

STATEMENT ON THE RECENT DAMAGE OF POWER TRANSMISSION PYLON BELONGING TO GRIDCo BY SOME UNKNOWN NATION WRECKERS AND THE NEED FOR URGENT PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

BY HONOURABLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR TARKWANNSUAEM, GEORGE MIREKU DUKER.

Mr Speaker, we were dumb founded to hear the hacking down of one of the high voltage transmission pylons belonging to the Ghana Grid Company (GRIDCo) within the Tema enclave on Monday, 25th March, 2019.

The hacked down pylon fell on an adjacent tower in the process.

Mr Speaker, this despicable act of vandalism to the transmission pylon which occurred around 1:30am on Monday saw the whole power generation systems losing some 180 megawatts of power.

According to GRIDCo, the damaged tower forms part of the transmissional chain that transmit power from Karpower, VRA and AKSA to the national grid. The unfortunate situation resulted in power interruptions to parts of Greater Accra including Dansoman, Kasoa, Swan Lake and parts of Western and Ashanti Regions respectively.

Mr Speaker, the intention to cause pandemonium in the country is a cause to worry as this same incident has been happening in other jurisdictions.

Mr Speaker, on March 8, 2019 the people of Venezuela were shocked to the marrow, when saboteurs waged an “Electrical War” to cut out power supply poles, leaving millions in the dark.

Mr Speaker, the state-owned electricity operator Corpoelec blamed the outage on an act of sabotage at the Guri Dam.

Mr Speaker, on November 22, 2015 the Russian government announced a state of emergency in the disputed Crimean Peninsula late Saturday evening after power to the regions was suddenly cut in an apparent act of sabotage.

Mr Speaker, there is a notorious power saboteur group named as "Dragonfly" based in the United States of America who have been operating under cover to dismantle electricity power installations in the world. They have been in operation since 2011 and have been targeting electricity transmission infrastructures, electricity generation infrastructures, petroleum pipelines etc. and their target operations have so far been Poland, Romania, Greece, Italy, Serbia, France, USA, etc.

Mr Speaker, these examples are enumerated to guide us to be informed of the trending calculated saboteurs who can practically cause mayhem in the power sector to infringe on the economic growth of our country.

Mr Speaker, Ghana could be a target if local perpetrators form a cartel with some of these groups.

Mr Speaker, taking what transpired within the Tema enclave, the saboteurs destroyed bolts and nuts of the pylon at its base while a substance believed to be corrosive allegedly used for the damage was also seen at the scene.

This unfortunate development must be condemned by all well-meaning Ghanaians irrespective of our party affiliation because it was an attack on the integrity of this nation.

Investigators from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Ghana Police Service who visited the scene found a hacksaw as an evidence used by the suspected saboteurs. Obviously, this is a man-made event and a clear sabotage.

Mr Speaker, I would like to urge the security agencies to intensify their investigation into the matter in order to bring perpetrators of this criminal action to book.

The general public especially those living in and around Tema, Dawhenya, Afienya, Kpone, Ashaiman and Prampram must help to volunteer information on suspected individuals to the police to aid investigations.

Mr Speaker, GRIDCo has estimated to spend a total amount of GHC500,000 (US \$100,000) to replace the two pylons that were destroyed as a result of the havoc.

This money could have obviously been spent on other useful national needs.

Mr Speaker, this unfortunate incident which is an attack on the nation must be a wakeup call to all of us on the urgent need to intensify protection of all our national assets.

In an era of technological advancement, there is an urgent need for the country to invest in technology to protect and safeguard all our strategic national installations that provide essential services for our daily survival.

Mr Speaker, it must be possible for entities such as GRIDCo, the Volta River Authority (VRA), and the Ghana Water Company Limited, Ghana Gas, Power Distribution Services (PDS) and the Bulk Oil Storage, Transportation (BOST) to be able to monitor all their assets no matter their distance from a central location by the use of technology.

This, I believe will enhance early detection when saboteurs invade our national installations.

Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity.

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