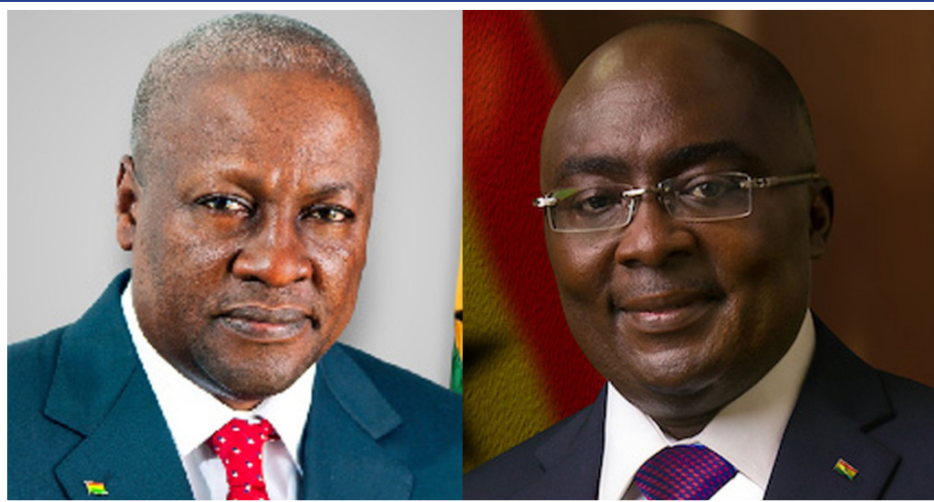


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# General News

## Byran Acheampong's Rock City withdraws from buying SSNIT Hotels

**R**ock City Hotel, owned by Agriculture Minister Bryan Acheampong, has withdrawn its bid to acquire a 60 percent stake in four hotels owned by the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT).

The hotels involved in the potential deal included La Palm Beach Hotel, Labadi Beach Hotel, Royal Ridge Hotel, and Elmina Beach Hotel.

This decision comes on the heels of a strong ultimatum from Organised Labour, who threatened to initiate a strike on Monday, July 15, if SSNIT proceeded with the sale to Rock City Hotel.

The threat of industrial action highlighted widespread concerns among stakeholders about the transparency and implications of the sale.

In a letter addressed to SSNIT Director-General Kofi Osafo-Mafo, Rock City Hotel expressed its dissatisfaction with the process, citing insufficient stakeholder engagement as a key reason for negative perceptions surrounding their bid.

"Due to the lack of stakeholder engagement, which we believe has led to negative perceptions about our bid, we have decided to withdraw from pursuing this investment opportunity in the hotels," stated the letter from Rock City Hotel.

In a move to uphold transparency and accountability, Rock City Hotel has also agreed to the public release of all or part of their bid documents, if necessary.

The withdrawal of Rock City Hotel

marks a significant development in the saga surrounding the SSNIT hotel sales.

The issue has generated considerable public and media attention, with many questioning

the motivations and implications behind the proposed sale to a company linked to a sitting government minister.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



*Bryan Acheampong, Minister of Food and Agriculture*

## Mahama-Bawumia debate imminent as IEA announces preparations

**T**he Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) has made significant progress in its preparations to revitalise its hallmark Presidential and Vice-Presidential debates ahead of the 2024 elections.

The IEA has called on candidates to use this platform to present their visions for the country's future.

"The IEA is far advanced in its preparations to reorganise its flagship Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates. The Institute encourages the candidates to take advantage of the debates to inform Ghanaians of their policies to address the country's challenges," stated Dr John Kwakye, Director of Research at the IEA, in a tweet on Saturday.

Amid these preparations, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, the NPP's presidential candidate, has publicly challenged former President John Dramani Mahama of the NDC to a live debate.

Speaking to a large crowd of

supporters in Bunkpurugu, North East Region, Dr Bawumia expressed his eagerness to discuss his vision and policies for Ghana.

"I am looking forward to a debate with John Mahama on the economy, on the country, on the governance," Dr Bawumia said. However, he expressed scepticism about the likelihood of such an engagement, suggesting that Mahama might be avoiding the debate.

"But I am afraid that he is running away from a debate. His people say he doesn't want to debate. I have never heard of an opposition leader who doesn't want to debate. But he knows I will expose the emptiness of his policies," Dr Bawumia remarked.

