



Fair Wages & Salaries
Commission

Fair Wages Commission rejects PSWU strike call amidst ongoing negotiations

Page 5

NDC defies Supreme Court, declares majority in parliament: Battle for control intensifies

Page 2



Ghana's policy rate of 27% highest in Africa - World Bank

Page 8



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General News

NDC defies Supreme Court, declares majority in parliament: Battle for control intensifies

By Persis Roberts

The National Democratic Congress (NDC), has boldly declared itself the new parliamentary majority, defying a recent Supreme Court order that stayed the Speaker of Parliament's ruling on vacant seats.

The declaration, made at a press conference on Sunday 20th October 2024 in Accra, marks a significant escalation in the ongoing power struggle within Ghana's legislature, as the NDC asserts its claim to majority control.

"The New Patriotic Party (NPP) group in Parliament are now the minority caucus as defined by the relevant sections of Order 6 in the standing orders of Parliament. The minority means members of the party or parties that have the second-largest number of seats in Parliament. Honourable colleagues, the NDC MPs now constitute the majority caucus in line with the standing orders of Ghana's Parliament," the party's leader in parliament, Cassiel Ato Forson, stated emphatically during the press briefing.

NDC stands firm against court ruling

The NDC's position comes in response to the Speaker's controversial decision to declare four parliamentary seats vacant on Thursday 17th October 2024—a move that temporarily tipped the balance of power in their favour. However, the Supreme Court's stay of execution, issued last week, halted the Speaker's ruling and effectively nullified the NDC's brief majority status pending further legal deliberation.

Despite this, the NDC remains adamant. "We will jealously protect our new majority status and will not bow, retreat, nor surrender our lawfully earned status. Nothing, absolutely nothing will change this position," the party declared. They further argued that Parliament's business must proceed independently, warning that any interference with its processes would be "unlawful, unacceptable, and shall

be resisted."

The party's defiance has heightened political tensions ahead of Parliament's next session, scheduled for Tuesday, October 22, 2024. As the two main political parties—NDC and the New Patriotic Party (NPP)—jostle for control, the stakes could not be higher.

Reactions to the Supreme Court ruling

The NDC's bold stance has drawn mixed reactions. Dr. Dominic Ayine, the former Deputy Attorney General, welcomed the opportunity for the NDC to take legislative action once Parliament reconvenes.

Speaking to Citi FM, Dr. Ayine said, "We will start implementing our manifesto on Tuesday, including repealing obnoxious pieces of legislation like the e-Levy and other taxes." He also underscored that parliamentary majorities are determined by numerical strength, which he claimed now favours the NDC.

Dr. Ayine and other NDC figures have criticised the Supreme Court's stay, calling it premature and outside the bounds of judicial oversight. "The Supreme Court in its haste to assert its authority grossly erred," Ayine remarked. "There was no appeal before any court of competent jurisdiction for there to have been a stay of execution."

On the other side, Majority Leader Alexander Afenyo-Markin expressed satisfaction with the Supreme Court's decision and called on Parliament to respect the legal process. "The court has determined the matter, and we expect all parties, including the Speaker, to respect the law," he said, reaffirming the NPP's confidence in the judiciary's intervention.

Legal and political ramifications

The NDC's defiance of the Supreme Court ruling raises important constitutional questions about the separation of powers in Ghana. Legal analysts have expressed concern over the implications of the NDC's move, as it may set a precedent for future disputes between the legislative and judicial branches.

The ongoing legal battle centres on the interpretation of constitutional provisions regarding parliamentary vacancies and majority status. The Supreme Court's final ruling could not only affect the current balance of power but also redefine the role of the judiciary in parliamentary affairs.

Political context ahead of December elections

This latest confrontation comes at a critical time, with general elections just months away in December 2024. Both the NDC and NPP are seeking to solidify their

positions as they head into the campaign season, and the fight for control of Parliament is becoming a key issue. The NDC's declaration as the majority party, despite the legal uncertainty, could energise its base and bolster its position in the run-up to the elections.

However, political commentators have warned that the NDC's defiance of the court order is a risky strategy. While it may rally party loyalists, it also opens the party up to criticism for undermining the judiciary, which could affect its standing with swing voters.

