



## President Mahama pledges full support to Pablo the New Youth Minister in drive for employment

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## Gov't to pay GHC6.1bn in Feb; GHC180bn next year in debt servicing

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# General News

## Foreign Affairs Ministry receives over 380 diplomatic passport after recall

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Over 380 diplomatic passports have been returned following a presidential recall directive aimed at enhancing accountability and ensuring the proper management of these sensitive documents.

This move comes after President John Dramani Mahama ordered the return of diplomatic passports issued by the previous administration. The decision, which focuses primarily on passports issued during the tenure of former President Nana Akufo-Addo, seeks to verify that they meet current requirements and prevent any potential misuse.

The directive, issued by the Secretary to the President, Dr. Callistus Mahama, required all holders of the recalled diplomatic passports to submit them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by January 24, 2025. Sources reveal that most of the recalled passports were submitted by Thursday,

January 23, a day ahead of the deadline.

Individuals impacted by this recall include former ministers and their spouses, former Members of Parliament from all political parties, members of the Council of State, as well as retired justices of both the superior and lower courts. The recall also affected former regional ministers, ex-municipal, metropolitan, and district chief executives, CEOs of state institutions, and members of various government boards.

Diplomatic passports offer holders privileges such as expedited customs clearance and exemptions from certain taxes and duties in host countries, which is why their proper management is critical.

International relations expert Dr. Vladimir Antwi-Danso has urged the government to implement stricter measures for issuing diplomatic and service passports to safeguard Ghana's international reputation.

"The issuance process should be tightened. Everywhere I have met individuals with diplomatic passports or special passports, they are working for the state, serving state interests. But here, it is often about connections and 'homeboyism,'" he remarked.

Dr. Antwi-Danso emphasized the

potential risks of misuse, warning that improper conduct by holders of diplomatic passports could strain Ghana's relations with host countries. He called for more stringent criteria for acquiring such passports to prevent misuse and protect the nation's image on the global stage.



Passport

## Gov't to pay GHC6.1bn in Feb; GHC180bn next year in debt servicing

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The government is set to spend GHC6.1 billion on debt servicing by the end of February 2025, with a staggering GHC180 billion projected for debt servicing next year, according to Felix Kwakye Ofosu, Spokesperson for former President John Dramani Mahama and Minister-designate for Government Communications. Speaking on The KeyPoints on TV3 on Saturday, Kwakye Ofosu described the looming fiscal challenges as a consequence of excessive borrowing and poor debt management by the previous administration.

"On January 2, we [the previous government] paid \$364 million in debt servicing," he revealed, noting that the payment was possible only through additional borrowing. He further explained, "By the end of February, we are required to pay GHC6.1 billion in debt servicing. Next year, this figure will escalate to GHC180 billion. This is for a country whose total budget is slightly above GHC200 billion."

Kwakye Ofosu underscored the gravity of the situation, highlighting

how nearly all government revenue would be consumed by debt servicing. "What it means is that all the taxes you and I pay, as well as every other source of revenue for the national budget, will be used for debt servicing because of the debt default and deferment," he stressed. He warned of dire economic repercussions if the debt obligations were not met. "That is what the Finance Minister must confront when he stares down that dark barrel, where everything he mobilizes next year will be used to service debt. If we don't meet these obligations, we will default, and it will be catastrophic—it would mean the end of our economy as we know it," he cautioned.

Kwakye Ofosu also criticized the financial practices of the previous administration, accusing them of reckless borrowing without adequate capacity for repayment. "The previous government was too happy to borrow but didn't have the capacity to pay," he remarked.

As of November 2024, Ghana's total public debt stood at GHC761.0 billion, reflecting a month-on-month decrease of GHC24.1 billion, according to the Bank of Ghana's

January 2025 Summary of Financial and Economic Data. This reduction was attributed to the successful restructuring of external debt, which significantly lowered its share in the overall debt portfolio.

