

## **PRESS CONFERENCE ADDRESSED BY THE NPP GENERAL SECRETARY, JOHN BOADY ON THE PARTY'S POSITION AND OBSERVATION OF THE JUST ENDED MASS VOTER REGISTRATION EXERCISE**

Ladies and gentlemen of the media, good afternoon! Thank you for honouring our invitation to this press conference. We have called you this afternoon in respect of the just ended voter registration exercise.

The exercise has been highly successful and we wish to commend the Electoral Commission, political parties, civil society groups, security services, the media, all stakeholders and the good people of Ghana for their efforts.

This press conference shall address the following issues:

- The vindication of the NPP position which we have held since 2012, that the old register was defective
  - The EC's case for a new voter register
  - The NDC's opposition to the new voter register
  - NDC's facilitation of non-Ghanaians to register and vote in our elections
  - The allegation by the NDC that the whole registration exercise was a grand scheme to disenfranchise Ghanaians
  - Acts of violence perpetrated at various polling stations, encouraged by the NDC
  - Registration in border constituencies where the numbers have come down
  - More people registered with the NIA card
  - NDC's opposition to the registration of students

### **1. THE VINDICATION THAT THE OLD VOTER REGISTER WAS BLOATED**

Ladies and gentlemen, we, in the NPP, as you will recall, have been consistent in stressing that the old voter register was defective and not fit for purpose. One of the issues we had with the old register was that, it was bloated. Indeed, the numbers from the current register vindicates that position. Until recently, the EC had always

disagreed with us on our position that the register is bloated. Indeed, after we mounted pressure, the EC, under the then Chairperson, Madam Charlotte Osei, empanelled the late Justice VCRAC Crabbe and others, in October 2015 to hear proposals, collect and collate views from the stakeholders, analyze the views and make recommendations to the Commission.

In their report, the Crabbe Panel vindicated NPP's position that the register was bloated. The panel established that the old register contained several categories of ineligible registrants including multiple registrations, names of minors, names of foreigners and deceased persons.

After its analysis of facts before it, the Crabbe Committee stated in page 10 of their Report, that

“there is evidence that the register of voters contains a substantial number of people whose names are currently not valid. By all indications, the number of registered voters is not only unusually high, but it may be in excess of the potential number. Based on the 2012 projected population of Ghana, provided by the Ghana Statistical Service, and discounting the population of foreigners, there were about 150,000 more individual records in the Register of voters than the 2012 estimated population of persons aged 18 years and older of Ghanaian nationality. This would include some thousands of minors who were wrongly registered.”

On the issue of dead people in the register, the Committee observed on page 14 that;

“further analysis of data, based on the reported number registered in 2012 and 2014, shows that as many as 580,000 estimated number of voter deaths would have occurred cumulatively by the 2016 elections and may well remain in the Register of Voters. It is not clear how many of these deaths have actually been identified and their records expunged from the Register through the established procedure. This constitutes about 4% of the eligible voters on the register. This margin is almost twice the margin by which most presidential elections

were won and more than ten times the margin in the preceding elections”.

As a way of tackling these issues, the Crabbe Committee on page 20 of their report first of all observed that;

“it may be difficult to justify more than half a million invalid records in the Register that we seek to characterize as credible. It may be expedient to try to find a middle ground to creating a new register through a completely new registration process. The electoral commission could consider extending the exhibition exercise to have voters confirm their names on the list, an indication that they would want to maintain their voter status. The benefits include signaling that the EC is doing something about the known flaws in the Register”.

In effect, the point the NPP is making here today is that the fact that the old register is bloated cannot be disputed. Eventually, the E.C itself decided to compile a new register. As we have stated already, the numbers that have come out of the new register confirms the link held position that the old register was bloated.

