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# General News

## Over 5.8m NHIS cards linked to Ghana Card for Universal Health Coverage

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

A total of 5,885,583 National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) cards have been successfully linked to the Ghana Card as of February 2024.

This is according to the Minister of Health, Dr. Bernard Okoe-Boye.

Dr Oko-Boye explained that the merging was a critical part of a broader initiative to streamline healthcare services and enhance data integration in support of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Speaking at a press conference, Dr. Okoe-Boye emphasized the importance of this development, noting that the linkage would strengthen the national health database and ensure better healthcare delivery.

"As of February 2024, 5,885,583 NHIS cards have been linked to the Ghana Card," he stated, highlighting the government's commitment to achieving UHC through strategic policies.

Ghana's UHC roadmap, implemented in 2020 and running until 2030, aims to ensure universal access to quality healthcare services for all citizens. The roadmap aligns with the country's National Health Policy (2019), which focuses on strengthening healthcare systems, expanding public health interventions, and improving service availability through community health initiatives.

The objectives of UHC, as outlined by Dr. Okoe-Boye,

include providing universal access to better-managed quality healthcare services, reducing preventable maternal, adolescent, and child deaths, and increasing access to emergency public health services. The ongoing NHIS-Ghana Card integration is a key step in achieving these goals.

On September 7, 2023, the Ministry of Health launched the National Health Database and the Health Facilities Regulatory Authority's (HeFRA) Digitised Health Facility Assessment Platform. These initiatives aim to improve data accessibility within the healthcare sector, further enhancing efforts to meet UHC targets.

In November 2020, the government began its quest to make the Ghana Card the sole source of identification for persons living in the country and for accessing public services. By dialing the short code \*929# and following the prompts, holders of the two cards can now link their National Health Insurance Cards to the Ghana Card and use the latter to access health care at any accredited National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) facility across the nation.

According to the incumbent government, it seeks to leverage technology to accelerate Ghana's development, especially as the world experiences the fourth Industrial Revolution.

"Our overarching objectives in this digitization agenda are to improve both economic and public sector governance, improve transparency



Dr. Bernard Okoe-Boye, Minister of Health

and accountability, improve domestic revenue mobilization, curb corruption and increase access to public services," Vice President Dr Mahamudu Bawumia said at the NHIS Week Celebration in Accra four years ago.

As of March 2024, a total of 17,918,135 Ghanaians had registered for the Ghana Card since mass registration began in April 2019. In addition, Joseph Annor, Deputy Director of the Information Management System at the NHIA, revealed that 30 million Ghanaians were enrolled in the NHIS as of July 2024.

Per reports, nearly \$30 million is being saved each year by the various state institutions that have successfully integrated their systems with the National Identification Authority (NIA) database.

The savings are being made from the absence of the procurement of new equipment, non-printing of new sector-specific cards and non-duplication of services as the Ghana Card now serves as the sole identity for health insurance, social security, taxation and

business transactions.

Dr. Okoe-Boye also announced that GHC 135.6 million had been disbursed to healthcare providers for NHIS claims for February and March 2024. This payment ensures that healthcare providers continue to deliver essential services to patients covered under the scheme.

In a significant policy shift, the Ministry of Health is preparing to integrate major herbal medicines into the NHIS, providing patients with alternative treatment options alongside conventional medicine.

"Not all herbal medicines are dangerous because some have gone through scientific processes and have been approved for use," the Minister explained.

Mental health treatments and related medications are also set to be included in the scheme, further expanding the scope of services covered by NHIS.

Ghana is making strides toward achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030, ensuring that citizens have access to affordable and quality healthcare services.

## We don't know the whereabouts of arrested protesters - Democracy Hub claims

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Civil society group, Democracy Hub, has expressed serious concerns about the lack of information regarding the whereabouts of protesters arrested during a demonstration on Sunday, September 22, 2024.

According to a member of the

group's legal team, Prince Ganaku, the Ghana Police Service has not provided a full list of those detained, making it difficult for their legal team to prepare a defence or ensure their clients receive legal representation.

Ganaku revealed that despite repeated attempts to obtain

details about where the protesters are being held or which court they would be presented to, the police have withheld this information. He stated that the protesters are being held in various locations across the country and claimed that they have been denied access to legal counsel.

"In our attempt to get them bail, we engaged with the police and they declined to give us the list of people who have been arrested. We were told, and to quote the police, 'to go and roam the streets of Accra and if we find them, fine. If we don't find them, fine,'" said Ganaku.

