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# General News

## Gov't to revamp 'dormant' PTA system to produce quality human resource - Education Minister

By Amanda Cartey

Minister for Education Haruna Iddrisu has announced plans to actively involve the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in the management of education in Ghana, with a strong focus on second-cycle institutions.

Speaking at a public forum, the minister noted that a barrier had hindered effective collaboration between parents and teachers in ensuring quality education for students. He believes a renewed joint effort will help improve the quality of human resources being trained for the job market.

"I am particularly happy to announce that PTAs will be introduced back into the management of education under the presidency of His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, to work for parents and teachers to work together to improve learning outcomes in our educational institutions and for PTAs to support our educational institutions to produce quality human capital for the country," the minister remarked on February 17.

Under the Akufo-Addo-led administration, public second-cycle institutions observed a

limited influence of PTAs in school management, particularly regarding financial assistance to augment the government's efforts under the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy.

In 2019, the Ghana Education Service (GES) ordered the suspension of PTA levies after reports emerged that some school heads were abusing the collection of dues and levies, undermining the administration's objective of eliminating cost as a barrier to secondary education in Ghana.

Consequently, teachers were exempted from the Parent-Teacher Association, and the organization was rebranded as the Parent Association (PA). According to the GES, the decision to rename PTA as PA aimed to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for parents and guardians.

This change, however, limited teachers' roles in school management, as the PA lacked the level of engagement and decision-making authority that PTAs traditionally held.

The decision to scrap PTAs faced criticism from various education stakeholders, with many citing

reduced teacher involvement and a weakened support system for students. Although the GES clarified that teachers had not been excluded from Parent Associations, many argued that the shift rendered the association ineffective.

With a new government in place, many are optimistic that a revived

PTA will take a proactive approach to ensuring quality education for students.

Haruna Iddrisu has, therefore, called on stakeholders to engage actively with PTAs to foster better educational environments and strengthen community involvement in schools.



Haruna Iddrisu, Minister for Education

## Police to undertake mass burial of 200 unclaimed bodies at its hospital

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Ghana Police Service has announced plans to conduct a mass burial for approximately 200 unclaimed and unidentified bodies currently stored at the Police Hospital.

This exercise, scheduled for the first quarter of 2025, aims to decongest the hospital's mortuary and improve the maintenance of its storage facility.

In a video statement, the Police Service emphasized the importance of this exercise, noting that the accumulation of unclaimed bodies places a strain on the hospital's resources. Authorities believe the mass burial will help create space for new cases while ensuring proper management of the facility.

Speaking on the development, Corporal Felix Kwaku-Dua disclosed that the deadline for identifying and claiming bodies is set for February 28, 2025. He stressed that families who may have lost relatives should visit the hospital's Pathology

Department before this date to verify whether their missing loved ones are among the unclaimed bodies.

"As such, members of the public are being urged to check with the Police Hospital Pathology Department to

identify and claim any missing or deceased relatives," he stated.

After the February 28 deadline, any remaining unclaimed bodies will be included in the mass burial without exception.

Over the years, the issue of

unclaimed bodies has been a recurring challenge in Ghanaian hospitals, particularly at the Police Hospital, where many bodies remain unidentified for extended periods.



Unclaimed Dead Bodies



# General News

## Ghana losing GHC2.2bn to ghost names including 72-year-old Kenyan in NSS scandal

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

An investigation by The Fourth Estate into alleged corruption within the National Service Authority's (NSA) payroll has revealed that Ghana may have lost approximately GHS 2.2 billion between 2018 and 2024/25 due to ghost names.

"A comparison of figures put out by the NSA to the public for each service year and what was presented to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education since 2019 reveals a systematic pattern of significantly inflated figures," The Fourth Estate reported.

According to the investigation, in the 2018/2019 National Service Year (NSS), the NSA had a total of 85,708 eligible personnel but presented 135,603 to Parliament, inflating the payroll with 49,895 ghost names.