In its Meet the Citizen briefing on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020, the EC told us that;

"A clean Voters Register is the basic foundation for ensuring that clean, credible, and transparent elections are delivered to the people of Ghana. The 2019 Register had a total of 16,845,420 Voters. Apart from this, we also had 797,493 people quarantined on the Duplicates/Multiples and Exceptions lists. The political parties are aware of this. When this is added to the registered Voters, the overall total is a little over 17.6million. Had the Commission maintained the old register and conducted a Limited Registration Exercise in all Electoral Areas and Registration Centers across the country, we would have estimated to conservatively add about 2million Ghanaians on to the existing Register. Potentially, without the compilation of a new Voters Register, the Commission was on track to register some 19million people plus another 800,000 people who remain on the multiple and exceptions lists who previously were denied the right to vote. This would have given us a total number of almost 19.6 million persons, approximately 20 million, had we maintained the old register and conducted the Limited Registration Exercise as compared to the current figure of

16.63 million, some 3 million difference. With the compilation of this register those on the duplicates/exceptions lists from 2012 have had the opportunity to register."

In a country where the outcome of general elections have sometimes been determined by less than 50, 000 votes, 3 million illegal registration entries or votes make a significant impact on the integrity and credibility of elections. Indeed, the VCRAC Crabbe panel, made this point as well.

## **2. THE EC'S CASE FOR A NEW REGISTER**

Even so, the E.C has also argued, that the decision to compile a new register in 2020 was largely driven by technical and financial considerations. The E.C says it received advice from its IT team and external Consultants to the effect that, it would be prudent to acquire a new system rather than refurbish the current system which had become obsolete and thus unfit for purpose.

Indeed, according to a letter from the vendors of the defunct system, the EC, would be at great risk if it did not take steps to change the equipment. In the letter, the vendors stated in part, that:

We would like to announce that the items in the present BVRs are End- of-Life, including laptops. This means that no components are available to repair the items. And so, for purposes of availability, maintainability and compatibility in the future we recommend to purchase new BVRs.

Equally, the old Biometric Verification Device (BVD) was unable to verify a number of voters electronically resulting in a high number of manual verifications on voting day, which is largely unreliable and a potential source of dispute as it tends to compromise the integrity of the elections. It also does not have facial recognition technology nor does it allow for a facial recognition add-on. The new Biometric Voter Management Solution which the EC has acquired ahead of the 2020 elections has facial recognition as an additional feature for those whose fingers cannot be verified. This will therefore reduce the high incidence of manual verification which often

proves to be problematic and tends to compromise the integrity and credibility of our elections.

### **3. THE NDC's OPPOSITION TO THE NEW REGISTER COMPILATION**

Despite the fact that the EC had demonstrated enough utility and justification for the adoption of a new Biometric Voter Management Solution to deal with the many challenges with the old system, the NDC, continued to stage strong protests against the commission's move and were bent on thwarting the EC's efforts.

They began by boycotting IPAC meetings where critical decisions regarding the new voters register were to be taken. Yet, they consistently held press conferences to mislead the public on issues discussed at the very meetings of IPAC they refused to attend.

They also spearheaded the formation of the "Inter-Party Resistance Against the New Voters' Register", comprising some 6 political parties out of the over 21 registered parties in the country, to constantly torment the EC through conferences and demonstrations.

All the arguments they made against the voter registration including the issue of cost, wrong timing, misplaced priority, possibility of civil war among others were all defeated by superior arguments in support of the exercise.

Indeed, in the face of continued NDC protests, the EC convened its Eminent Persons Panel and met most of the political parties. The report of the meeting was that a majority of political parties wanted a new voter register. Notwithstanding the emphatic conclusion of the Eminent Persons Panel, the NDC proceeded to the Supreme Court as their last resort to challenge the EC's decision. By an unanimous decision of the Supreme Court, the NDC's position was defeated. Even so, the General Secretary of the NDC addressed the press in the forecourt of the Supreme Court to announce that the Supreme Court had ruled in their favour.

Even after being defeated in the Supreme Court, the NDC continued to threaten fire and brimstone if the E.C went ahead to compile a new voters register with some of them vowing to stop speaking to the media and castrating themselves if the EC was

able to compile the new register. Well, as we have it now, the electoral commission has been able to successfully conduct the new voter registration across the country, and yet the NDC communicators are still talking to the media. They have also not offered themselves for castration.