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# General News

## *We don't know the whereabouts of arrested protesters - Democracy Hub claims*

*Continued from page 2*

Ganaku also alleged that there were higher-level instructions preventing legal access to the detainees. "We heard that there was an order from above that they should not allow those that they arrested to get access to legal representation," he added.

Meanwhile, a lawyer and social media influencer, Ama Governor, has voiced her frustrations after being detained for over 48 hours without food or water following her arrest during the #OccupyJulorbiHouse demonstration.

She was among several protesters who appeared in court on Tuesday, September 24, after being transported under heavy security

in a bus.

Ama Governor, as she was being escorted to the courtroom, shouted, "You want to see a 26-year-old lawyer in handcuffs because she said Stop Galamsey Now. 48 hours no lawyer, 48 hours no food, no water. Over 48 hours, you all should be proud. These people are ridiculous. Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery."

Ten out of the protesters arrested during the #OccupyJulorbiHouse demonstration have been remanded after appearing in court.

The Democracy Hub protest was organised to highlight several national issues, including socio-economic inequality,

unemployment, corruption, and state capture. It was scheduled to run from Saturday, September 21, to Monday, September 23, at Revolutionary Square, but clashes with police brought the demonstration to an abrupt end, with little or no representation on Monday.

The Ghana Police Service reported the arrest of 42 individuals on September 22, accusing the

protesters of unlawfully gathering, obstructing traffic, and engaging in public disturbances.

Video footage circulating on social media showed a standoff between the protesters and police, with the demonstrators carrying placards and chanting slogans like "Stop Galamsey Now." Tensions escalated when the police attempted to disperse the crowd, resulting in several arrests.



File Photo

## **We will restore Founder's Day to recognize Kwame Nkrumah - Mahama**

By *Sebastian Akaho-Tay*

Former President and flagbearer for the National Democratic Congress (NDC), John Dramani Mahama, has pledged to restore Founder's Day to honor Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's pivotal role in Ghana's independence.

Speaking during a celebration of Nkrumah's 115th birthday in Nzemaland, Mahama urged citizens to resist efforts to misrepresent Nkrumah's legacy. He remarked on the persistence of animosity towards Nkrumah, referencing the recent backlash over a derogatory comment made about the late leader.

"The hatred and bitterness harbored by those who disliked and hated Nkrumah still erupt from time to time, as exemplified in the recent outrage that was expressed by the whole nation by the description of Kwame Nkrumah in the derogatory term of 'that your Kwame Nkrumah,'" Mahama stated.

Mahama emphasized the need to acknowledge Nkrumah's contributions, insisting, "History cannot be revised, no matter how you feel about our children's

textbook with different versions of your history. Founder's Day must be a day that recognises Nkrumah, the leader who delivered independence to Ghana and whose vision was continental in scope."

He assured that if the NDC assumes power in 2025, they will address historical inaccuracies and reinstate Nkrumah's legacy. "The next NDC government, Inshallah in January 2025, would seek to remove the distortions in our history and restore Kwame Nkrumah to his rightful place in the history of Ghana," he said.

Founder's Day was traditionally celebrated on September 21—Dr. Nkrumah's birthday—to recognise his significant contributions to Ghana and his broader impact across Africa. However, the celebration was altered by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, who proposed a change in both the date and the spelling—Founders' Day on August 4, to include other key figures in Ghana's independence.

In 2019, the public holiday amendment bill was passed,

officially changing Founder's Day to acknowledge the contributions of all six founding fathers: Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Edward Akufo-Addo, Joseph Boakye Danquah, Emmanuel Obetsebi-Lamptey, William Ofori Atta, and Ebenezer Ako-Adjei.

The new date, August 4, marks

two important historical events: the formation of the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society in 1897 and the establishment of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in 1947. This change aimed to honour all members of the Big Six involved in Ghana's independence.



John Dramani Mahama, NDC Flagbearer

# General News

## Ghana's peace ranking slips to 55th globally, 4th in Africa

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Ghana has experienced a significant decline in its global peace ranking, dropping to 55th place in the 2024 Global Peace Index (GPI) with a score of 1.938.

This marks a continued downward trend from its 51st position in 2023 and 40th place in 2022. The report places Ghana as the 4th most peaceful country in Sub-Saharan Africa, down from its previous second-place standing, behind Mauritius, Madagascar, and Botswana.

The GPI, published annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), assesses the peacefulness of 163 countries based on factors including societal safety, ongoing conflict, and militarization.

The 2024 report shows a general decline in peacefulness across Sub-Saharan Africa, largely due to conflicts spilling across national borders. The region saw deteriorations in all three key domains, with 36 out of 44 countries

involved in external conflicts over the past five years.

