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# General News

## Restoring galamsey-damaged soil may take over 300 years – CSIR warns

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has raised serious concerns about the prolonged environmental recovery required to reverse the damage caused by illegal mining, known as galamsey, in Ghana.

A research scientist at CSIR, Dr. Albert Kwabena Mensah, revealed in a recent interview that restoring the soil affected by galamsey activities could take over 300 years. The estimate was derived from studies focusing on methods to remove the toxic chemicals present in contaminated soils.

Speaking on JoyNews' Newsfile program on October 12, Dr. Mensah emphasised that full restoration to the soil's original state is highly unlikely in the near term. He pointed to the slow process of remediation using techniques like phytoremediation, which involves using plants to absorb pollutants.

"As a matter of fact there is some calculations some of us have done and we wanted to see how many years it will take for the soil to restore to its natural state, and we were trying to use plants which are called phytoremediation to see how it is going to remediate the chemicals from soil and the calculation shows more than 300 years. So as a matter of

fact, when it comes to remediation or restoration of degraded mining sites we can reclaim to a state that it can be used in another form. But for us to return the land to its original state it is very dicey," Dr. Mensah said.

In parallel, Dr. Bright Bofo Boamah, a medical doctor and toxicologist, added that water bodies affected by illegal mining could take between 10 and 15 years to recover. He pointed out that pollutants like mercury and cyanide from mining have severely damaged the country's rivers and streams.

Both Dr. Mensah and Dr. Boamah warned that the long-term ecological damage poses serious threats to public health and wildlife.

"Currently, most of the antibiotics are not responding because normally it's due to poor use of antibiotics or prescriptions, but it has also been shown that this heavy metal induces some antimicrobial resistance," Dr. Boamah noted, highlighting that the impacts extend beyond environmental harm to affect human health.

"So we are not really dealing with a very simple issue and even if we should look at how to restore the water bodies and if we should start now, I think somewhere between 10-15 [Years] to be able to do this and I know there are some water bodies that cannot be restored," he stated.

Experts have consistently called for stricter enforcement of environmental regulations to curb the illegal mining crisis.

A Mineral and Natural Resources Economist, Dr. Theo Acheampong, revealed that seven out of ten small-scale miners in Ghana operate without a valid licence, which exacerbates environmental degradation. He attributed the persistence of illegal mining to weak governance and insufficient enforcement mechanisms.

"We have a collective failure as a people, and let me actually give some

context to this. If you look at the data and some of the statistics, about 40% of Ghana's total gold output comes from these small-scale miners. And when you look at these small-scale miners themselves, around 70% so basically, 7 in 10 of them are not licensed, and even those that are licensed we don't know whether they are doing things properly," Dr. Acheampong said.

As the government grapples with the consequences of galamsey, many are calling for enhanced efforts to protect Ghana's land, rivers, and communities from further devastation.



Galamsey site

## Court restrains Cynthia Morrison from contesting Agona West parliamentary election

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

A district magistrate court in Agona Swedru has placed an injunction on Cynthia Morrison, the sitting Member of Parliament for Agona West under the New Patriotic Party (NPP), barring her from contesting as an independent candidate in the upcoming parliamentary elections. The injunction follows allegations that Morrison does not reside in Agona West, the constituency she seeks to represent.

The case was filed by Emmanuel Addison, Solomon Nyarko, and Harrison A. Aglago, all members of the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Agona West

constituency. They argue that Morrison, who lives in Agona East, is not eligible to contest in Agona West. The court's order restrains her from presenting herself as a candidate until the matter is resolved. With the general election just two months away, concerns have been raised that the legal process may extend beyond the election date, affecting Morrison's campaign timeline.

The situation is especially critical as Morrison had already announced her candidacy as an independent following her loss in the NPP's internal primaries, citing the need to continue her developmental projects in the area as the reason for her independent

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Cynthia Morrison, Member of Parliament for Agona West



# General News

## Court restrains Cynthia Morrison from contesting Agona West parliamentary election

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bid. The court ruling has reignited debates about the constitutionality of sitting MPs running as independents. Former Minority Leader Haruna Iddrisu, citing Article 97(1)(g) of the 1992 Constitution, stated that any MP who leaves their party to contest as an independent must vacate their seat.

Article 97 (1) (g) states that: A member of Parliament shall vacate

his seat "if he leaves the party of which he was a member at the time of his election to Parliament to join another party or seeks to remain in Parliament as an independent member."

Investigative journalist Manasseh Azure Awuni also voiced concerns over the timing and fairness of the court's decision. He likened the ruling to a "VAR system" of justice,

suggesting that it could be setting a dangerous precedent. Awuni argued that if Morrison's case is not severe enough to warrant immediate disqualification, she should be allowed to contest, with the courts deciding her fate afterward.

"If she's stopped from contesting the election and she wins the case, can the court reverse the damage?" Awuni questioned, suggesting that

this ruling could open the floodgates for last-minute injunctions against candidates in competitive elections, undermining the democratic process.

