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General News

Supreme Court rules Bagbin's declaration of 4 vacant seats unconstitutional

By The Independent Ghana

The Supreme Court of Ghana has declared Speaker Alban Bagbin's decision to declare four parliamentary seats vacant as unconstitutional. In a landmark ruling delivered on November 12, 2024, the court overruled Bagbin's move, affirming the Majority Leader, Alexander Afenyo-Markin's legal challenge.

In a 5-2 majority ruling, the court found that the Speaker's actions violated the law. The Chief Justice, speaking on behalf of the court, noted that Justices Lovelace Johnson and Ahmadu Tanko dissented on the issue of jurisdiction, but the court ruled in favour of Afenyo-Markin.

"By court in a majority decision of five to two, Lovelace Johnson JSC and Ahmadu Tanko JSC dissenting on the issue of jurisdiction, the plaintiff's action succeeds," she said. Full details of the ruling are expected to be released

on Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

The controversy began on October 17, 2024, when Speaker Bagbin declared the seats of four MPs vacant just two months before the upcoming December elections.

The affected MPs include Peter Yaw Kwakye Ackah (NDC) from Amenfi Central, Andrew Amoako Asiamah (NPP) from Fomena, Kojo Asante (NPP) from Suhum, and Cynthia Morrison (NPP) from Agona West. Their seats were declared vacant after they announced their intention to run as independent candidates in the election.

Bagbin's decision shifted the balance of Ghana's hung parliament, diminishing the governing New Patriotic Party's (NPP) slight advantage. The opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) gained a stronger position with the announcement. In response, Afenyo-Markin filed

an injunction at the Supreme Court to block the Speaker's declaration. The court initially stayed the execution of the Speaker's decision.

However, the Speaker's legal team later filed an application to reverse the earlier ruling, claiming the Supreme Court lacked jurisdiction

over the suit filed by Afenyo-Markin.

This legal back-and-forth has raised concerns among Ghanaians about the impact of this ruling on government business and national stability, particularly with elections fast approaching.



Chief Justice Gertrude Torkornoo, on the left, Speaker Alban Bagbin on the right

Road projects to continue despite Ghana Highway Authority staff strike - Roads Ministry

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Ministry of Roads and Highways has reassured the public that ongoing road projects across Ghana will not be disrupted by the recent strike by Ghana Highway Authority (GHA) employees.

The Ministry's Public Relations Officer, Ahmed Nasir Yartey, stated in a recent interview that alternative plans have been activated to maintain progress on these projects.

Mr. Yartey explained that most government-funded road projects are executed by private contractors and monitored by external consultants under binding contracts. This setup, he noted, allows the Ministry to minimise the impact of the GHA strike on infrastructure development, as the day-to-day management of these projects is handled by independent firms rather than GHA personnel.

"I want to assure you that all ongoing road projects will go on uninterrupted, and the Ministry doesn't expect to see any road project halting," he said, underscoring the Ministry's commitment to upholding project timelines.

The GHA workers' strike began in protest against the recent implementation of the National Roads Authority Act, 2024 (Act 1118). They demand the removal of two officials: GHA Board Chairman Ing. I.K. Mensah and the CEO of the National Roads Authority, Ing. Collins B. Donkor, citing decisions they claim undermine the sector's integrity. The workers had previously petitioned President Akufo-Addo, calling for broader consultations before enacting the new legislation.

Mr. Yartey encouraged a peaceful resolution to the standoff, urging union leaders to maintain dialogue. "I want to appeal with the union

that we are one family, and so they should let us continue with our consultation and engagement so that, at the end of the day, we can all find an amicable solution as was stated by the Labour Commission," he said.

The Ministry remains committed to its infrastructure development goals and expressed confidence in the Labour Commission's role in facilitating constructive discussions to address the workers' grievances.



File Photo



General News

MIIF sets December deadline for payment of outstanding mining royalties

By Amanda Cartey

The Minerals Income Investment Fund (MIIF) has issued a firm ultimatum for mining companies in Ghana, setting a deadline of December 1, 2024, for the payment of outstanding royalties.

This mandate impacts all active mining operators, including those extracting gold, quarry, salt, limestone, and sand, underscoring the Fund's push to ensure companies meet their financial obligations to support national development through mineral income.

MIIF has clarified that companies can fulfill this requirement by depositing royalty payments into the MIIF's account at the Bank of Ghana or through the government's payment portal. Non-compliance could lead to penalties, including fines or other

legal actions, according to the Fund's announcement.

