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PRESS RELEASE

Corruption Watch Petitions Office of Special Prosecutor to Probe Alleged Acquisition of State Lands by Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie, Former CEO of Forestry Commission

On Tuesday, May 24, 2022, Corruption Watch Ghana petitioned the Special Prosecutor to investigate the alleged acquisition of several acres of State lands situated within the Achimota Forest and at Ramsar sites in Sakumono by three artificial and two natural persons.

A significant section of the general public has been riled by surfaced documents containing details of the alleged acquisition of lands situated within the Achimota Forest and Sakumono Ramsar site by the three artificial persons, namely Jakaypros Limited, Fasoh Limited, DML Limited, and the two natural persons namely Charles Owusu, an officer of the Forestry Commission and Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie, popularly known as Sir John, now deceased, who served as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Forestry Commission from March 2017 until July 2020.

The particulars of the alleged acquisition of the alleged State lands by the deceased were provided in the Last Will and Testament of Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie executed on May 21, 2020, in which the said testator deposed that he owns or jointly owns:

- A 5.541-acre land located in the Achimota Forest held in the name of Jakaypros Limited
- A 0.987-acre land located in the Achimota Forest held in the name of Fasoh Limited
- A piece of land located in the Achimota Forest jointly owned with one Charles Owusu
- A piece of land held in the name of DML Limited located in the Achimota forest, and
- A 5.07- acre land located at the Ramsar area in Sakumono, Greater Accra

Corruption Watch's petition for the investigation of these acquisitions is premised on the provisions of Section 1, Sub-section 3 of the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959), which mandates the Office of the Special Prosecutor to "investigate alleged or suspected cases of corruption or a corruption-related offence involving public officers, Politically Exposed Persons..."

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It is worth emphasizing that the deceased was a public officer and a politically exposed person per the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959), when he served as the CEO of the Forestry Commission and singularly or jointly allegedly acquired the said lands with other natural and artificial persons during the period he was the CEO of the said Commission. One such person was Charles Owusu, also a public officer, and a politically exposed person.

Furthermore, Corruption Watch draws inspiration from Section 179C of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29), which makes it an offence for a person to use public office for profit. We note that the offence is committed by both the person who holds public office who dishonestly abuses the office for private gain or benefit and other persons who collaborate with the public officer to so abuse the office.

Corruption Watch is specifically requesting the Office of the Special Prosecutor to investigate:

1. Whether the Republic of Ghana owned the said lands at the time of their alleged acquisition by Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie, Jakaypros Limited, Fasoh Limited, DML Limited, and Charles Owusu,
2. The circumstances of the alleged acquisition,
3. The Beneficial Owners of the companies implicated in this transaction and compliance with the reporting requirements of such persons where they are PEPs under sections 13, 35, and 126 of the Companies Act 2019 (Act 992),
4. Who authorized the alleged sale or purchase of the lands?
5. Whether the interests in the lands have been registered?
6. Under what authority did the person(s)/ institution authorize the sale or purchase?
7. Whether any amount of money was paid for the said lands, and to whom?
8. Whether the politically exposed person(s) and public officers who own these properties have complied with the Code of Conduct for Public Officers under Chapter Four of the 1992 Constitution, particularly relating to Article 286 of the Constitution?
9. The propriety or otherwise of the said sale or purchase?
10. Whether other natural or artificial persons who are politically exposed persons have also acquired lands illegally within the Achimota Forest and Ramsar site in Sakumono, and
11. Any other related matters

Corruption Watch Ghana is an initiative by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and a coalition of anti-corruption civil society organizations including, Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Africa Center for International Law and Accountability (ACILA) and Multimedia Platforms Joy FM and Adom FM as our main media partners.

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