Morrison, who previously served as a Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, accused her own party, the NPP, of orchestrating the injunction to sabotage her re-election bid. However, the NPP has yet to formally respond to these allegations.

## Hundreds rally with Catholic Church in anti-galamsey prayer walk; petition gov't to declare state of emergency

By Amanda Cartey

Hundreds of Ghanaians joined the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra on Friday in a large protest against illegal mining, widely known as galamsey. The demonstrators called on the government to declare a state of emergency to address the widespread environmental damage caused by the practice.

The march culminated in the submission of a petition to representatives of Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, urging the government to take immediate action to protect the country's water bodies and forest reserves from further degradation.

Most Rev. Narh Asare, Auxiliary Bishop of the Accra Archdiocese,

presented the petition, stating, "Your Excellency, the priests, religious, and faithful of the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra have observed with great alarm the destruction of our environment, particularly through illegal mining, commonly known as galamsey. We are, however, baffled by the fact that all the communiqués issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference have fallen on deaf ears."

The Catholic Church, which organized the protest as part of an environmental prayer walk, called for lasting solutions to the galamsey crisis. Rev. Asare stressed the need for divine intervention and urged the President to take stronger action to halt the illegal mining activities ravaging the country's natural resources.

This protest echoes the concerns

raised by many other groups across Ghana, who have demanded urgent government intervention to address the environmental damage caused by illegal gold mining.

From October 3rd to 5th, Ghanaians held a three-day protest, demanding the release of 54 activists detained for demonstrating against galamsey. The Technical University Teachers Association of Ghana (TUTAG) also joined the outcry, declaring a strike to highlight the seriousness of the situation.

However, in a contrasting move, Organised Labour suspended its nationwide strike, originally planned for October 10th, after union leaders held an emergency meeting.

They acknowledged progress made

by the government in fighting illegal mining, particularly through the "Operation Halt" initiative, which is led by the Ghana Armed Forces.

As part of the initiative, military personnel have been deployed to protect key water bodies and forest reserves classified as 'red zones' to clamp down on galamsey activities. Despite these efforts, the protest organized by the Catholic Archdiocese demonstrates that many Ghanaians remain frustrated with the pace of government action in tackling the crisis.

The Church's petition adds to growing pressure on the government to intensify its fight against illegal mining and restore the country's devastated ecosystems.



The Catholic Archdiocese of Accra on Friday, October 11, organized a protest in the form of a prayer walk against illegal mining

# General News

## Visually impaired lawyer to sue state over failure to implement Disability Act

By *Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey*

Newly enrolled lawyer, Mattah Tobias Dennis Xorse Esq., has announced his intention to sue state institutions for failing to fully implement the Persons With Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715).

The visually impaired lawyer, who was called to the Bar last Friday, expressed frustration over the lack of accessibility provisions for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in Ghana and vowed to take legal action to address these shortcomings.

"If we are paying the same school fees as our colleagues, who have access to books and libraries, then we should be given the same services," Xorse stated. "We all sit for the same exams, yet we aren't considered because we lack the necessary facilities. No special provisions were made for me, and if I had failed any of my papers, I wouldn't be here today." He emphasized that in other parts

of the world, institutions are designed to be inclusive, ensuring equal opportunities for all, but that is not the case in the schools he attended.

On October 11, 2024, a total of 777 lawyers were enrolled as Barristers and Solicitors of the Supreme Court of Ghana at a ceremony held at the Accra International Conference Centre (AICC). Xorse made it clear that his focus is on ensuring that Ghana becomes more inclusive, especially for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

"It's my aim to see that PwDs get their fair share of the national cake," he said, adding that once he obtains his full legal license, he will begin taking on state institutions that fail to comply with the law.

His comments come at a time when PwDs in Ghana have long called for equality in terms of access to opportunities and infrastructure that allow them to enjoy the same services as the average Ghanaian.

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, persons with disabilities constitute 8% of Ghana's population, amounting to 2,098,138 individuals. Although Ghana has signed and ratified various international agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, PwDs still face significant discrimination and challenges in accessing education, healthcare, transportation, and other basic services.

The Persons With Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715), mandates that public spaces and institutions must be made accessible to PwDs. It also requires the Minister of Education to designate schools in each region equipped to cater to PwDs and ensure that their needs are taken into account in the design of transportation networks.

Despite progress made by civil society organizations and government efforts, including initiatives like the National Council

for Persons with Disabilities and the 3% District Assembly Common Fund allocation for PwDs, much remains to be done to improve the lives of PwDs in Ghana.

Xorse's announcement comes at a time when both major political parties are pledging to support PwDs ahead of the 2024 general elections. Former President John Dramani Mahama, the presidential candidate for the National Democratic Congress (NDC), has promised free tertiary education for PwDs if elected. Similarly, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) candidate, has pledged to create funds to assist PwDs in accessing higher education.

Despite these political promises, the implementation of existing laws remains a critical challenge. Xorse's legal push seeks to hold state institutions accountable and ensure that PwDs in Ghana receive the services and opportunities they are entitled to under the law.