Mauritius continues its 17-year streak as the most peaceful country in Sub-Saharan Africa, showing significant gains in societal safety and security. In contrast, South Sudan remains the least peaceful nation in the region, despite some minor improvements.

Ethiopia recorded the largest improvement, mainly attributed to a ceasefire agreement in the Tigray region, while Gabon experienced the most significant decline following a military coup in August 2023 that removed President Ali Bongo from office.

Globally, Iceland remains the most peaceful country with a score of 1.112, followed by Ireland. Yemen ranks as the least peaceful, with ongoing conflict driving its score down to 3.397.

The global trend of declining peace continues, with 97 countries showing deteriorations in 2024,

compared to only 65 that recorded improvements. Rising political instability, violent protests, and increased conflict-related deaths were highlighted as contributing factors.

In Ghana, a series of violent protests have raised concerns. Notable events include the "Enough is Enough" protest organised by the National Democratic Congress (NDC), which saw clashes between demonstrators and security forces. The Democracy Hub protest against illegal mining also resulted in over 40 arrests, adding to the tension in the country.

The National Peace Council has voiced its concern over Ghana's declining peace ranking. Dr. Mark Boadu, Eastern Regional Chairman of the Council in 2023, remarked, "This is a cause for worry, and we must all work hard to bring back the glory."

The GPI report also highlighted a troubling global trend, noting that the world has become less peaceful

for the 12th time in 16 years.

Although some countries, including Kazakhstan, Iran, and Uzbekistan, saw a decrease in violent demonstrations, overall global conflict has increased, with 85 countries showing deterioration in the Ongoing Conflict domain.

Ukraine, Myanmar, and North Macedonia were singled out for their significant increases in military expenditure, contributing to the largest decline in the Militarization domain.

Despite this, there was a notable improvement in commitment to UN peacekeeping efforts, which emerged as the most improved indicator in the report.



File Photo

## Remove licensing barriers preventing lawyers from practising internationally - A-G urges IBA

By Amanda Cartey

Attorney-General and Minister of Justice Godfred Yeboah Dame has urged the International Bar Association (IBA) to reconsider the regulations surrounding cross-border legal practice.

Speaking at the African Regional Forum during the IBA's annual conference in Mexico City, Mr. Dame highlighted the need to eliminate licensing barriers that hinder lawyers from practising internationally.

"If our practice is essentially and unavoidably international or cross-border, then there must be a rethink of the legal framework regulating the practice of lawyers in our respective domestic settings. We must remove the barriers of licensing regimes that constrain the capacity of lawyers to appear in jurisdictions other than where they were trained to practise if our practice is indeed

international," he stated.

He acknowledged the diversity in legal systems, training methods, and licensing requirements across nations. Despite these differences, Mr Dame pointed to international legal practice as a model for a harmonised system.

"Nations appear before regional courts, international tribunals, and arbitration panels constituted to adjudicate cases in accordance with the law. The lawyers representing them do not require specific licensing to appear before such panels. Therefore, it can be done."

Mr. Dame suggested a common understanding to enable state counsel or lawyers with constitutional and statutory authority to represent their nations in disputes, allowing them to appear in foreign domestic courts without needing a local licence when

national disputes arise.

Currently, most jurisdictions prohibit practising law without a local licence. Lawyers looking to operate in another country often face stringent local licensing requirements, which may include passing a local bar exam or meeting specific educational and language criteria.

However, some nations, like the United States, permit foreign lawyers to practise temporarily without taking the local bar exam, provided they register as Foreign Legal Consultants (FLC).

As global economies integrate, the demand for cross-border legal services has surged. Governments are increasingly pursuing trade initiatives aimed at dismantling barriers, including those affecting the legal profession.

The IBA Council has responded to this trend over the past 15

years by offering guidance on the responsible provision of cross-border legal services. Their initiative is documented in the IBA Global Regulation and Trade in Legal Services Report 2014.

Established in 1947, the International Bar Association is the leading global association for legal practitioners, bar associations, and law societies, with over 80,000 individual members from top law firms and 190 bar associations in over 170 countries. The annual conference opened on September 15, 2024, featuring remarks from former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo.



Justice Godfred Yeboah Dame, Attorney-General & Minister of Justice

# General News

## Climate Change: We can't bear the brunt of a crisis we didn't create - Akufo-Addo tells global leaders

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has called on global leaders to take decisive and urgent action to address the escalating climate crisis, highlighting the disproportionate impact on Africa.

Speaking at the 79th United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 23, 2024, he stressed that the continent, despite its minimal role in global carbon emissions, is bearing the brunt of the consequences.