In addition to royalty payments, mining companies are expected to regularly submit reports on production and sales to both the Ghana Revenue Authority and MIIF's Finance Department.

This compliance push is part of MIIF's broader mission to ensure fair contributions to Ghana's economy from its mining sector.

Established under the Minerals Income Investment Fund Act, 978 (as amended), MIIF is a state-run fund with a mandate to maximize Ghana's income from mineral royalties and dividends.

The Fund aims to generate sustainable, long-term value by leveraging the country's mineral resources. A distinctive feature

of MIIF's portfolio is its full ownership of Agyapa Royalties Company, which makes it the only state-owned entity in Africa dedicated to gold royalties.

In a move to further bolster Ghana's mineral development, MIIF

recently committed a \$2 million investment to Castle Minerals. This funding will support ongoing gold exploration and advance the Kambale Graphite Project in northern Ghana, strengthening the country's position in mineral resource development.



File Photo

AngloGold urges swift govt approval for joint venture with Gold Fields as parliamentary deadlock persists

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

AngloGold Ashanti, a leading gold mining company, has raised concerns over the Ghanaian government's prolonged delay in approving its proposed joint venture with Gold Fields for the Tarkwa and Iduapriem mines.

The proposed partnership, announced in March 2023, aims to merge the two neighbouring mining sites to improve production, extend mine life, and enhance value for shareholders. However, nearly nine months later, the necessary government approvals remain pending.

According to a joint media statement by AngloGold and Gold Fields, constructive engagement with the government has been ongoing since March, yet the venture still awaits parliamentary approval.

The companies have pressed for ratification ahead of the October 2024 parliamentary recess, hoping to resolve the matter well in advance of Ghana's

national elections scheduled for December.

"Notwithstanding constructive engagement with the Government of Ghana since the announcement of the Proposed Joint Venture on 16 March 2023, the requisite approvals by the Government of Ghana for the Proposed Joint Venture have not yet been obtained," AngloGold stated, adding that they are optimistic the deal would enhance the mines' efficiency and reduce costs. "We continue to believe that a combination of the two neighbouring mines into a single managed entity is compelling, given that it is anticipated to extend the life of the mine, increase production, and lower costs, creating value for all stakeholders," the company affirmed.

Despite the delays, AngloGold and Gold Fields indicated they will continue to pursue improvements to their separate operations while maintaining communication with government officials. "Gold Fields and AngloGold Ashanti will

maintain engagement in relation to a potential asset combination while separately continuing to pursue improvements to their respective assets," they added, reassuring shareholders of ongoing updates.

The delays are partly attributed to recent parliamentary gridlock over legal disputes surrounding a vacant seat ruling, which led to the Speaker adjourning Parliament indefinitely. After weeks of contention, the Supreme Court overturned the ruling on November 12, potentially clearing the way for Parliament to reconvene and address pending approvals, including the mining joint venture.

At a recent West Africa Mining Security (WAMS) Conference in Accra, CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Mines, Dr. Sulemanu Koney, highlighted the adverse effects of delayed ratifications on Ghana's mining sector.

Dr. Koney stressed the need for prompt approval of mining agreements to secure investor

confidence and maintain industry growth. "There is competition for capital in recent times, and if the country has been able to attract some investment through exploration, it's only unfortunate that the impasse in Parliament is delaying the ratification of these agreements," he remarked.

Parliament has yet to announce a date for their next sitting following the Supreme court's ruling yesterday. In the meantime, both AngloGold and Gold Fields await an official decision, with hopes that the joint venture's benefits can soon be realised for Ghana's economy and stakeholders.



AngloGold signage

General News

More than 18.8m eligible registered voters expected to partake in 2024 elections - EC

By Amanda Cartey

The Electoral Commission (EC) has announced that a total of 18,774,159 registered voters are expected to participate in Ghana's upcoming elections on December 7.

According to the EC's report, 18,640,811 voters have biometric data, while 131,478 are registered as special voters.

Another 1,870 registered voters lack biometric records. This represents a significant increase of 1,746,518 voters compared to the 2020 voter registry, which listed 17,027,641 registered voters.

In the breakdown provided, most voters (18,640,811) have biometric data, while 131,478 are designated as special voters.

Additionally, 1,870 individuals are on the register but do not have

biometric details.