*Mattah Tobias Dennis Xorse Esq.*



# General News

## Kwahumanhene resigns as ADB Board Chair amid GHC2m fraud allegations

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

**D**aasebre Akuamoah Agyapong II, the Kwahumanhene, has stepped down from his role as Board Chairman of the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) following serious fraud allegations.

A customer of the bank, Collins Darkwa, accused the Kwahumanhene of demanding money in exchange for the approval of a GHC12 million loan.

Mr. Darkwa alleged that the Kwahumanhene had requested an upfront payment of GHC50,000, along with additional funds, to facilitate the loan process. Feeling pressured by his financial obligations, particularly from suppliers, Darkwa claims he complied but later faced continued demands for more money.

He also stated that the Kwahumanhene threatened to use his influence to disrupt his business operations if he did not

meet further demands, ultimately leading Darkwa to petition the Office of the President for intervention.

In his petition, Mr. Darkwa sought to recover a total sum of GHC2,408,000, which he claims was extorted by the Kwahumanhene. In response to

the allegations, the Bank of Ghana (BoG), invoking Section 103 (2) (d) of the Banks and Specialized Deposit-Taking Institutions Act, 2016 (ACT 930), advised the Kwahumanhene to step down.

Subsequently, the ADB board held an emergency meeting where it was decided that Daasebre Akuamoah

Agyapong II would resign in the best interest of the bank. ADB later released a statement confirming his resignation. The incident has raised questions about the integrity of corporate governance in Ghana, especially regarding the influence of traditional leaders in state institutions.



Daasebre Akuamoah Agyapong II, the Kwahumanhene

## Oliver Barker-Vormawor hasn't been rushed to the hospital - Police clarifies

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty

**T**he Ghana Police Service has issued a statement debunking claims that activist Oliver Barker-Vormawor was rushed to the hospital due to deteriorating health while in police custody. The rumors, which gained traction on social media, were described as part of a broader campaign to stir public sympathy for the activist.

According to the police, Barker-Vormawor's visit to the Police Hospital on October 10, 2024, was a routine check-up and not an emergency.

The police also addressed false claims suggesting that he was returned to custody due to an inability to cover medical

expenses, clarifying that all costs related to his care were fully covered by the Ghana Police Service, in line with their Standard Operating Procedures for suspects in custody.

The police emphasized their adherence to doctor-patient confidentiality, preventing them from disclosing specific details of the medical expenses, but assured that the situation was handled according to the protocol.

"Every cost associated with his visit to the hospital was borne by the Ghana Police Service," the statement read, urging the public to disregard rumors circulating online.

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Oliver Barker-Vormawor, Activist

# General News

## Oliver Barker-Vormawor hasn't been rushed to the hospital - Police clarifies

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The clarifications came after Democracy Hub, a group advocating for Barker-Vormawor's release, raised concerns about his health. The group reported that his condition had worsened since his detention on September 23, 2024, leading to his second visit to the hospital. Their statement noted, "Oliver remains in police custody, having been one of the 53 activists unjustly detained during the

protests on September 21, 2024. Currently, medical professionals are conducting tests to assess his condition and determine whether hospitalization is necessary."

Barker-Vormawor's health has become a central issue in the public debate over his detention, particularly after his bail was denied for the third time on October 8, 2024. While 52 of the

other activists arrested during the same anti-government protests were granted bail on October 9, Barker-Vormawor remains in custody due to opposition from the Attorney General's Department.

President of IMANI Africa, Franklin Cudjoe, criticized the court's decision to deny him bail, saying, "It is still unconscionable that someone will be remanded

in jail for two weeks without bail under the judicial view that it is to prevent him from committing further 'crimes.' Really! Now a judge is now a clairvoyant too?"

As Barker-Vormawor's legal team continues to push for his release, his health concerns have only intensified the public scrutiny surrounding his detention.

## White Volta flooding forces closure of Atebubu-Kumasi highway, nearby communities stranded

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Ghana Highway Authority (GHA) has announced the closure of the Prang-Atebubu section of the Atebubu-Kumasi Highway in the Bono East Region due to significant flooding at the Nyomoase Bridge caused by the rising waters of the White Volta.

As reported by the Ghana News Agency (GNA), the flooding has cut off several communities along this route, severely disrupting the movement of residents and impacting their economic activities. Fortunately, there have

been no reported casualties.

The Bono East Regional Director of the GHA, Emmanuel Okanklu, has confirmed the highway's closure and outlined the proactive measures being taken to alleviate the situation. These measures include diverting traffic to ensure traders and motorists can still navigate the area.

"The river submerged the Nyomoase bridge and portions of the road connecting communities and thereby making vehicular movement difficult," he stated, saying visibility on the road remained poorer for drivers and

motorists," he added.

Mr. Okanklu noted that visibility for drivers has significantly diminished due to the flooding, adding that the highway will be reopened as soon as the water levels of the White Volta recede.

In the meantime, a cofferdam has been constructed to contain the water on the highway, creating temporary passage for commuters while the GHA works to manage the flooding.

