



## NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY

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### NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY (NIA)

#### PRESS RELEASE

#### Issuance of Ghana Card to Kwabena Adu Gyamfi by NIA

The National Identification Authority (NIA) has noted with concern allegations against the NIA by Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Member of Parliament (MP) for North Tongu Constituency, in his Facebook post of Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023, and published by GhanaWeb and other media portals. Essentially, Hon. Ablakwa alleges that NIA has fraudulently issued a Ghana Card to Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng, “a popular prophet” and former Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the National Cathedral Secretariat, who had apparently presented himself at NIA premises with that identity but was issued a Ghana Card bearing the name Kwabena Adu Gyamfi, with a different date of birth. Hon. Ablakwa describes this as mysterious and asserts that his “rare and comprehensive analysis of the NIA database” discloses that “the biometrics (fingerprint mapping, facial template and iris recognition) of Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng matches that of Kwabena Adu Gyamfi”.

On these bases, Hon. Ablakwa, who is also the Ranking Member on Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Ghana, “calls to question the credibility of the entire national identification exercise, particularly after the recent embarrassing Aisha Huang Affair” (emphasis added). Hon. Ablakwa then laments that “it is the sloppiness and or complicity of state institutions that emboldens certain characters to entrench their sophisticated conflict of interest machinations.”

The NIA wishes to react to the above allegations, insinuations and attacks as follows:

#### **1. Alleged Fraudulent and Mysterious Registration and Issuance of Ghana Card**

NIA is required by law to register applicants onto the NIA database, properly called the National Identity Register (NIR), based on the information supplied by applicants. Section 8(1) of the *National Identity Register (Amendment) Act, 2017 (Act 950)* provides that, the Authority shall require an individual who applies for an entry to be made in the Register to submit any of the following identity documents:

- a. a birth certificate;
- b. a valid passport;

- c. a valid residence permit;
- d. a valid certificate of acquired citizenship; and
- e. any other information as may be required by the Authority.

The amendment of Section 8 of the *National Identity Register Act, 2008 (Act 750)* by the 7<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Ghana in 2017 was made by all Members of Parliament including Hon. Okudzeto Ablakwa.

Thus, NIA registration officials are bound to register and issue a Ghana Card to an applicant who presents any of the documents specified above, unless on the face of the record or based on information gathered from the interview process, there is a reasonable basis to suspect fraud.

NIA operates in accordance with law and public policy. A person's popularity is immaterial to the NIA registration process. Indeed, a popular name is not necessarily a person's real name. NIA officials register applicants based on the names the applicants present to the officials, as captured in any of the above-specified identity documents, such as their birth certificates or passports. Alternatively, as is commonly known, where an applicant is unable to submit any of the specified documents, they may be vouched for by a relative or other qualified persons before a Commissioner for Oaths at the registration premises. In that event, the registration officials will use the name indicated by the applicant and vouched for by the guarantor(s) as the applicant's name.

Thus, there is nothing mysterious about Kwabena Adu Gyamfi being issued with a Ghana Card as such, even though Hon. Okudzeto Ablakwa knows Kwabena Adu Gyamfi as Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng as well. Hon. Ablakwa has not presented any evidence that there is a person known as Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng whose biometrics exist in the NIA's database or NIR with which he made his rare and comprehensive analysis.

Contrary to Hon. Ablakwa's assertions, the following constitutes the facts in the NIR in connection with the issuance of a Ghana Card to Kwabena Adu Gyamfi:

- a. During the mass registration exercise, Kwabena Adu Gyamfi went to an NIA registration center called Vicandy School at Asuoeyeboah in Kumasi on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to register for the Ghana Card;
- b. He submitted to NIA registration officials a valid Ghanaian passport issued by the Passport Office on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018, with the name Kwabena Adu Gyamfi; the expiry date in the said passport is 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023;
- c. NIA registration officials registered Kwabena Adu Gyamfi using his valid passport as the base identity document for his registration, and duly issued him with a Ghana Card;
- d. NIA has no record of anyone bearing the name Victor Kusi Boateng in the NIR; and
- e. NIA has no record in the NIR of any person born on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1971 or any other day with the name Victor Kusi Boateng.

In these circumstances, NIA registration officials at the Vicandy School Registration Center did everything right, and absolutely nothing wrong; they could not reasonably have been expected to know that Kwabena Adu Gyamfi also apparently bore the name Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng as Hon. Okudzeto Ablakwa claims. A popular name may not be a person's real or official name, and this is rather trite or commonplace.

## **2. Attacking the Credibility of the National Identification Exercise**

Hon. Ablakwa questions *“the credibility of the entire national ID exercise”*. We beg to differ. Surely, the credibility of the exercise cannot be questioned simply because Hon. Ablakwa is apparently unable to accept the science and law behind the issuance of a Ghana Card to Kwabena Adu Gyamfi.