A pivotal moment for Ghana's democracy

As Parliament reconvenes tomorrow, the country is watching closely to see how the ongoing legal and political battle will unfold. The NDC's determination to push forward with legislative business despite the Supreme Court's stay signals a high-stakes confrontation that could reshape the future of parliamentary democracy in Ghana.

The Supreme Court has ordered the Speaker and Attorney General to file their statements of case within seven days, indicating that this battle is far from over. In the meantime, Ghana's political landscape remains fraught with uncertainty as both parties vie for supremacy in Parliament and beyond.



Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, Minority Leader

General News

2024 BECE results released: WAEC cancels results of 41 candidates over exam malpractice

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has announced the release of provisional results for the 2024 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), with a significant number of candidates facing penalties over examination malpractice.

A total of 41 school candidates, along with one private candidate, have had their entire results cancelled due to cheating, according to a statement issued by WAEC on October 19, 2024.

This revelation comes following thorough investigations conducted by the council's Final Awards and Examiners' Appointment Committee, which reviewed the cases of multiple candidates. In addition to the 41 cancellations, the committee decided to

nullify the subject results of 377 school candidates and 3 private candidates due to infractions during the exam process.

WAEC's report highlighted various forms of misconduct during the examination, including candidates bringing unauthorised materials into the exam halls and engaging in collusion.

As part of ongoing efforts to maintain the integrity of the exam, 33 school candidates and 3 private candidates had their results withheld pending further investigations into irregularities. These students may face further penalties depending on the outcomes of the inquiries.

Additionally, subject results from 149 schools have been flagged for investigation. Depending on the findings, these results could either

be cancelled or released.

This year's BECE saw a total of 569,236 candidates from 19,505 schools take the examination across 2,123 centres nationwide. The candidates included 282,703 boys and 286,533 girls. Special arrangements were made for candidates with disabilities, including 59 visually impaired students, 263 with hearing

impairments, and 161 with other special needs. Despite the large turnout, 3,845 candidates were absent from the exams.

The BECE for Private Candidates saw 1,390 participants—750 males and 640 females—who sat for the exam at 15 centres in the regional capitals. Among these, 57 candidates were reported absent.



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National Service Scheme officially launched as Authority, promises major shift in youth development

By Persis Roberts

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has officially launched the National Service Authority (NSA) in Accra on Saturday, October 19, 2024, heralding a significant shift in the structure of the country's National Service Scheme (NSS).

The transformation of the scheme into an authority comes 50 years after its inception, with the goal of enhancing the quality and impact of youth service across the nation.

The NSA Bill, passed by Parliament in July, mandates the authority to mobilise and post qualified individuals to areas of national priority. This marks a renewed focus on national development and the contribution of young people to key sectors such as health, education, and agriculture.

At the launch, President Akufo-Addo emphasised the importance of aligning the NSA's vision with other relevant institutions to maximise its national impact.

He said, "Each year, some 150,000 graduates are deployed, with

about 50,000 of them serving in the education sector alone. This remarkable contribution not only supports our national development goals but also saves the country approximately GH¢3 billion in wage costs annually."

The President added that the new authority would not only focus on mobilising service personnel but would also equip them with employable skills, preparing them for life after service. He expressed optimism about the future, saying, "I have every confidence that the next administration, led by my Vice-President, and the New Patriotic Party's excellent presidential candidate, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, will build on this foundation."

The Chairman of the NSA Board, Nee Odoi Tetteyfiio, highlighted the challenges faced during the transition from a scheme to an authority, including operational deficiencies and resource constraints. He noted that these challenges spurred management to explore new avenues for improvement.

"Several memoranda were developed, stakeholder forums were organised, and high-level consultations were held," he said, stressing that these efforts ensured a smooth transition.

Director-General of the NSA, Osei Assibey Antwi, emphasised the authority's expanded mandate, which includes a focus on employability and professional development. He said, "This enhanced framework empowers the authority not only to provide vital manpower to both public and private institutions but also

to equip young professionals with practical skills needed in today's competitive job market."

The event's chairman, Daniel McKorley, Executive Chairman of McDan Group, expressed hope that the next generation of leaders would embrace entrepreneurship through the opportunities provided by the NSA.

With its new mandate, the NSA aims to play a key role in driving national development by harnessing the talents and skills of young Ghanaians.



Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana

General News

Public alert as FDA flags unapproved contraceptive on the market

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) in the Upper East Region has raised concerns over the circulation of an unapproved version of the Postinor 2 contraceptive pill, which bears a pink flower label. This particular variant has not passed the necessary safety checks required for its approval, according to FDA officials.

The Principal Regulatory Officer at the FDA, Mr. Abel Ndego, made this announcement during the launch of the Goodlife Health Fair in Bolgatanga. He emphasised that while Postinor 2 is widely known and used as an emergency contraceptive to prevent pregnancy, the pink flower-labelled version has not undergone the FDA's regulatory approval process.

One of the most significant concerns raised by the FDA is the quality of the active ingredients in this unapproved contraceptive.

Mr. Ndego noted that the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API), which is essential in preventing pregnancy, is not present in the required quantity in this version of Postinor 2. This could render the pill ineffective, exposing users to the risk of unintended pregnancies.

"We have also undertaken quality product monitoring of this particular product, and we have noticed that the active pharmaceutical ingredient that should instigate the ability of the product to prevent pregnancy is not at the required value," said Mr. Ndego. "Once you use it, you would not get the needed pharmaceutical implication," he added.

The FDA strongly advised the public to purchase contraceptives and other pharmaceutical products from licensed pharmacies and accredited sales outlets to ensure they are getting registered and safe products. Mr. Ndego stressed that

only through such channels can consumers be sure that the drugs they are buying have been stored under the proper conditions and meet safety standards.

"This way, you are sure that you are buying registered products and the products are stored under the requisite storage conditions," Mr. Ndego said.

The Goodlife Health Fair, organised by the Regional Health Directorate in collaboration with NORSAAC, a consortium partner under the USAID Accelerating

Social and Behaviour Change initiative, aimed to promote public health and encourage positive health behaviours. The event focused on improving access to essential healthcare services and empowering individuals to make informed health decisions.

Held under the theme "Promoting Good Health Through Uptake of Positive Health Behaviour," the three-day fair featured various health screenings and educational sessions aimed at enhancing wellness in the region.



File Photo

UK intensifies deportations with record removal of 44 Ghanaians and Nigerians on single flight

By Persis Roberts

In a major escalation of its immigration enforcement, the United Kingdom forcibly deported 44 Ghanaians and Nigerians to their home countries on October 18, 2024, according to the UK Home Office.

This action is part of a broader campaign to tighten immigration controls, following the Labour Party's rise to power in July.

According to reports by UK media, the deportees were flown out on a single flight, marking a significant increase compared to previous deportation flights to these two West African nations. Data obtained under freedom of information rules revealed that prior deportations had far fewer people on board, with flights since 2020 carrying as few as six and no more than 21 deportees.

This latest flight had over double that number. A Home Office spokesperson cited a "major surge"

in enforcement as the rationale behind the mass deportations.

The spokesperson added, "We have already begun delivering a major surge in immigration enforcement and returns activity to remove people with no right to be in the UK and ensure the rules are respected and enforced, with over 3,600 returned in the first two months of the new government."

Among those deported were long-term asylum seekers and individuals who had lived in the UK for years.

One deportee, in an interview, said he had been in the UK for 15 years but had never been involved in criminal activity. Another claimed to be a victim of trafficking, showing physical scars as evidence, but said his claim had been rejected.

Chief Executive of the Migrants' Rights Network, Fizza Qureshi,

described the deportations as "cruel," citing the speed and secrecy with which the process was carried out. She highlighted the limited access to legal support for those being removed, stating, "The Home Office is playing politics with people's lives. We have not done anything wrong other than cry for help."

This deportation is part of a broader trend, with the UK also regularly deporting individuals to

countries like Albania, Lithuania, and Romania. However, flights to Ghana and Nigeria remain rare, making this mass removal a significant event in the ongoing debate over immigration enforcement in the UK.

As the UK government continues to ramp up its deportation efforts, the controversial handling of these cases raises concerns over human rights and the treatment of vulnerable asylum seekers.



File Photo

General News

Government names Quarm-LMI as developer for stalled Saglemi Housing Project

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Ghanaian government has announced Quarm-LMI as the lead developer responsible for completing the Saglemi Housing Project, a long-delayed public housing initiative aimed at easing the country's housing deficit. The announcement came via a statement from the Ministry of Works and Housing on Friday, October 18, 2024.