"We are on standby, ready to repair the road as soon as the water levels recede," he added, urging the affected communities, drivers,

and passengers to remain calm during this challenging time.

In a visit to the site, Bono East Regional Minister Kwasi Adu-Gyan assured local residents that the situation would be resolved swiftly.

He highlighted the importance of the Atebubu-Kumasi Highway and reaffirmed the government's commitment to its maintenance.

Mr Adu-Gyan also advised drivers to exercise caution, announcing that security personnel would soon be deployed to enhance safety along the highway.



Portions of Atebubu-Kumasi Highway closed as White Volta cuts off communities



# General News

## Galamsey will stop if victims are provided with jobs - Cardinal Turkson tells govt

By Amanda Cartey

**H**is Eminence Cardinal Peter Appiah Turkson, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences in the Vatican, has linked the rise of illegal small-scale mining, known as galamsey, to poverty in Ghana.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, October 13, Cardinal Turkson urged the Ghanaian government to prioritize the creation of alternative employment opportunities for those involved in galamsey.

He warned that without these job alternatives, Ghana risks dire consequences, potentially becoming a failed state. "If the status quo remains, Ghana risks becoming a failed state," he stated.

Cardinal Turkson emphasized that tackling the root causes of galamsey is crucial to mitigating the illegal practice. "We need to develop alternative industries to support the youth. Poverty is a reason a lot of these people go into illegal mining," he added.

This call for action comes amid ongoing government efforts to combat illegal mining. Recently, soldiers deployed under the

government's "Operation Halt" initiative destroyed 18 chafans, 10 industrial water pumping machines, and one excavator at various illegal mining sites across the country.

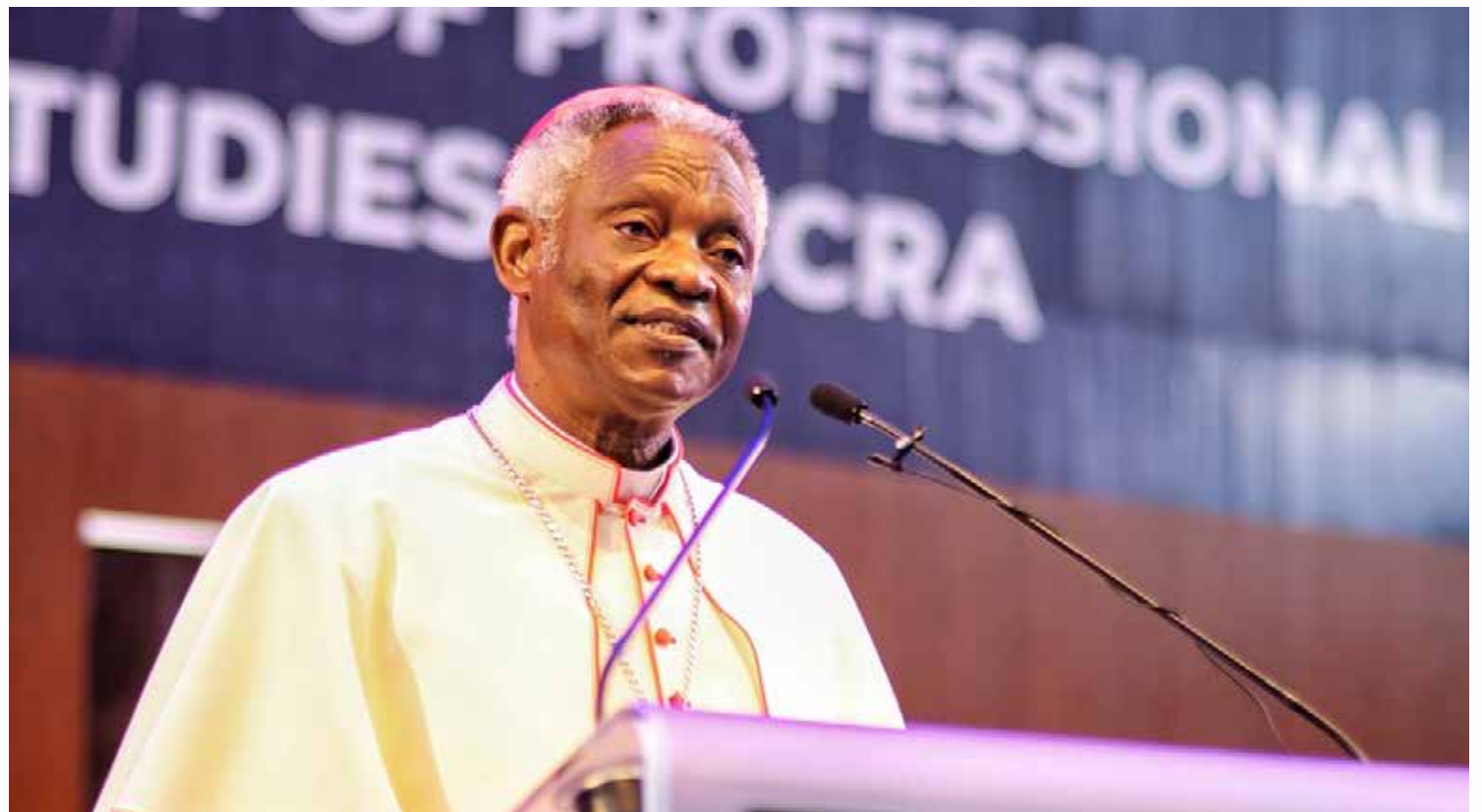
In response to the escalating crisis, Defence Minister Dominic Nitiwul has been instructed by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to send more military personnel to bolster efforts against illegal mining. The president