We wish to also make the point that Covid-19 was never part of the reasons for the NDC's opposition to the new register, because they started their protest against the new register in 2019 when there was no Covid. And so, it is disingenuous for the NDC to now seek to ground their reason for opposing the new register on Covid.

Indeed, the NDC's loudest argument in the latter stages was that Ghanaians did not have the Ghana card and so, the EC's decision to restrict the breeder documents to the Ghana card and passport meant that the Commission intended to disenfranchise Ghanaians. However, current data from the registration shows clearly that more than 60% of registrants used the Ghana card, 1.9% used passports and 38% used guarantors. At the end of the exercise, nobody has complained of being disenfranchised for want of documentation. Clearly, the NDC's argument was a deliberate ploy to stop the EC from conducting its constitutionally mandated function and they've been exposed by events.

## **REGISTRATION IN BORDER CONSTITUENCIES WHERE THE NUMBERS HAVE COME DOWN**

Ladies and gentlemen, a major security imperative for deploying security personnel to our borders is first and foremost the prevention of terrorism. That is why there is more personnel on the northern border.

Pursuant to the advent of Covid-19, the security duty was enhanced to include the containment measures required against Covid-19. The NDC had full knowledge of these measures and did not complain.

It is the same deployments that coincidentally, had to be in place to prevent not only illegal entries against Covid-19 but also the influx of non-Ghanaians seeking to be part of the voter registration exercise.

Consequently, there has been some reduction in the registration figures in border constituencies which the diagram below speak to:

SLIDE 2

S/ N	REGION	CONSTITUENC Y	2019	2020	DIFFERNC E	%
1	BONO	DORMAA CENTRAL	63,155	51,343	<b>-11,812</b>	- 18.70 %
2	BONO	JAMAN SOUTH	60,271	58,392	<b>-1,879</b>	- 3.10%
3	BONO	DORMAA EAST	35,136	24,492	<b>-10,644</b>	- 30.30 %
4	BONO	DORMAA WEST	26,251	21,139	<b>-5,112</b>	- 19.50 %
5	NORTH EAST	BUNKPURUGU	44,609	40,229	<b>-4,380</b>	- 9.80%
6	NORTH EAST	YUNYOO	23,423	21,543	<b>-1,880</b>	- 8.00%
7	NORTHER N	SABOBA	37,947	35,039	<b>-2,908</b>	- 7.70%
8	NORTHER N	TATALE/SANGU LI	34,956	32,885	<b>-2,071</b>	- 5.90%
9	OTI	BUEM	63,898	51,089	<b>-12,809</b>	- 20.00 %
10	OTI	NKWANTA SOUTH	62,400	58,931	<b>-3,469</b>	- 5.60%
11	OTI	AKAN	46,744	40,517	<b>-6,227</b>	- 13.30 %
12	UPPER EAST	BAWKU CENTRAL	69,849	58,541	<b>-11,308</b>	- 16.20 %

13	UPPER EAST	ZEBILLA	67,675	61,769	<b>-5,906</b>	- 8.70%
14	UPPER EAST	NAVRONGO CENTRAL	58,308	48,455	<b>-9,853</b>	- 16.90%
15	UPPER EAST	CHIANA/PAGA	53,890	46,179	<b>-7,711</b>	- 14.30%
16	UPPER EAST	PUSIGA	46,832	44,617	<b>-2,215</b>	- 4.70%
17	UPPER EAST	GARU	36,503	32,684	<b>-3,819</b>	- 10.50%
18	UPPER EAST	NABDAM	23,326	21,750	<b>-1,576</b>	- 6.80%
19	UPPER WEST	NADOWLI/KAL EO	42,952	41,259	<b>-1,693</b>	- 3.90%
20	UPPER WEST	LAWRA	33,059	31,059	<b>-2,000</b>	- 6.00%
21	VOLTA	KETU SOUTH	149,219	139,236	<b>-9,983</b>	- 6.70%
22	VOLTA	KETU NORTH	72,775	64,633	<b>-8,142</b>	- 11.20%
23	VOLTA	AKATSI SOUTH	53,092	49,510	<b>-3,582</b>	- 6.70%
24	VOLTA	CENTRAL TONGU	47,368	43,501	<b>-3,867</b>	- 8.20%
25	VOLTA	AFADJATO SOUTH	40,567	35,255	<b>-5,312</b>	- 13.10%
26	VOLTA	AKATSI NORTH	23,092	17,827	<b>-5,265</b>	- 22.80%
27	WESTERN	AOWIN	80,328	69,581	<b>-10,747</b>	-