The credibility of the entire registration exercise is solidly intact. Indeed, with stoic determination and focus, NIA has, since 2017, conducted a national identification exercise that has resulted in the capture of the biometrics and alpha-numeric data of over 17.3 million Ghanaians and qualified foreigners in Ghana, each with a unique identity, and issued smart, dual-interface biometric identity cards to over 16 million of them. The registration exercise continues at 276 District Offices and 16 Regional Offices of NIA. The register built from “the entire registration exercise” captures biometrics, date of birth, citizenship, residential address, and digital address, among others.

In addition to the comprehensive national identity register, NIA and its technical partner, Identity Management Systems II Limited (IMS II), have built a credible and robust National Identification System (NIS) which includes:

- a. A state-of-the-art back-end (technical) system;
- b. A dependable data verification system platform that is currently being used by various businesses nationwide including:
- c.
  - i. All 25 universal banks in Ghana
  - ii. All 145 Rural Banks
  - iii. 19 Savings and Loans institutions
  - iv. Five Micro-Finance/Micro-Credit institutions
  - v. Five Finance and Leasing institutions
  - vi. 16 Fintechs
  - vii. Nine state institutions including SSNIT, GRA, NHIA and Students Loan Trust Fund
  - viii. Six Telecommunications companies (telcos);
- d. A Ghana Card issued to applicants – the card is integrated and harmonized with other databases such as those of SSNIT, GRA, NHIA, and all banks and telcos in the country. The Ghana Card is secure with high-level encryption, digital certificates, Public Key Infrastructure, and meets the highest global standards. It is a contact and contactless

smartcard with 148k memory chip as well as secure printing that meets the global standards of ICAO and National Institute of Standards and Technology, with open standards. In addition, the card is unique and operates with a biometric verification system that is fast, accurate and not limited by geography.

So far, there have been more than 7.2 million biometric verifications without a single hitch. The Ghana Card verification system also has the capability to track and trace all transactions and return accurate and up-to-date information on the status of each individual, including banking and voting transactions. Finally, as the single truth anchor for the verification of persons, the Ghana Card constitutes a single source of truth in identity management in Ghana, and will ensure political stability and development, as well as economic and social inclusion. So far, NIA has shared vital data with the Ghana Police Service, EOCO and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), to assist in crime detection, investigation and prosecution.

Hon. Ablakwa is entitled to pursue all reasonable measures to tackle the spate of conflict of interest in our beloved country. He is, however, not entitled to attack and undermine the credibility of the National ID exercise, the NIS or any state institution without just cause.

### **3. *The Kusi Boateng – Adu Gyamfi Ghana Card Revelation***

Hon. Ablakwa notes that the “latest Kusi Boateng – Adu Gyamfi Ghana card revelation” fortifies his conviction even more that investigations are warranted into some dubious monetary transfer involving Victor Kusi Boateng/Kwabena Adu Gyamfi in connection with the National Cathedral Project. That may be so. But as far as NIA is concerned, there is nothing revelatory in Hon. Ablakwa’s post about NIA. He provides the application details of only Kwabena Adu Gyamfi, with 30<sup>th</sup> December 1969 as his date of birth, but not those of Victor Kusi Boateng, with 7<sup>th</sup> September 1971 as his date of birth. Hon. Ablakwa does not provide any records of Victor Kusi Boateng from the NIA database because none exists!

Again, Hon. Ablakwa’s claim that his “rare and comprehensive analysis of the NIA database” discloses that “the biometrics ... of Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng matches that of Kwabena Adu Gyamfi” rings hollow. The claim is false because there is no biometric record of any person in the NIA database called **Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng** and, therefore, Hon. Ablakwa could not have conducted any comparative analysis of that non-existent data with that of Kwabena Adu Gyamfi. The claim to having conducted “**a rare and comprehensive analysis of the NIA database**” is a mere self-praise; indeed, it is both rare and uncanny. Hon. Ablakwa provides no empirical evidence of the biometrics of Victor Kusi Boateng precisely, as there is none, and if there is, it is not derived from the NIA database!

### **4. *Invoking the Spectre of the Aisha Huang Affair***

As far as NIA is concerned, there was nothing embarrassing about its handling of the Aisha Huang affair. On the contrary, there was everything celebratory about NIA’s handling of Aisha Huang’s

attempted fraudulent registration for the Ghana Card, in that it was the vigilance of its personnel and the robustness of its technical system that resulted in her exposure. The NIR does not contain any record of a person named **Aisha Huang, a point that was made abundantly clear by the NIA when the “Aisha Huang Story” broke.** Raising the spectre of the dead Aisha Huang non-story is both unnecessary and disingenuous. NIA’s verification system functioned as designed to enable NIA prevent En Huang (the so-called Aisha Huang) from registering under a new name and date of birth for a new Non-Citizen Ghana Card, despite her being in possession of two different Chinese passports. NIA deserves commendation, not condemnation!

In short, the allegations against NIA by Hon. Okudzeto Ablakwa are without merit or foundation and must be ignored by Ghanaians. NIA urges Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa to respect state institutions doing their best to build the nation. The insinuations and castigations will not change NIA’s resolve to remain focused, rigorous and coherent in fulfilling its statutory mandate.

End.

*1<sup>st</sup> February 2023*

**CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE**