



Ghana rebuilds and hands over demolished Nigerian High Commission

Page 10

Votes for Akua Donkor will fall under rejected ballots category – EC

Page 2



WAPCo begins cleaning and inspection of West African Gas Pipeline

Page 2



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General News

Votes for Akua Donkor will fall under rejected ballots category – EC

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

The Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana has announced that any votes cast for the late founder and former flagbearer of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP), Madam Akua Donkor, in the upcoming presidential elections will be classified as rejected ballots.

In a statement, the EC explained, “Votes cast in favour of Madam Akua Donkor will not be added to the valid votes cast.” The Commission has briefed its permanent and temporary staff as well as agents of the other presidential candidates about this directive.

The decision follows the passing of Madam Akua Donkor at a time when the Commission had nearly completed printing ballot papers for the December 2024 elections. To avoid additional costs, the EC resolved not to reprint the ballot papers, meaning the image and party logo of the late presidential candidate will remain on the ballot.

However, this move has sparked controversy, with some political parties and stakeholders describing it as unconstitutional. Prof. Stephen Kwaku Asare, a CDD Fellow in Public Law and Justice, argued that the current Public

Elections Regulation, 2012 (C.I. 75), does not explicitly provide for votes cast for a deceased candidate to be rejected.

“Declaring such votes as rejected would go beyond the regulation’s scope, necessitating either a statutory amendment to include this scenario or a judicial interpretation to expand the regulation’s application,” Prof.

Asare said.

He further noted that if the votes were counted as valid, it would increase the total number of valid votes cast, potentially raising the threshold for achieving a majority. “This could disadvantage other candidates, as the votes for the deceased candidate become ‘wasted,’ contributing to no living candidate’s tally,” he added.

With less than two weeks until Ghana heads to the polls to elect its new leaders, calls for peace have intensified to avoid a repeat of the electoral violence witnessed during the 2020 general elections. The EC has stood firm on its decision, citing cost savings as a primary consideration, but the controversy surrounding the matter continues to dominate discussions in the political space.



Late Madam Akua Donkor, ounder and former flagbearer of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP)

WAPCo begins cleaning and inspection of West African Gas Pipeline

By **Phoebe Martekie Doku**

The West African Gas Pipeline Company Limited (WAPCo) has announced the commencement of a planned cleaning and inspection exercise on the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP). The maintenance work, which begins today, Monday, November 25, is a mandatory regulatory requirement aimed at ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the pipeline.

In a press statement, WAPCo emphasized that the exercise aligns with global industry best practices and will cover the entire pipeline system, stretching from Itoki in Ogun State, Nigeria, to Takoradi in Ghana’s Western Region.

“The comprehensive cleaning and inspection exercise is a key maintenance and regulatory requirement to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the pipeline.

- Continue on page 3



WAPCo station

General News

WAPCo begins cleaning and inspection of West African Gas Pipeline

- Continued from page 2

The exercise aligns with industry best practices and will cover the entire pipeline infrastructure, from Itoki in Ogun State in Nigeria to Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana. It is part of WAPCo's ongoing efforts to maintain the integrity of the WAGP and ensure its continued safe and reliable operation across the West African region," the statement read.

The project will be executed in two phases. The first phase,

which begins today, focuses on the onshore section of the pipeline in Nigeria and is expected to last approximately 10 days. The second phase is scheduled for January 2025 and will target the offshore section, stretching from Badagry in Lagos State, Nigeria, to Takoradi in Ghana.

During the second phase, gas transportation in reverse flow from Takoradi to Tema will be temporarily suspended.

Operations at critical facilities in Tema, Ghana; Lomé, Togo; and Cotonou, Benin, will also be halted to facilitate the replacement of subsea valves at key points, enhancing safety measures.

WAPCo noted that the cleaning and inspection of the WAGP is conducted every five years, with the last exercise completed in January 2020.

The WAGP is a natural gas

transmission system designed to transport gas from Nigeria's Niger Delta region to Benin, Togo, and Ghana. As the first cross-border natural gas pipeline network in sub-Saharan Africa, it plays a vital role in the energy supply chain within the region.

