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His Lordship Justice Paul Kwadwo Baffoe-Bonnie

Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana

Judicial Service of Ghana

Supreme Court of Ghana, Accra

Your Lordship,

**OPEN LETTER: A RESPECTFUL CALL TO GUARD THE INDEPENDENCE AND
INSTITUTIONAL DIGNITY OF THE JUDICIARY OF GHANA**

I write this letter with the deepest respect for the high office you occupy, with genuine concern for the health of our democratic institutions, and with the conviction that honest counsel, delivered respectfully and publicly, is sometimes the most patriotic act a citizen can render. I write not as a political adversary, but as a Ghanaian who has spent his adult life in service to democracy, constitutional governance, and the rule of law, and who cherishes the judiciary as the ultimate guarantor of those values.

Ghana's judiciary, Your Lordship, is not merely a branch of government. It is the last refuge of the citizen who has no one else to turn to. It is the sacred wall between arbitrary power and individual liberty. The moment that wall is perceived, even merely perceived, to be porous, the consequences for public confidence, democratic order, and social cohesion are severe and lasting. It is in this spirit that I respectfully draw your attention to certain conduct and public associations that, in the considered view of many Ghanaians across all political divides, are causing grave concern.

THE CONTEXT: A JUDICIARY UNDER SCRUTINY

The matters that culminated in your assumption of office as Chief Justice on 17th November 2025 should impress upon you an utmost regard for exceptional care, diligence and respect for the time-honored values and etiquette of judicial conduct. Your predecessor, Her Ladyship Justice Gertrude Araba Esaaba Torkornoo, had been controversially removed through a process that a vast majority of the Ghanaian public, legal scholars, and the Bar viewed as politically motivated. Chief Justice Torkornoo carved an indisputable reputation for not acting in a manner which compromised the independence of the Judiciary and that has been the case for all 'Chief Justices' our republic has seen. The manner of Chief Justice Torkornoo's removal sent a chilling

signal about the vulnerability of judicial independence to executive pressure, and it left behind a residue of public skepticism that your tenure was charged with the solemn duty of healing.

You therefore came into office carrying the weight of a duty to prove to the Ghanaian masses your absolute neutrality and disposition to dispense justice without fear or favor. You came with years of Supreme Court service. You pledged at your swearing-in, and I quote your own solemn words, to 'respect the separation of powers,' to 'protect the Constitution,' to 'ensure that the Judiciary remains free from improper influence,' and to 'insist on accountability.' We considered those words not merely ceremonial pronouncements. They were a covenant with the Ghanaian people.

Rather, sad to say, a significant number of Ghanaians now feel that covenant is under severe strain and those hallowed words uttered by you nothing but mere rhetoric.

THE CONCERN: A PATTERN OF PROXIMITY TO THE EXECUTIVE

Your Lordship, the concern being raised is not about a single incident. It is about a glaring pattern of social and public proximity to the government that appointed you, a proximity unprecedented in the conduct of any Chief Justice this country has produced. Ghanaians have noted, with growing unease, your regular attendance at private social functions, funerals, parties, and social gatherings of leading members of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC), in the company of senior officials and functionaries of that political party, including close associates of the President and his family members. In themselves, these events may seem innocuous. But the Chief Justice is not an ordinary citizen. The standard to which the Head of the Judiciary is held is not the standard of the ordinary. It is, and must always be, a higher standard, one that goes beyond personal innocence to institutional perception.

The most recent and most striking of these incidents is the one that has now captured national attention: your presence as a member of the Vice President's official delegation to Toronto, Canada, to visit the Black Stars ahead of Ghana's 2026 FIFA World Cup opener against Panama. Your Lordship, there is nothing inherently improper about the Chief Justice of Ghana supporting the Black Stars. Football is a national passion, and no one begrudges any citizen, however high their office, the joy of rallying behind the national team on the world stage. That is not the concern. The concern is the manner and the company.

Your presence with the Vice President's official delegation, Her Excellency Prof. Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang, the second-highest officer of an executive government whose decisions and policies are currently the subject of various hotly contested suits in the courts over which you preside. The development unmistakably signaled personal camaraderie and institutional alignment.



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The awkward manner in which you were handled, almost lost in the shadows of NDC government officials is where the concerns lie. You were not there in any constitutional capacity, not in discharge of any judicial function, not representing any independent institutional mandate of your own. You were there as one figure in a line-up of NDC government officials and party-aligned appointees, present at a high-profile government event on the international stage, in a manner that conveyed, to any reasonable observer, precisely the kind of personal camaraderie and institutional 'follow-follow' that the independence of the judiciary must never be seen to sanction.

The contrast with your predecessor is instructive and, for the purposes of this letter, decisive. The former Chief Justice, His Lordship Justice Kwesi Anin-Yeboah, was a member of the FIFA Disciplinary Committee and did attend FIFA events and international football matches. But he attended them in his own right, as a sitting member of an independent adjudicatory structure of an international body. His institutional mandate was self-evident, his presence required no explanation, and his attendance was untethered from the executive branch of any government. He was never photographed within a government delegation, never mistakable for anything other than an independent officer present in his own independent capacity. What was witnessed in Toronto was the precise opposite: the Chief Justice of Ghana travelling not on his own authority, not under his own institutional mandate, but folded into the entourage of the executive, present not in his own right, but in the shadow of the Vice President. It is not the destination that raises the alarm, Your Lordship. It is the company kept, and the terms on which you kept it

This is not a question of whether you are a man of integrity. For the sake of this letter, I accept entirely that you are. However, the situation reasonably casts a shadow over your neutrality. In a constitutional democracy, optics are not trivial. They are foundational. The "Lady Justice" in the Scale of Justice wears a blindfold for a reason. It is a message to the world: that justice is blind, that it does not see the face of power, that no one, not even the Vice President, not even the President, has a privileged relationship with the temple of justice. Your conduct in the high office ought to give an assurance to the people of Ghana of your complete neutrality.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL IMPERATIVE OF JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

Article 127(1) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana is unambiguous: 'In the exercise of the judicial power of Ghana, the Judiciary, in both its judicial and administrative functions, including financial administration, is independent and is not subject to the control or direction of any person or authority.' This provision is not merely about freedom from direct instruction. It is about freedom from the appearance of dependence. The doctrine of judicial independence encompasses what scholars and jurists have described as both subjective impartialities, the actual state of the judge's



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mind, and objective impartiality, whether a reasonable, fair-minded observer would conclude that the judge might be influenced by extraneous considerations.

