



PRESS RELEASE

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ANTI-CORRUPTION CIVIL SOCIETY DISAGREES WITH GJA

The Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), Citizens' Movement against Corruption (CMaC), and Africa Center for International Law and Accountability (ACILA) express deep disappointment with the statement issued by the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) on 31st August, 2017 captioned '*GJA on Anti-Corruption Crusade*'.

The statement, ostensibly cautioning the media against using its platforms to attack indigenous businesses doing their best to promote Ghana's social and economic development, taken on a face value, is a genuine expression of concern over a matter within GJA's mandate. However, current developments in the local media suggest a more sinister possibility. The statement appears to be targeted at the Multimedia Group and Manasseh Azure for the ongoing investigations into questionable contracts the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) signed with subsidiaries of the Jospong Group. It is also apparent that there are contemporaneous efforts by some print and electronic media houses to undermine the ongoing scrutiny into these questionable contracts, an insidious effort for which the GJA statement unfortunately provided legitimacy and cover.

Based on these developments, it is our considered opinion that the GJA may knowingly or unknowingly be playing along with businesses which may be involved in allegations of wrongdoing and want to undermine the work of investigative journalists who are exposing alleged wrongdoing. As the GJA is aware, the media has a responsibility to hold state and non-state actors accountable. This duty is not diminished when the state interfaces with non-state actors, especially the private sector in the award of public contracts. It is not out of place for the GJA to issue a statement aimed at enhancing the standards of media practice. However, a statement of this nature, broadly castigating journalists for performing their function under Ghana's 1992 Constitution, is highly invidious and capable of undermining the hard work of Investigative Journalists and media houses working tirelessly to uncover the several acts of grand corruption that has engulfed the country and threatening to delegitimize the state.

If the GJA is genuinely concerned with unethical practices in investigative journalism, then we strongly recommend that it invests in building the professional capacity of investigative journalists and work with the National Media Commission (NMC) to enforce sanctions against journalists who flout the ethical rules. At the minimum, the GJA must not impede the work of investigative journalists, even if it is unable or unwilling to advance the cause of investigative journalism and its tiny band of practitioners.

Signed:

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