has also directed the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation, along with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to cease enforcement of L.I. 2462, which governs mining in forest reserves.

This decision follows a meeting on Tuesday, October 8, with Organised Labour, which had threatened a nationwide strike on October 10 if the government did not take action against illegal mining.

The strike has since been called off. In a statement from the Office of the Presidency on October 9, President Akufo-Addo outlined various measures to address the concerns raised by Organised Labour.

The government now faces pressure to implement sustainable solutions to address the galamsey crisis while also responding to the urgent needs of those affected by poverty.



Cardinal Peter Appiah Turkson, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences in the Vatican

## UG reclaims Botanical Gardens after legal battle; facility to be reopened after renovation works

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tetty

**T**he University of Ghana has successfully regained full ownership of the Legon Botanical Gardens after resolving a prolonged contractual dispute with Mulch Company Limited, formerly known as Pine Springs Company Limited. This resolution marks the end of a contentious partnership that had stretched on since 2009.

The University's struggle with Mulch Company stemmed from the company's failure to meet its contractual obligations after

being tasked with renovating and managing the Gardens. Following extensive legal and operational challenges, the dispute was settled, with Mulch agreeing to vacate the premises by November 30, 2024.

In a statement, UG confirmed that legal proceedings had concluded in their favor, restoring the institution's control over the facility. Dr. Elizier Taiba Ameyaw-Buronyah, the Director of Public Affairs, reaffirmed the University's commitment to revitalizing the Gardens, describing them as an integral part of UG's mission

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Legon Botanical Gardens

# General News

## UG reclaims Botanical Gardens after legal battle; facility to be reopened after renovation works

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to promote environmental sustainability, research, and recreation.

"The University of Ghana is committed to preserving and enhancing the Botanical Gardens as a place of beauty, learning, research, and recreation," Dr.

Ameyaw-Buronyah said. She assured the public that once renovations are complete, the Gardens will reopen and continue to serve as a valuable green space for both the University and the surrounding community.

This announcement follows the

closure of the Gardens, which had sparked concern among the public. The Gardens had been temporarily shut down for repairs, but the closure triggered widespread speculation online. Mulch Company had initially announced the closure on October 30, 2024, which left many wondering about

the future of the Gardens.

With the University now in full control, there are plans to restore and improve the facility. The Gardens, a popular spot for both research and recreation, will soon reopen, providing an enhanced environment for its users.

## Two burnt beyond recognition in fiery collision at East Legon

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Two unidentified individuals have tragically lost their lives in a horrific accident that occurred on Saturday, October 12, 2024, at East Legon, Accra.

CCTV footage from the scene indicates that the accident was caused by excessive speeding, leading to a catastrophic collision.

The impact of the crash was so severe that both vehicles involved were engulfed in flames shortly after the collision.

According to an officer from the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS), ADO Nartey, one body has already been recovered from the wreckage, while firefighters battled to retrieve the other body trapped inside the remains of the vehicle.

Per reports, the victims were travelling in an Artura vehicle at the time of the incident.

In a video posted on the GNFS Facebook page, firefighters were seen using specialised hydraulic equipment to cut through the

twisted and charred remains of the vehicles, with smoke still rising from the crash site.

Among the victims were two young women, whose bodies were burnt beyond recognition, making identification particularly challenging.

Reports suggest that the accident occurred when one of the vehicles collided with a wooden electric pole.

The force of the crash brought down the pole's high-voltage cables, which sparked a fire that

quickly spread, engulfing both vehicles in flames.

The intense fire left the vehicles completely destroyed, with little left to salvage from the scene.

As investigations continue, authorities are working to establish the identities of the victims and the exact circumstances leading to the crash.

The accident has left the East Legon community in shock and mourning, with many residents expressing concerns over road safety in the area.



Officers of the Ghana National Fire Service attending to a burned car





# Business

## IMF slashes borrowing fees by 36% for debt-laden countries

By **Amanda Cartey**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reduced borrowing fees for some of the world's most debt-ridden countries, lowering costs by 36% in a move aimed at easing the financial burden of these nations. This decision comes amid rising global interest rates and growing criticism that the IMF's surcharge policies were too punitive.

The IMF's executive board approved a reduction in surcharges—additional fees imposed on countries that exceed their borrowing limits or take longer to repay loans. This change is expected to benefit major borrowers like Argentina, Egypt, Ukraine, and Ecuador, who have faced steep fees as a result of their heavy reliance on IMF support.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva announced that the fee cut would save countries approximately \$1.2 billion per year. By fiscal year 2026, the number of nations

subject to surcharges is expected to drop from 20 to 13. The reform also includes raising the borrowing threshold at which surcharges are applied and lowering the interest margin charged on these loans.

Despite these measures, some critics argue that the changes are insufficient. Leaders from Argentina and Brazil have called for a complete suspension of surcharges, citing the broader challenge of managing \$1.62 trillion in dollar-denominated debt across emerging markets, with \$132 billion of that amount coming due next year.

Georgieva, speaking ahead of the upcoming global financial leaders' summit in Washington, highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of highly indebted countries. While the reforms provide significant relief, the IMF's executive board decided to maintain surcharges, with Georgieva stressing that they are essential to ensuring responsible borrowing by member nations.

Historically, surcharges have been a tool for the IMF to discourage excessive dependence on its resources. These fees also contribute to the IMF's precautionary reserves, which serve to protect against potential losses. Earlier this year, the IMF reached its target of \$34 billion for these reserves, reducing the need for aggressive surcharge collection going forward.

As the IMF continues to navigate the complexities of global financial instability, this move to cut fees marks a step toward easing pressure on countries struggling with unsustainable debt levels. However, the debate over the fairness and necessity of these surcharges is likely to continue, as countries push for deeper reforms in the face of ongoing economic challenges.



*Kristalina Georgieva, IMF MD*

## Ghana's credit rating upgraded by Moody's amid debt restructuring

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

Global credit ratings agency Moody's has upgraded the country's long-term local and foreign currency issuer ratings from "Caa3" and "Ca" to "Caa2." The credit rating agency attributes the upgrade to significant progress in the government's debt restructuring program, which has eased financial pressures. Along with this, Moody's revised Ghana's outlook from "stable" to "positive," signaling improved liquidity conditions and potential for further economic stabilization.

Moody's announcement follows the latest developments in Ghana's fiscal reforms, supported by its \$3 billion loan programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to Minister of Finance Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, an IMF Executive Board meeting is slated for early December 2024, where

a disbursement of \$360 million will be considered. If approved, the total funds received under the IMF programme will rise to \$1.992 billion, aiding further recovery.

Ghana's economic performance in 2024 has exceeded expectations. Real GDP growth reached 5.8% in the first half of the year, outperforming the same period in 2023, which averaged 2.9%. The second quarter recorded an impressive 6.9% growth, the fastest in five years, according to data from the Ghana Statistical Service.

"The 5.8% growth in the first half of 2024, including 4.8% in Q1 and 6.9% in Q2, is the highest we've recorded in the last five years," Dr. Amin Adam confirmed during a briefing.

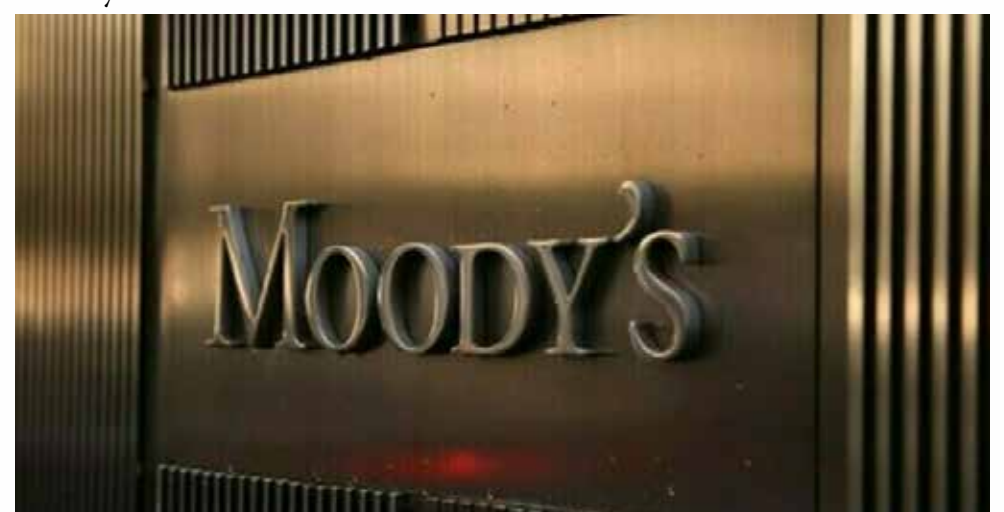
The ongoing restructuring efforts are critical to Ghana's recovery from its 2022 debt default, which reached nearly \$30 billion. Notably, 90% of

bondholders agreed to a \$13 billion debt overhaul in October 2024, which is projected to cut the total debt stock by \$4.7 billion and provide \$4.4 billion in cash flow relief during the IMF program.

In addition, Ghana's Eurobond debt exchange program, launched in September 2024, saw an overwhelming 98.6% participation rate by the final deadline. This

achievement represents a major milestone in restoring the country's economic health and regaining investor confidence.