	NORTH					13.40 %
28	WESTERN NORTH	BIA WEST	73,217	58,576	<b>-14,641</b>	- 20.00 %
29	WESTERN NORTH	JUABOSO	58,479	46,781	<b>-11,698</b>	- 20.00 %
30	WESTERN NORTH	BIA EAST	32,427	28,132	<b>-4,295</b>	- 13.20 %
31	WESTERN NORTH	SUAMAN	25,584	19,809	<b>-5,775</b>	- 22.60 %
32	WESTERN	JOMORO	92,557	66,377	<b>-26,180</b>	- 28.30 %
33	SAVANNA H	SAWLA TUNA KALBA	47,479	45,907	<b>-1,572</b>	- 3.30%

#### 4. THE NDC'S TRIBAL POLITICS AND "HATE FOR VOTE" CAMPAIGN

Having failed in their desperate attempt to stop the EC from compiling a new voters register, the NDC have, very characteristically, resorted to a dangerous ethnocentric agenda through outright fabrications and fear mongering in what they claimed to be ethnic disenfranchisement.

We are calling on our brothers and sisters of the Volta Region and indeed all Ghanaians to stand up against being used as pawns in this dangerous political chess game by a desperate John Mahama. Mahama showed very little concern for our brothers and sisters in the Volta Region when he had the opportunity as president to impact their lives. John Mahama cannot be trusted and we say so by his own record and not just his dangerous words.

In his hate-for-votes campaign, John Mahama falsely accused the military of disallowing “our brothers and sisters in the Volta Region and wherever there are settlements of Voltarians and non-Akans” to register to vote. This was a big and dangerous lie. The former president of the Republic, who should know better, had earlier said on 28th June that President Akufo-Addo was sending “troops into regions in times of peace for the sole purpose of preventing them from registration,” and that this amounted to “declaring war.” These statements were clearly building blocks in his desperate “hate- for-votes” strategy to create needless tension among our peace-loving people.

In any case, how could John Mahama accuse President Akufo-Addo of ethnic discrimination when recently, the President was in the Northern and Savannah Regions to ensure that 1.2 million people there have access to water, including John Mahama’s own maternal hometown of Busunu near Damongo.

John Mahama has no message because Akufo-Addo is working hard to solve the real-life problems that confront the Ghanaian people. The Ghanaian people should not be misled by John Mahama’s hate-for-votes campaign. John Mahama has resorted to this old bogus propaganda trick used by empty power hungry tyrants of decades gone-by because he has no policy response to Akufo-Addo’s social interventions and economic policies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Akufo-Addo has been instrumental in maintaining peace and tranquility throughout the country, including in Dagbon since he came into office. He will be the last to want to disturb the peace. We must completely and totally reject Mahama’s hate-for-votes campaign and look at the real facts.

The facts tell us that at the end of the mass registration exercise, the Volta region was among the highest performing regions. There is also no evidence that there is an eligible registrant in the Volta region or our brothers and sisters of Ewe extraction throughout Ghana who has been denied the opportunity to register. Please, let us not allow John Mahama to fool us with his hate-for-votes agenda.

As has already been stated, John Mahama’s allegations that many soldiers were deployed to the Volta Region ostensibly to intimidate Voltarians cannot be supported by the facts. The facts are that the military were deployed months ago to patrol all our

borders for a variety of security-related reasons including the prevention of terrorism and the enforcement of Covid-19 containment measures. The soldiers were not only deployed in our eastern borders but also in the north as well as the Western enclave. Indeed, the evidence made available by the Defence Ministry and the Ghana Armed Forces clearly shows that more military men were deployed on our northern borders.