In the 2019/2020 service year, 77,962 personnel were eligible, yet 114,036 were reported, adding 36,074 ghost names to the payroll, costing a potential annual loss of GHS 334.7 million. Similarly, in 2020/2021, 86,078 personnel were eligible, but 125,050 were recorded, creating 38,972 ghost names, with Ghana losing about GHS 242 million

per year.

For 2021/2022, the NSA reported 110,324 deployed personnel instead of the actual 81,081, leading to 29,243 ghost names and a potential loss of GHS 261.4 million. In 2022/2023, the reported figure of 179,309, compared to the actual 115,240, resulted in 64,069 ghost names and a potential loss of GHS 429.8 million.

The 2023/2024 service year saw 122,275 eligible personnel, but 182,142 were declared, adding 59,867 ghost names to the payroll. For 2024/2025, the NSA announced 180,030 eligible personnel but deployed only 98,145, leading to 81,885 ghost names. Over seven years, these discrepancies have resulted in losses exceeding GHS 2.2 billion.

The report also uncovered additional irregularities, including foreign nationals appearing on the payroll. One case involved a 72-year-old Kenyan, Kwame Donkor, who was added without an official ID card—an unusual practice. Instead, a photo was used, but The Fourth Estate found through a reverse image search that the picture belonged to Emmanuel Mutio, a Human Resource Manager

at a private IT company in Kenya.

Another alarming discovery was the repeated use of the same name 226 times on the payroll as a registered beneficiary.

During a media appearance on February 17, 2025, Kwaku Krobea Asante, Manager of the Independent Journalism Project under the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), described the findings as shocking.

"Beyond that, we see how they do this—how they pack the payroll with ghost names, which is what the story is trying to expose. How they use over-age individuals, some as old as 80 or 90 years, to falsify records. How they create fake index numbers in the name of universities to justify these names," he stated.

Following these revelations, President John Dramani Mahama

has ordered an investigation into the suspected ghost names on the NSA payroll.

According to Felix Kwakye Ofori, the president's spokesperson and Minister of Government Communications, a recent headcount of national service personnel revealed possible fraudulent entries.

Meanwhile, former executives of the National Service Authority (NSA) have rejected accusations from the investigative report by The Fourth Estate. They called the report misleading and sensationalized.

Former Director-General Osei Assibey Antwi and former Executive Director Mustapha Ussif said the report misrepresents how the NSA handles enrolment and payments.



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## Risk of Human metapneumovirus low - Health Minister says as Ghana records single case

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Health Minister Kwabena Mintah Akandoh has indicated that while the country has identified a trace of Human metapneumovirus (HMPV), its impact remains minimal.

Appearing before Parliament on Tuesday, the Health Minister stated that the detection was made through routine surveillance testing for HMPV in January this year.

According to him, out of a total of 90 samples submitted, only one tested positive, involving an elderly person.

Mr. Akandoh noted that the Ghana Health Service (GHS) has implemented measures to limit the further spread of the virus.

"Mr. Speaker, we have identified a single case of Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) in the country. In response to the recent increase in respiratory cases in China and some other countries

in 2024, we commenced routine surveillance testing for HMPV in January 2025. So far, a total of 90 samples have been submitted for testing, and only one positive case has been detected. This was found in an elderly person.

"Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the House that the risk of HMPV in Ghana remains low. As you can see, we have a robust system in place to monitor respiratory viruses," he added.

Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a respiratory virus that can cause various respiratory conditions, ranging from mild cold-like symptoms to severe pneumonia. Though it can affect individuals of any age, it predominantly impacts young children, elderly adults, and those with compromised immune systems.

Meanwhile, Ghana is currently battling outbreaks of cholera and cerebrospinal meningitis (CSM).

The cholera outbreak, which began in Ada West in the Greater Accra Region in October 2024, has since spread to multiple regions.

As of February 13, there have been 6,145 reported cases, 719 of which are confirmed, with 49 deaths.

To enhance Ghana's response to meningitis, the World Health Organization (WHO) has delivered a shipment of critical medical supplies to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to aid in the ongoing battle

against the outbreak.