WAPCo has reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining the integrity of the pipeline and ensuring reliable service delivery to West Africa.

Purchase a month worth of prepaid amid upgrade to avoid disruption - ECG to Nuri meter users

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) has advised customers using Nuri Prepayment Meters to purchase enough credit to last at least one month as it undertakes a mandatory upgrade of its Standard Transfer Specifications (STS) metering systems.

In a public announcement, ECG explained that the upgrade, which includes the Nuri Prepayment system, is necessary to maintain uninterrupted vending services.

"Please buy enough top-up credit that will last for at least one month in order not to experience vending disruptions that might arise out of the ongoing Nuri meter upgrading exercise," the statement urged.

Customers are encouraged to ensure their meters are upgraded promptly. For assistance, ECG has directed customers to contact its call center on 0302611611 or reach out through its official social media platforms (@ECGghOfficial).

The company emphasized that the upgrade is vital to improving the functionality and reliability of its

metering systems.

"This is a crucially mandatory STS upgrade designed to ensure uninterrupted vending service," ECG stated.

Customers are reminded to take the necessary steps to avoid potential inconveniences during the upgrade period.



ECG meter

General News

Govt ordered to compensate Shalimar Abbiusi for rights violations

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court has ruled in favor of Shalimar Abbiusi, spokesperson for the New Force Movement, directing the Government of Ghana to compensate her for an unlawful arrest and deportation.

The court determined that Abbiusi's rights were violated, emphasizing that the actions against her contravened international human rights standards. This judgment highlights Ghana's failure to adhere to protections enshrined under international law. In a statement issued on Friday, the New Force Movement celebrated the ruling as a significant victory.

"The New Force is pleased to

announce a significant victory following the recent ruling by the ECOWAS Court, which confirmed that the Republic of Ghana violated the rights of our spokesperson, Shalimar Abbiusi. This ruling underscores our commitment to justice and accountability in a democratic society," the statement noted.

Abbiusi's ordeal began on December 4, 2023, when she was detained on allegations of falsifying documents to secure a student residence permit at Ghana Christian University College. After being granted bail by National Security, she was rearrested and deported on December 20, 2023, despite charges against her being dropped by Ghana Immigration Service prosecutors.

The New Force Movement

condemned the actions as unjust and damaging to Abbiusi's personal and professional reputation. It also called on civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and the international community to support reforms that protect human rights in Ghana.

"We call on civil society organisations, human rights advocates, and the international community to join us in condemning these violations and supporting efforts for meaningful reform in Ghana. Together, we can foster a future where every individual's rights are respected and protected," the statement urged.

The movement reaffirmed its commitment to promoting justice and accountability across Africa

while urging Ghana to respect human rights and the rule of law as guaranteed by its Constitution.

"The actions against Ms. Abbiusi exemplify a broader issue of political persecution that threatens the foundations of democracy in Ghana. As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our mission to promote transparency and accountability within governmental institutions for the benefit of all," the New Force stated. Reacting to the ruling, Abbiusi's legal team, led by Francis-Xavier Sosu and Belinda Narkey Quaynor, expressed satisfaction with the court's decision.

Lawyer Sosu commended the ruling, stating, "I feel vindicated that the ECOWAS Court has protected the rights of Shalimar."



Shalimar Abbiusi, Spokesperson for the New Force Movement



General News

Speaker petitioned to recall Parliament again amid boycott threats by NDC MPs

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Majority Leader, Alexander Afenyo-Markin, has formally petitioned the Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin, to reconvene the House to address unresolved parliamentary business.

In a letter addressed to the Speaker, Afenyo-Markin invoked Standing Orders 57(3) and 58(4), urging Bagbin to recall Members of Parliament to deliberate on critical matters awaiting parliamentary action.

Speaker Bagbin had adjourned the House indefinitely on Thursday, November 7, following a half-side representation. The adjournment came after New Patriotic Party (NPP) Members of Parliament failed to attend the session, despite Parliament being recalled less than a month earlier on October 22.

The earlier recall, prompted by a petition from NPP MPs under Article 112(3) of the 1992 Constitution and Order 53 of Parliament's Standing Orders, aimed to address urgent national

issues. However, proceedings on November 7 were stalled when the Business Committee, chaired by Afenyo-Markin, failed to convene to outline the agenda.

