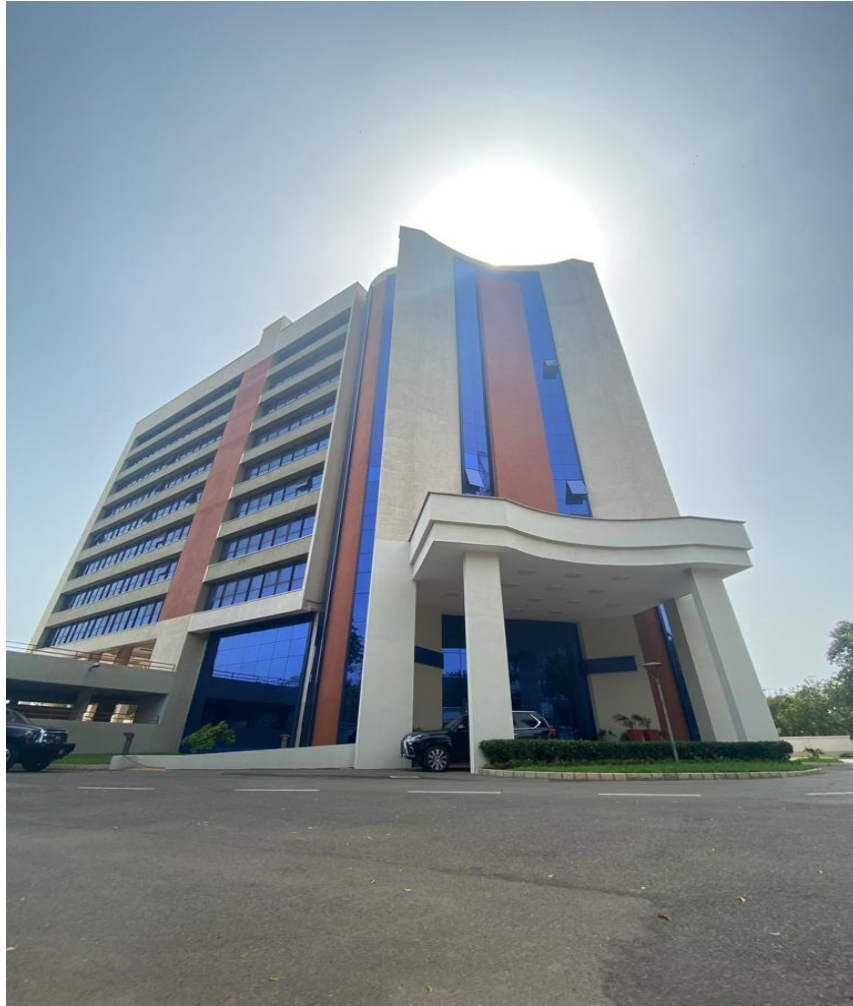




Half Yearly Report

11 July 2024



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Preface

It is my honour to present the fifth Half Yearly Report under my tenure as the Special Prosecutor of the Republic, pursuant to section 3(3) of the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959). This report highlights the investigations and prosecutions conducted by the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) and developments in respect of the operations of the Office spanning the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024.

At the OSP, we are of the firm conviction that corruption-prevention is a preferable method to after-the-fact modules in the fight against corruption, as it is more productive and cost-effective in its outlook and reach. Consequently, the Office has intensified activities within the province of its corruption-prevention mandate, and we have introduced novel initiatives and engagement with stakeholders to garner support for corruption awareness and education efforts and to shift the narrative of our shared experiences in driving down the incidence of corruption and corruption-related activities. These efforts are designed to instill confidence in the anti-corruption drive by stamping the mark of opprobrium on corruption – that it is an extremely high-risk and low-reward adventure.

In the first half of 2024, the Office was confronted with formidable existential challenges as corrupt actors and interests and their agents accentuated their pushback against the principal officers of the Office and the very existence and essence of the Office. The Office conceptualises the attacks on its principal officers and attempts to whittle away the mandate and powers of the Office as a testament that the Office is indeed performing its anti-corruption role creditably and it is gradually disrupting corrupt interests.

The OSP remains resolute and committed to combating corruption, remaining impartial to partisan affiliations and status. We wish Ghanaians a successful and hopefully corruption-free general elections in the second half of 2024.



