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PRESS RELEASE -GLOSARGG

Should Ghana Protect the Office of the Special Prosecutor, or should we Undermine the Watchdog?

By Francis Ahovi, Executive Secretary, Global Security for Africa Research and Good Governance (GLOSARGG)

GLOSARGG, observes with keen attention that the ongoing discourse surrounding the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) reveals more than mere disagreement; it exposes a troubling pattern that risks undermining Ghana's anti-corruption architecture.

The Office of the Special Prosecutor is facing questions from people across the spectrum. Some people are even trying to discredit the work of the Special Prosecutor. It is good to question things in a democracy. The way people are criticizing the Office of the Special Prosecutor now is a concern. It makes us wonder if people really want to hold institutions accountable.

GLOSARGG wishes to remind all and sundry of the evocative phrase, "*the mother serpent of corruption*," often used to describe the deeply entrenched nature of corruption in public life. Yet, the critical question remains: are current attacks on the OSP aimed at dismantling this "serpent," or are they inadvertently protecting it? The Office of the Special Prosecutor is supposed to help stop corruption so we need to think about what these attacks mean for the Office of the Special Prosecutor and its work.

The thing that is really worrying is that people are using the law in a way that's not fair. They are interpreting the law in a way that helps them avoid getting in trouble than doing what is right. This is not moving backwards but it is also a direct attack on the rule of law, which is essential for a democracy to work.

GLOSARGG further gathers that, sometimes people talking about issues start to make it personal. While it is good to be passionate about things making legal and institutional debates personal can make it hard for people to think clearly and make decisions. This dynamic feeds into a broader culture often described as the "*pull him down syndrome*," which undermines collective national progress.

It is clear what will happen if we weaken the Office of the Special Prosecutor. If we criticize it much or put too much political pressure on it or if people lose confidence in it, it will not just affect that one office. It will hurt the system of good governance, transparency and accountability.

GLOSARGG looking at things from a security perspective wishes to caution that, *if we weaken the institutions that fight corruption:*

- 1. It will make it easier for crime and illegal money flows to happen which will hurt national security and the economy.*
- 2. People may start to lose trust in the government and become violent because they will think the government cannot provide justice and accountability.*
- 3. This makes it easy for organized crime and illegal money to grow, which is bad for the country's safety and economy.*
- 4. The people will start to lose trust in the government if this keeps happening. They might even get angry and protest. This is because they will think the government cannot make sure justice is served and people are held responsible for their actions.*

GLOSARGG wishes to conclude by stressing that if Ghana wants to fight corruption it needs to stop weakening its institutions and start making them stronger. This means giving the Office of the Special Prosecutor the power to prosecute crimes, be independent and be able to withstand challenges. *The Office of the Special Prosecutor is important and weakening it will have consequences.* We need to support the Office of the Special Prosecutor to ensure that it can do its job properly. If this does not happen it will set an example that the institutions that are supposed to fight corruption can themselves be hurt by politics and legal issues.

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