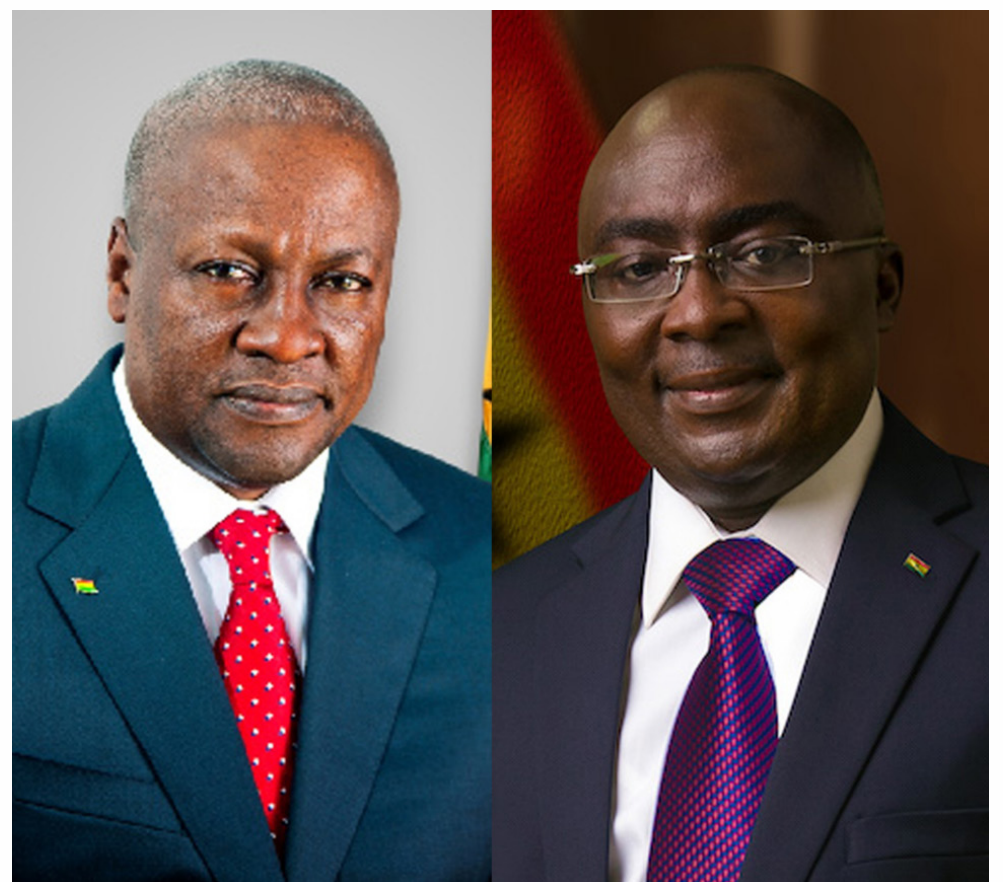
Dr Bawumia also criticised former President Mahama and his team for not effectively communicating their plans for a 24-hour economy to the people of Ghana.

He implied that Mahama's reluctance to engage in a debate stems from a fear of being exposed on this issue.

The anticipation surrounding the potential debate between these two political heavyweights is palpable, as it would provide a crucial platform for them to outline their respective plans and policies for addressing Ghana's challenges.

The IEA's initiative is expected to play a significant role in informing and engaging the electorate ahead of the 2024 elections.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*



*John Dramani Mahama, ND Flagbearer on the left, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, NPP Flagbearer, on the right*

# General News

## 2024 election victory is not yet a done deal for the NDC - Franklin Cudjoe

Founder and President of IMANI Africa, Franklin Cudjoe, has cautioned the National Democratic Congress (NDC) against assuming premature victory in the upcoming 2024 general elections.

He stressed the necessity for the NDC to present clear, measurable strategies aimed at reducing Ghana's dependence on borrowing and averting another IMF program by 2026.

In a recent Facebook post, Cudjoe highlighted the critical importance of the NDC outlining specific plans for job creation and detailing how these initiatives would positively impact the country's GDP.

He emphasized the need for well-coordinated and realistic economic policies to build voter confidence.

"Meanwhile, the major opposition

party, the NDC, should not assume 2024 is a done deal. Some of us are yet to see properly quantified interventions that will reduce our reliance on borrowing, and crucially how we may avoid another IMF programme in 2026," Cudjoe wrote. "There is a need for the NDC to coordinate and relate the many promises of creating employment and ascertain by an estimated figure the qualitative addition to GDP."

As Ghanaians prepare to vote on December 7, 2024, to elect a new president and parliamentary representatives, both the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the primary opposition NDC have launched their campaign efforts.