Kissi Agyebeng
The Special Prosecutor
The Republic of Ghana
11 July 2024

I Introduction

- 1.1 The Office of the Special Prosecutor is the flagship anti-corruption institution. It functions as a specialised autonomous investigative and prosecutorial agency. Its powers and functions are founded on the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959) and its additional legislative instruments – the Office of the Special Prosecutor Regulations, 2018 (L.I. 2373), governing the management of human capital and discipline and the Office of the Special Prosecutor (Operations) Regulations, 2018 (L.I. 2374), outlining operational protocols. Further, the mandate of the office extends to the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29), the Criminal and Other Offences (Procedure) Act, 1960 (Act 30), the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663) and any other law enforcement enactments in the context of corruption and corruption-related offences.
- 1.2 The mandate of the Office is primarily four-fold – investigating suspected or alleged corruption and corruption-related cases;¹ prosecuting suspected offenders; recovering and managing assets; and taking steps to prevent corruption.
- 1.3 The Office exercises full police and law enforcement and security powers in the performance of its functions.
- 1.4 The Office is independent and unique in its mandate. Its independence, by law, is assured in the proper sense, as the Special Prosecutor retains full authority and control over the initiation, investigation, prosecution and conduct of cases.
- 1.5 The mandate of the Office encompasses the authority to investigate and prosecute public officials, private individuals, as well as politically exposed persons – that is, individuals entrusted with significant public roles in Ghana or abroad, including senior officials from political parties, government, judiciary, and the military. This category also includes individuals who have served as executives in foreign countries, senior political party officials abroad, or immediate family members and close associates of such persons.
- 1.6 The Office is the first of its kind in the history of the country and it is not comparable to any State agency or institution that existed or now exists in the Republic.

¹ See www.osp.gov.gh for an expansive list of corruption and corruption-related offences.

II Developments

General Elections

- 2.1 On 7 December 2024, the Electoral Commission would conduct and supervise general elections for the election of the Sixth President of the Fourth Republic and Members of the Ninth Parliament of the Fourth Republic. The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) is mandated by its anti-corruption powers to assure the sanctity of the elections through prevention, control and repression of corruption, fraud, and unfair practices in relation to the elections, and specifically by the operation of section 79 of the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959) and sections 256 and 258 of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29).
- 2.2 The Office would deploy its covert and investigation operatives throughout the country before, during, and after the elections to monitor, suppress and repress the falsification of returns at the elections. Consequently, all officers charged with the counting of votes at the polling stations, collation centres and the transmission of the outcome of the elections are admonished that it is a grave offence to wilfully falsify the account of the votes or make a false return of the votes.
- 2.2 The public is also notified that the law prohibits corruption, intimidation, and personation in respect of the elections. Therefore, no person is permitted to influence the outcome of the elections through corrupt means. Then again, no person is permitted to influence the conduct of a voter in respect of the elections by a threat of an evil consequence to be caused to the voter or to any other person. In addition, it is unlawful to impersonate a voter or an electoral officer.
- 2.3 The Office would be alive to its mandate and would promptly address any such occurrence which comes to its notice. On this score, the public is further admonished that, by operation of law, a person who is found liable for any of these acts shall be banned from voting at a public election for a period of seven(7) years and that person cannot hold a public office or be eligible for election as the President or a Member of Parliament.

Cecilia Abena Dapaah

- 2.4 After several months of extensive investigation by the Office in respect of the source(s) of large amounts of money reportedly stolen from the residence of Cecilia Abena Dapaah, a former Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources and large sums

of money discovered at the same residence by the Office and subsequently frozen by the Office, the Special Prosecutor discontinued the investigation by the Office on 25 January 2024. However, upon a determination by the Office that the case was primarily suspected to be in the province of money laundering and structuring, the Special Prosecutor referred the case and the docket to the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO), the agency mandated to investigate and initiate prosecution in respect of money laundering, for further investigation.

- 2.5 On 3 May 2024, EOCO returned the docket to the OSP, citing a directive by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice that EOCO could not take up the matter for investigation owing to the absence of a predicate offence. The OSP would continue to monitor the channels of the indicated large sums of money.