This information was outlined in a certified summary signed by Samuel Tettey, the EC's Deputy Chairman of Operations.

Meanwhile the Electoral Commission on Wednesday, 6 November 2024 gave all registered political parties and independent presidential candidates digital versions of the Certified Voters Register, following the rules laid out in Regulation 27 of C.I. 91.

The digital copies, provided on external hard drives, included several lists: the Valid Voters Register, the Exceptions List (those with issues in the registration), the Multiples List (showing duplicate entries), the Transferred Voters List (those who changed constituencies), the Absent Voters List, the Manual Verification List, the Proxy Voters List (for voters

designating someone else to vote on their behalf), and the Special Voters List.

However, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) stated that it would not accept the final certified voters register for the upcoming December polls without the

accompanying ballot statistics and summaries.

Nonetheless, the EC has affirmed its commitment to delivering free and fair elections, citing its long-standing track record of credibility and transparency in managing the country's electoral process.



Jean Mensa, Electoral Commission Chairperson

2024 Election: EC disqualifies GFP's new flagbearer over "illegalities"

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Ghana Electoral Commission (EC) has disqualified Philip Appiah Kubi, the newly selected flagbearer of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP), from contesting in the upcoming 2024 presidential elections due to errors and illegalities in his nomination form.

The decision was announced by Jean Mensa, EC Chairperson, at a press briefing on November 12, 2024. Mensa explained that although the GFP was given a chance to correct the discrepancies, some issues were deemed too significant to overlook.

"...At the end of the process, they detected a number of errors and some illegalities within the forms. The candidate's attention was drawn to these errors, and the party was provided an opportunity to correct them. They did that. In the view of the commission, it was not in our blossom to provide the political party the opportunity to correct some of the illegalities that we found on the form," she said.

As a result, the EC informed the

party and Kubi that he would be disqualified from running in the 2024 election.

The GFP's setback comes on the heels of the unexpected death of its founder and original flagbearer, Akua Donkor, on October 15, 2024. Donkor's passing left the party in search of a new candidate, leading

to Kubi's appointment after the EC granted the GFP a 10-day window to submit a replacement.

Despite the party's efforts to resolve the issues with Kubi's nomination, the EC maintained that the integrity of the electoral process must be upheld, and irregularities, no matter how

small, cannot be allowed.

Jean Mensa reaffirmed that the EC's duty is to ensure a fair and transparent election process, which could not accommodate the illegalities found in Kubi's nomination papers.



Philip Appiah Kubi, Ghana Freedom Party (GFP)



General News

GMA raises alarm over rising alcohol abuse, drug use, and sexual misconduct among health workers

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Ghana Medical Association (GMA) has raised alarm about a rise in alcohol and drug misuse, along with incidents of sexual misconduct, among healthcare workers.

These troubling behaviours, according to the GMA, are emerging as significant threats to patient safety and the overall quality of healthcare.

Speaking at the GMA's recent annual general meeting, President Dr. Frank Serebour underscored the impact of these issues, warning that affected healthcare professionals continue to work despite substance abuse and misconduct.

Dr. Serebour pointed out that such conduct directly threatens the standards of patient care, revealing that the GMA currently

faces a rising number of lawsuits, most related to alleged negligence and malpractice.

"We have some health personnel involved in alcoholism and drug abuse, which impacts their quality of life. In some cases, we are left off the hook simply because the victims of our unprofessionalism choose to blame the witches and wizards instead of taking on the system," he said.

Dr. Serebour also addressed a concerning increase in sexual harassment complaints against healthcare staff, many of which are still being investigated by the Medical and Dental Council.

According to him, this surge in cases, coupled with ongoing lawsuits against healthcare facilities, poses a significant challenge to the profession's reputation.

Dr. Serebour further criticised a pattern of unprofessional behaviour, including chronic lateness, absenteeism, and reduced working hours.

He questioned whether some workers prioritise personal gain over patient welfare, saying, "Is there an overwhelming focus on greed and selfishness? Some workers arrive at 9:00 a.m. and leave by noon, expecting to be paid for a full day."

In response to these challenges, the GMA is calling for strengthened accountability and higher professional standards across the healthcare sector.

Dr. Serebour emphasised that reform is essential to restoring trust in Ghana's healthcare system, urging stakeholders to address these issues comprehensively to ensure safe, reliable care for all patients.



