

STATEMENT ON THE 66TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 28TH FEBRUARY CHRISTIANBURG
CROSSROADS SHOOTING INCIDENT BY HON. MAJOR DEREK ODURO MP- NKORANZA NORTH

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to make this statement as the entire nation commemorates the 66th Anniversary of the 28th February Christianburg Crossroads Shooting Incident – an important landmark in the political history of this country.

Mr. Speaker, Ghana every year, remembers her gallant soldiers who in their quest to seek justice or demand what legitimately belonged to them were killed on the 28th February, 1948 at the Christiansburg Crossroad, Osu.

Mr. Speaker, Indeed, our independence story which will be told once again on the 6th of March cannot be complete without recounting the incidence that transpired on that fateful day. The contribution by the ex-servicemen to Ghana's Independence cannot be over-emphasized in the political history of Ghana.

Mr. Speaker, during the Second World War, the soldiers of the Gold Coast Regiment of the Royal West African Frontier Force fought alongside the allied forces. The Gold Coast Regiment were among the most decorated African soldiers, fighting alongside British troops in Burma. The ex-servicemen were promised pensions and jobs after the war.

However, the World War II veterans who had fought so gallantly and had received high commendation were demobilized after the war and paid a pittance by way of war gratuity of about one shilling a day. Jobs were scarce and their pensions were never disbursed. Several appeals made by the soldiers to the authorities fell on deaf ears.

Mr. Speaker, on 28th February, 1948, the ex-servicemen together with other citizens of this country embarked on a peaceful march in an attempt to bring a petition to the Governor of the Gold Coast then requesting the dispensation of promised pensions and other compensation for their valiant efforts during the war.

As the group marched towards the Governor's residence at Christiansborg Castle, they were stopped and confronted by the colonial police, who refused to let them pass.

The British Head of Police then, Superintendent Imray, ordered his troops to shoot at the protesters. Frustrated, Imray grabbed his weapon and ultimately shot into the crowd, killing three former soldiers: **Sergeant Adjetey, Corporal Attipoe and Private Odartey Lamptey.**

Apart from the three ex-servicemen, a further sixty ex-servicemen were wounded. In response to this violence, the population of Accra erupted into five days of rioting, in which both Asian and European-owned stores and businesses were looted and more deaths occurred.

Mr. Speaker, this incident that occurred on that fateful day further fueled anti-colonial movements to press the British Government to institute a committee to investigate the killings and general disorder. The

Committee recommended self-government for Gold Coast. This subsequently led to the attainment of political independence for the country.

Mr. Speaker, the essence of commemorating the day has not only been to honour the gallant soldiers but to inculcate in generations after the incidence the virtues and values they stood for.

The ex-servicemen stood for Justice; commitment, selflessness and dedication to national duty; integrity, the independence and freedom of the human race and above all transparency and accountability of those in Leadership.

Their virtues and values represent important legacies that would propel our nation to greater heights. And we must cherish them and inculcate them in our young people.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate them today because of these virtues and values, the question which comes to mind is how have we as a nation lived these virtues and values. Do we still have citizens of our beloved country who in their services to this nation would stand for these values and virtues even at the peril of their lives? Your guesses are as good as mine.

Mr. Speaker, as we commemorate this day, let us be inspired, as Ghanaians, to always champion the fight against injustice. We must not stand by unconcerned when injustice is being perpetuated. Our national motto - "**Freedom and Justice**" must reflect in our service to the nation.

Mr. Speaker, a significant lesson that the political leadership of this country must learn from the 28th February Christiansbourg Castle Incidence is the need for them to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people.

The political leadership of this country must learn to always make good their promises. It was their failure to honour promises made to the ex-servicemen and their persistent refusal to listen to them that led to the agitations. Political Leadership or those in Authority must listen to their followers or the people.

Mr. Speaker, as recently said by His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations - "**When Leaders fail to lead, the people will lead**". I believe this assertion by His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan is being witnessed by all of us across the world. The recent and current ones that come to mind were the Arab Spring and Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, again as we extol the virtues and values of the ex-servicemen, we must not lose sight of gallant men and women (dead or alive) who have retired from the Armed Forces after their dedicated service in search for peace and security for and on behalf of the nation.

Let us continue to give meaning to their sacrifices by honouring them so that the young people of this country would emulate them and die a little for this country.

On this note, Mr. Speaker, I thank you once again for the opportunity.

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA! AND LONG LIVE OUR EX- SERVICEMEN!!