III Cases

- 3.1 By operation of law, the investigation mandate of the Office is dual. The Office investigates to prevent corruption, and it also investigates to prosecute suspected offenders. The Office first engages in intelligence gathering or “pre-investigation” to determine whether it should open investigation into a matter. Subsequently, the Special Prosecutor directs the opening of a preliminary enquiry or investigation where he determines that the matter is within the mandate of the Office. Where sufficient information is gathered, the Special Prosecutor directs the initiation of a full investigation. The Special Prosecutor directs the institution of criminal proceedings where it is determined that the Office has the requisite probative evidence to meet the standard of proof beyond reasonable doubt. On the other hand, the Special Prosecutor directs the institution of corruption-prevention measures where the matter under investigation either ends in criminal proceedings or does not necessarily lead to prosecution.
- 3.2 The Office takes especial care to safe-guard and protect the privacy and reputations of persons it investigates. To this end, the Office seeks to avoid unnecessary stigmatisation by conducting its operations with as little intrusion into the privacy of individuals and the business operations of companies as the circumstances permit.
- 3.3 Thus, the Office only publishes the initiation or commencement of investigation where the Special Prosecutor deems the investigation in question to be at a threshold which dictates communication to the public.

3.4 The following are the various cases handled by the Office during the period under reference:

A Prosecutions

There has not been any convictions or acquittals in respect of the cases pending before the criminal courts during the period under review. Three(3) substantive criminal cases are being tried before the courts.

CR/0492/2022 *The Republic v. Adjenim Boateng Adjei & Francis Kwaku Arhin*

The trial of the former Chief Executive of Public Procurement Authority is ongoing before the Criminal Division of the High Court, Accra. Mr. Adjei has been charged with eight(8) counts of using public office for profit and directly and indirectly influencing the procurement process to obtain an unfair advantage in the award of public contracts.

Previously, Mr. Adjei was standing trial together with his brother-in-law, Mr. Francis Kwaku Arhin, who was charged with a count of using public office for profit. On 17 April 2024, the Office withdrew the initial charge sheet and replaced it with eight(8) counts of using public office for profit and directly and indirectly influencing the procurement process to obtain an unfair advantage in the award of public contracts, exclusively in respect of Mr. Adjei.

Mr. Adjei was granted bail in the sum of Four Million cedis (GHC4,000,000.00) with two(2) sureties to be justified.

NR/TL/HC/CCI/10/23 *The Republic v Sumaila Abdul Rahman, Stephen Yir-Eru Engmen, Patrick Seidu & Andrew Kuundaari*

The trial of the former Chief Executive, former Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations, former Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Finance and Administration of Northern Development Authority and the Chief Executive of A&QS Consortium Limited is pending before the Criminal Division of the High Court, Tamale. The four(4) are facing a total of eleven(11) counts of corruption and corruption-related offences comprising conspiracy to directly or indirectly influence the procurement process to obtain an unfair advantage in the award of a procurement contract, directly or indirectly influencing the procurement process to

obtain an unfair advantage in the award of a procurement contract, corruption by a public officer, and corruption of a public officer.

On 26 April 2024, the Court dismissed an application by the accused persons on a submission of no-case-to-answer. The Court held that the Republic had established a *prima facie* case against the accused persons in respect of all the charges. The Court ordered the accused persons to open their defence.

D13/9/2022 *The Republic v Alexander Kwabena Sarfo Kantanka*

The trial, for corruption in respect of a public election, of the President's nominee for the position of Chief Executive of Juaben Municipal Assembly in the Ashanti Region is pending before the Criminal Division of the High Court, Kumasi.

On 9 April 2024, the Court partially dismissed an application by Mr. Sarfo-Kantanka on a submission of no-case-to-answer. The Court held that the Republic had established a *prima facie* case against Mr. Sarfo-Kantanka in respect of three(3) of the charges. The Court ordered Mr. Sarfo-Kantanka to open his defence in respect of the three(3) charges.

Mr. Sarfo-Kantanka subsequently filed an appeal in the Court of Appeal against the decision of the High Court. He also filed an application for stay of proceedings to suspend the trial indefinitely pending the outcome of the appeal. The High Court dismissed the application for stay of proceedings and ordered that the trial should proceed on its normal course.

B Other Cases

Charles Bissue

The Secretary of the dissolved Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM), Mr. Charles Bissue has sued the Office in the Human Rights Court, Accra in HR/0101/2023 *Charles Bissue v. Office of the Special Prosecutor*. Mr. Bissue alleges that the Office infringed on his human rights by investigating him, declaring him a fugitive from justice when he failed to attend to the Office upon the issuance of notices to that effect, and also by issuing a warrant for his arrest.