After a competitive bid process launched in July 2024, the government selected Quarm-LMI following negotiations with various agencies, including the Ministry of Finance, the Attorney General's Office, and Deloitte. Technical evaluations were supported by the Ghana Institute of Surveyors to ensure the project's completion under transparent and accountable standards.

The redevelopment will be undertaken through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), a partnership where the government's initial investment is treated as equity. This arrangement means both the government and Quarm-LMI will recoup their financial contributions once the

project is finished. According to the Ministry's statement, "As part of the redevelopment, the government and the developer will both recover their investments when the project is completed."

The Saglemi Housing Project, launched in 2012 under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) administration, was designed to provide 5,000 affordable housing units at a cost of approximately \$200 million. However, due to stalled construction and a lack of essential infrastructure, such as water, electricity, and sanitation, only 1,506 units were partially completed. This left the project unable to meet its objectives, prompting the government to search for new developers to take over.

A valuation conducted by the Ghana Institute of Surveyors revealed that an additional \$100 million would be required to finish the remaining units, but securing that funding has proven difficult. The appointment of Quarm-LMI is seen as a critical step toward reviving the project, which is expected to significantly ease Ghana's housing deficit—currently

estimated at 1.8 million units.

The project's location in Prampram, within the Greater Accra Region, was chosen to provide affordable housing solutions to address the growing urban population. Despite initial optimism when construction began, the project became bogged down by financial and administrative challenges.

The Saglemi Housing Project's completion is viewed as essential to addressing Ghana's housing crisis. The current housing shortage, exacerbated by rapid urbanisation, has led to increasing pressure on both private and public

housing sectors. With the cost of housing out of reach for many Ghanaians, affordable solutions such as Saglemi are crucial.

Analysts suggest that the completion of the project will not only provide much-needed accommodation but also stimulate related industries such as construction, real estate, and infrastructure development. However, questions remain over whether the government's financial strategy—recovering investments upon completion—will be enough to meet the project's long-term goals.



Saglemi Housing Project

Fair Wages Commission rejects PSWU strike call amidst ongoing negotiations

By Persis Roberts

The Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC) has urged the Public Services Workers Union (PSWU) to call off its planned strike, scheduled for Monday, October 21, 2024, arguing that it violates established negotiation rules.

The commission emphasised that negotiations are still ongoing and that striking would disrupt the process.

In a statement released on Friday 20th October 2024, the FWSC pointed out that the strike was premature and counterproductive.

"It is important to emphasise that embarking on a strike would rather cause delays in the negotiations since engagement

cannot continue while a party at the negotiation table is on strike," the FWSC stated.

The PSWU had submitted a proposal on September 19, 2024, requesting two institution-specific allowances for all 46 member organisations under its umbrella. Along with this request, the union indicated its intent to strike if its demands were not met, a move the FWSC says contravenes the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651).

Following the PSWU's proposal, the FWSC promptly invited the union's leadership to a meeting on September 24 to begin discussions. Both parties signed the rules of engagement and began negotiations. They agreed to analyse cost implications for the allowances and forward the

findings to the Ministry of Finance for review.

The FWSC noted that some PSWU organisations already benefit from institution-specific allowances. Therefore, the focus of the ongoing negotiations is on institutions that do not yet enjoy such benefits.

On September 28, 2024, the FWSC submitted cost implication scenarios to the Ministry of Finance, addressing the union's request for institutions that lack specific allowances.

The commission emphasised that the strike goes against the signed rules of engagement, as well as the Labour Act, which mandates that negotiations should proceed without threats of industrial action.

"FWSC wishes to state that the decision to embark on a strike from October 21, 2024, is against the Rules of Engagement signed and the Labour Act, Act 651, when negotiation is ongoing," the commission said.



Fair Wages & Salaries Commission

General News

Government inaugurates largest urology and nephrology centre at Korle Bu

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

President Nana Akufo-Addo has officially opened Ghana's largest Urology and Nephrology Centre of Excellence at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, marking a significant milestone in the country's healthcare sector.

The new facility, equipped with state-of-the-art medical services, is part of the government's broader efforts to improve healthcare infrastructure nationwide.

Speaking at the commissioning ceremony on October 18, 2024, President Akufo-Addo emphasised his administration's progress in enhancing healthcare services, describing the developments as unprecedented. He assured Ghanaians that ongoing initiatives, particularly the Agenda 111 project aimed at constructing hospitals across the country, would further transform healthcare delivery.