In dollar terms, Ghana's total debt was valued at \$47.9 billion as of November 2024, down from \$51.6 billion in the same period in 2023. This represented 72.2% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

However, domestic debt painted a different picture, rising to GHC311.7 billion in November 2024, equivalent to 30.5% of GDP. This increase is attributed to the government's persistent borrowing from the treasury market, up from GHC275.8 billion in February 2024. In light of the challenges, President Mahama has tasked the newly sworn-in Minister of Finance, Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson, with addressing the country's economic woes. During a ceremony at Jubilee House on January 22, the president emphasized the need for decisive action to stabilize the economy and rebuild public trust.

"The people of Ghana are looking up to you to reduce inflation, make

life affordable, and ease the cost of living. Ghanaians are looking up to you to bring our national debt to sustainable levels and to stabilize our currency so that we can achieve macroeconomic stability," Mahama stated.

He also highlighted the importance of implementing sound fiscal policies and strategic planning to rebuild confidence amid the economic turbulence.

As Ghana braces for a challenging year ahead, experts warn that addressing the debt burden and restoring fiscal discipline will require collective efforts and strong leadership.



Felix Kwakye Ofosu, Minister-designate for Gov't Communications

# General News

## Submission of nomination forms for Council of State elections commences Jan 28

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Electoral Commission (EC) has announced that the nomination process for the upcoming elections of regional representatives to the Council of State will begin on Tuesday, January 28, and conclude on Friday, February 3.

The elections, scheduled for February 11, will be conducted across all regional capitals in compliance with Article 89 of the 1992 Constitution. The EC has indicated that the exact venues for the polls in each region will be communicated in due course.

In a statement, EC Chairperson Jean Mensa outlined the nomination process, noting that interested candidates must submit their completed forms to the Regional Directors of their respective regions. The forms can be submitted between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., as well as from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., within the designated period.

Candidates are also required to

provide two copies of a recent bust-sized photograph with a red background, showing their full face and ears, along with their nomination forms. The completed documents must be delivered to the designated locations within the stated timelines.

The EC emphasized the importance of adhering to the submission guidelines and encouraged eligible individuals to actively participate in the process. "We urge all qualified candidates and voters to participate actively to ensure a smooth and transparent electoral process," the statement concluded.

It is the role of the Council of State to counsel the President in the performance of his functions.

Per the law, the Council of State shall consist of—

(a) the following persons appointed by the President in consultation with Parliament—

(i) one person who has previously

held the office of Chief Justice;

(ii) one person who has previously held the office of Chief of Defence Staff of the Armed Forces of Ghana;

(iii) one person who has previously held the office of Inspector-General of Police;

(b) the President of the National House of Chiefs;

(c) one representative from each region of Ghana elected, in

accordance with regulations made by the Electoral Commission under article 51 of this Constitution, by an electoral college comprising representatives from each of the districts in the region nominated by the District Assemblies in the region; and

(d) eleven other members appointed by the President.

The law states that the Council of State shall elect a chairman from among its members.



Jean Mensa, EC Chairperson

## Paying GHC9 daily insufficient - UG justifies 20% hall fee hike amid backlash

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The University of Ghana (UG) has defended its decision to increase hall fees by 20% for the 2024/2025 academic year, explaining that the adjustment is necessary to address rising costs associated with utilities, renovations, and facility maintenance.

Under the revised fee structure, Residential Facility User Fees (RFUF) for traditional halls—Volta, Commonwealth, Mensah Sarbah, and Legon—will rise to GHS 3,000 annually. This translates to GHS 9 per day per student, a move that has drawn criticism from some students and some parents.

Dr. Margaret Amankwah-Poku, Chairperson of the Committee of Heads of Halls, clarified the rationale behind the increment, emphasizing that it is essential to ensure the continued provision of a conducive living environment for students.

"Out of what they pay, the hall gets 70%, and 30% goes to the university. Each student pays GHS 9

per day and GHS 65 per week. With this, we have to clean washrooms, maintain the facilities, and cater to students' welfare," Dr. Amankwah-Poku explained.

