

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF GHANA

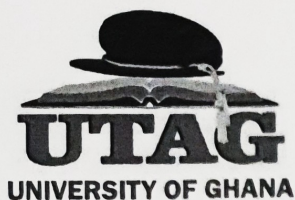
P. O. Box LG 232, UPO - Legon, Accra - Ghana
☎ +233 (0)55 360 9520 / 024 485 8495
✉ universityofghanautag@gmail.com

PRESS RESEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ALL MEDIA HOUSES
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RECENT ARREST AND MOLESTATION OF PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATORS BY GHANA POLICE SERVICE (GPS)

University of Ghana, Legon-The University Teachers Association of Ghana, University of Ghana Branch (UTAG-UG) has noted with grave concern the arrest and detention by the Ghana Police Service, of citizens who were congregating near the 37 Military Hospital on 21st September 2023 to embark on a peaceful demonstration to the Jubilee House. The demonstration we understand was to enable them, as citizens, not spectators, to express their concerns about issues of corruption and economic mismanagement which have brought untold hardship on many Ghanaians. Unfortunately for this group, however, their intended protest was disrupted by the GPS, resulting in mass arrests, mistreatment, torture, assault, and abuse. We dare say that it was not only the demonstrators but also some passers-by and journalists invited to cover the event were made to taste rough justice by the GPS.

We would like to remind the GPS that their unprofessional behaviour is an affront to, and has resulted in the violation of the rights of the demonstrators to freedoms of assembly, including the right to demonstrate in a peaceful manner, speech, association and movement, and their right to dignity guaranteed in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. These sacred rights, among others, form the foundation upon which democracies are birthed and nurtured, and democracies die when such rights, among others, are curtailed. The recent tendency for the police to resort to court injunctions to prevent a constitutionally guaranteed right to expression instead of carrying out its constitutional duty of protecting citizens, is extremely worrisome and completely unacceptable. Recent occurrences in our subregion should guide us in jealously guarding our democratic experiment.



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As a group clothed with the powers of a countervailing authority under the constitution, and whose membership have expertise in all aspects of the law, democracy, human rights, security etc, we find such blatant abuse of power extremely dangerous to our burgeoning democracy. We would therefore like to urge all parties involved to be circumspect in this matter and ensure we uphold the tenets of rule of law which is the foundation of all democracies. We urge the GPS and the justice system to be guided by the law always in the discharge of their duties. We are therefore calling on all concerned citizens and stakeholders to condemn such acts of arbitrariness, brutalization and perceived bias. We would also like to call for a national discourse on this matter to streamline police and judicial exercise of authority.

Sincerely,

Prof. Ransford E. V. Gyampo
President, UG-UTAG
revgyampo@ug.edu.gh
+233244277275

Dr. Jerry Joe Harrison
Secretary, UG-UTAG
jjharrison@ug.edu.gh
+233201068889