"We've added some 8,665 hospital beds for admission, i.e. from 24,153 hospital beds in 2016 to 32,818

hospital beds by August 2024, representing a rise of some 36%," the President noted, underscoring the expansion in healthcare infrastructure. These additions exclude the expected impact of the Agenda 111 project.

The new Urology and Nephrology Centre will provide specialised care for patients with kidney and urinary conditions, enhancing the country's capacity to handle such ailments. The facility includes a 30-suite dialysis centre for treating kidney-related diseases, as well as a 70-bed ward for genito-urinary conditions.

In his speech, President Akufo-Addo also pointed out key improvements in maternal healthcare. He highlighted a reduction in the Institutional Maternal Mortality Ratio (IMMR), which decreased from 127.3 deaths per 100 live births in 2018 to 102.1 per 100 live births. This decline, he said, reflects the positive impact of government interventions in maternal and child health.

The Urology and Nephrology Centre is designed to offer comprehensive medical services. In addition to inpatient care, it features a fully equipped outpatient department providing diagnostic and treatment services. The facility also includes administrative offices, public amenities, staff quarters, and a dedicated research unit.

A three-year post-construction maintenance plan has been put in place, which includes staff training to ensure the centre runs efficiently. This initiative aligns with the government's broader efforts to modernise healthcare services in Ghana.

The opening of this centre at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, one of the largest medical facilities in West Africa, is expected to provide much-needed relief for patients and strengthen Ghana's healthcare capacity.

In addition to the new centre, President Akufo-Addo reaffirmed his government's commitment to the Agenda 111 project, aimed at expanding the country's healthcare facilities. Once completed, the project is expected to significantly increase the number of hospital beds across Ghana, further improving access to quality healthcare.



Urology & nephrology centre, Korle Bu

Parliamentary majority earned, not "manufactured"- Bawumia mocks NDC's '24-hour majority' after speaker's controversial ruling

By Persis Roberts

Vice President and New Patriotic Party (NPP) flagbearer, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, has criticised the National Democratic Congress (NDC) for briefly claiming a parliamentary majority, following a recent ruling by the Speaker of Parliament.

The Speaker had declared four seats vacant, impacting the NPP's majority in Parliament, only for the Supreme Court to stay the decision within 24 hours.

Speaking at a campaign rally in Nkawkaw on Saturday, Dr. Bawumia emphasised that parliamentary majorities are determined through constituency wins, not decisions made within Parliament itself.

"A few days ago, they (NDC) did something in Parliament and claimed to be the majority side," he said. "But their majority lasted just 24 hours. It was the shortest-living majority in history."

Dr. Bawumia's comments came after the Speaker of Parliament's declaration of the four seats vacant, which briefly tipped the balance of power in favour of the NDC. However, the Supreme Court swiftly intervened, issuing a stay of execution and nullifying the Speaker's decision until the court hears the substantive case on the interpretation of the constitutional article in question.

The Vice President reiterated that parliamentary majorities are secured through elections at the polling stations. "If they want

a majority, they should come to the polling station, come to the constituency, win an election, and then go to Parliament," he remarked. "You don't sit in Parliament and manufacture a majority for yourself."

Dr. Bawumia further expressed confidence in the NPP's ability to win a decisive majority in the upcoming December elections, pointing to his extensive campaign work across the country.

"We will meet them in the constituencies, we will meet them at the polling stations," he stated. "From what I've seen—having been to over 200 constituencies, campaigned on the ground, and analysed the data—I can tell you, if we held elections today, the NPP would have a decisive majority in

Parliament."

He encouraged NPP supporters to stay united and continue their efforts ahead of the December 7 elections, emphasising that victory would be determined at the polling stations. "By midnight on December 7, you'll hear that the NPP has won a decisive majority in Parliament," Dr. Bawumia confidently predicted.



Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice President & NPP Flagbearer



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Business

Energy sector decline threatens industrial growth despite 8.2% surge

By Persis Roberts

Ghana's industrial sector recorded notable growth in the second quarter (Q2) of 2024, posting an 8.2% year-on-year (YoY) increase, according to the Ghana Statistical Service's (GSS) latest Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

However, persistent challenges in the energy sector cast a shadow over the strong performance, raising concerns about the long-term sustainability of industrial growth.

