



**STATEMENT BY HON. IRENE NAA TORSHIE ADDO, MP TEMA WEST ON
THE DEMOLITION EXERCISE BY THE TEMA DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION IN ADJEI KOJO**

Thank you Mr. Speaker for the opportunity given me to make a statement on the demolition of buildings in the Adjei Kojo Electoral area, in the Tema West Constituency.

In these hard Economic times where the Government is battling with securing loans and other facilities to put up affordable housing for its citizenry, it is unfortunate to learn that some governmental agencies are engaged in the demolitions of houses. One such agency is the Tema Development Corporation (TDC).

Mr. Speaker between the 20th of January to the 27th of January 2014, the TDC demolished over 500 complete and uncompleted houses thereby rendering over 2,000 residents homeless. This exercise was undertaken with over 200 police and military men on the pretext that the residents were squatters and armed robbers.

Mr. Speaker if and when a demolition exercise has to be resorted to there are steps that need to be followed such as performing asbestos abatement, removing hazardous or regulated materials, obtaining necessary permits, submitting necessary notifications, disconnecting utilities, rodent baiting and development of site-specific safety and work plans. Where these steps are not properly taken, as was in the case of TDC at Adjei Kojo the act of demolition becomes inhuman and even irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker the often asked questions in such instance of demolition are:

1. How the residents acquired the land?
2. How they built houses and lived there for 7 – 10 years without being noticed by the TDC?
3. Why were the structures not pulled down at the foundation stage?
4. How did they connect electricity and water without permits?
5. Should the conduct of TDC, TMA and other utility bodies go unpunished when they have been collecting penalties and property rates, etc. from the so-called illegal residents?
6. What reliefs were available to such residents, if even refugees from neighbouring countries are taken care of in this country?

Mr. Speaker, the effect of the demolition exercise at Adjei Kojo cannot be quantified financially because it did not only displace people by making them look like refugees in their own country but it has shattered the dreams and aspirations of their children. The

children of the victim's went to school full of the desire of patriotism for their country and came back shattered confused and afraid of their future.

Mr. Speaker, children and adults now sleep in the open due to limited tents which makes them vulnerable to the bites of mosquitoes, snakes and other insects. We cannot also overlook other vices that could rear its head, like rape, theft and so on. Children are not able to go to school anymore. Food shelter and water has now become a burden for a family which hitherto was able to fend for itself without support from the state. The impact of the environment cannot also be downplayed: the dust emissions that take place and the open defaecation that is now the norm for the displaced citizens should be of great concern. This has its own attendant ailments and effect on the people. Livelihood that is lost in this way can be likened to a genocide and war situation and must be condemned at all cost.

Mr. Speaker, involving the police and military in such matters must be done with a great deal of circumspection. ~~[The rationalization of the use of ~~excess~~ force on the pretext that some of the residents are armed robbers is simply unfortunate and unacceptable because the entire 2,000 residents of Adjei-Kojo whose houses were demolished cannot be armed robbers. The clash of the military and civilians in demolition activities may lead to death and injures to residents of such areas as happened at Adenta a few months ago.]~~ The use of extreme force by our security operatives could lead to serious riots which may affect the peace and stability of this country.

Mr. Speaker, whereas the demolition of a couple of houses or structures may be overlooked the mass demolition of over 500 houses by the Tema Development Corporation without proper administrative procedures, warning and sufficient planning is irresponsible and must never be repeated anywhere in the country. Thank you Mr. Speaker for this opportunity.