The breakdown of the deployment as put out by relevant authorities is as follows: Upper East 206 soldiers, Northern Region 110 soldiers, North East 102 soldiers, Volta Region 98 soldiers, Oti Region 72 soldiers, Upper West 65 soldiers, Bono Region 60 soldiers, Western Region 27 soldiers, Savanna Region 21 soldiers. So, there have been more military deployments in the Upper East Region; in the Northern Region as well as in the North East Region than in the Volta Region.

If any region should be complaining of heavy military deployment, then it should be the regions in the northern part of the country. Clearly, the former President is only using this reckless ploy to try to motivate the NDC's grassroots who have been consistently neglected by his administration in the Volta Region and cover the security agents from doing their legitimate job so that the NDC can employ foul means to populate the register.

We should not confuse the genuine efforts to police the borders throughout the country to mean that the NPP is against anyone. Elections in Ghana are for Ghanaians. Yet, as we speak, a number of Togolese and Nigerians have either been convicted or have their cases pending at the Keta circuit court charged with registering for a Ghanaian voter ID card.

1. Okafor Wale, age 47 years; nationality, Nigerian.

Offence: Registered for Ghana voter ID card when not qualified to register.

Convicted and Sentenced to 2years in hard labour by Keta Circuit Court on 30/07/20

2. Evoda Yao Dieu Donne, age 22 years, nationality Togolese.

Offence : Registered for Ghana voter ID Card when not qualified to register.

Convicted and sentenced to 2 years in hard labour by Keta Circuit Court on 30/07/20

3. Emmanuel Philip, age 32, nationality Nigerian.

Offence: Register for Ghana Voter ID Card when not qualified.

Case pending before Keta Circuit Court.

4. Jerry Azameti, age 28 years, nationality, Ghanaian; and 5. Abigail Tagbor age 20 years Ghanaian. Offence: the two abetted Emmanuel Philip a Nigerian who is not qualified to register to register for Ghana voter ID Card by standing as guarantors.

Case pending before Keta Circuit Court.

6. Ekoume Sena, age 32 years, Togolese. Offence: Register for Ghana Voter ID Card when not qualified to register. Case pending before Keta Circuit Court.

7. Ametame Raymond, age 33 years, Togolese.

Offence: Register for Ghana voter ID Card when not qualified to register.

Case pending before Keta Circuit Court.

8. The arrest of sixty six Ivorian nationals last week

9. The arrest yesterday of 12 Nigerians currently in custody at the Kotobabi police station in Accra, allegedly brought in to register by the NDC MP for the area.

Ladies and gentlemen, we love all our brothers and sisters of West Africa, but they cannot vote in our elections as we cannot vote in theirs. We expect mutual respect for national sovereignty with our dear neighbors.

## **5. NDC'S FACILITATION OF NON-GHANAIS TO REGISTER AND VOTE IN OUR ELECTIONS**

As clearly established by the VCRAC Crabbe Committee and by the Supreme Court of Ghana during the election petition, one of the main reasons accounting for the bloated nature of the register is the names of non-Ghanaians, particularly our West African neighbors, on the register. This, we contend, is the handiwork of the NDC based on their conduct in all registration exercises conducted by the EC. And indeed, developments at the just ended 2020 mass registration exercise yet again showed the NDC's usual desperation to get foreigners on our voters register. The media is awash with videos showing some foreigners being imported by the NDC into the country to participate in the voter registration exercise.

Videos to be displayed ....

## **6. ACTS OF VIOLENCE PERPETRATED AT VARIOUS POLLING STATIONS, ENCOURAGED BY THE NDC**

Ladies and Gentlemen, the NDC, in their usual fashion, continued with their acts of violence against innocent Ghanaians and on members of the NPP during the registration exercise. You would recall that John Mahama is on record as having told Ghanaians that when it comes to violence, no political party in the country can match the NDC.