The surge in industrial output was primarily driven by significant expansions in the mining, quarrying, and manufacturing sub-sectors. Mining and quarrying grew by 8.2%, contributing over half (53.26%) of the total industrial output.

Manufacturing also recorded an 8.3% growth, demonstrating resilience despite sectoral challenges. Nevertheless, a decline in energy production, particularly in the electricity and gas sub-sector, threatens to undermine the sector's continued momentum.

The mining and quarrying sub-sector has been a key driver of industrial growth, accounting for the largest share of output. Year-on-year, the sub-sector grew by 8.2%, with notable contributions from the mining of metal ores, which surged by 12.1%, and other mining and quarrying activities, which saw a 24.8% rise in production.

Global demand for minerals like gold and manganese is expected to remain strong, offering a positive outlook for further growth in the sector.

While the crude petroleum and natural gas segment recorded modest growth of 4.7% year-on-year, it experienced a 4.4% quarter-on-quarter decline, reflecting volatility in global energy markets.

The manufacturing sector also posted strong results, growing by 8.3% year-on-year. The basic metals sub-sector saw a remarkable 18.5% increase in production, while the manufacture of transport equipment grew by

20.9% over the same period.

However, performance across manufacturing was mixed, with food production experiencing a significant 12.3% quarterly decline. This drop was attributed to ongoing supply chain disruptions and high input costs.

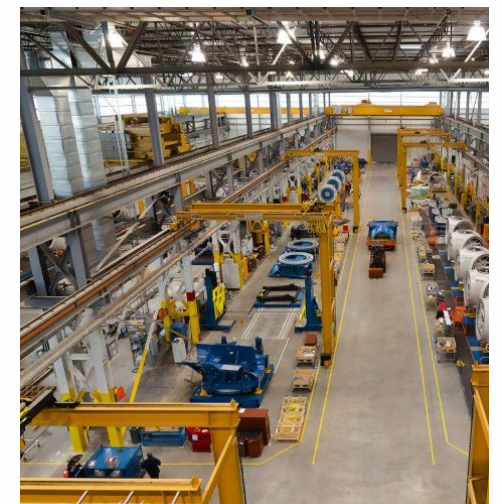
Despite the positive growth in mining and manufacturing, the energy sector continued to struggle. The electricity and gas sub-sector declined by 1.4% year-on-year and recorded a 4.3% quarter-on-quarter drop. Ongoing issues in electricity and gas supply have sparked concerns about the sector's ability to support sustained industrial activity.

Energy remains a critical input for industrial production, and the continued decline in output from the sector poses a threat to growth prospects in the second half of the year. The inability to meet growing industrial energy demands could slow production and weaken overall economic performance.

The water supply, sewage, and waste management sub-sector

saw modest growth of 1.2% year-on-year, with quarterly output increasing by 2.8%. However, waste collection and disposal services recorded a 4.8% decline over the quarter, signalling inefficiencies in waste management services.

Ghana's industrial sector showed promising signs of recovery in Q2 2024, but the underlying weakness in the energy sector raises critical concerns. As industrial growth is largely driven by mining and manufacturing, sustained energy shortages could dampen these gains and limit the sector's full potential.



File Photo

Ghana's policy rate of 27% highest in Africa - World Bank

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The World Bank has identified Ghana's current monetary policy rate of 27% as the highest on the continent, according to its October 2024 Africa Pulse Report. The report highlights that the Bank of Ghana, along with other central banks in Africa, has maintained elevated interest rates to manage inflation and stabilise their economies.

The World Bank noted that countries facing high inflation and weakened currencies, such as Angola, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, are expected to keep their monetary policy rates high for an extended period. In some cases, rates may even be increased if inflation remains unchecked.

"Central banks in countries that still have double-digit inflation and

weakened domestic currencies will keep monetary policy rates higher for longer," the report said, citing the combination of currency weakness, slow fiscal adjustments, and cost pressures as key factors influencing the decisions.

Ghana, Ethiopia, and Nigeria were singled out as some of the worst-performing economies in Africa this year. These countries continue to experience significant currency depreciation, while the demand for foreign exchange remains high.

The World Bank also observed that as inflation outlooks improve and currencies stabilise in some countries, there could be an end to the current cycle of high interest rates. However, reductions in benchmark rates may be delayed due to ongoing price pressures and the need to stabilise inflation

expectations.

