

7th February, 2026

PRESS RELEASE

Condemning Vote-Buying in the Ayawaso East NDC Parliamentary Primary and Calling for Swift Accountability

We strongly condemn the reported acts of vote-buying during the Ayawaso East Constituency parliamentary primary, including the alleged distribution of items such as 32-inch television sets and other material inducements to influence voters. Such practices undermine internal party democracy and weaken public confidence in Ghana's electoral system.

These actions constitute bribery under Section 33(1) of the Representation of the People Law, 1992 (PNDCL 284), which criminalizes the giving of money, gifts, or anything of value to induce a voter to vote or refrain from voting, or to secure the election of a candidate. The law applies not only to national elections but also to internal party electoral processes.

Beyond their illegality, vote-buying practices have disproportionate and harmful gendered effects. They entrench money politics that systematically disadvantage women, young women, and other marginalized groups who often lack access to the financial resources required to compete in inducement-driven contests. This reinforces structural inequalities, discourages ethical leadership, and narrows political participation to those with economic power rather than ideas, competence, and public service commitment.

We take note of the National Democratic Congress' public announcement that it has initiated an investigation into the alleged incidents. While this step is welcome, we call on the party leadership to ensure a swift, transparent, and credible conclusion of the investigation, and to apply appropriate sanctions to any candidates or actors found culpable, in line with party rules and national law.

We further urge all political parties to:

- Act decisively to dismantle vote-buying networks within their structures;
- Enforce internal regulations consistently and without favoritism; and
- Commit to reforms that promote clean, inclusive, and gender-responsive political competition.

Ghana's democracy cannot thrive where leadership is bought rather than earned. Internal party elections must reflect the free will of delegates and create fair pathways for women and marginalized groups to participate meaningfully in political life.

Signed:

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