

**STATEMENT BY HON ALFRED OBENG-BOATENG (MP, BIBIANI-ANHVIASO-BEKWAI CONSTITUENCY) ON THE PERSISTENT MILITARY BRUTALITIES IN BIBIANI ZONGO AND BIBIANI OLD TOWN COMMUNITIES WITHIN BIBIANI-ANHVIASO-BEKWAI CONSTITUENCY AS A VIOLATION OF THE INHABITANTS' RIGHT TO LIFE**

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I rise to make a statement on the persistent military brutalities in Bibiani Zongo and Bibiani Old Town both in the Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Constituency in the Western North Region which is a clear violation of the inhabitants' right to life as provided under Article 13(1) of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

Rt. Hon Speaker, I am sad that I have to bring to the attention of this August House that the people of Bibiani Zongo and Bibiani Old Town in the Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Constituency no longer feel safe because of persistent military brutalities in these two communities.

After Asante Gold took over Bibiani Gold Mines from Mensin Gold Bibiani Ltd, the military stationed at the place has been consistently brutalizing the people in these two communities which are adjacent to the mines for apparently no reason. In October 2022, armed military officers went to the Old Town community looking for a boy they claimed had taken some waste materials dumped nearby the community and when the residents questioned their movements in the community

which was scary, they started assaulting them to the extent that one Fuseini Issah was shot three times in the leg rendering him paralyzed.

Again, just a few weeks ago, one Mr. Jakit Pillar, a native of Bibiani Zongo had his motorbike broken down on the road. While trying to fix it the military came across the scene and started beating him and left him severely injured.

Mr. Speaker what has necessitated this statement is the third incident which just happened on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023 where the same military brutalized some of the inhabitants in Bibiani Zongo and left five of them seriously wounded and are currently admitted at different hospitals including Bibiani Government Hospital for treatment. One sad aspect of this development is that one of the victims by name Aziz Karim was shot in his private part and I wonder if this young man can give birth later in life. The assembly member of the Zongo Community Mr. Abdellah Adams who was trying to calm the military down ended up being beaten and severely injured as well. The third person received several bullets in the leg and one would be wondering whether the military officers thought they were on a battle ground. Rt. Hon Speaker, you would be unpleasantly surprised when you watch the footages of the manner in which the military officers deliberately targeted their victims while shooting. Rt. Hon Speaker, isn't it strange that our military officers

could mete out such atrocities to unarmed civilians? If the people's right to life is threatened in their own country, then there is much to be worried about as Ghanaians and the call for professionalism on the part of the military should not be limited to the people of Bibiani Zongo and Old Town alone.

At this critical point Mr. Speaker, my appeal to the House is to direct the Defence Minister to order the military to stop the brutalities and harassment of the people in the aforementioned communities immediately in order to maintain peace and calm in the area. I further request that these incidents be investigated fully and the culprits should be punished accordingly while the innocent victims must be given adequate compensation.

Thank you Rt. Hon. Speaker for the opportunity.

PARLIAMENT OF GHANA LIBRARY