Moody's expects a gradual decline in Ghana's debt load as the government resumes payments on interest and principal, driven by the restructuring's positive effects and the IMF-backed fiscal consolidation.



*Global credit ratings agency Moody's*

# International

## Zambians struggle with electricity shortages driven by drought

Source: AfricaNews

Less than half of Zambia's 20 million people had access to electricity before Kariba's problems. Millions more have now been forced to adjust as mothers find different ways to cook for their families and children do their homework by candlelight.

Zambians are facing a daily struggle to find electricity during a climate-related energy crisis that's robbed the southern African country of almost all its power.

Some Zambians are so exasperated that they've taken to lugging their entire desktop computer — hard drive, monitor, everything — to a local cafe so they can work.

Zambia's worst electricity blackouts in memory have been caused by a severe drought in the region that has left the critical Kariba dam, the source of Lake

Musonda's woes, with insufficient water to run its hydroelectric turbines.

Kariba is the largest man-made lake in the world by volume and lies 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of Lusaka on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The massive dam wall was built in the 1950s. It was meant to revolutionize the countries' energy supplies by trapping the water of the Zambezi River, turning a valley into a huge lake and providing an endless supply of renewable hydroelectric power.

That's not the case anymore as months of drought brought by the naturally occurring El Nino weather pattern and exacerbated by warming temperatures have put Zambia's hydroelectric station on the brink of completely shutting down for the first time.

Less than 10% of normal output

The water level is so low that only one of the six turbines on Zambia's side of the dam can operate, cutting generation to less than 10% of normal output. Zambia relies on Kariba for more than 80% of its national electricity supply, and the result is Zambians have barely a few hours of power a day at the best of times. Often, areas are going without electricity for days. The most damaging impact is during the daylight hours when small businesses, the backbone of the country, struggle to operate.

"I tell you, we've stayed five days now without power," says Tindor Sikunyongana, who is trying to run a welding business.

His frustration, like Phiri's, is evident. Sikunyongana says he has tried to ease the impact by investing in a diesel generator, but the fuel is expensive, and he can't

always afford enough.

His generator ran out of diesel and spluttered to a halt as he spoke. Experts say Zambia is paying for a lack of diversity in the energy sector.

"85% dependency on hydro is obviously a risk," explains Geoffrey Chiyumbe, Vice Chairman of the Energy Committee at the Engineering Institute of Zambia.

"We needed to have a mix of renewable and non-renewable energy sources so that in case one fails, we are not put in a crisis like the one we are in," he adds.

At Kariba, the 128-meter-high (420-foot) dam wall is almost completely exposed. A dry, reddish-brown stain near the top marks where the water once reached in better times more than a decade ago.



Kariba Dam



# International

## Better use of vaccines could reduce antibiotic use by 2.5 billion doses annually, says WHO

Source: WHO

A new report by the World Health Organization (WHO) finds that vaccines against 24 pathogens could reduce the number of antibiotics needed by 22% or 2.5 billion defined daily doses globally every year, supporting worldwide efforts to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR). While some of these vaccines are already available but underused, others would need to be developed and brought to the market as soon as possible.

AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines, making people sicker and increasing the risk of illness, death and the spread of infections that are difficult to treat. AMR is driven largely by the misuse and overuse of antimicrobials, yet, at the same time, many people around the world do not have access to essential antimicrobials. Each year, nearly 5 million deaths are associated with AMR globally.

Vaccines are an essential part of the response to reduce AMR as they prevent infections, reduce the use and overuse of antimicrobials, and slow the emergence and spread of drug-resistant pathogens.

The new report expands on a WHO study published in *BMJ Global Health* last year. It estimates that vaccines already in use against pneumococcus pneumonia, *Haemophilus influenzae* type B (Hib, a bacteria causing pneumonia and meningitis) and typhoid could avert up to 106 000 of the deaths associated with AMR each year. An additional 543 000 deaths associated with AMR could be averted annually when new vaccines for tuberculosis (TB) and *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, are developed and rolled out globally. While new TB vaccines are in clinical trials, one against *Klebsiella pneumoniae* is in early stage of development.

“Addressing antimicrobial resistance starts with preventing

infections, and vaccines are among the most powerful tools for doing that,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “Prevention is better than cure, and increasing access to existing vaccines and developing new ones for critical diseases, like tuberculosis, is critical to saving lives and turning the tide on AMR.”

### Vaccines are key to preventing infection

Vaccinated people have fewer infections and are protected against potential complications from secondary infections that may need antimicrobial medicines or require admission to hospital. The report analyzed the impact of already licensed vaccines as well as vaccines in various stages of development.

Every year, vaccines against: *Streptococcus pneumoniae* could save 33 million antibiotic doses, if the Immunization Agenda 2030 target of 90% of the world's

children were vaccinated, as well as older adults; Typhoid could save 45 million antibiotic doses, if their introduction was accelerated in high-burden countries; Malaria caused by *Plasmodium falciparum* could save up to 25 million antibiotic doses, which are often misused to try to treat malaria; TB could have the highest impact once they are developed, saving between 1.2 to 1.9 billion antibiotic doses – a significant portion of the 11.3 billion doses used annually against the diseases covered in this report.