Show video..... **(JOHN MAHAMA TOUTING THE NDC'S VIOLENCE NATURE)**

It is thus not surprising that during this mass registration, the NDC hooligans were again at their best visiting mayhem on our people.

Show video (Joynews video showing our agent at the Tsorme Registration Centre in the Akan Constituency in the Oti Region. He is called Francis Kofie)

Pictures of our party activists who suffered brutalities being displayed

## **7. NDC OPPOSES THE REGISTRATION OF STUDENTS**

The NDC, you will recall, recently went to the high court to challenge the EC's decision to provide an opportunity for SHS students to register during the mass registration exercise. Yet, they were the same people alleging that this whole voter registration is an attempt to deny eligible Ghanaians their constitutional right to vote in the December 2020 elections following the removal of the old voters ID card from the voter registration requirements. They claimed the EC, by this decision, was going to disenfranchise many eligible Ghanaians from registering and therefore sought the court's intervention.

Ladies and gentlemen, isn't it interesting that the same NDC which claimed it was defending people's constitutional right to register and vote, is today, back in court arguing that the court should intervene and stop the EC from registering eligible Ghanaian voters in our Senior High Schools. So we ask, is the NDC in support of the right of eligible Ghanaians to register and vote, or they are against it? The right to vote as enshrined in Article 42 of the Constitution, does not preclude students in Senior High Schools from registering, provided they are 18 and above. Well, I just hope free SHS has nothing to do with this manifest absurdity of our NDC friends.

And please, do not be deceived by the NDC's argument that the registration centres at the Senior High Schools have not been gazetted hence their opposition. First of all, the EC was not created any new centres from the centres that were gazetted. The current legal regime allows the EC to use mobile registration vans and accompanying devices to register eligible voters and assign them to the closest polling station. The Commission has in fact been using this mobile registration vans across the country since the exercise began on 30th June.

So, what the EC proposed to do on Friday (10th July) and Saturday (11th July) subject to possible extension where necessary, was to move these mobile registration vans and the accompanying devices to the Senior High Schools to register the final year students who have turned 18 and beyond. This is because per the current executive instrument on Covid-19 restrictions, the students cannot leave campus and go to

town queuing to register. Meanwhile, these eligible students have a constitutional right to register and vote, which right cannot be denied under any circumstances.

Mind you, out of the about 700 Senior High Schools in the country, over 280 of them are already registration centres which were duly gazetted, hence will not be captured under this special arrangement. And this is what the NDC is kicking against? So, what at all is the alternative? Clearly, the alternative being proposed by the NDC was the SHS students should be disenfranchised. We are sure the students will be guided by this accordingly.

## **CONCLUSION**

Happily, ladies and gentlemen, in a reported facebook live session held on tour in Kete Krachie, the leader of the NDC, John Mahama, having initially bastardized the voter registration, has now conceded that the exercise has been successful. So, we, in the NPP expect him to apologize to the nation for the dangerous ethnic sentiments he raised, jeopardizing the security of the state with unwarranted attacks.

His actions which were mirrored by the leadership of his party unduly created fear and raised political tension in the country. Certainly, Ghanaians didn't deserve this from an immediate past President of this great country who is again seeking the mandate.

The NPP will continue to work hard to meet the needs of Ghanaians. The times demand strong and decisive leadership on the issues that have impacted our lives. It is in pursuit of our stated goals that we have not only strengthened the economy but have also managed to provide social and economic support in terms of cost-free water and electricity as well as business-support schemes.

The NPP vision of the way forward captured in our manifesto 2020 will hopefully be shared with Ghanaians on the 22 of August 2020. We ask you to look forward on that day to heartwarming policies detailing how, with your support, we will transform Ghana for the benefit of all.

Your NPP government remains focused and expect a massive turnout on December 7 to consolidate the leadership and good governance offered by His Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo.

We thank all Ghanaians sincerely for rejecting the hate filled divisive non policy based rhetoric of Candidate Mahama. You demonstrated this rejection with the massive turnout for the voter registration exercise. Confirm it even more with a decisive vote against the politics of division come December 7, 2020.

May God bless Ghana.

Thank you for your attention.