The Office is contending the suit on the ground that except persons exempted from criminal proceedings by law, no person (including Mr. Bissue) has a right not to be investigated by the Office for suspected commission of corruption and corruption-related offences. Also, the Office's power of arrest, much like that of all law enforcement agencies, implies the power to declare a person a fugitive from justice, where, as in this case, a person evades apprehension and intentionally renders himself impossible to apprehend. Further, the Office is contending that the alleged warrant of arrest does not exist and that Mr. Bissue is misrepresenting facts stemming from his unsubstantiated suspicion.

C Concluded Investigations

Airbus SE

The Office has concluded investigation into alleged bribery by Airbus SE, a European multinational aerospace corporation, regarding the sale and purchase of military aircrafts for the Republic. The Office was engaged with INTERPOL and the central authorities of the United Kingdom and the United States under the mutual legal assistance regime. The Special Prosecutor will issue directives and further action on the matter in due course.

Ghana Police Service

The Office has concluded investigation into suspected corruption and corruption-related offences regarding the recruitment exercise of Course 51 of Cadet Officers Training at the Ghana Police Academy. The Special Prosecutor will issue directives and further action on the matter in due course.

Gaming Commission of Ghana

The Office has concluded investigation into suspected corruption and corruption-related offences in respect of the procurement and the award of a contract to Turfsport Ghana Limited by the Gaming Commission of Ghana. The Special Prosecutor will issue directives and further action on the matter in due course.

Charles Bissue

The Office has concluded investigation into allegations of the use of public office for profit against Mr. Charles Bissue, during his tenure as Secretary to the erstwhile Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM), arising from an investigative documentary titled Galamsey Fraud. The Special Prosecutor will issue directives and further action on the matter in due course.

D Ongoing Investigations

Government of Ghana Payroll Administration

The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) and the Controller and Accountant General's Department (CAGD) jointly commenced corruption risk assessment and investigation into suspected corruption and corruption-related offences in respect of Government Payroll Administration. The assessment and investigation are especially aimed at isolating and removing the names of non-existent, ineligible, and undeserving persons from government payroll, recovering wrongful payments and unearned salaries, prosecuting persons suspected to be culpable for any offences, and the institution and implementation of internal controls in respect of payroll processing and payment of salaries.

The investigation and assessment cover all employees on government payroll and their respective banks and other deposit taking financial institutions. The investigation and assessment are being carried out in two phases. Phase I covers Ghana Education Service and Ghana Health Service. Phase II covers Ministries, Departments, all other Agencies and Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies (MDAs/MMDAs).

The Government of Ghana payroll business process is intended to ensure that only eligible employees are paid deserving salaries. Two key quality assurance activities form the foundation of the process, *viz* –

- i. the validation of and by management units to confirm that staff are at post and have earned the assigned amount; and
- ii. the payment of salaries into bank accounts of employees as designated by employees on the payroll.

The robustness of the intended quality assurance activities has been seriously challenged in the past few years with the reckoning that some persons who are deceased, or retired, or vacated their posts are being validated as alive and at post and are being paid as if they are at post and performing designated duties.

The imperativeness of a wider and more rigorous review of government payroll data became obvious. This birthed the ongoing collaborative investigation and assessment by the OSP and CAGD. Two major activities are being undertaken by the OSP and CAGD, *viz* –

- i. reconciliation of staff paid on the government payroll system and the nominal rolls of MDAs/MMDAs; and
- ii. confirmation of the account holders' names on the final payroll payment report with their respective banks.

To facilitate the roll-out of the investigation and assessment throughout the country, a pilot exercise was carried out in the Northern Region (covering educational institutions under Ghana Education Service and the Tamale Teaching Hospital) by a joint team, comprising investigators, tracers, and assessors from the OSP and selected staff of the Payroll Processing Directorate of CAGD between December 2023 and April 2024. On 20 May 2024, the OSP and the CAGD published an investigation report on the pilot exercise.

The report stated that the team investigated and assessed 1265 persons represented on Government payroll and flagged as high-risk of suspected corruption and corruption-related activities. The data of the flagged persons were transmitted to the respective banks, which were directed by the Special Prosecutor to promptly withhold the salaries of the affected persons commencing from January 2024. The team evaluated and analysed the nominal roll data of the target institutions in respect of the affected persons. Subsequently, the field unit of the team carried out field investigation to ascertain the status of the affected persons.

