

**PRESS RELEASE IN RESPONSE TO THE INVESTIGATION BY THE  
FOURTH ESTATE REGARDING THE NATIONAL SERVICE  
AUTHORITY (NSA)**

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Our attention has been drawn to a media publication by the Fourth Estate making several allegations against former officers of the National Service Authority. The publication, is laden with a misapprehension of the enrolment, verification and payment processes of the National Service Authority, as well as selective omission of information, calculated to achieve contrived conclusions of imputing wrong doing to former officers. We respond to the various claims as follows:

1. The publication claims that the figures submitted to parliament for budgetary purposes are significantly different from what is available to the public. Our checks reveal that the claim is palpably misleading as the Fourth Estate only relies on figures from the general posting done in September without including two (2) cohorts of Nursing trainees and one (1) cohort of Teacher Trainees.
2. It must be noted, that in addition to the general enrolment cycle by the Authority, the NSA in partnership with the Nursing and Midwifery Council runs an enrolment cycle for nurses with the same being done for teachers in partnership with the Teachers Council. The shortfalls in the figures are therefore accounted for from these other enrolment cycles. The claim by the Fourth Estate is therefore without any basis, which fact would have been apparent to them had they exercised any diligence in their purported investigations.
3. The Fourth Estate relies on the above disparity to claim that the NSA payroll has been padded with "Ghosts" because monies allocated by Parliament exceed verified postings. Instructively, submissions of personnel list to parliament for budgetary purposes are based on the total personnel posted by the Authority. However, in practice, not all persons posted end up on the payroll owing to varying reasons including failing verification and failure to show up for the service.
4. The payroll is thus only activated following stringent verification processes and only personnel who pass the verification process are paid through the GhiPPS System, a Bank of Ghana subsidiary system. Even then, the payment is only made after monthly validations that confirm that personnel are at their respective

postings. Any surplus sums after payments by GhiPPS are left in the Authority's account for subsequent use. The publication by Fourth Estate is therefore false in suggesting simply because monies allocated by parliament exceed verified postings, some "ghosts" are drawing pay.

5. The Fourth Estate further claims that the NSA system is full of people who are overaged, bear foreign pictures and wrong IDs. Based on these, the Fourth Estate concludes yet again, that these are ghosts drawing pay from the NSA. This is a clear misapprehension of the enrolment, verification and payment systems of the NSA. Educational Institutions provide an initial data of eligible persons for national service without any input from the Authority. Private persons are also entitled to register for national service with the Authority.
6. Such entry data is often riddled with several errors including the kind described by the Fourth Estate since there is no other data to cross-reference it with and unscrupulous persons always attempt to override the Authority's system every enrolment cycle. However, during the regional verification process, which all personnel are required to undergo in person, personnel provide identification information including Identification cards, facial biometric and finger biometric data. This information is cross-referenced with the initial data submitted and personnel with inconsistent information are categorised as banned or made to pend awaiting verification.
7. Any personnel failing verification remains in the system under the banned, on hold or pending category, but becomes ineligible to be paid hence does not draw from the payroll. Majority of rejections happen at this stage and in point of fact, the several images, allegations of foreign nationals and placeholder images provided by the Fourth Estate are within this category of fraudulent attempts to beat the NSA System.
8. It is therefore shocking, that considering the standing of the Fourth Estate as a media outlet, they would rely on these entry data without ascertaining from GhiPPS (the paying entity), the actual number of personnel paid per year and whether any of these persons with such inconsistent information actually received allowances from the NSA.

9. This betrays the malicious intent of the purported investigation by the Fourth Estate, as merely calculated to hurriedly publish a sensational story to smear former officers, rather than diligently establish the facts as expected of a decent media house.
10. Throughout our tenure, we committed to implementing robust enrolment and verification mechanisms to reduce the occurrences of unscrupulous attempts to circumvent the system. One of such important systems was the development of a common portal and the generation of unique access codes to institutions for the submission of their enrolment data in order to reduce the likelihood of manipulation at the entry point.

The publication by the Fourth Estate must therefore be treated with the contempt it deserves as it is a manifest example of how the misapprehension of data and institutional processes may result in conclusions that misinform and mislead the general public.

We urge journalists to stay true to their creed and be thorough in their work to avoid publishing sensational stories that malign individuals without basis.

Finally, we welcome the directive by President Mahama for an investigation, as we are certain the investigation will reveal that the true state of affairs on the matters published are contrary to the contrived allegations by the Fourth Estate.

Thank you.

## **SIGNED**

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