



GHANA CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

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Press Release

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CDD-GHANA CALLS ON CHIEF JUSTICE TO UPHOLD JUDICIAL IMPARTIALITY AND AVOID PERCEPTIONS OF PARTISAN BIAS

The Ghana Center for Democratic Development ("the Center") today urged the Chief Justice, His Lordship Justice Paul Baffoe-Bonnie, to exercise the highest possible restraint and discretion in his public engagement and commentary, following remarks he made on September 2, 2026, during visits to the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and the Minerals Income Investment Fund (MIIF) alongside members of the Council for Legal Education and Training.

At MIIF, the Chief Justice lauded current management while questioning the organization's performance over "the past eight years." At SSNIT, he contrasted current operations with past attempts to sell off certain properties in the organization's portfolio of assets, openly lamenting how the management of the nation's affairs had previously "sunk so low."

By explicitly contrasting performance under the current administration with its predecessor's, the Chief Justice crossed a vital constitutional line into partisan validation. Such commentary creates a perception of political bias, compromises the Judiciary's non-partisan mandate, and risks breaching the Code of Conduct for Judges and Magistrates.

These remarks come at a perilous moment for the bench. Public trust in the Judiciary has fallen to its lowest point since Afrobarometer tracking began in 1999. The Round 10 (2024) survey found that only 35% of citizens trust the courts — a 21-percentage-point decline since 2012 — while 62% believe judicial decisions are routinely swayed by powerful interests, and roughly half doubt that an ordinary person can obtain a fair trial.

Judges are not expected to withdraw from public life, but their office demands the self-restraint needed to preserve public confidence. Justice must not only be done but be seen to be done — a principle that requires the unequivocal appearance of neutrality, not merely its substance. To safeguard institutional integrity, the Center urges the Chief Justice to lead by example: adhere strictly to the Code of Conduct, and confine public

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appearances, including engagements with other state institutions, to matters that directly serve court administration or legal development. The Judicial Council and the Association of Judges and Magistrates must also strengthen internal oversight, holding all judicial officers accountable regardless of rank.

The Judiciary is the bedrock of Ghana's constitutional order; when its integrity is compromised, democratic stability is put at risk. Judicial authority depends entirely on public confidence — a resource that is already running dangerously low — and no explanation offered after the fact can repair damage that better judgment would have avoided in the first place. Credibility is preserved by conduct that leaves no room for doubt. The Center calls on the Chief Justice to reflect on the solemn duties of his office, align his conduct with its ethical demands, and uphold the Code of Conduct to restore the public trust essential to the administration of justice.

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About CDD-Ghana

Established in 1998, Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) is an independent not-for-profit think-and-do-tank that works through research, policy engagement, thought leadership, and civic dialogue and partnerships to promote and strengthen democracy, good governance, and inclusive development in Ghana and the rest of Africa. A founding Core Partner (and Ghana National Partner) of Afrobarometer, CDD-Ghana is also the convener and secretariat for the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), West Africa Election Observers Network (WAEON), and West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS).

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