The joint team observed that the payroll system in the Northern Region (covering educational institutions under Ghana Education Service and the Tamale Teaching Hospital) is characterised by an alarming number of unauthorised and inactive validators. Indeed, most of the management

units were found to be validating persons with unauthorised and inactive validators' credentials. That is to say, the credentials of deceased and retired validators were being actively used in the validation process. Then again, transferred validators were purporting to engage in validation with their inactive previous credentials.

It was also observed that transferred and released staff were being validated by their previous management units, creating the clear danger of unattested active or continuous engagement by the respective institutions. Also, some schools had no management units to validate staff. The persons affiliated with the schools were either being validated by their previous affiliated schools or were being offloaded to the nearest schools for validation. This created grave problems of unreliability of the validation process, especially in respect of the status of the nominal rolls of the district education directorates and the monitoring of actual attendance to duty.

In one instance, it was discovered that a non-existent entity was being passed off as functional primary school; and the non-existent contrived entity was represented as staffed and the purported staff were being validated monthly and being paid salaries. Further, some headteachers and heads of units were validating some persons whose whereabouts were unknown to them. Egregiously, some validators were validating persons who were, to the knowledge of the validators, deceased, retired or vacated their posts.

Out of the sampled high-risk number of 1265 persons represented on the payroll, the joint investigation and assessment cleared 1020 persons as regularly validated.

The OSP and CAGD are engaged in enhanced investigation into the educational institutions under Ghana Education Service in the Northern Region and the Tamale Teaching Hospital aimed at the prosecution of persons who promoted the non-existent school; validated deceased, untraceable, and retired persons and persons who have vacated their posts.

The OSP is taking steps to recover unearned salaries paid in respect of deceased, untraceable, and retired persons and persons who have vacated their

posts. Further, the OSP and CAGD are engaged in the process of directing internal control mechanisms in respect of payroll processing to substantially reduce the incidence of the processing and payment of unearned salaries. The OSP and CAGD would proceed by extending the investigation to the remaining fifteen regions of the Republic under Phase I of the exercise.

Ghana Education Service

The Office has commenced extensive investigation into suspected corruption and corruption-related offences in respect of the sale of Ghana Education Service (GES) appointment letters and employment to applicants. The investigation covers a network of some staff of GES and middlemen suspected to be engaged in the use of public office for profit through the sale of appointment letters and employment to applicants.

Strategic Mobilization Ghana Limited/Ghana Revenue Authority

On 19 December 2023, the Office commenced investigation into contractual arrangements between Strategic Mobilization Ghana Limited (a company registered in Ghana) and Ghana Revenue Authority for the stated objective of the enhancement of revenue assurance in the downstream petroleum sector, upstream petroleum production, and minerals and metals resources value chain.

The investigation is based on a complaint filed by *The Fourth Estate* (a project of Media Foundation for West Africa) represented by three (3) journalists – Evans Aziamor-Mensah, Adwoa Adobea-Owusu, and Manasseh Azure Awuni. The complaint alleged possible corruption, including breaches of the Public Procurement Act, in respect of the contractual arrangements.

On 29 December 2023, the President of the Republic appointed an accounting firm, KPMG, to conduct an audit of the contracts and related transactions between Strategic Mobilization Ghana Limited and Ghana Revenue Authority intended at assessing the propriety of procurement and contracting processes as well as the appropriateness of cost value analysis in the performance of the contracts. KPMG submitted the outcome of its audit to the President on 27 March 2024.

The Office has incorporated the outcome of the KPMG audit in its ongoing investigation.

State Lands, Stool Lands, and other Vested Lands

The Office is proceeding with investigation into the appropriation, sale and lease of State-owned lands and properties to individuals and corporate bodies since 1993. The investigation covers all lands and properties that fall under the direct stewardship of the Lands Commission; the Ministry of Works and Housing; all other Ministries; State Housing Company; State Owned Companies; and other State agencies.

The investigation also covers the management of vested lands and all public lands over which the State's ownership or control has been relinquished and the conditions of release.

Further, the investigation covers the sale, lease, grant, and disposal by the Lands Commission to individuals and corporate entities of some parcels of land and bungalows occupied by the Judicial Service of Ghana.

Tema Oil Refinery and Tema Energy and Processing Limited

The Office is proceeding with analysis of the risk of corruption in respect of a proposed partnership agreement between Tema Oil Refinery and Tema Energy and Processing Limited.

The Special Prosecutor has directed the Management of Tema Oil Refinery to immediately suspend the proposed partnership agreement, ongoing negotiations, operations, and all other ancillary activities arising out of and consequent upon the proposed partnership agreement until otherwise advised by the Special Prosecutor.