She highlighted that even with the increased fees, the funds remain inadequate to cover operational costs, forcing the university to rely on supplementary funding sources such as donations and sponsorships. "Even with what they are paying now, it's not enough, and we have to supplement it with internally generated funds," she added.

The fee hike has elicited mixed reactions from students and parents. Many have expressed frustration, citing the financial strain it places on families already grappling with economic challenges.

"Things are expensive, and money is already a problem. Even the previous fees were manageable, but this increment worsens the situation," a parent lamented in an interview with Channel One News.

However, some parents have been more understanding of the university's position,

acknowledging the broader economic pressures.

"This is my first time experiencing this. Considering how the cost of everything has risen, I think the increment is normal," another parent remarked.

While the university maintains that the fee adjustment is necessary to sustain operations and maintain service quality, it continues to face criticism from some stakeholders over its financial implications on students and their families.



University of Ghana, Legon

# General News

## Prioritise access, relevance, and quality in higher education - Education Minister charges stakeholders

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Minister of Education, Haruna Iddrisu, has called on stakeholders to prioritise enhancing access, relevance, and quality within Ghana's higher education system to promote inclusivity and equitable opportunities for all.

He underscored the importance of collective efforts to dismantle systemic barriers that hinder marginalised groups, including girls, children, and persons with disabilities, from accessing quality education.

Speaking on the government's commitment to transforming education, the Minister described it as a powerful tool for personal and national development. He stressed the need to address historical inequalities within the system to ensure no group is left behind.

"Education is the cornerstone of national development and

personal empowerment. To achieve meaningful progress, we must eliminate barriers that restrict access for the most vulnerable groups in our society," Mr. Iddrisu said.

The Minister highlighted Ghana's alignment with global frameworks, citing the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which mandates nations to make education universally accessible. He reiterated Ghana's dedication to improving access and quality in education while adhering to international standards.

"The Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly stipulates that higher education must be accessible to all. In Ghana, we prioritise access, relevance, and quality in higher education. Agenda 2030 further recognises education as a cornerstone for the success of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," he stated.

Mr. Iddrisu also emphasised

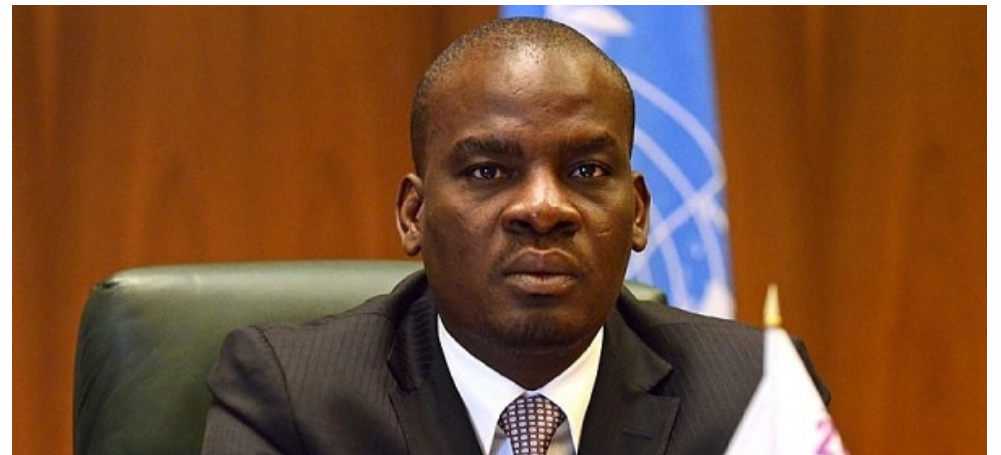
the critical role of education in achieving the SDGs, noting that sustainable development hinges on a strong educational foundation. He called for collaborative action involving the government, private sector, international organisations, and local communities to address the challenges facing the sector.

"Only through strong partnerships can we address these challenges and create a truly inclusive educational

system," he emphasised.