In his address, Akufo-Addo emphasized that Africa faces severe effects from climate change, such as droughts and floods, while contributing the least to the problem. He warned that these environmental challenges threaten not just regional stability but "humanity's very existence."

"At the heart of today's crisis is the climate emergency that threatens humanity's very existence. Africa, despite contributing the least to global emissions, faces the most significant consequences. From floods to desertification, we are already witnessing its devastating effects. Despite promises made, the vulnerable continue to be neglected," he stated.

Akufo-Addo's speech comes against the backdrop of severe drought in parts of Ghana's Northern Region, where a ban on grain exports has been implemented as part of efforts to manage the crisis. He reiterated Africa's demand for fairness, not charity, in the global response to climate change.

"We are told to adapt and be resilient, but how can one adapt to famine or build resilience when farmers cannot predict the seasons? Africa should not have to pay for a crisis it did not cause. We demand fairness, not charity. Climate justice requires a system that benefits all, not just the privileged few," he remarked.

While developed nations have pledged financial support to help Africa mitigate and adapt to climate impacts, President Akufo-Addo questioned the delivery and effectiveness of these promises. He called for a more inclusive approach that accounts for both developed and developing nations, insisting that climate action is an urgent necessity for global stability.

Ghana has made strides in securing international climate funding, including a \$50 million

performance-based agreement with the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation.

In 2023, the country also secured new climate financing from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to bolster its climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – are by far the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 per cent of all carbon dioxide emissions, according to the United Nations.

As greenhouse gas emissions blanket the Earth, they trap the sun's heat. This leads to global warming and climate change. The world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history. Warmer temperatures over time are changing weather patterns and disrupting the usual balance of nature. This poses many risks to human beings and all other forms of life on Earth.

"The wealthiest bear the greatest responsibility: the richest 1 per cent of the global population combined account for more greenhouse gas emissions than the poorest 50 per cent," the UN report adds.



Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana

## "We are paid GHS 300 monthly!" - Mortuary workers threaten strike over poor conditions

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Mortuary workers in Ghana are gearing up for a nationwide strike on Thursday, September 26, 2024, in protest of their poor working conditions and meagre salaries.

According to the Mortuary Workers Association of Ghana (MOWAG), some of its members are earning as low as GHS 300 a month.

General Secretary of MOWAG, Richard Jordan, expressed deep frustration over the situation, citing not only the low wages but also the deplorable state of many mortuaries and inadequate protective gear for staff.

"We are paid as little as GHS 300 to GHS 400 per month in this economic crisis, and after taxes, we are left with almost nothing. If we were working in other jurisdictions, we would have become wealthy people," Jordan said.

### Dangerous Working Conditions

Mr. Jordan highlighted that the lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) puts workers at high risk of exposure to diseases and other hazards. Despite the significant health risks associated with their duties, mortuary workers continue to face what he describes as mistreatment and neglect.

"The conditions in our facilities

are deplorable. Our mortuaries are not in good condition at all," Jordan lamented, adding that maintenance issues have long gone unresolved.

Unpaid Arrears and Broken

### Promises

According to Jordan, the government still owes mortuary workers salary arrears dating back

*Continued on page 6*



Mortuary

# General News

## “We are paid GHS 300 monthly!” - Mortuary workers threaten strike over poor conditions

*Continued from page 5*

to 2020. Additionally, a promised COVID-19 bonus, pledged by President Nana Akufo-Addo, has yet to be disbursed.

The association also raised concerns about the government's failure to grant financial clearance for the recruitment of 500 new staff members, which they

argue has further strained the already overworked mortuary employees.

### **A Last Resort**

The planned strike, which could paralyse mortuary services across the country, comes as a last resort after repeated failed attempts to engage relevant authorities.

“The challenges we are confronted with are too many, and we don't want to stress Ghanaians, but at this point, we have exhausted every avenue. The only option left is to embark on a strike,” Jordan said. The Association has also pointed to the alarming statistic of 16 mortuary workers dying within

the past year, which underscores the urgent need for change in the sector.

MOWAG is calling for immediate action to address these issues, warning that the strike will continue if their demands are not met.

## Trafigura threatens to seize Ghana's South African assets over offsetting \$134m debt

*By Amanda Cartey*

**O**il giant Trafigura has issued a stern warning to Ghana, threatening to seize the country's assets in South Africa over an unpaid \$134 million judgment debt. The energy firm has petitioned Ghana's Finance Minister, Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, demanding immediate settlement of the debt.

In a letter dated September 23, Trafigura expressed frustration over the government's delay in resolving the debt, despite multiple negotiation attempts.