Electricity Company of Ghana Limited

Investigation is ongoing in respect of suspected corruption and corruption-related offences regarding the termination of a Distribution, Loss Reduction and Associated Network Improvement Project contract between the

Electricity Company of Ghana Limited and Beijing Xiao Cheng Technology (BXC).

Illegal Mining

Investigation is ongoing in respect of suspected corruption and corruption-related offences regarding illegal mining – referred to as *Galamsey*. The investigation targets some officials of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Forestry Commission. It also targets the activities and expenditure of the dissolved Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM), especially in respect of the seizure and management of excavators, machinery, road vehicles, and gold nuggets.

The investigation further targets the activities of Akonta Mining Limited and other companies; nationals of foreign countries allegedly involved in illegal mining; and allegations of corruption and corruption-related offences against some Municipal and District Chief Executives.

National Sports Authority

Investigation is ongoing in respect of suspected corruption and corruption-related offences regarding contracts awarded by the National Sports Authority for the provision of goods and services to the following entities:

- Acoma Green Consult
- Tabee Gh. Limited
- Wanschie Car Rentals
- Obiri Car Rentals
- No Farmer No Fortune
- STC Clinic
- Bobina Solutions
- Mum & Sons Signature

Ghana Water Company Limited

Investigation is ongoing in respect of suspected corruption and corruption-related offences regarding contracts awarded by Ghana Water Company Limited for the provision of goods and services to the following entities:

- Nayak 96 Enterprise
- Dencom Construction Works
- Edmus Limited
- Jomaks
- Espab Construction Limited
- Roger More Construction Limited
- Velech Enterprise
- Intermec Gh. Limited
- A.J.I. Trading & Construction Limited

Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority

Following the publication by the Office of an investigation report on 3 August 2022 in respect of a complaint against Labianca Company Limited and the Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority, the Special Prosecutor directed the commencement of a wider investigation into the issuance of customs advance rulings and markdowns of benchmark values. Investigation is also ongoing in respect of suspected corruption and corruption-related offences regarding the auction sales of vehicles and other goods by the Customs Division between 1 July 2016 and 15 August 2022.

Bank of Ghana

Investigation is ongoing in respect of the banking and financial sector crisis that precipitated the collapse of some banks and financial institutions and the financial sector clean up and recapitalisation reforms. The investigation targets alleged corruption and corruption-related offences perpetrated by some officials of the Bank of Ghana, banks, specialised deposit-taking institutions, and financial holding companies.

Estate of Kwadwo Owusu-Afriyie alias Sir John

Investigation is ongoing in respect of alleged improper acquisition of state protected land at the Achimota Forest enclave and the Sakumono Ramsar site by the deceased former Chief Executive of the Forestry Commission.

Other Cases

The Office is also investigating one hundred and sixty-two (162) other cases at various levels of consideration. These may be publicised if the Special Prosecutor determines that they are within the mandate of the Office and that they should be moved past the preliminary investigation stage. This is a policy intended to protect the privacy of individuals and the business operations of institutions and companies, and to avoid unnecessary stigmatisation.

IV Prevention of Corruption and Savings

Government of Ghana Payroll Administration

The joint investigation by the Office of the Special Prosecutor and the Controller and Accountant General's Department into Government Payroll Administration resulted in the blockade in January 2024 of a total amount of Two Million Eight Hundred and Fifty-Four Thousand One Hundred and Forty-Four cedis Eighty pesewas (GHC2,854,144.80), which was traced as representing unearned monthly salaries being paid to persons who are deceased, retired, vacated their posts, flagged as missing staff, or whose whereabouts are unknown (colloquially referred to as "Ghost Names").

The blockade of the amount of Two Million Eight Hundred and Fifty-Four Thousand One Hundred and Forty-Four cedis Eighty pesewas (GHC2,854,144.80) and the removal from Government Payroll of the corresponding deceased, retired, post vacators, the missing, and those whose whereabouts are unknown has saved the Republic an amount of Thirty-Four Million Two Hundred and Forty-Nine Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-Seven cedis Six pesewas (GHC34,249,737.6) for the 2024 financial year, and future savings of that amount (in addition to future periodic upward pay adjustments) for every year that the unearned-salaries-amount would have remained undetected but for the joint investigation and assessment by the OSP and CAGD.