His comments come in the wake of the 2024 Global Youth Development Index Update Report by the Commonwealth Secretariat, which ranked Ghana's education system 125th out of 183 countries.

The report highlighted significant challenges, including infrastructural deficiencies, teacher shortages, and inadequate funding, which continue to hinder progress in the sector.



Haruna Iddrisu, Minister of Education

## Exceed your target to reduce govt borrowing - Finance Minister charges GRA

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Finance Minister Dr. Cassiel Ato Baah Forson has urged the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) to surpass its revenue targets to help reduce the government's reliance on borrowing.

Speaking during a visit to the GRA as part of a series of engagements aimed at addressing key revenue and public expenditure issues, Dr. Forson emphasized the importance of domestic resource mobilization in light of limited access to international borrowing markets.

"Without revenue, there's little you can do," Dr. Forson remarked. He pointed out that Ghana currently has no access to Eurobond markets, domestic bonds, or commercial bank loans, leaving Treasury bills and multilateral loans as the only available financing options. "This means we have to focus more on domestic resource mobilization rather than borrowing externally," he stressed.

While acknowledging the GRA's success in exceeding its 2024 revenue target by raising GH¢153.5 billion—GH¢7.5 billion above the initial target—Dr. Forson urged the agency to set even higher goals for

2025. "Achieving your target will not be enough; you have to exceed it so that we can reduce borrowing. The space to borrow is simply not there," he said.

The GRA's performance in 2024, which saw a 5.3% increase in revenue compared to the target, reflects a nominal growth of 35% from 2023. Additionally, with the introduction of levies such as the Sanitation Debt Recovery Levy and Energy Sector Debt, total revenue collection reached GH¢157.9 billion.

As part of Ghana's fiscal consolidation efforts under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program, Dr. Forson reminded the GRA that they are obligated to raise additional tax revenue equivalent to 0.6% of the GDP.

"This agreement is between the government of Ghana and the IMF, not political parties, so we are obligated to meet this target. I urge you to find innovative ways to achieve this," he added.

The Acting Commissioner General of the GRA, Anthony Kwasi Sarpong, responded by emphasizing the importance of teamwork in achieving the agency's targets.

"I may have two hands and one head, but together with the entire GRA team, we can overcome any challenges," Mr. Sarpong said, reaffirming the institution's commitment to revenue generation. In a separate meeting with the Controller and Accountant General's Department (CAGD), Dr. Forson discussed the need for expenditure quality in managing public funds. He explained that while the Ministry of Finance sets expenditure priorities, the CAGD must ensure compliance with the law.

"Your role is to ensure that whatever we direct you to pay is carefully reviewed. If it aligns with the law, proceed with payment. But the quality of expenditure is the prerogative of the Ministry of Finance," Dr. Forson stated.

The Controller and Accountant

General, Kwasi Agyei, expressed appreciation for Dr. Forson's leadership and reiterated the CAGD's commitment to transparency.

"Our mandate, as outlined in the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, is to ensure transparency in transactions and proper management of funds," he said.

However, Mr. Agyei also acknowledged the need for further system upgrades to maintain public trust, which he stressed is critical to the success of Ghana's financial management. "Declining public trust in the management of public funds is a growing concern across Africa. While Ghana has not yet reached a critical point, we must act now to sustain confidence in our financial systems," he warned.



Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, Finance Minister, & Anthony Kwasi Sarpong, Acting Commissioner General, GRA

# General News

## President Mahama pledges full support to Pablo the New Youth Minister in drive for employment

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

President John Dramani Mahama has charged the Minister of Youth Development and Empowerment, George Opare Addo, to leverage his organisational skills to develop and implement impactful policies that will significantly benefit the youth of Ghana.

The President made these remarks during the swearing-in ceremony for the second batch of ministers-designate approved by Parliament on Friday, January 24, at the Jubilee House in Accra.