The company stated, “Further to our letter of September 20th 2024, to which we have not yet received a response, we can confirm that we have today filed the relevant papers to commence enforcement of the arbitral award in South Africa. As a courtesy, we have enclosed at Annex 1 the filings with this letter as service on the Government of Ghana through diplomatic channels may take some months.”

Trafigura emphasised its preference for an amicable resolution, saying, “We would nevertheless like to reiterate the message of our previous correspondence, that we would prefer not to take any further enforcement action and instead to resolve the matter amicably by fully executing the settlement agreement, as soon as possible, ideally within this week, and receiving payment in accordance with the agreed schedule.”

While the specific assets targeted in South Africa remain

undisclosed, reports indicate that Trafigura's Ghana Power Generation Company (GPGC) has taken control of Ghana's Regina House in London due to non-payment of the judgment debt.

This development marks a significant escalation in Trafigura's four-year effort to recover funds following the abrupt termination of a power purchase agreement by Ghana.

A U.S. District Court recently ruled in favour of Trafigura, adding \$111.4 million in interest to the original debt after Ghana failed to respond to legal proceedings. Bright Simons, Vice President of Imani Africa, disclosed on social media that Regina House is under Trafigura's control, a claim corroborated by Joy News. He accused the Ghanaian government of concealing this information, intensifying the ongoing controversy.

Ghana's High Commissioner to the UK, Papa Owusu-Ankomah, confirmed that Trafigura will retain control of Regina House until the debt is fully resolved. He urged the government to engage in renewed negotiations to prevent additional financial penalties, stating, “Until we pay in full or come into an arrangement to pay them, Trafigura will remain in control over the receivership of the Regina House and its proceeds.”

The legal dispute originated on January 26, 2021, when a UK tribunal awarded GPGC \$134.3 million for Ghana's breach of contractual obligations after terminating the power purchase

agreement in February 2018. Although Ghana contended that GPGC did not meet specific conditions, the tribunal disagreed and granted damages based on an Early Termination Payment formula.

The tribunal also imposed an interest rate of six-month USD LIBOR plus 6% and required Ghana to cover GPGC's arbitration costs of \$3.3 million. Despite partial payments of \$1.89 million, a significant balance remains outstanding.

In an effort to enforce the arbitral award, GPGC filed a case in the U.S. District Court in January 2024

under the New York Convention, which mandates the recognition and enforcement of arbitral awards.

Ghana's failure to respond led to a favourable ruling for GPGC. Chief Judge James E. Boasberg affirmed the court's jurisdiction under the convention, which further complicated Ghana's financial obligations. The U.S. court awarded post-judgment interest at a statutory rate, adding to Ghana's financial burden. Consequently, Trafigura maintains control over Regina House until the debt crisis is resolved.



*Fiile Photo*

# General News

## Manhyia palace rejects apology from journalists over anti-Otumfuo remarks

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

**M**anhyia Palace has declined to accept an apology from Agoo TV journalist Afia Pokua and Onua TV host Mona Gucci for remarks made about the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, which were deemed disrespectful to the Asanteman.

The journalists appeared before the palace on Monday, September 23, to offer their formal apologies following widespread backlash.

In a video widely circulated on social media, Afia Pokua was seen kneeling before several Asante chiefs in a gesture of humility. However, their apology was not accepted by the authorities at Manhyia.

One of the chiefs, speaking on behalf of the palace, firmly stated, "We don't need anything from this child over here. She should take her curse away."

The controversy erupted when Afia Pokua criticised the Asantehene on Mona Gucci's show, "Bribi Gye Gye Wo", for what she perceived as his silence during ongoing conflicts involving his subjects and other tribes, including the

Bonos. Afia Pokua also expressed her frustrations over the Ashantis' perceived superiority over other tribes, comments that quickly drew outrage from the Ashanti community.

The remarks sparked public condemnation from Ashanti leaders, including sub-chiefs and queen mothers, who found the comments disrespectful. Realising the gravity of their words, both journalists initially took to social media to express remorse but later recognized the need for a more formal apology.

Mona Gucci admitted her regret for allowing Afia Pokua to voice such controversial opinions on her platform.

"When my guest came on the show, she made statements that hurt many. We are using this same platform to apologise. To our viewers around the world, including the Ashantis, we are truly sorry. We acknowledge your pain and concerns regarding this issue. I, Monalisa Abigail Sefakor Semeha, plead for your forgiveness. I apologise for everything that has transpired. The Asantehene is

our father, and Asanteman is our family. Please forgive us," Mona Gucci pleaded.