During the handover ceremony in Accra, Dr. Frank Lule, WHO Representative to Ghana, reiterated the organization's dedication to supporting the country's healthcare efforts.

"We have adequate antibiotics to treat affected individuals, and a response team will be deployed to the northern region to provide further assistance," he disclosed.



Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, Health Minister

# General News

## Mahama declares assets, cautions appointees to follow suit or risk sacking

By **Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo**

President John Dramani Mahama has officially declared his assets in accordance with the law. He submitted the documents to the Auditor-General, Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu, in the early hours of February 18, 2025, and duly informed the press during an engagement.

"I have just performed a simple but brief, yet very important act of presenting my complete assets declaration forms to the Auditor-General as required by Article 286 of the 1992 Constitution and the Public Office Holders (Declaration of Assets and Disqualification) Act, 1998 (Act 550)," he noted.

Article 286 of the 1992 Constitution requires public office holders "to submit to the Auditor-General a written declaration of all property or assets owned by, or liabilities owed by, him whether directly or indirectly—(a) within three months after the coming into force of this

Constitution or before taking office, as the case may be, (b) at the end of every four years, and (c) at the end of his term of office."

Over the years, the declaration, which usually occurred in secret, has for the first time been made public by President Mahama—a move he explained is aimed at fostering transparency and accountability in Ghana's governance system.

"In times past, I would have privately presented these forms to the Auditor-General in fulfilment of my statutory obligation. I have taken this step of presenting these forms publicly as a way of injecting some openness and transparency into the process of asset declaration."

The President further stressed that a well-structured and effectively enforced asset declaration system could serve as a powerful tool in the fight against corruption.

Additionally, President Mahama directed all public office holders and appointees to declare their

assets by March 31, 2025, warning that failure to comply would result in severe sanctions, including removal from office.

This directive follows a call by former Auditor-General Daniel Domelevo, who urged President Mahama to ensure that all appointees declare their assets before being sworn into office. Mr. Domelevo also called on institutions such as the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) to

ensure compliance and hold public officials accountable. He believes proactive enforcement would deter corruption and enhance confidence in the governance system.

Meanwhile, Auditor-General Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu has reaffirmed his office's commitment to scrutinizing the asset declarations submitted to ensure transparency and accountability in public service.



John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana

## Communications Ministry orders shut down of 6 radio stations over payment obligations, others

By **Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey**

The Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology, and Innovations has instructed the National Communications Authority (NCA) to take immediate enforcement action against six radio stations operating without valid frequency authorisations.

These stations, located in different parts of the country, have reportedly failed to meet regulatory requirements, including payment obligations and submission of required documentation.

In a directive to the Acting Director-General of the NCA, the Ministry emphasized that the continued operations of these stations violated Section 2(4) of the Electronic Communications Act, 2008 (Act 775).

"These entities have failed to renew their authorisations, fulfill statutory payment obligations, or submit the required documentation within the stipulated timeframe," the statement noted. "As a result, their authorisations have lapsed by operation of law, rendering their continued operations illegal."

The affected stations include Fire Group of Companies in Sunyani,

broadcasting on 90.1MHz, and I-Zar Consult Limited in Tamale on 89.7MHz. Also affected are Abochannel Media Group in Adidome on 105.7MHz, Okyeame Radio Limited in Bibiani on 99.7MHz, Mumen Bono Foundation in Techiman on 99.7MHz, and Osikani Community FM in Nkrankwanta, also on 99.7MHz.

The Ministry stressed that broadcasting without a valid frequency authorisation is a violation of the law, warning that swift enforcement actions will be taken against any station that disregards regulatory requirements. "In accordance with Act 775, it is unlawful to operate a broadcasting service without a valid frequency authorisation. The NCA will take the necessary steps to halt all unauthorized transmissions and ensure compliance with the law," the statement added.

Officials have indicated that a broader review of frequency authorisations is ongoing, with further directives expected in due course. The Ministry urged all radio stations to comply with the terms of their authorisations to avoid facing similar enforcement actions.

The NCA is expected to collaborate with law enforcement agencies to

ensure the immediate cessation of operations by the affected stations.