Dr. Frank Serebour, GMA President

Ghana receives first 50 electric buses in bold move toward eco-friendly public transport

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Ghana has received its first shipment of 50 electric buses as part of a government initiative led by Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia to bring 100 of these buses to the country by the end of the year.

The new fleet, which arrived on November 12, is intended to reduce carbon emissions, lower transport costs, and introduce cleaner energy options into the nation's public transport system.

The electric bus plan was first announced by Dr. Bawumia in July 2024 during a meeting with the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU). According to Dr. Bawumia, the government's push toward electric vehicles (EVs) aligns with Ghana's climate goals and aims to reduce the high cost of transportation for citizens.

"One of the issues we are looking at as far as reducing the cost of transport in Ghana is that we go through two things: we should move towards electric vehicles, which will help the environment,"

he said. Dr. Bawumia explained that this initial fleet of 100 buses is intended to demonstrate the benefits of electric vehicles to the public.

Officials from the Ministry of Transport view the new fleet as a way to introduce a more sustainable and efficient public transport option, especially in urban areas like Accra and Kumasi, where pollution levels from fuel-powered vehicles are high.

Ministry sources indicate that the buses will first be deployed in major cities to maximise their environmental impact.

The electric bus initiative also aims to motivate private transport operators to consider similar eco-friendly options. In addition, the government has outlined plans to build a nationwide network of EV charging stations, which will support the new bus fleet and contribute to the infrastructure for future electric vehicle use.

The public response has generally been positive, with many hopeful that the shift to electric buses

will address long standing issues in Ghana's public transportation system. As these buses enter regular service, they are expected

to reduce Ghana's dependence on imported fuel and could lead to lower transportation costs over time.



File Photo

General News

Bagbin must learn to respect the authority of the Supreme Court - K.T. Hammond

By Amanda Cartey

Trade and Industry Minister, KT Hammond, has firmly urged Speaker Alban Bagbin to respect the authority of the Supreme court and adhere to its ruling.

This statement follows a Supreme Court ruling, decided by a 5-2 majority, which deemed the Speaker of Parliament's action to declare four parliamentary seats vacant as unconstitutional.

After the proceedings, Mr. Hammond voiced strong disapproval of Mr. Bagbin's stance, criticizing his reluctance to comply with the court's prior rulings.

"The Speaker of Parliament has acted with dictatorial tendencies. The Speaker is supposed to be the custodian of the Constitution, but he has decided that he'll not respect the Constitution and he would not respect the apex court

of the land," he said on Tuesday, November 12.

Mr. Hammond pointed out that although Speaker Bagbin says he respects the Constitution's authority, he hasn't shown the same respect for the Supreme Court's authority.

"He respects the supremacy of the Constitution but does not respect the supremacy of the Supreme Court. He doesn't agree that the person of his caliber will not respect the ruling of the Supreme Court," he said.

Mr. Hammond stated that Bagbin has no option but to follow the court's ruling.

"Bagbin has absolutely no choice than to comply with the ruling of the Supreme Court," he said.

On October 17, Speaker Bagbin declared four parliamentary

seats vacant—three from the NPP and one from the NDC—which shifted the power dynamics in Parliament.

Following this announcement, the NDC claimed a new majority, with 136 seats compared to the

NPP's 135. But on October 18, the Supreme Court intervened, temporarily halting Bagbin's decision and allowing the four MPs to continue representing their constituencies until a final judgment is reached.



KT Hammond, Trade and Industry Minister

Ghanaians selling kidneys for millions amid high dialysis costs as patients seek relief

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Some Ghanaians are reportedly selling their kidneys for between GHS3 million and GHS4 million to help those in need of life-saving transplants, according to Baffour Kojo Ahenkorah, President of the Renal Patients Association.

This alarming development highlights the severe financial challenges faced by kidney disease patients and the increasing desperation among healthy individuals willing to sell their kidneys in exchange for money or property.

Speaking on PM Express on Joy News, Mr. Ahenkorah shared that while dialysis is essential for end-stage kidney disease patients, it does not offer a permanent cure. The only long-term solution is a kidney transplant, but the high cost of both the surgery and post-transplant medication makes it difficult for many patients to afford.

"If I calculate the 10 years now, the money I've spent, I could have

done a transplant easily with that money," Mr. Ahenkorah said, reflecting on his personal battle with the expensive cost of dialysis. "But the point is, I don't have the bulk money to go and do it."