Afia Pokua, visibly emotional and dressed in funeral attire, offered a heartfelt apology to the Asantehene and the entire Ashanti kingdom. On the verge of tears, she bowed deeply as she expressed her regret for her words.

"I offer a sincere apology to Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. I did not speak well at all, and I accept my wrongs. I am his grandchild, child, and niece. I bow and ask for his forgiveness. I also apologise to the entire Asanteman, both home and abroad. Please forgive me. My actions were not intentional; I ask that, despite your anger, you find it

in your heart to forgive me. I erred; I goofed," Afia Pokua said.

In her apology, she also addressed the Kwahumanhene and Paramount Chief of the Kwahu Traditional Area, Daasebre Akuamoah Agyapong II, as well as the people of Kwahu, recognizing that her comments had caused them embarrassment as well.

"I also apologise to the Kwahumanhene. I have brought shame upon you. My words have embarrassed the Chief and the people of Kwahu. Please forgive me; I promise not to let this happen again," she added.

Despite their emotional pleas, the Manhyia Palace stood firm, refusing to accept their apology.



Onua Tv Representatives

## Ghana maintains 10th position in latest ranking of African countries with lowest fuel prices

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

**G**hana has secured its place as the 10th country with the lowest fuel prices in Africa as of September 2024, according to data from GlobalPetrolPrices.com. The country has seen a slight decline in fuel prices, with the average cost of petrol currently at \$0.985 per litre, moving up to 43rd globally from its previous 45th position.

Earlier this year, petrol prices fell from GH¢12.691 to GH¢11.24 per litre, reflecting a broader trend in the global oil market that began on May 16, 2024.

Analysts expect an additional reduction of 4.3% in September 2024, driven by ongoing

fluctuations in global oil prices and the relative stability of the Ghanaian cedi.

Data from the Institute for Energy Security (IES) reveals notable price decreases in the second half of July 2024, with petrol prices declining by 2.99%, diesel by 4.59%, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by 1.10%.

"Precisely, the price of gasoline [petrol] fell by 2.99%, gasoil [diesel] by 4.59%, and LPG by 1.10% in the second half of July 2024. The Ghana cedi also recorded slowed depreciation (0.52%), the lowest since February 2024," an IES spokesperson noted.

In comparison, Libya continues to offer the cheapest fuel in Africa at

\$0.031 per litre, ranking second globally. Egypt follows closely with a price of \$0.035 per litre, while Angola ranks third at \$0.323 per litre. Other countries in the top ten

include Algeria, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Tunisia, and Liberia, with prices ranging from \$0.348 to \$0.889 per litre.



File Photo



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# Business

## Investor-demand for T-bills declines as auction sees GHS1.4bn under subscription

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Investor demand for Ghana's Treasury bills has taken a sharp turn, with the latest auction results revealing a significant shortfall of GHS1.4 billion. This marks a 25.27% drop in subscriptions, according to data released by the Bank of Ghana.

In this week's auction, the government was able to raise GHS4.3 billion from its short-term debt instruments, falling short of its GHS5.8 billion target. The results highlight a stark contrast to the previous week when the government surpassed its target.

While there was a decrease in demand for Treasury bills ranging from 91 to 364 days, the government accepted all

bids submitted. This included GHS3.7 billion for 91-day bills, GHS441 million for 182-day bills, and GHS175 million for 364-day bills.

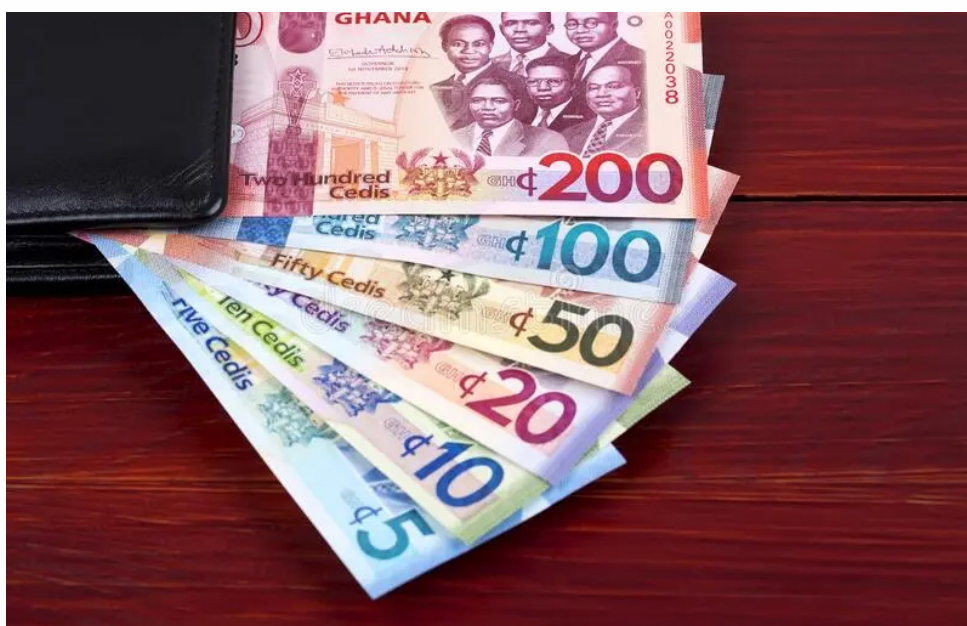
Market analysts attribute this under-subscription to changing conditions in the financial market, combined with the government's aggressive borrowing targets. Investors, concerned about economic volatility and market shifts, seem to have exercised more caution, which may have contributed to the shortfall.