Youth in Anti-Corruption Campaign

The Office, in collaboration with Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) and other civil society organisations, has been actively engaging the youth through anti-corruption training programmes in Senior High Schools. This initiative employs interactive education based on the learner-led model of enabling students to lead the learning process. The primary objective is to transform the deeply ingrained culture of corruption in the country and prepare students to assume the role of anti-corruption champions.

The Office has undertaken anti-corruption sensitisation in ten schools (both public and private) and tertiary institutions over the period, interacting with about 5000 students in the process. The sessions covered the nature of corruption and its effects, the mandate of the Office, anti-corruption values of transparency and accountability and whistleblowing, including OSP contacts for reporting corruption.

The Campaign is also engaging the youth on anti-corruption via social media. The handle “YAC_OSP” is active on X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. The Office has also extended an invitation to the youth to work more actively with the OSP as anti-corruption champions.

Engagement with Religious Bodies

The Office, acknowledging that it requires the support of myriad stakeholders in respect of its corruption prevention mandate, has been undertaking outreach activities to connect with various segments of society, including religious bodies.

On the back of this drive, the Special Prosecutor was hosted by the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) to speak at the 2024 Heads of Churches and Organisations Conference on 15 February 2024 at the Pentecost Convention Centre in Gomoa Fetteh. The Conference was attended by 153 heads of churches and principal officers of the GPCC.

The Special Prosecutor appealed to the church leaders to employ their reach and influence to disseminate anti-corruption messages to their congregations. He further requested their partnership in designing and implementing anti-corruption programmes targeted at the Christian youth.

Beaming the Dark Corridors of Elections

Vote buying during public elections has become commonplace in Ghana. This threat to democracy is starkly obvious. When money buys the outcome of elections, the entire integrity of the purpose of elections is completely eroded. The influence of money in elections is also a precursor to corruption as various persons with commercial interests invest in specific candidates with the express or implicit understanding that they will be rewarded with commercial packages, such as inflated public contracts, when those candidates assume power.

Commencing in January 2024, the OSP has been issuing wanted notices and arresting for questioning persons filmed allegedly engaging in vote selling and vote buying. It was noticeable that elections held after the intervention by the Office showed drastically reduced incidence of overt vote buying and vote selling. The Office is intensifying its repression and suppression efforts to narrow the space for election-related corruption.

The Office's investigation into alleged election-related corruption has been accompanied by stakeholder engagement and education. The Office engaged political parties to alert their members to corruption in elections and the readiness of the Office to tackle perpetrators. On 7 February 2024, the Office engaged sixty-four media personnel and civil society representatives on the electoral corruption offences and the mandate of the Office to investigate and prosecute suspected offenders for such offences. The event was hosted by Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC).

Media and Public Engagements

The Office actively engaged the public through various channels, including traditional media such as television and radio, as well as social media platforms. The engagement is designed to educate the public on the mandate of the Office, promote anti-corruption initiatives nationwide, expound the Office's actions and directives, and counteract propaganda and misinformation.

V Miscellaneous Activities

- 5.1 The Economic and Organised Crime Office, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, and the Office of the Special Prosecutor hosted the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa between 6 - 11 May 2024 at the Kempinski Gold Coast Hotel in Accra. The Office presented on its initiatives, success stories and challenges.
- 5.2 Selected staff of the Office participated in several training programmes in-country and abroad.

VI Collaboration

- 6.1 The joint investigative work of the clean-up of Government Payroll undertaken by the Office and the Controller and Accountant General's Department is further proof of the versatility and capability of the Office in partnering relevant institutions to reduce corruption in Ghana. This partnership has yielded millions in savings for the Republic.
- 6.2 The Office engaged in collaborative efforts with civil society organisations, notably Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), and Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) on various outreach initiatives focused particularly on combating electoral corruption. These partnerships are intended to raise awareness, promote transparency, and foster public trust in electoral processes through targeted educational programmes and advocacy campaigns. The Office, through these partnerships, sought to strengthen its impact in addressing electoral integrity issues and ensuring fair and credible elections.

VII Conclusion

The Office has made substantial strides in fulfilling its comprehensive mandate, notwithstanding ever-present resource and existential challenges. Nationwide, prosecution efforts have reached pivotal stages; corruption-

prevention initiatives are thriving; and asset recovery and savings for the Republic have reached notable levels. The Office of the Special Prosecutor is now functioning creditably as it was intended by Parliament. The Office will continue to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, accountability and transparency in serving the interests of the Republic.

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