Cudjoe's comments come at a crucial time, urging the NDC to enhance the credibility and clarity of their economic proposals.

Cudjoe also mentioned that IMANI Africa plans to provide an objective analysis of the political parties' plans.

"IMANI plans presenting brief analysis with the public and media based on objective assessments of how the plans of the major

political parties shall impact the country regardless of how extreme the partisan debate develops over the next few days and weeks," he stated.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



*Franklin Cudjoe, Founder & President, IMANI Africa*

## Alarm as new breed of mosquitoes invades Eastern Region districts – DCEs urge immediate action

District Chief Executives (DCEs) from four assemblies in the Eastern Region have raised an alarm over an outbreak of a new breed of mosquitoes that is causing illnesses in their districts.

They have called on the Ghana Health Service (GHS) to take immediate action to address the situation.

The DCEs from Akyeamansa, Achiase, Birim South, and Birim Central Districts reported that these mosquitoes, typically found in cocoa farms, are large, black, and have distinctive white markings.

The presence of these mosquitoes has led to a significant rise in malaria cases in local health facilities, prompting urgent appeals for a lasting solution to prevent further health issues and loss of lives.

Achiase DCE, Richmond Amponsah Agyabeng, highlighted the severity of the situation. "The situation has become a significant health threat in the region, with numerous health centres reporting cases related to these mosquito bites," he said.

He revealed that approximately 300 people across the four districts have been hospitalised, though some, including himself, have since been treated and discharged.

Mr. Agyabeng also mentioned that a National Community Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compound in the Achiase District had recorded about 30 cases, emphasising the need for immediate intervention.

He noted that the issue began in his district about a month ago, with residents initially self-medicating until the severity of the problem became apparent.

Similarly, Asare Danso, the DCE for Birim South District, confirmed numerous cases in his district and urged the GHS to find a lasting solution.

"We are seeing numerous cases and it's crucial that the GHS steps in to address this problem

effectively," Danso stated.

The DCEs stressed that swift and effective action by the GHS is essential to control the outbreak and protect public health.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*



*Mosquito*

# General News

## Mahama is not asking for aid from Russian government – Campaign team

The Mahama Campaign Team has denounced media reports about the flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

They claim that these outlets falsely reported that Mahama sought assistance from the Russian government for the upcoming December elections.

This reaction follows an article published by Asaase Radio on Thursday, July 11, which suggested that Mahama approached Russian authorities for support under the guise of launching a Russian version of his autobiography, 'My First Coup D'etat'.

Joyce Bawah Mogtari,

spokesperson for Mahama, issued a statement on Friday, July 12, 2024, vehemently denying these allegations and condemning the publication as an example of 'shadowy and unethical journalism' aimed at damaging Mahama's reputation.

Mr. Mogtari clarified that Mahama's trip to Russia was solely for the purpose of launching the Russian language translation of his memoir, 'My First Coup D'etat and Other Stories from the Lost Decades of Africa', at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow.

The Campaign Team stressed that Asaase Radio's claims are unfounded and urged Ghanaians

to disregard them, asserting that there was no interaction with Russian authorities during Mahama's visit.

Additionally, they reaffirmed their dedication to ethical campaigning and transparency, urging media organizations to uphold

journalistic standards.

The team assured the public of Mahama's unwavering focus on his campaign and on tackling the critical challenges confronting the country.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



*John Dramani Mahama, Flagbearer, NDC on the left, and foreign delegates on the right*

## New L.I: MPs to use sirens in vehicles, exempted from speed limits

Parliament has proposed a Legislative Instrument (L.I.) to amend sections of the Road Traffic Regulations 2012.

Upon approval, these modifications will grant privileges formerly reserved for emergency and specialised vehicles to Members of Parliament (MPs) and Ministers of State.

The revision of Regulation 74 of LI 2180 will enable the fitting of sirens or bells as warning devices on specific vehicle categories, including those owned by Supreme Court justices, Members of Parliament, and Ministers of State.

Additionally, an amendment to Regulation 166 of LI 2180 specifies that speed limit regulations will no longer apply to Members of Parliament (MPs) and Ministers of State.

In January 2023, Ghana's Presidency issued a letter cautioning certain ministers, members of parliament, and chief executives of government institutions against using sirens and bells to bypass traffic.

This directive reinforces an earlier order from December 2017, which remains in effect, aimed at preventing the misuse of sirens by ministers and other government officials.