Despite the subdued investor interest, yields on the Treasury bills remained relatively stable, with interest rates hovering between 24% and 28%.

The government, in response to

the recent auction, has signalled its intent to increase its borrowing target to GHS5.5 billion in the upcoming auction.

Market participants are closely watching these developments, as continued shortfalls could affect the government's broader fiscal strategy.



Ghana Cedis

## Custom agents, freight forwarders protest against high port charges in Tema

By Sebastian Akaho-Tay

Members of the Ghana Institute of Freight Forwarders, customs agents, and other stakeholders protested against what they consider excessive port charges that threaten business viability yesterday in Tema.

The demonstrators argued that the increasing fees impose significant burdens on their operations, pushing some to seek alternatives outside Ghana.

During their march, protesters submitted petitions to various shipping lines and presented their concerns to the Ministries of Transport and Trade and Industry. Freight forwarders interviewed expressed their frustration with current port practices, highlighting that many importers are turning to Togo's ports to avoid high costs.

"We are out here because the shipping lines are exploiting us and crippling our businesses. Many importers now prefer the Togo port because of the heavy fees we are burdened with," one freight forwarder stated.

Another freight forwarder, Bismark

Ocansey, shared a personal encounter involving a faulty APS scanner that delayed his container processing and incurred a penalty of approximately GH¢10,000. He stressed that the delay was beyond his control yet resulted in a financial burden.

"It's time for the shipping lines to realise they're unfairly treating us," Ocansey explained, noting the challenges of justifying such costs to his clients.

The Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA) has, however, defended the increase in port charges, stating that it was necessary for operational sustainability. This comes after opposition from the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA) regarding the fee hikes.

According to the GPHA, the decision to raise port tariffs was based on a comprehensive evaluation of factors influencing port operations.

They cited comparative tariff studies conducted with nearby ports in Lomé and Abidjan to maintain competitiveness in

pricing and service quality. The GPHA also highlighted that their operational costs have risen due to increases in the prices of water, electricity, fuel, machinery, and equipment, similar to any other business sector.

Parliament on July 29, 2024, passed the Ghana Shippers'

Authority Bill, 2024, amending its 50-year-old establishment law, NRC 254 (1974), to regulate commercial activities of shippers, and primarily address the issue of unfair and excessive charges that burden traders who use Ghana's sea and air ports, as well as land borders to ply their international trade.



File Photo

# International

## Zambian president suspends judges who ruled in favour of rival

By Reuters

Zambia's President Hakainde Hichilema has suspended three top judges over alleged judicial misconduct, prompting accusations of political interference in the judiciary.

In 2016, the three Constitutional Court judges dismissed President Hichilema's petition, in which he challenged the election victory of former President Edgar Lungu.

They also took part in a controversial ruling allowing Lungu to stand in the 2021 elections, despite having twice served as Zambia's president.

Political tensions are rising in Zambia ahead of elections in 2026, when Hichilema and Lungu are expected to face each other for a fourth time. The three were due to be part of a bench sitting on Thursday in a case which would decide whether Lungu can contest those elections.

The judges' suspension, which has sparked sharp reactions, was based on recommendations by a panel which investigates them, the presidency said.

The suspended judges - Justice Annie Sitali, Justice Mungeni Mulenga, and Justice Palan Mulonda - are yet to comment on the matter.

The trio have been investigated by the Judicial Complaints

Commission (JCC), following a complaint by lawyer Joseph Busenga over their judicial conduct.

Mr Busenga, who now works as a diplomat at the Zambian embassy in Belgium, in 2022 petitioned the JCC to remove the three judges from office citing the "improper manner" in which they had handled the 2016 presidential election petition.