Commending Mr. Opare Addo, widely known as 'Pablo,' for his exceptional organisational abilities, which contributed to the National Democratic Congress's (NDC) victory in the 2024 elections, President Mahama stressed that such skills are crucial for addressing the numerous challenges facing Ghanaian youth, particularly unemployment.

"Mr. Opare Addo, or Pablo as you are affectionately called, you established a vast 'green army,' which you commanded and mobilised to rally the youth of Ghana behind the NDC's cause.

It is now time to channel that unique organisational ability into your work at the Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment, to deliver tangible results for the millions of Ghanaian youth aspiring to live dignified lives and secure meaningful employment," the President remarked.

President Mahama further assured Mr. Opare Addo of his unwavering support, stating: "Your ministry is one that I take a personal interest in, and you will have my full support 24/7 to succeed in this role."

Mr. Opare Addo has served as the National Youth Organiser of the NDC since his election in 2018 and is widely credited with energising the party's youth base.

On Friday, President Mahama also swore in other ministers, including Abla Dzifa Gomashie as Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts; Emelia Arthur as Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development; Ahmed Ibrahim as Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs; and Elizabeth Ofosu-Adjare as Minister for Trade, Industry, and Agribusiness.

The President urged the newly sworn-in ministers to prioritise

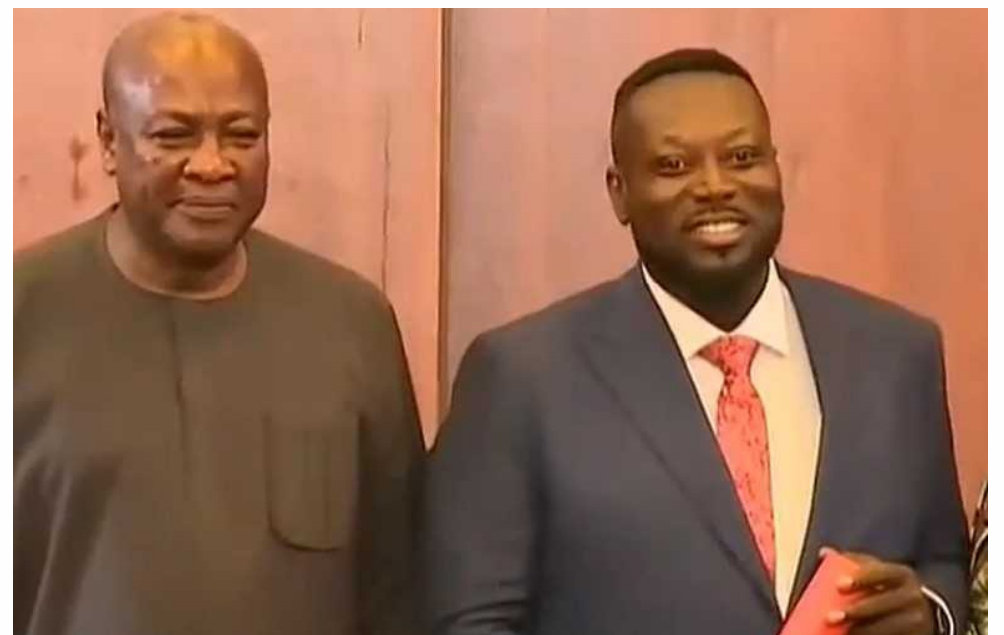
transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in their respective roles, reminding them of the high expectations of the Ghanaian people.

"Ghanaians have signalled zero tolerance for poor governance," President Mahama stated. "You must serve with dignity, respect, and an unwavering commitment to advancing national progress."

Meanwhile, the Minister-designate for Gender, Children, and Social

Protection, Naa Momo Lartey, could not be sworn in due to her absence, which was attributed to a family emergency. This was disclosed by Felix Kwakye Ofosu, Spokesperson for President Mahama.

To date, President Mahama has sworn in 11 ministers-designate approved by Parliament following vetting by the Appointments Committee. In total, 17 ministerial appointees have received parliamentary approval.