Radio station



# General News

## I apologise for unpardonable omission from National Education Forum - Mahama to Christian Council, others

By Amanda Cartey

President John Mahama has expressed regret over the delayed invitation extended to the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference for the ongoing National Education Forum in Ho.

His apology follows a press statement from the clergy, in which they voiced their disappointment over their exclusion from crucial discussions on education reforms. Speaking at the launch of the forum on February 18, President Mahama acknowledged the oversight and reassured religious groups of his government's commitment to inclusivity in national education dialogues.

"Let me express my sincerest apologies on behalf of the planning committee of the forum to our stakeholders from faith-based organizations for the unpardonable omission committed in your delayed invitation to this forum," he said in the Volta Regional capital, Ho.

He further noted, "The omission

was very speedily remedied, but you still deserve an unqualified apology for this oversight."

"And since you are the purveyors of God's mercy on Earth, I'm sure that you have forgiven us... And we know you're important stakeholders because you own some of the schools, so this educational forum is important to see how we carry everybody along."

The National Education Forum has brought together education experts, policymakers, civil society groups, and religious leaders to discuss ways to improve Ghana's education system.

This important national initiative aims to address key issues within Ghana's education sector. The forum, which kicked off yesterday, will span multiple regions and conclude on February 28.

The theme, "Transforming Education for a Sustainable Future," serves as a clarion call to tackle challenges at all levels of education, from basic to secondary school, while focusing on equitable growth and sustainability.

One of the central reasons for the forum is the long-standing neglect of Ghana's basic education system.

While much attention in recent years has been on the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy, President Mahama believes that the primary level of education has been overlooked, prompting the need for this forum.

"We are going to look at the basic level too. Because we are focused on Free SHS, we are abandoning the basic level. The basic level is

becoming a major problem. 1.3 million pupils do not have furniture; they don't have tables and chairs to sit on. They lie on their school mats in the classroom or sit on cement blocks, and that is because all our focus has been on the secondary school level," he explained.

"So, we are going to hold a national education forum, and that forum is going to bring all the stakeholders together. We are going to take a look at the whole education value chain, and we are going to come to a consensus," he stated.



John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana

## Increasing cases of installation tampering causing power outages in Kumasi - ECG

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

The Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) has attributed the recent power outages in Kumasi, Ashanti Region, to the increased cases of installation tampering within the area.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday, the Public Relations Officer for the ECG in Ashanti West, Benjamin Obeng Antwi, noted that some unknown individuals are deliberately destroying critical cables essential for maintaining stable power in the region.

He cited a recent incident that occurred on Monday in the Central Business District in Adum, where poles, transformers, and cables were tampered with. According to him, this trend is severely affecting the operations of the power supply company and causing significant disruptions for traders and business owners in the area.

"So yesterday, our 500 kW transformer set in the Central Business District in Adum was damaged by some individuals. We have reported the incident to the police. What happened was they

took some fuses, destroyed cables, plates, and even some DPs were destroyed. This affected our supply to customers within the Adum Business Centre," he noted.

He has urged Ghanaians to support efforts in apprehending the individuals responsible for these acts, emphasizing the importance of collective action in safeguarding the region's power infrastructure.

Certain parts of Kumasi have experienced extended power outages in recent weeks, with some communities left without electricity for over 24 hours.

Many Ghanaians have linked the recent power fluctuations to 'dumsor,' a term commonly used in Ghana to describe power outages. Some have even suggested implementing a timetable to manage the supply more effectively. However, the ECG has maintained that the current issues are not due to a power crisis, but rather the result of technical difficulties that are being addressed.



ECG Meters

# General News

## Ken Ofori-Atta no longer a fugitive - OSP makes U-turn after engagement

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) has withdrawn the fugitive tag placed on former Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta due to his failure to assist in investigations into corruption cases involving him.

In a statement dated February 18, the OSP explained that Mr. Ofori-Atta, through his lawyers, communicated his intention to voluntarily return to the jurisdiction on a specified date.

