



**NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE**

**NIA RESPONDS TO HON. OMANE BOAMAH ON PILOT GHANA CARD
REGISTRATION EXERCISE IN PUSIGA, UPPER EAST REGION**

A. INTRODUCTION

The attention of the National Identification Authority (NIA) has been drawn to a Facebook post of Tuesday, 21st May 2024 attributed to Hon. Dr. Omane Boamah of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). In the said post, Dr. Omane Boamah makes statements to the effect that:

1. The NPP has criminalized state institutions (including the NIA);
2. The NIA headed by Dr. Bawumia's bosom friend Ken Attafuah has strangely chosen this voter registration period to embark on a special pilot program to issue Ghana Cards to Ghanaians living along the borders of Ghana and Burkina Faso in Pusiga;
3. The NIA "wants to give the people driven away from the Pusiga registration centre Ghana cards in order for them to register within these final 7 days and vote on December 07";
4. This registration exercise in the Pusiga District is a politically motivated enterprise "masked as a collaboration with IOM", and its purpose is "simply to aid illegal voters to embark on the last lap of the voter registration exercise"; and
5. The NIA is "issuing cards to minors" and "misrepresenting their ages" in the limited voter registration exercise being conducted by the Electoral Commission.

At the end of the said post, Dr. Omane Boamah poses the question, "... *what purpose does the NIA serve?* "

B. RESPONSES, DENIALS AND ASSURANCES

The NIA flatly denies each and every one of the allegations specified above, as well as the insinuation that the NIA's decisions and actions spring from a malevolent seedbed. Specifically, the NIA wishes to assure the public that, contrary to Dr. Omane Boamah's wild assertions, the NIA has acted in utmost good faith, in the national interest and in accordance with the law. Accordingly, NIA reacts as follows to the above allegations:

1. Criminalization of NIA: The NIA has NOT been criminalized by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) or any other entity whatsoever and howsoever described. The Governing Board and Senior Management of the NIA comprise men and women of sterling integrity and unalloyed patriotism who will not countenance the criminalization of NIA's operations by any entity or yield to any improper considerations in the discharge of their duties;

2. Malicious Timing of Pusiga Registration: The idea for the registration of Ghanaians in the Pusiga District was first mooted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on 30th August 2023 following a Stakeholder Consultation on border security along the Ghana-Burkina Faso border conducted by the Ministry of the Interior at the Fiesta Royal Hotel in Accra. A long series of negotiations and preparations eventually culminated in the commencement of the registration exercise on Monday, 20th May 2024, with the IOM bearing the entire cost of the operations, namely: surveying and selecting registration centres; deploying personnel and equipment; organizing and conducting the registration exercise; remunerating the staff; supervising and monitoring the registration exercise; and retrieving equipment and personnel after the exercise. The collaboration is supported by a Purchase Order for General Services duly executed by the lawful representatives of the two parties, NIA and IOM, on 3rd May 2024.

3. Registration of Unqualified Applicants: The NIA has never sought to equip or empower any unqualified persons with the Ghana Card to enable them "to register within these final 7 days and vote on December 07". The NIA is unaware of any persons having been driven away by NDC officials from any Electoral Commission (EC) registration Centre in Pusiga. The arrest of an EC officer for allegedly using a single Ghana Card to register multiple individuals has got nothing to do with NIA; the conduct of that EC officer is unrelated to NIA in any shape or form. The NIA does not condone any illegal activity and is not involved in the activities of the EC or its officers.

4. Collaboration with IOM is a Mask for Partisan Political Enterprise: The registration exercise is an honest operation in response to a formal request by the respected and credible IOM; it reflects the responsiveness of NIA to well-considered proposals from stakeholders for expanding registration options for Ghanaians. The collaboration between NIA and IOM is not a mask for anything but an unqualified human good being offered by two noble institutions in the service of Mother Ghana. NIA unequivocally denies that the purpose of the collaboration is to aid illegality and firmly asserts that NIA has not aided, is not aiding, and will not aid any "illegal voters to embark on the last lap of the voter registration exercise".

For the avoidance of doubt, NIA further states categorically that the Ghana Card registration exercise in the Pusiga District is lawful, proper, necessary and wholly wholesome; it is focused on ensuring that vulnerable Ghanaian populations, particularly those living in communities straddling the Ghana-Burkina Faso border, are able to register for the Ghana Card if they have not already done so, in order to ensure their accurate identification, facilitate their easy crossing of the border, enable them access various public services and ensure their security within the border area. As the IOM stated in its letter to NIA dated 27th March 2024:

“... Without the Ghana card or any other means of confirming the identity of border residents seeking to cross, conflict arises with Border Management Agencies (BMAs), leading to the usage of irregular crossing points by the border residents.