In a statement responding to the call for a reconvening, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) announced plans to boycott any emergency session. NDC National Chairman Johnson Asiedu Nketia instructed the party's MPs to abstain, asserting that with just three weeks to Ghana's general elections, any recall might be an avenue for the ruling NPP to pursue partisan interests rather than genuine national concerns.

Tamale Central MP Ibrahim Murtala Mohammed also criticized the financial implications of emergency sittings, highlighting that each session costs Ghana over GH¢1 million—a significant expenditure for a single day.

Key government business remains stalled, including the approval of two Supreme Court Judge nominees appointed by President Akufo-Addo and the consideration of tax waivers exceeding \$350

million.

Several bills are also pending, such as the Architects Registration Bill 2024, the Economic and Organised Crime Office (Amendment) Bill 2024, the Vaccines Development and Manufacturing Bill 2024, and the Environmental Protection Agency Bill 2024. Notably, the

Environmental Protection Agency Bill 2024 was finalized on October 16 during the 5th meeting of the 4th session of the 8th Parliament.

The upcoming election and political divisions cast uncertainty over the likelihood of an effective parliamentary session.



Alexander Afenyo-Markin, Majority Leader

Police rescue Emirates Manager, Sylvia Baah from kidnappers

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Airport Services Manager of Emirates Airlines in Accra, Sylvia Patience Baah, who was abducted last Thursday, November 21, near her residence on Spintex Road, has been found safe following swift action by the Ghana Police Service.

Ms. Baah's disappearance had caused significant distress among her family and colleagues. In a statement shared on its official social media platforms, the Police confirmed her safe return and assured the public of their commitment to pursuing justice.

"The Police are continuing the search for the suspects behind this incident and we want to assure the public that we will surely bring them to face justice," the statement read. The Police also expressed gratitude to individuals who provided crucial information during the rescue operation.

"We would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who gave us pieces of information in the course of our rescue operations in particular and the public in general for their support and cooperation," it added.

- Continue on page 6



Sylvia Patience Baah, Airport Services Manager of Emirates Airlines in Accra

General News

Police rescue Emirates Manager, Sylvia Baah from kidnappers

- Continue from page 5

Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Dr. George Akuffo Dampare has personally reached out to Ms. Baah and her family, underscoring the Police's dedication to ensuring

their well-being.

In addition, a team of police medical officers and psychologists has been assigned to offer

professional care and support to Ms. Baah and her family during this challenging period.

As investigations continue, Ms. Baah has yet to comment publicly

on the incident. Authorities remain focused on apprehending those responsible for the abduction.

Govt releases GHC50m for SHS feeding and arrears

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Ministry of Finance has disbursed GHC50 million to Senior High Schools (SHSs) across Ghana to support the feeding of students and reduce outstanding arrears, the Ministry of Education has announced.

This intervention follows a formal request from the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS) to the Minister of Education, Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum, for the release of funds. The request covered arrears related to recurrent fees, the transportation of food items, and day school expenses for the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year.

Kwasi Kwarteng, the Public Relations Officer of the Education

Ministry, confirmed the release of the funds during an interview with Accra-based TV3. However, he declined to specify the total amount of arrears owed.

"Just at the end of this week, an amount of GHC50 million was issued to schools to be able to settle some of these outstanding arrears or give them the capacity to buy perishable food items. I will have to verify and confirm. I am unable to put a figure to it," Kwarteng stated.

Challenges with Food Supply

CHASS has raised concerns over the lack of key food items since the start of the 2024/2025 academic year, which has complicated efforts to feed students effectively. This situation has reportedly led

to disciplinary issues and unrest on some school campuses.

Currently, the government implements a feeding system where 70% of food items are supplied by the National Food Buffer Stock Company Limited (NAFCO), while schools purchase the remaining 30% using funds provided by the government. Delays in cash disbursement have forced some school heads to seek alternative suppliers on credit, with the expectation of settling debts when funds are eventually released.