"This marks a significant shift from Mr. Ofori-Atta's previous intention of remaining outside the jurisdiction indefinitely," the OSP stated, adding that it accepted Mr. Ofori-Atta's request, deeming his voluntary return date reasonable under the circumstances.

Special Prosecutor Kissi Agyebeng has rescheduled the date for Mr. Ofori-Atta's attendance at the OSP, taking into account the stated date of his voluntary return.

"Consequently, Mr. Ofori-Atta has been removed from the OSP's list of wanted persons, and the OSP no longer considers him a fugitive from

justice, pending his voluntary return to the jurisdiction on or around the stated date," the statement read.

However, the OSP emphasized that if Mr. Ofori-Atta fails to return voluntarily by the stated date or attend the OSP on the rescheduled date, he will be re-entered on the OSP's list of wanted persons. The OSP will then consider him a fugitive from justice and take all necessary legal actions to secure his return and compel his attendance at the OSP.

The Office of the Special Prosecutor had previously shared an infographic on its social media platforms, indicating that Mr. Ofori-Atta could possibly be in the United States or the United Kingdom.

"Anyone with information on the whereabouts of this individual should alert the Office by calling or sending a WhatsApp message to 0554494499/0554484488," the OSP urged.

Last week, Special Prosecutor Kissi Agyebeng declared Mr. Ofori-Atta wanted during a press conference, citing several dealings that allegedly caused financial loss to the state.

These included:

A contractual arrangement between Strategic Mobilisation Ghana Limited and the Ghana Revenue Authority aimed at enhancing revenue assurance in the downstream petroleum sector, upstream petroleum production, and the minerals and metals resource value chain.

The termination of a distribution, loss reduction, and network improvement project contract between the Electricity Company of Ghana Limited and Beijing Zhao Chen Technology (BXC).

Procurement of contractors, materials, and activities, and payments related to the National Cathedral project.

Activities and payments concerning a contract initially started by the Ministry for Special Development Initiatives, awarding Ghana Auto Group Limited for the purchase, after-sales service, and maintenance of 307 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 304 5 CDI ambulances for the National Ambulance Service.

Payments out of and the use of the tax refund account of the Ghana Revenue Authority.



Ken Ofori-Atta, Former Finance Minister

## I don't subscribe to violence but I won't retract retaliation comment against NDC - Annoh-Dompreh

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

Minority Chief Whip, Frank Annoh-Dompreh, has stated that he is not remorseful for his call to escalate tensions between the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP).

He emphasized that while he does not endorse violence, he believes it is necessary to respond in kind to those who deliberately provoke others.

In a preview of an upcoming interview shared by Starr FM on its Facebook page, Frank Annoh-Dompreh, the Member of Parliament for Nsawam Adoagyiri, stated that he is prepared to engage with the National Security over his controversial remarks.

The MP explained that his comments were driven by the actions of certain NDC members, which he attributed to the party's position in power.

"I am not withdrawing that statement. I stand by it. I am ready to face the music, whatever it takes. I will be happy to meet with National

Security, and I will tell them what is happening. Perhaps they are not aware of what is happening in this country. What is happening at AshantiGold, GRA, is that people are taking hostage of state institutions because their party is in power, and people are being attacked merely because of their political affiliations," he said.

"This is not to say that if you find an NDC person attacking an NPP person, you should help the NPP person attack the NDC. There is nothing wrong with that," he added. On February 6, the MP urged his party members to strongly resist the NDC at the residence of NPP parliamentary candidate for Ablekuma North, Akua Afriyie.

He called on NPP supporters to stand firmly behind their fellow party members, emphasizing that no member should hesitate in offering support during difficult times. "Every NPP member should be willing to stand by their colleagues in difficult times without hesitation," he stated.