It is the objective dimension, Your Lordship, that your recent conduct is failing. When the Chief Justice of Ghana is seen in the company of the official delegation of the Vice President of a government whose policies and conduct are before the courts, when he is seen socializing with government ministers and party officials at private functions, a reasonable and fair-minded Ghanaian citizen, not a partisan, not a cynic, but a reasonable observer, cannot be faulted for concluding that the independence of the judiciary may be compromised. That perception, once entrenched, is extraordinarily difficult to reverse. And it does not harm only the judiciary. It harms every litigant, every accused person, every ordinary citizen who comes before Ghana's courts expecting justice uncolored by political affiliation, for a long period after you have retired from the Judicial service.

THE DANGER TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Your Lordship, Ghana's democracy has been admired across Africa precisely because we have, with remarkable consistency, maintained institutions that serve as a check and balance on executive power. Your conduct constitutes a danger to the pride of place occupied by the country in the democratic club.

When citizens perceive the judiciary as an extension of the executive, two things happen: first, the rule of law loses its legitimacy, because legitimacy derives not only from legal authority but from the moral credibility that citizens invest in institutions. Second, and more dangerously, political actors on all sides begin to treat the judiciary as a prize to be captured rather than a referee to be respected. The NDC may be in government today. The NPP will return to government tomorrow. If the culture now being established is one in which the Chief Justice belongs to the social world of the governing party, then every future government will expect the same, and will feel entitled to ensure it. You, with the greatest respect, setting a precedent not for yourself but for the institution and the Republic.

We must not ignore the additional dimension of your personal circumstances. Your wife, Her Ladyship Patience Baffoe-Bonnie, serves as Director-General of the Ghana Prisons Service, pursuant to an appointment by the John Mahama administration whose government officials you are now publicly accompanying on local and international delegations. These sets of circumstances create a picture that Ghana's citizens, and the international community watching Ghana's democracy, find deeply troubling.

A PERSONAL NOTE: ON THE SAFETY OF DISSENTING VOICES AND THE DUTY OF THE COURTS

Your Lordship, I am compelled to raise a matter that is, at once, deeply personal and profoundly constitutional.

There is a well-established pattern of concern about the treatment of dissenting voices, political opponents and critics under the current John Mahama administration which appointed you as Chief Justice. Citizens, journalists, and opposition actors have raised serious alarms about the use of state institutions to intimidate, harass and silence those who dare to speak uncomfortable truths to power. Unfortunately, the Judiciary that you head has been a willing enabler of the deployment of the criminal processes to suppress the right of citizens to free speech and expression. Bail conditions have been weaponized to punish political opponents even in cases where prosecution cannot be justified under the laws of Ghana. onerous, punitive and arbitrary bail conditions are applied in a manner showing that they are instruments of political persecution dressed in the robes of law.

It is in this context that I put the question to you directly, Your Lordship: if those who are displeased by this letter, including NDC government officials who may feel stung by its contents, were to bring pressure to bear upon the courts, would the proximity you have cultivated with members of this government grant them any measure of privileged access to the judiciary? Would the relationships you have built at private social functions, in government delegations, at funerals and celebrations, become channels through which a citizen who has written an open letter can be quietly made to suffer? Or will you, as you are constitutionally and morally obligated to do, raise the sacred shield of the law over every citizen, including those whose voices are inconvenient to those in power?

I do not ask this to be dramatic. I ask it because the answer matters, and because the pattern of your public conduct makes it a question that must be asked. An independent Chief Justice should require no such assurance to be volunteered, because his conduct would already have made the answer self-evident. The fact that this question is now being asked, by many Ghanaians across political lines, is itself a measure of how far public confidence has eroded. Your Lordship, the citizens of this Republic must know, without ambiguity or equivocation, that the Chief Justice of Ghana is the guardian of every Ghanaian equally, not the protector of some and the instrument of others.

AT THE END OF IT ALL

Your Lordship, History will ask whether, during one of the most fragile periods in the life of Ghana's judiciary in which one Chief Justice was removed from office for you to be appointed by President John Dramanin Mahama as the Chief Justice, you conducted yourself in a manner that strengthened or weakened the public's belief in



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the independence of the courts, or you superintended over a Judiciary that was fair, impartial and protective of the rights of Ghanaian citizens and business. I call upon you, in the name of Ghana's Constitution, in honor of your own sworn undertakings, and in service to the generations of Ghanaians who will inherit the venerated institution you head to rise to the full and uncompromising demands of your office.

Please accept the assurances of my highest esteem.

Yours faithfully,

Dennis Miracles Aboagye

Team Lead

CC:

The President, Republic of Ghana

The Council of State of the Republic of Ghana

The Former President, J.A Kuffour

The Former President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo

The Former Vice-President/Flagbearer of the NPP

The General Legal Council of Ghana

The Ghana Bar Association

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

The UN Resident Coordinator

The National House of Chiefs

The Christian Council of Ghana