In September 2024, the Bank of Ghana reduced its policy rate by 200 basis points, bringing it down to 27%. This marked the second time since 2021 that the central bank has cut rates. UK-based financial firm Fitch Solutions had predicted the move in August, forecasting a similar reduction in the Bank of Ghana's rate before the

year's end.

Despite the recent rate cut, Fitch highlighted concerns about the cedi's sharp depreciation and the Bank of Ghana's strong focus on controlling inflation. The firm adjusted its year-end forecast for the policy rate from 25%, reflecting the persistent challenges facing Ghana's economy.



World Bank Logo

International

26 million Africans facing some degree of visual impairment – WHO

By Reuters

Kenya's impeached deputy president, Rigathi Gachagua, said on Sunday his security protection team had been withdrawn and that President William Ruto would be responsible if anything happened to him.

Gachagua - who has dismissed the charges against him as politically motivated - told journalists his safety was at risk.

"It's the most unfortunate thing that has ever happened in this country that you can be so vicious to a man who helped you to be President," he told journalists, referring to Ruto, whose candidacy he supported in the 2022 elections.

Police spokeswoman Resila

Onyango declined to make an immediate comment and said she would make inquiries about Gachagua's statement on the security protection. Ruto's spokesperson said they would comment later.

Senior protection is regularly scaled down for senior politicians after they leave office in Kenya.

Gachagua told journalists the case was different as he had launched a legal challenge to his impeachment so did not see his dismissal as final.

Gachagua was impeached on Thursday on five out of 11 charges including gross violation of the constitution and stirring ethnic hatred, in a motion that was backed by opposition lawmakers

and Ruto allies. He denied all the accusations.

On Friday, parliament approved the appointment of Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki to replace Gachagua. But a court put Kindiki's swearing-in on hold pending the legal challenges from Gachagua and others.

Ruto, who has fallen out with Gachagua in recent months, has not commented on the impeachment proceedings.

On Sunday, while addressing a national holiday celebration, Ruto called for national cohesion and an end to "tribalism and exclusion".



Rigathi Gachagua, Kenya's Impeached deputy President

Gunmen kill two Mozambique opposition officials before election protests

By Aljazeera

Gunmen in Mozambique have killed a leading opposition politician's lawyer and another opposition official, according to their party, before protests against a disputed election result.

The attackers chased the car of Podemos party's lawyer Elvino Dias and party representative Paulo Guambe and fatally shot them late on Friday night in the capital Maputo, the party said on Saturday.

Videos on social media showed a BMW SUV in the middle of the road with numerous bullet holes in the bodywork. Some of the videos showed what appeared to be the bodies of two men, one with blood on his chest, in the front seats. The other body was slumped over.

The killings came with tensions already high in the southern African country as it waits for the results of an October 9 election that has drawn more allegations of vote-rigging and clamping down on dissent against the 49-year rule of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) party.

Podemos has rejected provisional

results showing a win for Frelimo and called for a nationwide strike on Monday. Although Venancio Mondlane ran for president as an independent, he was supported by Podemos.

The killings are "further clear evidence of the lack of justice that we are all subjected to", Podemos stated.

"They were brutally assassinated [in a] cold-blooded murder," Adriano Nuvunga, director of Mozambique's Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD), told the Reuters news agency by telephone.

"The indication [is] that around 10 to 15 bullets were shot, and they died instantly."

Human Rights Watch also issued a statement confirming the attack.

According to the latest election tally, Frelimo is leading in all 11 provinces and its candidate Daniel Chapo is widely expected to win the election. Chapo is expected to be announced as successor to President Filipe Nyusi, who has served a maximum of two terms.

Podemos and other opposition

parties have accused Frelimo of electoral fraud. Western observers have also cast doubt on the polls, citing reports of vote-buying, intimidation, and inflated voter rolls in Frelimo strongholds.

Mozambique has struggled with these issues since Frelimo first introduced democracy in 1994 after two decades in power. The election's final results are expected on October 24, but there

are fears Monday's protest could be violent.

Mozambique's security forces have opened fire on political protesters in the past, including after last year's local elections, according to rights groups.

Nuvunga, the NGO director, wrote on social media that the killing of Dias was a "political assassination".



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