companies have attributed the price hikes to uncertainties in the exchange rate market.

As of May 22, at a Forex bureau located in Accra, the dollar was

purchased at a rate of GH15.00 and sold at GH15.30.

Source: The Independent Ghana | Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, Minister for Finance

International

Ghana's cocoa regulator will borrow up to \$1.5 billion for 2024-25 cocoa purchases, sources

hana's cocoa regulator will borrow up to \$1.5 billion by September to finance 2024/25 cocoa purchases and compensate for low output, two COCOBOD sources with knowledge of the arrangement said on Sunday.

The world's second-largest cocoa producer after neighbouring Ivory Coast uses an annual syndicated loan to finance bean purchases from farmers. It is usually agreed at the start of the season in September.

But this year's \$800 million loan faced delays due to low cocoa output so far this season.

COCOBOD has since withdrawn \$600 million and cancelled the remainder as the season's cocoa output is seen almost 40% below forecast - unable to guarantee the full loan.

"A request for proposal sent to banks

indicates COCOBOD will borrow up to \$1.5 billion next season. It is understood the banks are sizing it and together (with COCOBOD), they will decide an optimal amount," said one COCOBOD source.

COCOBOD did not respond to a request for comment.

Ghana's cocoa production has been affected by adverse weather, disease and cocoa smuggling. It is expected to be almost 40% below target in the 2023/24 season, according to COCOBOD.

The sector regulator said it lost about 150,000 tons of cocoa beans to smuggling and illegal gold mining known locally as galamsey in the 2022/23 season.

It expects even greater losses this season as a global rise in cocoa prices is an incentive for more smuggling.

Swollen shoot virus wiped out around 590,000 hectares of farmland between 2018 and 2024, according to COCOBOD.

One source said they were confident Ghana would still meet next season's target of 810,000 tons as the weather is expected to improve, and

rehabilitated cocoa farms will boost output.

Ghana's cocoa export revenue fell nearly 50% year-on-year in the first four months of the year, central bank data showed this week.

Source: Reuters



Cocoa farm

Burkina Faso extends military rule by five years

military government has announced it will extend junta rule for another five years.

The country's ruler, Capt Ibrahim Traoré, will also be able to contest the next presidential election, the stateowned broadcaster says.

When he seized power in a coup nearly two years ago, Capt Traore pledged to restore the civilian government by 1 July this year.

But Burkina Faso has now joined neighbouring Mali in extending military rule. The move was announced on Saturday, after a national consultation meeting in the West African country's capital city, Ouagadougou.

An amended charter, signed by Capt Traoré, states that the new 60-month transition period will take effect from 2 July this year.

"The elections marking the end of the transition may be organised before this deadline if the security situation so permits," the Reuters news agency quoted the charter as saying.

Burkina Faso has been governed by the army since January 2022, when Lt Col Paul-Henri Damiba seized power from President Roch Kaboré.

Col Damiba justified the coup by saying the previous government had failed to deal with growing militant Islamist violence.

Since 2015, jihadist rebels affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group have waged a grinding insurgency that has killed thousands and displaced millions.

In September 2022, Capt Traoré ousted Col Damiba, arguing a second coup was necessary because Col Damiba was himself unable to tackle the insurgency.

Capt Traoré promised to improve the country's dire security situation within "two to three months" and restore civilian rule within 21 months.

But since issuing the pledge, Capt Traoré has warned that elections are not "a priority" until territory is recaptured from jihadist forces so that all citizens of the country can vote.

Under the new charter, quotas will no longer be used to assign seats in the assembly to members of traditional parties, the AFP news agency reported.

Instead, "patriotism" will be the only criteria for selecting deputies. The decisions made during Saturday's national consultation happened swiftly.

Local media reports indicated that

political parties were absent at the start of the meeting.

International and human rights groups, including the European Union and UN, have accused Burkina Faso of serious human rights violations in its fight against Islamists, including the indiscriminate killings and forced disappearances of dozens of civilians.

Source: BBC



Capt Ibrahim Traoré, Military Ruler of Burkina Faso