Per the directive "any vehicle outside the above list or categories with a siren or bell is, thus, in contravention of the law and the operator is liable to prosecution."

"For the avoidance of doubt, the said ban on the use of sirens covers the following government appointees:

Ministers and Deputy Ministers, Regional Ministers and Deputy Regional Ministers, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs), CEOs of government agencies and officials of the presidency, unless otherwise designated," the letter stated.

Meanwhile, in December 2020, Parliament enacted the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2020, imposing harsher penalties on road traffic violators responsible for the death of an unborn child.

This marks the first instance

where a Bill initiated by private members of Parliament (MPs) has been ratified by Parliament.

Henry Quartey, the Greater Accra Regional Minister, has been outspoken about tackling the misuse of sirens in the capital.

During his vetting in March 2021, he promised to address this issue directly if confirmed as Regional Minister. He stressed that under his leadership, the abuse of sirens and blue lights would be significantly reduced.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*



*File Photo*

# General News

## Next pandemic to hit Ghana is Non-Communicable Diseases - Health Expert warns

Health experts are issuing a dire warning that Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) could emerge as the next global pandemic post-COVID-19 if prompt action is not taken.

Annually, over 94,000 deaths are attributed to NCDs like diabetes, hypertension, kidney failure, and cancers, yet current efforts to combat this silent crisis are deemed inadequate.

At the JoyNews National Dialogue on NCDs, experts emphasized the urgent need for proactive government intervention.

Prof. Gordon Abekah-Nkrumah, from the University of Ghana Business School's Department of Health Services Management, stressed a multidimensional approach to tackling NCDs.

He underscored the necessity of robust regulations and policies to address the underlying causes of these diseases.

"NCDs are the next pandemic. How are we communicating this to the elites who have the power to make decisions when it comes to resource allocation, such as the Ministry of Finance and cabinet?"

"Do they see NCDs as the next COVID, which may necessitate the President addressing the nation every fortnight and holding meetings all over the place?"

"The way we package this message and align it with their own incentives, in terms of how this determines their electoral fortunes, will be very important," Prof. Abekah-Nkrumah stated.

Effectively conveying the severity of NCDs and their potential impact on public health and the economy is essential for mobilizing support and resources. Dr. Kwasi Boahene, Director of Health Systems at PharmAccess, painted a bleak picture of Ghana's NCD landscape, projecting annual expenditures of approximately six billion dollars by 2030 to address these chronic ailments.

The consensus among health experts is clear: immediate, strategic interventions are imperative to prevent NCDs from evolving into the next pandemic. This calls for comprehensive policies and persuasive engagement with decision-makers.

**Source:** *The Independent Ghana*



*Prof. Gordon Abekah-Nkrumah, University of Ghana Business School's Department of Health Services Management*

## Ablakwa calls for the immediate dismissal of SSNIT, NPRA board members

Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, has called for the immediate removal of board members at the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and the National Pensions Regulatory Commission (NPRA).

Additionally, he is advocating for the termination of SSNIT's Director-General, Kofi Bosompem Osafo-Mafo, and NPRA's Chief Executive Officer, John Kwaning Mbroh, from their current roles.

In a Facebook post on July 12, Ablakwa said, "In addition, we demand that the entire SSNIT board, the NPRA board, the SSNIT Director-General and the NPRA Chief Executive Officer must all be sacked without further delay."

SSNIT engaged in negotiations with Rock City Hotel, owned by Minister of Agriculture Bryan Acheampong, to sell 60% of its shares in four hotels. This move sparked protests led by Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Member of

Parliament for North Tongu, and civil society groups on June 18.

On June 28, the National Pensions Regulatory Commission instructed SSNIT to halt negotiations with Rock City regarding the sale of these hotels, pending further review and consultation.

Subsequently, NPRA approved the sale of SSNIT's shares in the four hotels, triggering a swift response

from Organised Labour. Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, Ignatius Baffour Awuah, assured Parliament on July 11 that all required procedures had been followed amid criticism of the deal's impact on pensioners.

Following an emergency meeting of its National Executive Council, Organised Labour announced plans for a nationwide strike

starting Monday, July 15, with seven government agencies pledging participation.

In response, Rock City announced its decision not to proceed with the purchase of the hotels. SSNIT subsequently confirmed the termination of its plans to sell 60% of its shares in the hotels.

**Source:** *The Independent Ghana*



*Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, MP for North Tongu*

# General News

## 2024 Mid-Year budget Review will be free from taxation - Finance Minister assures

Finance Minister Mohammed Amin Adam has assured Ghanaians that the 2024 Mid-Year Budget Review would be free from taxation.