To meet the growing demand for kidneys, healthy individuals are reportedly choosing to sell their organs, often asking for millions in return. Some individuals, according to Mr. Ahenkorah, are even willing to exchange their kidney for property, such as a two-bedroom apartment.

"Now, the country is hot; people need money. So if I can live on one kidney, why not?" he said. "People are doing it indirectly. In Ghana, people are doing it indirectly."

This situation has intensified despite the government's move to include dialysis under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) starting December 1, 2024. The expansion will provide free dialysis to all patients, regardless of age, following a successful pilot program.

However, the cost of kidney transplants remains a significant barrier to many, with the scarcity of compatible donors exacerbating the situation.

The sale of kidneys is illegal in Ghana. According to the Human Tissue and Organ Transplant Act, 2012 (Act 851), the buying and selling of organs is strictly prohibited, with organ donations only allowed on a voluntary basis, free from financial compensation.

A legal expert, speaking anonymously to The Independent Ghana, stressed that violations of this law could lead to severe penalties, including fines and imprisonment.

"Organs and tissues can only be donated voluntarily and without any monetary exchange," the lawyer said. "Engaging in organ trade or the unauthorised handling of human tissues carries serious legal consequences."

Despite the legal framework, the illegal trade of organs remains a

global challenge, and enforcement can be difficult. Authorities in Ghana continue to work to prevent the commercialization of organ donations, aiming to ensure ethical practices in the healthcare system.

While the government's expansion of NHIS coverage for dialysis treatment provides some relief, the underlying issue of access to affordable kidney transplants remains a pressing concern, with serious ethical and financial implications for both patients and donors.



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Business

Ghana, World Bank team up in \$227m drive to fight child labour, transform agriculture

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Government, in partnership with the World Bank, will officially launch the Ghana Tree Crop Diversification Project (TCDP) on November 14, 2024, in Accra.

The \$227.5 million project aims to overhaul the nation's agriculture sector, with specific goals to eliminate child labour, promote gender equality, and drive sustainable growth in tree crop production.

The TCDP project will centre on cocoa, cashew, coconut, and rubber production, aiming to enhance productivity, expand market access, and boost private sector competitiveness.

Of the total project budget, \$27.5 million is funded by the Ghanaian government through COCOBOD, marking a substantial local investment in advancing the country's agricultural goals.

The project employs a dual approach: it seeks to increase yields of cocoa and other tree crops while enhancing resilience to climate change. The four main areas of focus are strengthening institutional and value chain governance, improving crop productivity, enhancing post-harvest management and market access, and establishing robust coordination and monitoring systems.

Beyond economic benefits, the TCDP aims to introduce climate adaptation practices and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to Ghana's environmental goals. The project will be implemented in eleven districts across six regions with high potential for tree crop production.

Key project areas include:

Cocoa production in Essam and Adabokrom in the Western North

Region, and Asamankese in the Eastern Region.

Cashew cultivation in Bole and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba in the Savannah Region, Wenchi and Tain in the Bono Region, and Techiman Municipal and Techiman North in Bono East.

Coconut production support in Upper West Akim and Suhum in

the Eastern Region.

Rubber cultivation in Upper West Akim.

According to MoFA, the project aims to achieve "significant outcomes, such as increased yields and value addition for target tree crops, improved climate adaptation strategies, and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions."



File Photo

GWCL targets defaulting customers with court action to recover GHC23m

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) has announced plans to pursue legal action against customers in the Western Region who have defaulted on their water bills, aiming to recover GH¢23 million in unpaid debts.

This debt recovery measure, announced by the Acting Chief Regional Manager of GWCL in the Western Region, Nana Yaw Barima Barnie, marks a significant step in the company's efforts to sustain its operations amidst financial pressures.

In a media briefing on November 11, 2024, Nana Barnie confirmed that GWCL is preparing to take non-compliant customers to court, especially those who have been disconnected but continue to ignore their payment obligations.

"We are compiling the list of all customers who have been disconnected but have failed to

pay their bills and will send them to court because we need the money to run our operations," he stated.

GWCL, which no longer receives government subsidies, relies heavily on revenue from customer bills to fund its daily operations.

Nana Barnie stressed that unpaid bills have made it challenging for the company to maintain essential services, noting that without consistent payments, GWCL may struggle to procure necessary resources like chemicals and fuel for water treatment and distribution.

