

COMMENTARY ON ASSIN-NORTH: LESSONS FOR 2024 PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

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The people of Assin-North on Tuesday 27th June 2023 exercised their rights of electing a capable citizen of the land to represent them in Parliament.

Campaigns prior to the election were characterized by denigrating pronouncements against the elected Member of Parliament, Hon James Gyakye Quayson, with the President of the Republic, Nana Akuffo-Addo, questioning his credibility and describing him as a man who was going to jail.

He articulated, 'We should not support or vote for individuals who are entangled in legal controversies that may eventually lead them to face imprisonment'.

The pre-election activities also saw sudden multiple commencement of development projects in Assin-North all aimed at influencing the electorates against voting for James Gyakye Quayson.

Despite these patronizing agenda, the people of Assin-North voted massively for James Gyakye Quayson with 57.4% winning votes.

While I congratulate the elected Member of Parliament for maintaining his humble demeanor in the midst of the denigrating pronouncements and persevering in his re-entry journey to Parliament, I wish to draw attention to three lessons from the Assin-North scenario which must guide us as citizens of Ghana as we prepare for the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

Firstly, with a resolute mindset, the most competent person to rescue us from our fast-sinking economy would be elected in spite of vote buying and intimidation.

The people of Assin-North wanted a tried and tested development-oriented representative at Parliament and, with resolute minds, they defied all influences and voted for the right person.

Secondly, the right people can be elected peacefully without bloodshed if our policemen are allowed to perform their duty as professionals.

In this light, the Inspector-General of the Ghana Police Service, Dr. George Dampare, and his men need high commendation for exhibiting professionalism in their security operations at Assin-North.

Indeed, as a barracks boy myself, I am proud of the performance of the police and hope they will maintain the same professionalism during the 2024 elections.

Indeed, if the Police are allowed to be in control with no external interferences as we experienced in 2020, they will perform.

It behooves, therefore, on the Council of State, the Ministry of Interior, the Peace Council and all stakeholders to put in all necessary efforts to empower the police to exhibit their professionalism during the 2024 elections as they have done at Assin-North.

Thirdly, it was observed that the Electoral Commission performed its role as an objective referee with no cause for any adverse concerns.

It is therefore hoped that the same apolitical orientation will be demonstrated during the 2024 elections to avoid the recurrence of the tensions that characterized the 2020 elections.

Thus, citizens' rejection of vote buying influence, the professionalism exhibited by officers and men of the Police Service and the apolitical operations of the Electoral Commission are three key lessons that we should embrace as a citizens and scale up during the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

In conclusion, it is worth drawing attention to a statement made by His Excellency President Nana Akuffo-Addo to wit, 'we want someone who after the election can come to me so we sit and find solution to your challenge' while pointing to the NPP candidate, Mr Charles Opoku.

I hope this statement does not imply that the President will not open his door to the choice of the people of Assin-North, Hon James Gyakye Quayson, to sit and find solution to challenges facing Assin-North.

I pray His Excellency remembers that he is currently the President of Ghana, a nation that comprises people of diverse political ideologies to whom he owes a constitutional obligation to serve without discrimination.

In the interest of national development, therefore, it is essential that the President moves beyond party politics and open his door to the re-elected hardworking Member of Parliament to discuss development challenges facing Assin-North and continue with the pre-bye election triggered development projects in the constituency.

This is the mark of a genuine democrat.