The government supplies 18 essential food items, including maize, beans, peanuts, millet, and soya beans, to over 700 Senior High Schools, technical institutions, and community development schools

nationwide.

Financial Commitments Under Free SHS Policy

Between 2017 and 2022, the government spent over GHC2.7 billion to pay food suppliers under the Free Senior High School policy. However, persistent delays in funding have strained school administrations, highlighting the need for more consistent cash flow to maintain the program's sustainability.

Education stakeholders continue to call for improved systems to ensure timely disbursements and adequate food supplies to support effective learning environments in schools.



SHS dinning



General News

Verdict on J.B. Danquah Adu's murder case to be delivered on Dec 4

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

An Accra High Court has set December 4, 2024, as the date to deliver its verdict in the trial of Daniel Asiedu, alias Sexy Don Don, who stands accused of murdering former Member of Parliament for Akim Abuakwa North, J.B. Danquah Adu.

Justice Lydia Osei Marfo, a Court of Appeal judge with additional responsibilities at the High Court, will provide a summary of the case before a seven-member jury delivers its verdict. Final submissions from both the prosecution and the defense are also expected on the same day.

Claims and Testimonies by Daniel Asiedu

During the trial, Asiedu alleged that he gave only one statement to the police, claiming that subsequent statements attributed to him were fabricated under duress. He also denied police accusations of stealing the MP's mobile phones, asserting that no phones were recovered from him.

"The police never collected any mobile phone from me. They rather took the phone from another guy

who I do not know," Asiedu told the court. He further alleged that the police held meetings involving Madam Ursula Owusu Ekuful and Kennedy Agyapong, without bringing these individuals to testify in court.

Additionally, Asiedu refuted allegations that he stabbed the deceased, maintaining his innocence and offering to display tattoos bearing his name and alias as evidence of his identity. In response to questions from the jury, Asiedu claimed he had visited the Regional Police Command to report an unrelated issue involving a prostitute.

Developments in the Case

The case, which has spanned nearly a decade, has been marred by controversies, including a claim by pathologist Dr. Lawrence Edusei that his autopsy report was stolen during a burglary in Germany. In April 2024, Asiedu subpoenaed MPs Kennedy Agyapong and Ursula Owusu Ekuful, the late MP's wife Ivy Boakye, and their household staff to testify in court.

Defence lawyer Yaw Dankwah alleged that the MP was killed by three individuals impersonating

police officers, a claim corroborated by the late MP's security guard, Apraku, who reported the incident to the police.

Meanwhile, Asiedu's co-accused, Vincent Bossu (alias Junior Agogo), has been acquitted of conspiracy charges due to insufficient evidence.

Background

J.B. Danquah Adu, a respected politician who served as MP from 2005 to 2009 and from 2013 until his death, was murdered on February 9, 2016, at his Shiashie residence near Accra.

Asiedu faces charges of murder and robbery, with prosecutors alleging he conspired with Bossu to rob the MP. The highly publicized trial will conclude with the court's verdict on December 4.



J.B. Danquah Adu, Former Member of Parliament for Akim Abuakwa North

Journalist to stand trial for spreading Election Day falsehood

By Amanda Cartey

Kumasi-based radio and television presenter Oheneba Nana Asiedu, who was arrested and granted bail for spreading false information over the weekend, is set to appear in court on a date yet to be announced.

Oheneba Nana Asiedu was seen in a viral video making claims that encouraged voters to cast their ballots for presidential candidates on separate days during the general elections.

The Ghana Police Service described his statements as "false and likely to disturb the public peace." Following his arrest, he was granted bail, with the police confirming that he would be arraigned before court soon.

In a statement, the police noted: "...the case will be presented before the Court for him to face justice."

In a related event, the Ghana Police Service has announced a GH¢20,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of individuals from Obuasi who

- Continue on page 8



Oheneba Nana Asiedu, Kumasi-based Radio and Television Presenter

General News

Journalist to stand trial for spreading Election Day falsehood

- Continue from page 7

appeared in a viral video making violent threats ahead of the 2024 general elections.