To avert legal action, GWCL is urging all customers with outstanding bills to clear their arrears promptly. Nana Barnie reiterated the company's commitment to "use every legal means to retrieve all the arrears," highlighting the need for customers to fulfil their financial responsibilities to sustain water supply operations.

As part of efforts to streamline payments, GWCL has introduced

an electronic payment system that allows customers to settle their bills remotely.

Nana Barnie encouraged customers to take advantage of this platform for convenience,

stating, "In order to make it easier for customers to pay their bills, we have introduced the electronic mode of payment, and they do not need to walk to any pay point, a bank, or GWCL offices."



GWCL Logo



International

Mauritius government suffers electoral wipeout

By BBC

The opposition Alliance of Change in Mauritius has won all 60 seats up for grabs on the archipelago's main island following Sunday's parliamentary election.

Opposition leader Navin Ramgoolam, 77, said "the power of the people" had triumphed.

Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, 62, had already acknowledged on Monday that his Lepep alliance was heading for a "huge defeat".

Mauritius is known as one of Africa's most stable democracies, but this election was tainted by a phone-tapping scandal, with leaked recordings of public figures posted online.

In response, the government issued a social media ban until after the election, although this led to an outcry and the decision was reversed within 24 hours.

Final results are set to be released later on Tuesday.

Ramgoolam, a former doctor,

looks set to become the country's prime minister for the third time. His second term in office, having served the last time between 2005 and 2014.

"The court of the people has delivered its verdict and a new Mauritius awakes," he told supporters.

"We must respect this choice... and we wish the country and the population good luck," said Jugnauth.

The mood in the capital Port Louis reflects this changing tide, as people gathered on Monday in anticipation of results that would signal a fresh direction for the country.

They were dancing and singing in the streets and blowing vuvuzelas. They also waved the country's flag and held fire crackers.

Ibrahim, who voted for the Alliance for Change told the BBC that "growing public dissatisfaction" was a major reason the ruling party lost.

The cost-of-living crisis has been a major issue for many Mauritians, along with a growing concern about governance and corruption.

On the campaign trail, both parties promised to improve the lives of people on the islands.

Ramgoolam - whose father was a liberation hero - said he would increase pensions, introduce free transport and internet and reduce fuel costs.

Mauritius' former foreign minister and a member of the opposition coalition, Arvin Boolell, told the BBC Newsday programme the

election was a "victory of the people".

Voter turnout was about 80%, according to the electoral commission.

Citizens went to the polls to elect lawmakers for the 62 seats in parliament for the next five years.

Additionally, up to eight "best loser" seats are allocated to ensure fair ethnic representation in parliament.

The vote comes after a historic agreement in which the UK gave up sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius.



File Photo

New York judge pauses proceedings in Trump hush money case

By Reuters

A New York state judge paused for a week further action on President-elect Donald Trump's conviction stemming from hush money paid to a porn star, a document made public on Tuesday showed.

Justice Juan Merchan delayed at least through Nov. 19 any decision on whether to vacate Trump's conviction due to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in July that presidents are immune from prosecution involving their official acts.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office had said it agreed with a defense request to pause proceedings to consider how to approach the case in light of Trump's Nov. 5 election and looming inauguration in January 2025. Trump in May became the first U.S. president - former

or sitting - convicted of a crime when a jury in Manhattan found him guilty on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up a potential sex scandal shortly before his first election win in 2016.

Trump, who pleaded not guilty, has vowed to appeal the verdict after sentencing. The judge has yet to delay sentencing, scheduled for Nov. 26, but legal experts widely expect it to be pushed back because of Republican Trump's presidential election victory over Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris.

The prosecutors asked to have until Nov. 19 to propose next steps, and Merchan agreed. "The People agree that these are unprecedented circumstances," prosecutors wrote.

At issue in the trial was a \$130,000 payment made by Trump's then-

lawyer Michael Cohen to adult film actress Stormy Daniels to keep quiet about a sexual encounter she said she had with him in 2006 but which he has denied.

His lawyers argued that the case must be dismissed following the Supreme Court's July immunity decision, which also held that juries cannot be presented evidence of official presidential acts in trials over personal conduct.

It marked the first time the court recognized any degree of presidential immunity from prosecution.

Trump's defence lawyer Emil Bove wrote that the case ultimately needed to be dismissed to avoid interfering with Trump's presidential duties.

"The stay, and dismissal, are necessary to avoid unconstitutional impediments to President Trump's ability to govern," Bove wrote.

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Donald Trump, US President

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