To help address this challenge IOM is requesting the NIA to support registering and issuing Ghana cards to the border residents in Pusiga and its environs to facilitate cross-border movements by the residents. ... NIA can leverage on this opportunity to issue Ghana Cards which have been printed but are yet to be collected by already registered applicants.”

The Pusiga District registration exercise is a pilot exercise which may be extended to other communities along the Ghana-Burkina Faso border if at the conclusion of the current exercise, it is deemed necessary to do so.

5. Issuance of Cards to Minors: It is absolutely untrue that in the current EC limited voter registration exercise, the NIA is “issuing cards to minors” and “misrepresenting their ages”. This is a most shocking and unfair allegation, and NIA urges the Hon. Omane Boamah to report to the Ghana Police Service the conduct of any NIA registration official he knows to have engaged in such criminal acts.

The NIA remains committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and transparency in its operations. The registration process involves rigorous biographic and biometric data collection and verification procedures to ensure that only eligible Ghanaians are registered as such and issued with Ghana Cards. Allegations of registering and issuing cards to ineligible persons, such as minors, must be reported to the police; such ineligible applicants can, and must, be challenged by any person who has reason to doubt their eligibility. NIA urges Dr. Omane Boamah and those who have such information to obey the law and do the needful.

6. What Purpose Does the NIA Serve? Dr. Omane Boamah once served as the Minister responsible for the National Identification System. The NIA operated under his ministerial supervision during his tenure in office as Minister of Communications, and he should be the first person to know what purpose NIA serves. NIA likes to think that his question is a rhetorical one, but in case that NIA is mistaken, NIA hereby serves him, most respectfully, with a menu of purposes NIA provides in order to promote the economic, social and political development of Ghana:

- a. Registering all Ghanaians living in Ghana and abroad and eligible foreign nationals permanently resident in Ghana onto the National Identity Register;**
- b. Issuing Ghanaians and eligible foreigners with ultra-modern, chip-embedded, dual-interface biometric National Identity Cards commonly known as Ghana Cards for several significant functionalities;**
- c. Ensuring the accuracy, integrity, confidentiality and security of data collected;**

d. Creating and maintaining the National Identity Register; and

e. Making data in its custody available to persons or institutions authorized by law to access the data.

In keeping with these purposes, NIA has, since February 2017, revamped the National Identification System and, through a mix of mass registration, mop-up registration, special card issuance blitz, and special registration exercises (including institutional and household registration) succeeded in achieving the following milestones:

1. registered 17,904,157 Ghanaians aged 15 years and above between 29th April 2019 and 16th May 2024. This represents a substantial increase from the 4,554,528 registered between July 2008 and January 2017;
2. issued 17,152,511 Ghana Cards to registered Ghanaians between 29th April 2019 and 16th May 2024 compared to the 900,000 cards issued from January 2009 to January 2017;
3. Established 16 Regional Offices and 276 Operational District Offices coterminous with the political constituencies in the country, including SALL;
4. Ensured data integration and harmonization with various user agencies including SSNIT, NHIA, GRA, DVLA, Passport Office, National Service Scheme, Students Loan Trust Fund, resulting in significant cost savings and a movement toward the establishment of a single source of truth in identity management;
5. Implemented, in partnership with Identity Management Systems II Limited, its technical partner under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) Agreement, a personal Identity Verification System Platform (IVSP) which has enabled over 120 million verifications to be conducted since January 2020 without a single hitch; and
6. Successfully on-bordered onto the IVSP various institutions including all 25 Universal Banks, 145 Rural Banks, 25 Savings & Loans companies, 16 FinTech companies, 5 Finance Houses, 5 Microfinance institutions and all telecommunication companies in the country to facilitate personal identification in real time.

CONCLUSION

The intervention by Hon. Dr. Omane Boamah in his said Facebook post is most unfortunate as it seeks to highlight the evils of deliberate miscommunication and deception of the public. Beyond the truth of (a) friendship between Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia and Prof. Ken Attafuaah and (b) collaboration between NIA and IOM to register Ghanaians in Pusiga and environs, there is no evidentiary basis to any of the wild claims and conjectures made by Dr. Omane Boamah. The public should not be dissuaded by Dr. Boamah's deliberate falsehoods

against the NIA. His allegations are all spurious and unfounded, and the public is urged to disregard them.

Lawfully and boldly, the NIA will continue to pursue its statutory mandate of registering all Ghanaians at home and abroad and issuing them with the Ghana Card in order to advance the economic, social and political development of our country. It will not achieve these ends alone but in partnership with others, as by law prescribed. For the avoidance of doubt, NIA will continue to carry out its mandate of registering Ghanaians in Pusiga and environs aimed at expanding access to the Ghana Card and thereby improving identification and border security in that part of Ghana.

End.

22nd May 2024

Corporate Affairs Directorate

NIA