His comments were related to the disputed Ablekuma North parliamentary election. Months after the general elections, the Ablekuma North Constituency remains without a parliamentary representative, as the official outcome is yet to be announced, drawing significant public interest. Both the NPP and the NDC have declared victory, resulting in a political standoff that has now been taken to court. The NPP argues

that its candidate, Nana Akua Afriyie, emerged victorious in the December elections, citing figures from the Electoral Commission. In contrast, the NDC disputes this claim, asserting that Ewurabena Aubyn rightfully won the seat. Concerns over alleged electoral anomalies and inconsistencies in the pink sheets have intensified the dispute, further delaying a resolution.



Frank Annor-Dompreh, Minority Chief Whip



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# Business

## Govt deposits GHC9.7bn into Sinking Fund as buffer for July-August DDEP coupon payment

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The government has made an initial deposit of GHC9.7 billion into the Debt Service Recovery Cedi Account, commonly known as the Sinking Fund, to cushion upcoming payments for the fifth Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP) coupon in July and August 2025.

This move, aimed at easing debt servicing pressures, was announced in a statement on Monday, February 17, by Felix Kwakye Ofose, Spokesperson to the President and Minister for Government Communications.

Economists have long stressed the necessity of strengthening the Sinking Fund as a strategy to effectively manage Ghana's restructured debt obligations. Given the country's mounting debt stock, the fund serves as a critical tool to ensure timely repayment and ease financial strain.

Before assuming office, President John Mahama had pledged to reintroduce the Sinking Fund as part of his administration's debt

management strategy. He outlined plans to finance the fund using provisions under the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (ACT 815).

Historically, Ghana successfully repaid a \$750 million Eurobond issued in 2007 through the Sinking Fund, reinforcing its effectiveness in managing debt obligations. However, the previous administration discontinued the fund from 2017, a decision that former Finance Minister Seth Terkper criticized, arguing that it left the country vulnerable and overly reliant on the Stabilization Fund and Bank of Ghana interventions.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance has completed the Payment-In-Cash (PIC) component of GHS6.081 billion to all DDEP bondholders as of February 17, 2025. Additionally, the Payment-In-Kind (PIK) portion of GHS3.46 billion has been credited to bondholders' securities accounts, in line with the DDEP Memorandum.

"Through the 2025 Budget Statement, the government will introduce further measures to restore market confidence, prioritize spending, and enhance transparency and accountability in public finances," the statement added.

Despite inheriting a challenging economic situation, the government reaffirmed its commitment to restoring fiscal discipline, stabilizing the Cedi, curbing inflation, and creating employment opportunities for the youth.



John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana

## Get rid of 20% excise tax on sweetened beverages in 2025 budget - AGI to govt

By Amanda Cartey

The Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) has called on the government to eliminate the 20% excise tax on locally made sweetened drinks and fruit juices in its upcoming budget statement.

According to the AGI, removing this tax will support the government's 24-hour economy program by enabling local producers to grow their businesses and create more jobs. They believe that eliminating the tax will allow juice makers to return to full production capacity and even increase output. The AGI also argued that cutting the tax will create more job opportunities in local factories.

The excise tax, introduced in 2023 under the Amendment Act 2023 (Act 1093), has made it more difficult for local juice makers. Since its implementation, sales for some companies have dropped by over 50%, and their production capacity has decreased from about 85% to just 38%.

In a letter to the Minister of Finance, Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson, the AGI stated that the tax has led to numerous job losses and allowed

imported products to dominate the local market. Local producers like Ekumfi Fruits and Juices Limited, Healthlife Beverages Limited, Kasapreko Limited, and Aquafresh Limited are struggling to compete with imported goods, rising production costs, and multiple taxes.

The AGI has warned that if the government does not address these issues, the entire sector could collapse, jeopardizing the 24-hour economy goals.

As Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson prepares to present the 2025 Budget to Parliament on March 10, the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GNCCI) has called for the inclusion of pro-business reforms and policies. According to the GNCCI, the private sector has faced significant economic difficulties over the past decade due to a lack of fiscal discipline, high fiscal liabilities from the financial and energy sectors, and the expensive fiscal response to global shocks.

In light of this, the GNCCI is urging the government to use the 2025 National Budget to introduce

policies and incentives that will stimulate private sector growth and serve as a launchpad for resetting the economy.