The suspects, identified as Fuseini Yahuza, Bernard Ahedor, Simon, Basit, and Musa Yakubu (also known as Agya Musah),

have evaded capture since the video emerged, prompting a police manhunt. The video, which sparked concerns about potential electoral violence, has led authorities to escalate their efforts to locate the suspects.

On November 15, 2024, the individuals were officially declared wanted for making threats linked to the elections.

Individuals with relevant information are encouraged to

contact the Police through the dedicated hotline: 0547927272. Public cooperation, the Service stressed, is essential in ensuring a safe and peaceful electoral process.

Nag Fairmount involved in another devastating blast on Kasoa-Winneba road

By Amanda Cartey

Nag Fairmount Constructions Limited, the company managing the Kasoa-Winneba road expansion project, has once again caused significant damage with another blast activity, this time in the Dabenyin area of Gomoa East District in the Central Region.

The explosion affected multiple buildings, including a fully completed 16-bedroom apartment and a two-bedroom

unit still under construction.

Rock fragments from the blast landed on nearby structures, leaving residents outraged over the destruction caused. Unlike the earlier Buduburam blast, this incident resulted in no fatalities.

However, affected residents have expressed frustration over the lack of attention from authorities and the company's delayed response to their plight.

"I called the person who was

supposed to come and inspect, but he never came. I took a GHS25,000 loan to roof the building. They should bring someone to replace the entire roof so we all have peace," lamented Kwadwo Amoah, one of the affected homeowners.

Other residents, such as Albert Appiah and Issah Rahman, echoed similar sentiments, with Rahman recounting how a stone from the explosion pierced his roof and landed in his bedroom.

The National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) in Gomoa

East has assessed the situation. Robert Nana Hackman, the NADMO director, assured the media that compensation for the affected property owners would be arranged soon.

Mr Hackman also confirmed that medical expenses for victims of the Buduburam blast on October 14 had been covered, although compensation for property destruction from that incident remains unresolved.



Kasoa-Winneba road expansion project



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Business

Cedi depreciation, shortage of dollars worsening our debt - ECG reveals

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) has attributed its worsening debt situation to the instability of the forex market and the depreciation of the cedi.

This revelation comes amid a deepening energy crisis, with nine Independent Power Producers (IPPs) owed \$1.7 billion for the power they generate and supply to the national grid.

Speaking on Joy News' Newsfile on Saturday, November 23, the acting Managing Director (MD) of ECG, Ing. Asamoah David, explained that forex challenges significantly contribute to the company's debt accumulation.

"The truth is that the majority of these debts are a result of a forex shortfall," he stated. "Each month, just from forex, we lose about 37 million. So, if you get the money and pay, getting the dollars becomes a problem. Sometimes, you will even make a payment, and it will take days or weeks before the IPPs receive it because of the dollar."

Ing. Asamoah further clarified the role of currency conversion in the delays, saying, "If it were in cedis, I would pay. But now, when I pay the money, the banks have to get the dollars and convert them before they pay the IPPs, and by the time they pay, if the dollar increases, it means we still have a shortfall."

As of November 22, the Bank of Ghana reported that the dollar was selling at a little less than GHC16 and the pound selling a little less than GHC20.

Despite these challenges, the MD assured the public that ECG is making efforts to address the payments issue. "So, for the payments, we are doing our best to pay. We have an agreement with them now on how it's going to be paid. ECG will pay part, and the Ministry will come in. Just yesterday [Friday], they sent me a message saying they have agreed."

The energy sector's troubles escalated when Sunon Asogli, Ghana's largest IPP, completely shut down operations on October 8 due to a \$259 million debt. Dr. Elikplim Kwabla Apetorgbor, CEO of the Chamber of Independent

Power Producers, Distributors, and Bulk Consumers (CIPDiB), warned of further shutdowns if no intervention occurs.

"I can confirm that all is not well. If there is no intervention before Friday [November 22], I can tell you that by Monday, three key power plants will be off the grid. It is a serious matter, not fun," he cautioned.

The financial strain has also affected the operations of other IPPs, which supplement power generated by

the state-owned Akosombo plant. However, with a new payment agreement in place, Ing. Asamoah revealed that the IPPs have agreed to resume smooth operations, and Sunon Asogli is expected to resume production in the coming weeks.