John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana on the left, George Opare Addo, Minister for Youth Development and Empowerment on the right

## US Embassy, Ghana Navy hand over 3-unit classroom block to basic school in Sogakope

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The United States Embassy, in collaboration with the Ghana Navy, has officially handed over a 3-unit classroom block to the Galotse District Assembly Basic School in Sogakope.

The event took place last week, marking a significant step in strengthening the partnership between Ghana and the United States, focusing on community development.

This project, the second of its kind in the Sogakope District, was completed by the US Navy Seabees, a division of the US Navy Construction Battalion, further emphasizing their ongoing commitment to supporting local development initiatives.

The Deputy Head of Mission at the United States Embassy in Ghana, Mr. Rolf Olson, visited the Flag Officer Commanding the Naval Training Command, Commodore

Solomon Asiedu-Larbi, ahead of the handover.

During their meeting, Commodore Asiedu-Larbi expressed his appreciation for the long-standing relationship between the Ghana Navy and the US Navy Seabees, which began in the late 1990s. He noted the successful collaboration on previous projects, including

the construction of sickbays at the Western and Eastern Naval Commands.

Mr. Olson reaffirmed the United States' commitment to assisting community development initiatives in Ghana, highlighting the importance of such collaborations in fostering long-term growth.

Mrs. Celestine Kosi Agodo, the District Director of Education, expressed her gratitude for the joint effort, praising the work of the US Navy, the Ghana Navy, traditional leaders, and the teaching staff. She emphasized the importance of cooperation in providing quality education for the students.



3 unit classroom block

# General News

## Muntaka, 4 others approved by Parliament; tally of cleared ministers-designate at 17

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Parliament has confirmed the nomination of Muntaka Mohammed-Mubarak as Minister for the Interior, along with four regional ministers, in a move aimed at strengthening the government's administrative framework.

The approval, granted on Friday, January 24, followed a rigorous vetting process by the Appointments Committee and extensive deliberations on the parliamentary floor.

Muntaka Mubarak, the Member of Parliament for Asawase, will now assume leadership of the Interior Ministry, a critical role in safeguarding national security and maintaining law and order. His appointment has been widely lauded as a recognition of his extensive experience and steadfast dedication to public service.

In addition to Muntaka Mubarak, Parliament approved Ali Adolf John as Northern Regional Minister, John Kwadwo Gyapong as Oti Regional

Minister, James Gunu as Volta Regional Minister, and Mrs. Rita Akosua Awatey as Eastern Regional Minister. These appointments are expected to bolster governance at the regional level, with each minister tasked with addressing region-specific developmental and administrative challenges.

The approvals were met with optimism from legislators and stakeholders, who expressed confidence in the nominees' ability to deliver results.

This confirmation comes as part of an ongoing parliamentary approval process for President Mahama's ministerial nominees. On Thursday, January 23, six additional appointees were confirmed, including Naa Momo Lartey as Minister for Gender, Children, and Social Protection; Ahmed Ibrahim as Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs; Elizabeth Ofosu-Adjare as Minister for Trade, Agribusiness, and Industry; Abba Dzifa Gomashie as Minister for Tourism, Culture,

and Creative Arts; Emelia Arthur as Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture; and George Opare Addo as Minister for Youth Development and Empowerment.

Earlier in the week, Parliament also approved other key ministerial nominees, including Kwame Govers Agbodza as Minister for Roads and Highways, Eric Opoku as Minister for Food and Agriculture, and Haruna Iddrisu as Minister for Education.

Parliament's Appointments

Committee is scheduled to resume vetting the final group of ministerial nominees on Tuesday, January 28, 2025. The remaining 24 appointees include prominent figures such as Dr. Edward Omame Boamah, Minister-designate for Defence; Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Minister-designate for Foreign Affairs; and Sam Nartey George, Minister-designate for Communications, Digital Technology, and Innovations.