They ruled against Hichilema and in favour of Lungu, the man he eventually replaced. After two years of investigations, President Hichilema on Monday suspended them on the recommendation of the JCC, the presidency said.

"The suspensions of the three is in exercise of the powers vested in the president," the presidency statement stated, without giving further details.

The move sparked sharp criticism, with Lungu's Patriotic Front (PF) saying the suspension was illegal.

"I want to say to the Zambian people that the time has come for you to stand up and fight the injustice which is being applied to the judiciary because when we lose the judiciary, we would have lost everything," Lungu told journalists on Tuesday.

Activists have also accused

President Hichilema of meddling in the independence of the judiciary.

Neither the president nor his office have responded to the accusation. However, some argue that the judiciary has already become politicised.

Social and political commentator Laura Miti says the judges deserve to be sacked but the president is at least partly motivated by revenge.

"My honest view is that the judges harmed the country and now and the president is doing the same," she wrote on her Facebook page.

The judges' suspension comes barely 48 hours before the Constitutional Court sits to hear Lungu's re-opened eligibility case.

The former president has announced a political comeback

and is set to contest the 2026 presidential race - against Hichilema.

"It is an extremely dangerous political game that Hichilema is playing over this desire to exclude Lungu," political analyst Sishuwa Sishuwa posted on X.

The three judges will now go through a disciplinary procedure, after which they will either be removed from the bench or be reinstated.

Under Zambia's constitution, all judges, including the chief justice, are appointed by the president upon the recommendation of the JCC and with the approval of the National Assembly.

Critics say the president's involvement in the appointment and removal of judges compromises the independence of the judiciary.



Hakainde Hichilema, President of Zambia

## Boat with 30 decomposing bodies found off Senegal coast

By BBC

At least 30 decomposing bodies have been found on a boat off the coast of Senegal, military authorities say.

The navy was informed of a vessel that was adrift about 70km (45 miles) from the capital Dakar, according to a military statement on X. They brought the wooden canoe, or pirogue, into port on Monday morning.

"Recovery, identification and transfer operations are being

made extremely delicate by the advanced state of decomposition of the bodies," the statement said.

There has been a recent increase in migrants setting off from Senegal for Spain's Canary Islands - a journey of more than 1,500km (950 miles) across the Atlantic Ocean.

Given how decomposed the bodies were, the migrants were probably adrift on the Atlantic Ocean for

many days before fishermen found them.

Investigations are underway to determine when and where the boat departed, and how many people were on board, the army said.

"We must avoid this type of journey. It is a kind of suicide," said Dakar boat owner Mandiaye Diène.

He told the BBC that swordfish

fishermen, who go more than 60km off the coast, often come across floating bodies or boats with lifeless bodies drifting on the waters.

"It's a sad fate. I certainly don't support this form of emigration, but people are desperate," said Bassirou Mbengue, a fisherman and boat owner.

Some Senegalese fishermen say they can't survive by fishing any longer because of the presence of

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## ***Boat with 30 decomposing bodies found off Senegal coast***

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foreign trawlers off the coast, so they turn to either migration, or offering their boats to be used by people smugglers.

“It’s dangerous to travel by sea to Europe. I would never do it and neither would my children. But you can’t blame those who go. There are no fish left on our coasts and fishing equipment is expensive,” said Mr Mbengue, 50.

In August, at least 14 decomposing bodies, believed to have been Senegalese migrants, were found off the coast of the Dominican Republic by a local fisherman.

Senegal’s government announced a 10-year plan in August to tackle illegal migration amid a surge in migrant-related deaths.

The authorities have intercepted hundreds of migrants on boats off the country’s coast in recent weeks.

Despite frequent tragedies, unemployment, conflict and poverty drive young men to risk the route from West Africa to Spain’s Canary Islands.

Boubacar Sèye, President of Horizons sans Frontières, an NGO that raises awareness on

the effects of illegal immigration, told the BBC that “given the recurrence of this type of tragedy, we can say that this is no longer a cyclical phenomenon, but rather a structural one”.

“To stop this, we need to attack the problem at source, with new ways of raising awareness in the most vulnerable areas”, says Mr Sèye.

For him, “despair is total”, for many people to the point where “the most vulnerable people think they have no future in the country”.

Young West African migrants have

been increasingly using the Canary Islands route to reach Europe because it involves a single, albeit dangerous, journey rather than needing to cross both the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea.

Frontex, the European border agency, reported that in 2023 the Atlantic route saw a 161% increase compared to the previous year.

The UN says about 40,000 migrants made it to the Canary Islands last year. Nearly 1,000 are known to have died or disappeared on the way. Although the real number is likely to be far higher.



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