Other IPPs that had scaled down their power output will also increase their supply. The unresolved debt crisis continues to threaten the stability of Ghana's national grid, with urgent measures needed to avert widespread power outages.



File photo

10,000 direct jobs created through petroleum activities in Ghana - Petroleum Commission Director

By: Amanda Cartey

The Petroleum Commission (PC) has announced the creation of over 10,000 direct jobs in Ghana through local content initiatives in the upstream petroleum sector. Speaking at the Ghana Energy Week held in Takoradi, Mr. Kwaku Boateng, Director of Local Content at the Commission, attributed this achievement to the robust development of local businesses within the industry.

"More than 10,000 direct jobs had been created with the local content development in the petroleum upstream activities in Ghana," Mr. Kwaku Boateng reported. He spoke on the theme: "Renaissance of Ghana's energy; the renewed commitment towards inclusive and sustainable energy transition, decarbonisation, and energy poverty history for economic development".

He disclosed that Indigenous Ghanaian Companies (IGCs) have secured contracts exceeding \$3.6 billion, while joint ventures received

\$6.3 billion worth of contracts. Foreign companies were awarded contracts valued at \$8.7 billion.

Highlighting key in-country investments, Mr. Boateng listed infrastructure like cementing units, waste management plants, hydraulic facilities, aviation hangars, bolt and nut manufacturing facilities, chemical blending units, and training centers for specialized trades as transformative efforts driving growth in the sector.

"The Commission will continue to ensure transparency, cooperation, and mutual benefits in the sector. We are committed to creating an enabling environment for investment by enacting appropriate laws, regulations, and guidelines," he assured.

Addressing strategies for growth, Mr. Boateng outlined measures such as increased promotion of local businesses, enhanced industrial collaboration, and incentivizing international oil companies (IOCs) to

use Ghana as a hub for sub-regional operations. He also emphasized domestic value creation, including empowering local businesses through strategic partnerships and subcontracting.

However, he acknowledged challenges, such as low levels of activity, limited technical capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and high financing costs, which hinder further progress in local content development.

"Emerging economies worldwide have successfully used local content as an enabler for economic development, and Ghana aims to maximize national value creation along the petroleum value chain," Mr. Boateng stated.

He emphasized the importance of workforce development, local procurement, and infrastructure expansion to ensure the continued growth of Ghana's petroleum industry and its contribution to national economic development.



Mr. Kwaku Boateng



International

Tanzania: Opposition leader Freeman Mbowe released on bail after arrest

Source: *Africanews*

Freeman Mbowe, the leader of Tanzania's main opposition party Chadema, has been released on bail after being arrested on Friday, just days before local elections set for November 27.

Chadema announced the release on Saturday via the social media platform X, stating, "Chairman Freeman Mbowe (...) and other leaders detained at the Vwawa police station have been released on bail."

Mbowe's arrest was reportedly linked to a gathering ahead of the elections. Following his release around midnight, he addressed reporters, dismissing the accusations as baseless. "We were accused of violating the campaign schedule, but this is unfounded, as we had already

reached an agreement with our opposition colleagues," he said. He further alleged that the arrest was a deliberate attempt to disrupt Chadema's planned campaigns. Mbowe also noted that some party members remain in custody and that he and others have been summoned to appear before authorities on November 29. He intends to consult legal counsel regarding the matter.

The upcoming local elections are being closely watched as a key test of Tanzania's political landscape ahead of the presidential election scheduled for October 2025.

Since assuming office in 2021, President Samia Suluhu Hassan has implemented certain measures to relax media and opposition restrictions; however, human rights advocates claim that arbitrary

detentions persist.

During Magufuli's presidency, opposition gatherings faced violent disruptions by the police, and their leaders were often arrested. Notably, top Chadema figures, Mbowe and deputy Tundu Lissu, were subjected to attacks by unknown assailants,

with both asserting that the assaults were politically motivated.

The resumption of opposition protests marks a renewed push for political openness and reform in Tanzania, echoing the changing political landscape under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership.



