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STATEMENT OF THE GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ON THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S RECENT PUBLIC REMARKS

The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference has followed with interest the recent remarks made by the Chief Justice, Justice Paul Baffoe-Bonnie, during his visits to the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and the Minerals Income Investment Fund (MIIF) on 2 September 2026. We offer these reflections not to inflame a controversy, but in the hope of contributing calmly to the nation's understanding of judicial ethics and public trust.

There is nothing improper, in itself, in the Chief Justice visiting public institutions, acquainting himself with their operations, or commending genuine improvement. These institutions belong to the people of Ghana, and every citizen, the Chief Justice included, has a legitimate interest in seeing them run efficiently and accountably. The difficulty lies not in the visits themselves, but in the political character that some of his remarks, in particular his reference to the "past eight years", can reasonably be understood to have acquired. In our national context, such a phrase is readily heard as a comparison between the present administration and its predecessor. What may have begun as a straightforward assessment of institutional performance thus took on, at least in appearance, the character of a partisan judgment.

We note that this concern has already been raised publicly, including by the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, which cautioned that such remarks risk creating an impression of political endorsement and could weaken confidence in judicial impartiality. We note, too, that the Judicial Service has since clarified that the Chief Justice's observations were made in good faith, without intention to compromise judicial independence, and has reaffirmed his commitment to the integrity of the Judiciary and to equality before the law. We receive that clarification in good faith.

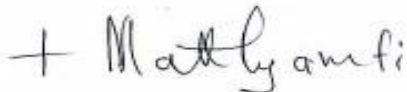
Nevertheless, we believe the episode raises a question that deserves the sober attention of the whole nation, not only of the Judiciary. The office of Chief Justice is not that of an ordinary public commentator. The courts may at any time be called upon to adjudicate disputes involving the Government, political parties, or public institutions, and citizens must be able to approach them without wondering whether the Chief Justice has, even inadvertently, aligned himself with one political era over another. Judicial independence is not only a matter of actual impartiality; it also depends on the visible, unmistakable appearance of impartiality. A judge, and especially the head of the Judiciary, must be, and must be seen to be, above the partisan contest.

We wish to be clear that none of this amounts to a suggestion that the Chief Justice is partisan, or that the Judiciary has been compromised. Such conclusions would go well beyond the evidence available to us, and calls for his resignation on this basis alone strike us as disproportionate to the offence. The Chief Justice, like any citizen, is entitled to his own convictions. The question is not whether he may hold them, but whether his public conduct in office should ever create room for reasonable doubt about where he stands.

We respectfully suggest that the better course would have been to commend the achievements of SSNIT and MIIF on their own merits, encouraging continued efficiency, accountability, and service to the Ghanaian people, without setting one administration's record against another's. The same positive message could have been delivered without inviting the very perception now at issue.

We appeal, finally, to all sides to receive this moment as an occasion for reflection rather than an opportunity for partisan advantage. The governing party ought not to treat criticism of the Chief Justice as an attack on its own record, nor should the opposition treat his remarks as proof that the courts have been captured. The same standard of restraint must be asked of every public office holder, regardless of who occupies it or which party is in government.

We continue to hold the Judiciary, and all who serve the nation in public office, in our prayers, and we pray that God may grant our leaders the wisdom to serve truth, justice, and the unity of our common home.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Matthew Kwasi Gyamfi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MOST REV. MATTHEW KWASI GYAMFI
BISHOP OF SUNYANI AND PRESIDENT,
GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2026