



**A STATEMENT PRESENTED BY HON. MP FOR AKAN CONSTITUENCY,  
MR ABDUL AZIZ MUNIRU**

**ON GRENFELL TOWER FIRE AND LESSONS TO LEARN FROM IT**

While Sympathizing with the United Kingdom and victims of the ravaged fire on the twenty four (24) storey residential apartment block built in 1974, we take a cue to draw vital lessons.

Ghana's fire regulations which was extended to include residential buildings is undoubtedly very good in all purpose. Like many other Laws and Regulations in Ghana, the main challenge is its implementation. How can existing buildings be helped to comply while ensuring that new buildings corresponds with the new fire regulation directive.

The Grenfell tower fire has become a political event because people are calling to question, whether the British Local councils and Government cared about the health and safety of its people. How could fire ravage, I understand a recently refurbished building to such an extent? Also people think property developers and owners only think about their profit. This tower building according to reports was a known fire trap. Now the Grenfell tower fire has destroyed a lot of property and claimed seventy-nine (79) lives with still more people presumed missing as at June 19,2017.

Mr. Speaker, I will want to take this opportunity to call on our various Ministries, Department and Agencies to take structural fire audit on our existing structures especially public buildings, to ensure whether they are habitable and safe for humans and also their functionality.

I will applaud, The British Prime minister, Theresa May and London's Mayor Sadiq Khan who called on an enquiry into the situation leading to the fire. Mrs. May however indicated that survivors of the fire will be housed somewhere in central London and this is laudable.

It is known widely in Ghana that apart from arson, most fires in buildings are caused by electrical faults or volatile LPG or other domestic fuel. The most recent fire in Ghana was the Central Stores Building of GBC which happened on Friday the 15th of June this year and was ably put out swiftly by the Ghana National Fire Service. Investigation is ongoing as to the cause but there is a hint that it may be due to electrical fault because the building is old or heat accumulation as a result of over stuffing of the store.

According to Al-Jazeera reports on June 18, 2017, the Grenfell tower fire is unprecedented in the UK's history because no fire apart from this one had gone beyond two floors before being put out. More so because the building was just recently refurbished but the forty three (43) year old structure got engulfed entirely by this ferocious furnace. This fire points out a one clear disadvantage of high rise buildings and all safety standards and precautions must be taken. The imminent fear is that the remains of the structure could collapse anytime.

Now the question is are we safe in Ghana as per our building rules and regulations, construction rules of thumb and standard methods of measurements because we rely on those of our colonial masters the British? This is a question that needs immediate thought and answer because, Ghana's climate is different from that of the UK, whereas it snows in the UK, it doesn't snow in Ghana. Why then can't we rely on our data and statistics based on our own research and development?



And in doing so we should not forget that times have changed and that society is bedeviled with many problems like climate change due to the greenhouse effect leading to rising temperatures above 5 degree Celsius across the globe causing increasing water levels due to the melting of ice. This subsequently cause flashfloods. Strong tidal waves recently along Ghana coast swept settlements and displaced many people due to our own human activities.

Mr. Speaker I crave on your indulgence to organise and direct members of parliament to take an orientation on fire fighting techniques on job 600 and in the chamber and this should include the use of fire extinguishers, what to do in case of fire outbreak, where escape routes are located for swift deployment of rescue workers and subsequent evacuations. I think many members don't even know the inside out of Job 600 and yet we work there.

Mr. Speaker I conclude, by drawing the house attention to Melcom disaster which occurred in 2012, also the June 3rd, 2015 disaster all in our capital city which claimed precious lives. The only solution to our local problems I suggest should be local solutions and not depending on British rules, standards and regulations, we can however take inferences from them. I in this regard call on the executive to bring to this house for passage two important bills which are the Building Industry Regulatory Authority bill and the Survey Council bill because this will help in championing the solution to the diverse building related problems in Ghana.

I thank you Rt. Hon. Speaker for the opportunity.

**A**M GRATEFUL.

**T**hank you.