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To the Mass Media.

CONCERNING AKWASI AFRIFA'S ALLEGATIONS IN THE OGYEEDOM CASE

My attention has been drawn to the social and political raucous occasioned by a petition by Ogyeedom Obranu Kwesi Atta VI of Gomoa Afransi to the General Legal Council complaining of the conduct of a certain Akwasi Afrifa, a lawyer who had acted for him in his case against the Lands Commission and Ghana Telecommunications Limited. The case is currently pending before the Supreme Court. According to Ogyeedom, he had engaged the professional services of this lawyer Afrifa, as additional lawyer to prosecute his case in the Supreme Court and had paid him GH\$300,000 for his brief. I had originally taken the view that the oblique insinuations in lawyer Afrifa's response, which fortuitously became public almost immediately after he had written to the Council were so infantile and preposterous that they did not deserve the dignity of a response from me. But Ghana being what it is, tomorrow, people might say, but Akoto Ampaw did not deny the allegations. So my reaction.

As is now well known, Ogyeedom complained about the failure of Akwasi Afrifa to return the full sum of USD100,000 that he had paid to Afrifa, following Afrifa's demand of his client, Ogyeedom for same in order to get a favourable judgment (through 'ways and means') in his case before the Supreme Court. According to Ogyeedom, lawyer Afrifa had, at the time of his petition, refunded only USD25,000.00 of the total sum of money he had given to Afrifa, leaving an outstanding sum of USD75,000.00, and that all efforts on his part to retrieve the balance had proven unsuccessful.

In his response dated 7th July, 2021, lawyer Afrifa categorically denied asking for and receiving any USD 100,000.00 from Ogyeedom, and stated further that the only sum he had received was for his professional services as a lawyer and was the sum of GH\$300,000.00, together with his travel and hotel accommodation and other incidental expenses he incurred whenever he traveled from Kumasi, where he resided, to Accra to prosecute his client's case before the Supreme Court. Having categorically denied the complaint of his client, lawyer

Afrifa then proceeded to craft the story, now the daily sauce of political gossip, **presumably to explain how come he refunded the GH\$300,000 to his client, not in cedis but in US dollars.** Never mind that there is absolutely no sense or reason in Afrifa refunding GH\$300,000 in its dollars equivalent; not even if, by the side, he were a forex bureau owner! Furthermore, it least accords with reason how a miserly USD50,000.00 could in any meaningful way assist in meeting an alleged demand of Five Million US Dollars. And, what, may we ask, would be the motive of Ogyeedom in petitioning the General Legal Council for a return of money he never gave to Afrifa? What, by the way, is the track record of professional integrity of lawyer Afrifa? These are, in my view, valid questions we must ask before rushing into taking his allegations seriously.

Briefly, according to lawyer Afrifa, his client, Ogyeedom, had informed him that he (the client) had been taken to see the Chief Justice by a friend, and the Chief Justice, allegedly promised to procure a favourable outcome in Ogyeedom's case before the Supreme Court, provided that he, Ogyeedom, agreed to pay him the whopping sum of Five Million US Dollars (USD5,000,000.00) and further to replace him, lawyer Afrifa, by me, Akoto Ampaw.

Lawyer Afrifa must have his own diabolical reasons for trying to implicate me in this crazy judicial bribery scandal, which manifestly does not add up. That is his problem. What I know as the facts are the following:

1. Some time at the end of July, 2020, Ogyeedom came to see me at our offices at Kojo Thompson Road, Adabraka, Accra, with a request that he wanted me to take over the prosecution of his case in the Supreme Court. I indicated that it would be foolhardy on my part to take over a case before the Supreme Court that was to be heard in some two to three days' time. I therefore urged him to still rely on his current legal team in the pending application and, if thereafter, he still wanted my professional services, I would be ready to hear him out.
2. Sometime later, during the legal vacation, last year, Ogyeedom came back to consult with me, and, with much reluctance, I agreed to take up the brief, upon the very clear understanding that if he wanted me to take up the case because he thought I was politically connected or had friends within the judiciary, then he was at the wrong place, as I did not carry on my work as a lawyer by such dishonourable means. Indeed, I have had to make similar caveat to many potential clients when they seek my professional services, as, alas, these days, virtually everything seems to be for sale in our country and ethical standards have gone to the dogs. Fortunately, my junior, Nicholas Lenin Anane Agyei, was present in my office when I laid out this standard for my professional relationship with Ogyeedom, and he can testify to same.
3. Eventually I agreed to take up the brief and filed notice of change of lawyer in the Supreme Court sometime in October. I have since been in the Supreme Court on a

few occasions in respect of the matter to move an application to adduce new evidence in response to the Court's grant of an earlier application by the appellant to adduce new evidence. On 31st March, 2021, the Supreme Court granted our application by a four to one ruling. Incidentally, the Chief Justice, who, according to lawyer Afrifa's yarn, wanted me to be engaged as lawyer in the matter to facilitate an outcome favourable to my client, was the dissenting judge out of a panel of five. The records are there for anyone to access, including the media.

4. For the record, I wish to state, without any equivocation, that the only dealings I have had with the Chief Justice in this matter have been in open court as the lawyer for Ogyedom. Beyond that I have had no dealings whatsoever with the Chief Justice in this matter. Furthermore, even though, of course, I have known the Chief Justice since his law student days in the 70's, once he became a judge, I have kept my respectful and studious distance from him, as I have from other justices of the Supreme Court, past and present, even if they may have been my friends in school. I have adopted this attitude in order to avoid the slightest insinuation that I may be using my personal relationship with judges to subvert the cause of justice. I have never even stepped into the Chief Justice's official residence, since he was elevated to the high office. Yes, I know ethical values are in short currency in our dear country these days, and so people are cynical about almost everything and everyone, and are ready to believe the worst in any person. I am also well aware that almost everything is now reduced to ugly partisan party politics, and that the main political parties will not lose an opportunity to have a go at each other, on the slightest of occasion, however tenuous the evidential basis. I can, however, assure Ghanaians that I am definitely not one of those who have lost their values and are ready to sell their soul to the God of money and political power. I have been involved in national life for over forty years now, and if it had been my desire to make money out of politics at the expense of the interests of our people, I would have done so long, long ago. Even more preposterous is the infantile idea that I would collude with anyone, much more the Chief Justice of our Republic, to subvert the cause of justice.
5. I will therefore not permit any one to sully my name on the altar of politics or personal convenience. I take this opportunity to serve notice to any political group or commentator and also media practitioners that I would not have anyone drag my good name and reputation down the slimy mud of corruption in order to curry political favour or boost audiences. In particular, I wish to have it on record that I reserve all my legal rights and options occasioned by lawyer Afrifa's scandalous and defamatory publication of, and concerning me.

Akoto Ampaw
Accra.

Cc: The Chairperson,
Disciplinary Committee,
General Legal Council,
Accra.