The Ghana Federation of Labour has

also sent a letter to the government, urging them to reconsider the excise tax, as it is severely damaging the local beverage production industry.



Beverages





# International

## Uganda discharges all eight Ebola disease patients

Source: WHO

Uganda today discharged eight patients who had been receiving treatment for Sudan virus disease – which belongs to the same family as Ebola virus disease – after two negative tests carried out 72 hours apart.

The recovered patients were receiving care at treatment centres in the capital Kampala and in Mbale, a town in the east of the country. A total of 216 contacts are currently being monitored in quarantine centres at various facilities in the country.

Since declaring an outbreak of Ebola disease on 30 January 2025, the health authorities, with support from World Health Organization (WHO) and partners, have rolled out a comprehensive response to halt the spread of the virus. This includes strengthening early detection, clinical care, infection prevention and control as well as community engagement.

“The patients we are discharging today are safe and free of the disease. I urge their families and communities to receive and interact with them normally,” said Dr Jane Ruth Aceng Ocero, Uganda’s

Minister of Health.

In support of the ongoing response, WHO has deployed 47 health emergency experts, delivered 7 tonnes of emergency medical supplies, supported the deployment of national Emergency Medical Teams to affected areas and the setup of treatment centres, including an 84-bed isolation unit in Mulago national hospital. WHO experts have also provided training and technical expertise in disease surveillance, contact tracing, testing and diagnostics.

WHO also supported the Ministry of Health to launch a groundbreaking vaccination trial soon after the outbreak was declared as well as advancement of research on therapeutics for Sudan virus disease.

“The discharging of the patients today not only marks an important milestone in our collective efforts to control the outbreak, but it also brings huge relief to their families and communities,” said Dr Kasonde Mwinga, WHO Representative in Uganda. “While we welcome this positive step, we remain steadfastly on course, working with our partners to support the government halt this virus and end

the outbreak.”

Along with partner organizations, WHO is also supporting efforts to enhance public awareness, countering misinformation and promoting early care-seeking behaviours to help curb the spread of the virus. This community-driven approach has been vital in the response, with local leaders and health workers at the forefront of public health education and support. WHO experts have also provided training and technical expertise in contact tracing, testing and setting up of treatment centres. The discharged patients will continue to receive help, with psychosocial teams from WHO, Ministry of Health and partners

working with them, their families and communities in the reintegration process. They will also undergo regular reviews in survivors clinics.

Sudan virus disease is a severe, often fatal illness affecting humans and other primates that is due to Orthoebolavirus sudanense (Sudan virus), a viral species belonging to the same genus of the virus causing Ebola virus disease. Case fatality rates of Sudan virus disease have varied from 41% to 100% in past outbreaks. There are no approved treatments or vaccines for Sudan virus. Early initiation of supportive treatment has been shown to significantly reduce deaths from Sudan virus disease.



File Photo

## Pope Francis hospitalised for respiratory infection

Source: Africanews

Pope Francis is currently reported to be in critical condition, with the Vatican revealing that his respiratory tract infection has resulted in a “complex clinical procedure,” necessitating extended hospitalisation. However, no specific timeline has been provided for the 88 year old’s release.

Two Nigerian nuns, Sister Mary Lucy Okwuwulu and Sister Mary Beatrice Nnenji, sat outside the hospital near the statue of John Paul II, offering prayers for the Pope’s recovery.

Sister Mary Lucy expressed their purpose, stating, “We came to pray for our Pope. He is not feeling well, so we came to pray for him.”

In her own words, Sister Mary Beatrice reflected on the Pope’s condition, saying, “God willing, because no one is strong enough

on their own, with age also your health suffers, especially with his workload and the immense efforts he makes. So, God willing, he will

persevere. Let’s hope in God—we cannot go against whatever comes.” Later updates reported that the Pope’s fever had subsided and

his condition had stabilised. Pope Francis was admitted to the Gemelli hospital in Rome on Friday, after his week-long battle with bronchitis worsened.



Pope Francis, Head of Catholic Church

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