### Vaccines could significantly reduce the substantial economic costs of AMR

Globally, the hospital costs of treating resistant pathogens evaluated in the report are estimated at US\$ 730 billion each year. If vaccines could be rolled out against all the evaluated pathogens, they could save a third of the hospital costs associated with AMR.

A comprehensive, people-centred approach applied across health systems is needed to prevent, diagnose and treat infections. This approach recognizes vaccination as core to preventing AMR and especially impactful when combined with other interventions.

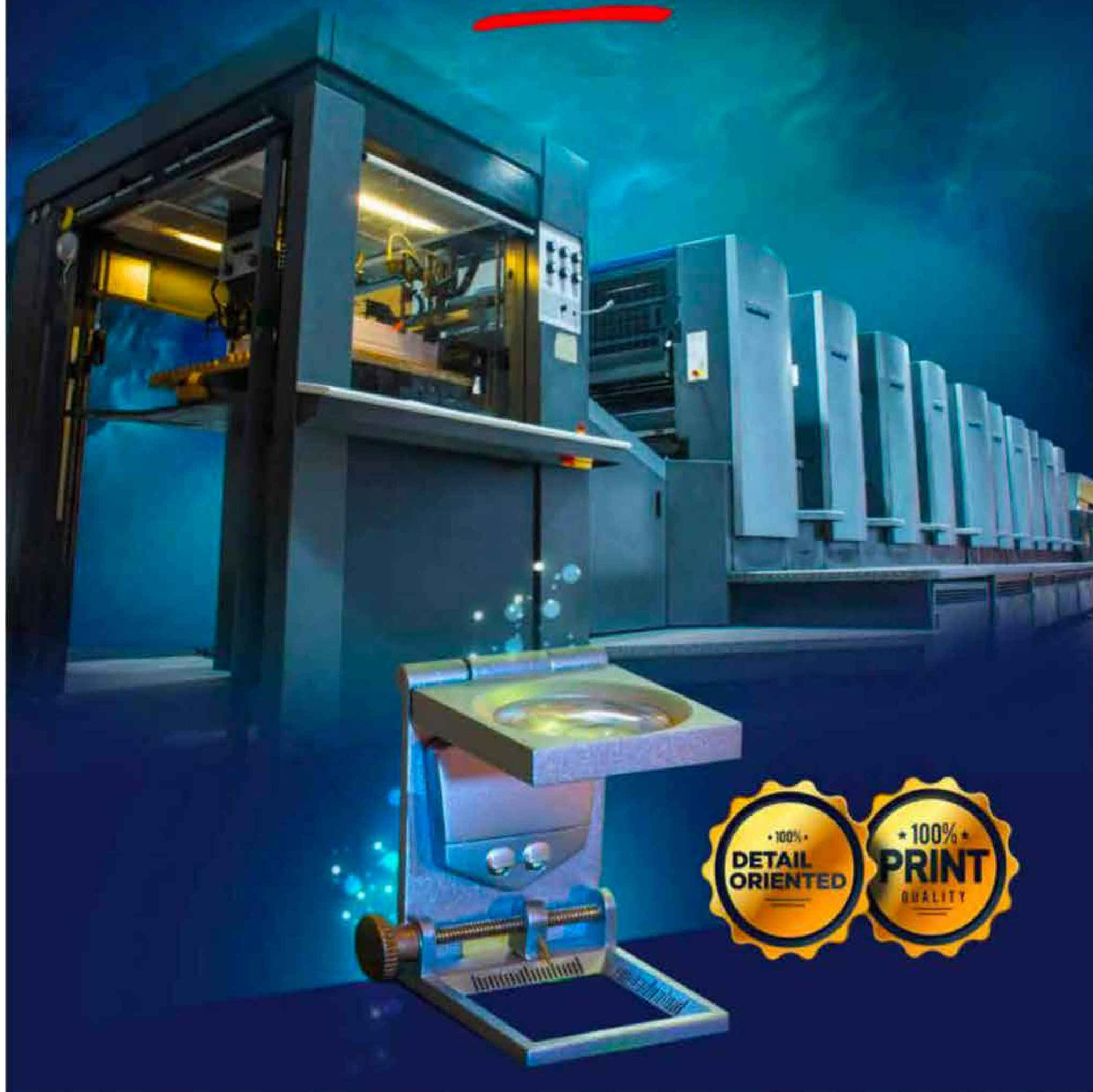
At the 79th United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AMR on 26 September, world leaders approved a political declaration committing to a clear set of targets and actions, including reducing the estimated 4.95 million human deaths associated with bacterial AMR annually by 10% by 2030. The declaration emphasizes key aspects, including the importance of access to vaccines, medicines, treatments and diagnostics, while calling for incentives and financing mechanisms to drive multisectoral health research, innovation and development in addressing AMR.



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