The Budget Review slated for July 23, 2024 will primarily address housing and road financing through public-private partnerships (PPPs), and not focus on taxation.

He made these remarks during a meeting with directors of the Ministry of Finance, members of the Ghana Association of Bankers, representatives of non-bank financial institutions, civil society organisations, and members of academia and trade associations.

On his part, Dr. Amin Adam the taxes to be raised had already received parliamentary approval, and no new taxes would be introduced.

The purpose of the engagement was to encourage banks to support economic growth by enhancing PPP arrangements.

Dr. Amin Adam emphasised the need for Ghana to be intentional about its growth, highlighting the importance of involving banks to accelerate PPPs in financing public investments and projects.

"Government is not able to take as much external credit as it could, because we want to achieve our debt sustainability levels," he said.

"We expect the Mid-Year Budget Review to announce a few measures on how we can promote economic growth and get the banks to appreciate where we are going."

The minister gave his assurance that the government will not touch Treasury bills, adding that, "As the minister, [I] do not intend to touch the T-bills. They are safe."

He urged bankers and financial industry players to have confidence in the economy as the data has shown that Ghana is on the right path.

"The tough decisions that the government had taken when we were in crisis will certainly not be the same decisions to take in our economic recovery," Dr Amin Adam said.

In encouraging the bankers, he said, they had a role to play in building investor confidence by "telling them of our smooth effective recovery but if you don't do so, then you have succeeded in deterring them from investing in our economy".

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*



*Mohammed Amin Adam, Finance Minister*

## Economist refutes Mahama's claim of 8.1% economic growth rate in 2016

Development economist George Domfe, a senior research fellow at the Centre for Social Policy Studies in the College of Humanities at the University of Ghana (UG), has described a claim by the former president John Dramani Mahama that Ghana achieved a growth rate of 8.1% in 2016 as deceptive and a complete falsehood.

Dr Domfe made these remarks when he engaged the media on Saturday, July 13, 2024.

Dr Domfe, who is also a fellow at the Institute of Progressive Governance, said that at a meeting with the Ghana Union of Traders' Associations (GUTA) held recently, Mahama took on the Akufo-Addo administration, asserting that the 8.1% economic growth he bequeathed to the current government has shrunk dramatically.

This, the economist said, is factually inaccurate and a complete

fabrication.

"Former president Mahama met members of GUTA recently and declared that the sound economy he left for Akufo-Addo has been greatly mismanaged.

"He stated categorically that he left a robust economy, with a growth rate of 8.1% when he left office. This is a complete lie, very deceptive coming from the former president," Dr Domfe said.

Domfe could not fathom why the press who met the former president at his media encounter on 7 July did not ask him to prove his claim that his government had achieved 8.1% economic growth.

Questioning the professionalism of Ghanaian journalists and other media practitioners, Domfe argued that Mahama's office "ought to have put him on the right path when he departed from the truth".

"The economy under Mahama's

last year in office grew at 3.4% and that of the previous year, 2015, was 2.1%. It was 2.8% in 2014. In 2017 [the first year of the Akufo-Addo government], it grew at 8.1%; in

2018, 2018 a decline to 6.2%, and in 2019 it went up marginally at 6.5%," Dr Domfe said.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*



*George Domfe, Development Economist*



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# Business

## Debt value of GN Bank was intentionally reduced to force its collapse - Nduom

The Global Chairman of Groupe Nduom, Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom, has alleged that the Central Bank of Ghana intentionally misrepresented the debt value of his now-defunct GN Bank to facilitate its closure.

Dr. Nduom disclosed that a debt of 2.2 billion Ghana cedis was falsely reduced and recorded as 30 million Ghana cedis to portray the bank as unstable and at systemic risk.

The Group Chairman made these statements during an inspection of a former GN Bank office at Roman Hill in Kumasi.

He also stressed that his bank was unfairly shut down.

“People who said we only have about 30 million cedis, I know they did it deliberately because the

same people, a year before, said they counted 640 million Ghana cedis.

“Meanwhile, they have seen a report by an independent auditor, which confirmed that the value of our project was 2.2 billion Ghana cedis. And so why did they use this to collapse the GN bank?” Dr Nduom asked, according to a report by myjoyonline.com.

Despite the bank’s accusations and legal challenges contesting the Bank of Ghana’s (BoG) decision to revoke its banking license, an Accra High Court affirmed the BoG’s action.