Muntaka Mohammed-Mubarak, Minister for Interior

## World Leprosy Day: Challenge misconceptions, spread awareness and promote inclusion - GHS charges public

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Ghana Health Service (GHS) has called on the public to challenge misconceptions, spread awareness, and promote the inclusion of individuals affected by leprosy in commemoration of World Leprosy Day on January 26.

In a post shared on their X page on Sunday, the GHS urged the general public to "challenge misconceptions, spread awareness, and promote inclusion" in honor of the day. This appeal comes in response to the prevalent misconceptions and stigma surrounding leprosy and those affected by the disease in Ghana.

Many people mistakenly believe that leprosy is highly contagious and untreatable, which has led to discrimination and social exclusion of those affected. In response, healthcare providers have condemned these misconceptions, emphasizing that leprosy is neither highly contagious nor untreatable.

"No one should face discrimination for a disease that can be treated. Leprosy is not a label," the GHS stated, reinforcing that those living

with leprosy have the right to a dignified life, access to available resources, and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

"Everybody has the right to a dignified life and to achieve their full potential. Not just to survive, but to thrive. Persons affected by leprosy are more than their diagnosis," the GHS added.

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's Disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae. It primarily affects the skin and nerves, leading to disabilities if left untreated. However, with early diagnosis and proper treatment, leprosy is a curable disease, and long-term disabilities can be prevented.

Globally, approximately 200,000 new cases of leprosy are reported annually, with the highest numbers found in Brazil, India, and Indonesia. Notably, 56 countries reported zero new cases in 2023. Efforts by the World Health Organization (WHO) are focused on achieving zero disease, zero disability, and zero discrimination through public education, early

diagnosis, prevention programs, and the empowerment of affected individuals.

In Ghana, the National Leprosy Control Programme (NLCP) has been actively working to eliminate leprosy since the 1950s. The program focuses on reducing transmission, managing cases, and preventing disabilities. The Ankaful Leprosy & General Hospital serves as the national referral center, and the Zero Leprosy Action Plan, developed in collaboration with the

Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy, aims to achieve zero leprosy by 2030.

Despite the availability of effective treatment, the stigma surrounding leprosy often prevents affected individuals from seeking timely medical care. The GHS has urged the public to support efforts to eliminate discrimination and ensure that all individuals, regardless of their diagnosis, can live dignified lives.



Leprosy



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# Business

## Total exports surged by 21.06% to \$20.22bn in December 2024 - BoG

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

Ghana's total exports saw a remarkable increase of 21.06% in December 2024, reaching \$20.22 billion, a significant boost driven by a sharp rise in gold exports, according to data from the Bank of Ghana.

Gold exports surged by an impressive 53.15%, accounting for \$11.64 billion of the total export value by the end of December. However, the gains in gold were offset by declines in other major export commodities, such as crude oil and cocoa.

Crude oil exports fell slightly by 0.7% to \$3.68 billion, while cocoa exports dropped to \$1.696 billion from \$2.152 billion in December 2023. The decline in cocoa was attributed to the adverse effects of extreme weather conditions and illegal mining activities (galamsey),

which have strained production.

The trade balance also showed notable improvement, recording a provisional surplus of \$4.98 billion in December 2024—almost double the \$2.694 billion surplus recorded in the same period of the previous year. The robust trade performance was primarily bolstered by the increased export earnings from gold.

On the import side, Ghana's total import bill rose to \$15.24 billion in December 2024, compared to \$14.008 billion in December 2023. This growth in imports, coupled with the strong export performance, contributed to a healthier external sector position for the country.

The Bank of Ghana highlighted the overall improvement in the external sector in its November 2024 Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

report, noting that the progress was supported by a higher current account surplus and reduced net financial outflows, which led to a substantial buildup of gross international reserves.

Ghana's gross international reserves climbed by \$1.101 billion

in December 2024 to \$8.982 billion, equivalent to 4.0 months of import cover. This was a considerable increase from the \$6.31 billion recorded in January 2024, demonstrating a consistent upward trend throughout the year.



Bank Of Ghana Office

## Ghana records 2.4% cedi depreciation to dollar in January

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Ghana cedi depreciated by 2.4% against the US dollar in January 2025, marking a sharper decline compared to the 1.3% recorded during the same period last year, the Bank of Ghana has revealed.

By the end of January, the local currency was trading at GH¢15.06 to the US dollar on the interbank market. Similarly, the cedi weakened by 3.0% against the euro, selling at GH¢15.69, and depreciated by 0.8% against the British pound, which traded at GH¢18.55.

In the retail forex market, the cedi's performance was even more concerning. As of January 17, 2025, the local currency had depreciated by 2.94% to the dollar, bringing its year-to-date loss to 3.87%.

This decline was driven by heightened demand from the manufacturing and energy sectors, coupled with the Bank of Ghana's auction of its first US\$20 million to Bulk Oil Distribution Companies (BDCs).

in January was its steepest decline since the start of the year, with the currency trading at a mid-rate of GH¢16.15 per dollar during the third week of the month.

Market analysts attribute the cedi's

challenges to sustained pressure from key sectors and the demand for foreign exchange. The Bank of Ghana's interventions, such as the forex auction, aim to stabilize the currency, but rising demand for dollars continues to exert

downward pressure.

As of January 24, the dollar was selling and buying a little over GHC15, whereas the pound and euro were selling close to GHC19 and GHC16 respectively.



Ghana Cedi and US Dollar

The cedi's depreciation to the dollar



# International

## 70 killed in attack on hospital as Sudan war escalates

Source: *Africanews*

**A**round 70 people were killed in an attack on a hospital in Sudan's city of El Fasher, the World Health Organization reported on Sunday.

The attack targeted the Saudi Teaching Maternal Hospital, which local officials blame on the rebel group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

This incident comes as the civil war in Sudan intensifies, with the RSF suffering apparent losses to Sudanese military forces. On Saturday, army chief Gen. Abdel-

Fattah Burhan appeared near a burning oil refinery north of Khartoum, which his forces claimed to have seized from the RSF.

Saudi Arabia condemned the attack, calling it a violation of international law.

Meanwhile, neighboring South Sudan has suspended access to social media platforms for at least 30 days due to the circulation of videos showing alleged killings of South Sudanese nationals in Sudan. This decision aims to prevent further violence and unrest within South Sudan.



File Photo

## WHO ramps up support for Tanzania's Marburg outbreak response

Source: *WHO*

**A** team of public health emergency experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) has deployed to Tanzania's north-western Kagera region to support the health authorities strengthen response to an outbreak of Marburg virus disease.

The WHO experts are part of an initial 20-member inter-agency team from Médecins Sans Frontières, Tanzania Red Cross Society and UNICEF in the field working with national and local health officials to reinforce disease surveillance, diagnostic capacity, ensure effective case management, and help strengthen public awareness to prevent further transmission of the virus.

WHO has also shipped 1.4 tonnes of essential medical supplies including diagnostic kits and personal protective equipment to Tanzania from its Regional Emergency Response Hub in Nairobi. As of 23 January 2025, there were two confirmed and 29 suspected cases reported. A total of 281 contacts are being closely monitored.

"Our focus is to rapidly halt the spread of the virus and save lives by working closely with the government to ensure a coordinated and effective response," said Dr Charles Sagoe-Moses, WHO Representative in Tanzania.

The ongoing outbreak is Tanzania's second of Marburg virus disease,

following a successful containment of the first in 2023, which occurred in the same region. Lessons learned from that experience, coupled with the government's investments in emergency preparedness, are proving crucial in addressing the current challenge.

WHO is committed to working with Tanzanian authorities and partners to bring the outbreak under control. The Organization has allocated US\$ 3 million from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies to help accelerate the outbreak control efforts.

Marburg virus disease is a highly

contagious illness that causes haemorrhagic fever. It spreads through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals or contaminated materials. Although there are no approved treatments or vaccines, early supportive care can significantly improve outcomes for patients.



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