

LAWYERS IN SEARCH OF DEMOCRACY (LINSOD) CAUTION GHANA POLICE AGAINST PROMOTING HOOLIGANISM ON PRIVATE PROPERTY OF H. E. JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA

We have sighted, with utter shock, a letter purported to be written by the Greater Accra Regional Police, dated October 17, 2023, and addressed to a certain “Fixing the Country Movement,” and gave a tacit consent to the group to embark on a demonstration to, and on, the private property of H.E. John Draman Mahama, a Former President of the Republic of Ghana and the flag bearer of the opposition National Democratic Congress on November 16th, 2023. The letter, which was signed by DCOP Henry Kodjo Otoo was referred to the attention of one Ernest Kofi Bempah, and it advised the group on the route agreed between them and the police to the office of the former President.

Whereas we of LINSOD understand that all citizens have the right to assemble and protest on any public property to register their grievances and demand of public officials to act or refrain from acting in a certain manner, we fail to see the sense in allowing citizens to break all the laws regarding trespassing on private property in a manner that may attract reprisal action from the owners or followers of such property. What is more surprising to us is that the Ghana Police Service, just recently, denied demonstrators, who were led by responsible Members of Parliament, the right to protest near the office of the Bank of Ghana, arguing that the office was a security zone. The Governor of the Bank of Ghana later described the demonstrators as hooligans.

Indeed, we have followed discussions in the media in the last few weeks about the intention of the group, which seeks to embark on the demonstration in question, and we have listened to very rude, volatile, and abrasive language by Mr. Ernest Owusu Bempah, whom the police's letter was referred, and who is the convenor of the group. We have also seen notices of certain youths of the National Democratic Congress, calling on their members to report at the office of H. E. John Dramani Mahama with machetes, axes, etc. to clean the office on the day of the intended

One would have thought that in light of the tense atmosphere and the back-and-forth verbal attacks by Mr. Bempah and response from the NDC youth, and the highly likelihood of a clash between the two groups at President Mahama's office on the day of the demonstration, the police would have been more circumspect and advise the organizers to confine their protest to public properties only, or stay away from anywhere near 500 meters from the office of the former President. As things stand, it appears to us that the police want to see mayhem, and this is very sad for Ghana's democracy.

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