



GHANA CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry of National Security's preliminary actions in the Caleb Kudah/Citi FM case welcome, but broader reforms needed – CDD-Ghana

On Thursday, May 20, 2021, the Ministry of National Security announced certain steps it had taken following an internal investigation into the armed invasion of the offices of Accra-based CITI FM, and the “arrest” and assault of CITI FM reporter Mr. Caleb Kudah by operatives of the Ministry on May 11, 2021. The Ministry found that its operatives acted inappropriately in contravention of “standard operating procedures”. The Ministry accordingly revoked the secondment to the National Security Secretariat of certain personnel of the Ghana Armed Forces and the Ghana Police Service who were found to have been involved in or responsible for the incident, including Lt. Col. Frank Agyemang, Director of Operations at National Security Secretariat. The Ministry advised that the Ghana Armed Forces and Ghana Police Service take further disciplinary action against the officers involved. The Ministry also found that Mr. Caleb Kudah’s presence on the National Security Ministry’s premises on the day of the incident was “unlawful” and “unauthorized”.

CDD-Ghana welcomes as an important first step the swift action taken by the Minister of National Security. As far as we know, this is also the first time the National Security outfit has admitted publicly that certain of its operatives acted “inappropriately” in an encounter with citizens and also announced administrative or disciplinary actions against the culpable officers. However, the Ministry sought to minimize the misconduct of its operatives by describing the criminal assault against the person of Mr. Kudah as merely “inappropriate”. This is regrettable, as it does not send the right signal or deterrence to officers of the National Security apparatus. The Center also awaits the speedy conclusion of the National Media Commission’s investigations into the complaint filed by CITI FM on this matter.

CDD-Ghana would like to implore the Government and the Minister of National Security to see and seize upon this incident as an opportunity to pursue more far reaching reforms in the National Security apparatus and its operations, as the problem highlighted by the Kudah/CITI FM case is longstanding, recurring and systemic. This latest incident indeed highlights the importance of taking seriously the observations and recommendations of the Emile Short Commission. Among other things, the Short Commission recommended that, “operatives of the National Security Council should be trained to

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internalize human rights rules including the provisions on the fundamental human rights of the Constitution within their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).” It is clear from both the incidents at the National Security compound involving Mr. Kudah and on the CITI FM premises, including the attempt to “arrest” Ms Zoe Abu Baidoe of CITI FM, that the admonition and recommendation of the Short Commission, including in the area of recruitment and training, have not been heeded or implemented.

Not only is a total change in orientation needed and long overdue, the current architecture of National Security, including the lines of accountability, authority, command, and responsibility, also needs a re-look. While the Security and Intelligence Act 2020 (Act 1030) sought to answer some of the pre-existing structural and functional challenges, it does not appear to have gone far enough. Interagency and interpersonal turf battles evidently persist. With the designation and appointment of a Minister in charge of National Security (both under this President and former President Kufuor) it was expected that the “national security” function and apparatus would be both better streamlined and brought under firmer civilian political control, including from Parliament. Unfortunately, these formal organizational changes have not translated into visible change in the way “National Security” operates or in the way citizens perceive and experience “National Security”. Indeed, it appears that the Minister for National Security has no proper or effective oversight of the operations of the so-called National Security “Secretariat”. Moreover, it is not clear what oversight Parliament has or exercises over the Minister, Ministry or the National Security Secretariat.

The Center appreciates the enormous and critical national security challenges the country faces, including from threats and developments in our immediate neighborhood. What this calls for is better trust, understanding and cooperation between citizens and the personnel and agencies entrusted with frontline responsibility for protecting the nation against credible and emerging threats to our security and cohesion. This goal is not advanced, however, by actions by or in the name of “National Security” that either tarnish or cast doubt on the professionalism of the various national security agencies or alienates them from important sections of the national community, including the media. Effective national security calls for a “whole-of-society” approach, not an “us” versus “them” mindset or posture that has a tendency to alienate certain groups of citizens or segments of society or cause citizens to doubt the professionalism of, or withhold cooperation from, persons acting in the name of national security.

We call on Parliament to assume its rightful place as the people’s assembly and the principal government oversight body to ensure that the country has a National Security system that is fit for purpose. A good place to start is to revisit the Emile Short Commission report and get Government to commit to credible reforms both in the way National Security personnel are recruited and trained and in the way National Security does business.

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About CDD-Ghana

With a mission to promote and deepen democratic consolidation, good governance, and inclusive growth and development, the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) works to support and promote a free, peaceful, and a well-governed democracy in Ghana and in other parts of Africa. The Center has over two decades of experience, expansive reach, and a robust network of partners at the national, continental and global levels. CDD-Ghana has cultivated an enduring reputation as a leader in the field of democracy and governance, which enables the adoption and implementation of targeted strategies aimed at addressing the fundamental issues hindering citizens from enjoying the full benefits democracy and good governance has to offer.

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