The court found that the BoG had not violated any laws.

Nevertheless, Dr. Nduom asserts that the shareholders and stakeholders of GN Bank

will persist in their pursuit of justice.

“People were happy saving with us and the business was thriving. We are just sending a message because we have done things behind closed doors and are not getting the results.

“We have to do this before Akufo-Addo leaves office and we want any government that may take over to know that there is an outstanding matter to be resolved,” he said.

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Amanda Cartey*



*Dr Paa Kwesi Nduom, CEO, GN Bank*

## Ghana Revenue Authority exceeds 2024 mid-year revenue target

The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) has exceeded the mid-year revenue target, according to an official statement dated July 12, 2024.

“The chairman and board of directors of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) wish to congratulate the commissioner-general, top management and staff on their outstanding performance, in exceeding the 2024 mid-year revenue target” parts of the statement read.

The statement revealed that more light would be shed on the Authority’s milestone by the GRACommissioner-General, Julie Essiam next week at a media conference.

“The Commissioner-General, will be sharing more insights on these achievements next week at a media briefing and the Board calls on all valued stakeholders such as taxpayers, and the business community to provide GRA with the needed support to improve on revenue mobilisation,” the GRA statement said.

Meanwhile, the Authority seems to be on a target reaching and surpassing spree as in 2023 it exceeded its annual revenue target for 2023.

The GRA collected a total tax

revenue of GH¢113.06 billion, surpassing the revised target of GH¢109.19 billion.

This achievement represents a significant nominal growth rate of 49.3% compared to the expected

growth rate of 44.2% over the previous year.

Initially, the GRA was tasked to collect GH¢106 billion, which was revised upwards mid-year

*Source: The Independent Ghana / Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo*



*GRA Office Building*



# International

## Kenya's police chief resigns after deadly anti-tax protests

Kenya's police chief Japhet Koome has resigned, following weeks of violent protests against proposed tax hikes in which more than 40 people died.

Human rights groups have accused police of shooting dozens of protestors, some of them fatally, and abducting or arbitrarily arresting hundreds more.

The resignation comes a day after President William Ruto sacked most of his cabinet, following pressure from the protest movement which is largely coordinated online by young

Kenyans.

Two weeks ago protesters stormed parliament shortly after legislators passed the controversial finance bill.

President Ruto later withdrew the bill but that failed to quell the protesters, who want him to step down and are planning more protests to demand further reforms.

Deputy police chief Douglas Kanja takes over running the force with immediate effect, the Kenyan presidency said.

Source: [BBC.com](https://www.bbc.com)



Japhet Koome, Kenya Chief of Police

## Donald Trump, with blood on his face, surrounded by Secret Service agents at his campaign

A gunman and one audience member are dead after a shooting at former President Donald Trump's rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday night, according to the local district attorney. Another spectator is in serious condition.

Trump was injured in the shooting, and he dropped to the ground and was swarmed by Secret Service agents after shots rang out while he spoke on stage.

He had blood on his face as he was rushed away, but pumped his fist and shouted to attendees.

The Secret Service says Trump is safe and under protective measures. A spokesperson said Trump is "fine" after the "heinous act."

The shooting came after a busy day of campaigning for both Trump and President Joe Biden in the 2024 presidential race.

Three law enforcement sources confirm the shooter was outside the venue at former President Donald Trump's rally in Pennsylvania.

Two of those sources say the shooter was on a roof, outside of the venue.

Multiple law enforcement sources have referred to this individual as a sniper, although additional details about that are not clear.

Butler County District Attorney Richard Goldinger said he was told by his chief detective that the shooter was in a building adjacent to the property and had no additional details on the person.

"It would have required a rifle," he said. "It was several hundred yards."

Biden says he's "grateful" Trump is OK after shooting

President Joe Biden has responded to the Saturday shooting.

"I have been briefed on the shooting at Donald Trump's rally in Pennsylvania. I'm grateful to hear that he's safe and doing well. I'm praying for him and his family and for all those who were at the rally, as we await further information. Jill and I are grateful to the Secret Service for getting him to safety.

There's no place for this kind of violence in America. We must unite as one nation to condemn it."

Biden has been largely out of sight

at his Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, home Saturday, but was attending Mass at St. Edmund's Catholic Church when the shooting occurred.

The White House told reporters in Delaware that Biden was

briefed on the shooting by Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, and Homeland Security adviser Liz Sherwood-Randall.

Source: [CNN.com](https://www.cnn.com)



Donald Trump, Former US President

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