Freeman Mbowe, Leader of Tanzania's main opposition party Chadema

WHO adds LC16m8 mpox vaccine to Emergency Use Listing

Source: *WHO*

The World Health Organization (WHO) has granted Emergency Use Listing (EUL) for the LC16m8 mpox vaccine, making it the second mpox vaccine to be supported by WHO following the Director-General's declaration of an mpox public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on 14 August 2024.

This decision is expected to facilitate increased and timely access to vaccines in communities where mpox outbreaks are surging. In 2024, cases have been reported across 80 countries, including 19 countries in Africa, based on data as of 31 October 2024. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, the hardest-hit country, recorded a large majority of suspected cases – over 39 000 – as well as more than 1000 deaths.

Today's move is particularly relevant as the Government of Japan has announced that it will donate 3.05 million doses of the LC16m8 vaccine, along with specialized inoculation needles, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is the largest donation package announced to date in response to the current mpox emergency.

LC16m8 is a vaccine developed and manufactured by KM Biologics in Japan. The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for EUL of vaccines convened to discuss the outcome of the LC16m8 vaccine review, including the product and programmatic suitability assessments. The TAG recommended the vaccine for use in individuals over one year of age as a single dose vaccine, via a multiple puncture technique using a bifurcated needle.

"WHO emergency use listing of the LC16m8 vaccine against mpox marks a significant step in our response to the current emergency, providing a new option to protect all populations, including children," said Dr Yukiko Nakatani, WHO Assistant Director-General for Access to Medicines and Health Products. "Vaccines are one of the important tools to help contain the outbreak as part of a comprehensive response strategy that also includes improved testing and diagnosis, treatment and care, infection prevention control, and engagement and education within affected communities."

WHO's assessment for EUL is based on information submitted by the manufacturer and review by the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA), the Japanese regulatory agency of record for this

vaccine. The LC16m8 vaccine has been used in Japan during previous mpox outbreaks and was shown to be safe and effective, including in people with well-controlled HIV.

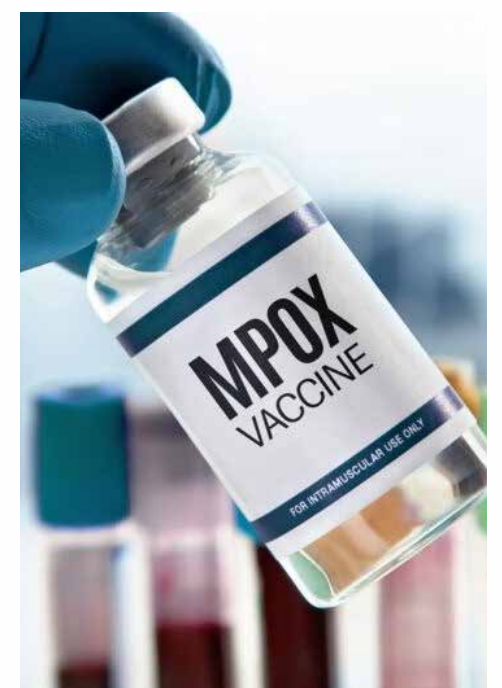
The WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization reviewed available evidence and recommended the use of LC16m8 vaccine in outbreak settings in children and others with a documented high-risk of exposure to mpox.

However, minimally replicating vaccines, such as LC16m8, should not be used during pregnancy and in people who are immunocompromised. Immunocompromised persons include those with active cancer, transplant recipients, immunodeficiency, and active treatment with immunosuppressive agents. They also include people living with HIV with a current CD4 cell count of <200 cells μ l.

The Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety reviewed the updated safety data on LC16m8 on 20 September 2024 and recommended that healthcare workers are provided with training on the use of bifurcated needles to prevent injuries and adverse effects. In light of the changing epidemiology and

emergence of new virus strains, it remains important to collect as much data as possible on vaccine safety and effectiveness in different contexts. WHO continues to work closely with manufacturers, global partners and countries to ensure the availability and administration of safe and effective life-saving products.

On 13 September 2024, WHO prequalified the Modified Vaccinia Ankara-Bavarian Nordic (MVA-BN) vaccine and expanded its indication to include use in individuals aged 12 years and older on 8 October 2024.



Mpox vaccine

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