

• President John Dramani Mahama (2nd from left) cutting the ribbon to commission vehicles for the Ghana Armed Forces. Helping him are Dr Cassiel Ato Forson (left), acting Defence Minister, Lt Gen. William Agyapong (2nd from right), CDS, and Muntaka Mohammed-Mubarak (right), Interior Minister. Picture: BENEDICT OBUOBI



# Pay GH¢1bn to retired soldiers

- It's gratuity arrears under CI 129
- President directs

By Joshua Bediako Koomson

**P**RESIDENT John Dramani Mahama has directed the Minister of Finance to immediately release funds to pay retirement gratuity arrears owed to personnel of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF).

The retired military

personnel, both officers and men, are owed more than GH¢1 billion arising from the implementation of Constitutional Instrument (CI) 129.

CI 129 is a subsidiary legislation introduced in 2020 to amend the terms and conditions of service of personnel of the GAF.

Under that new arrangement, personnel were allowed to remain in active service for a longer period before retirement.

The intent was to retain experienced officers and strengthen institutional continuity within the force.

President Mahama explained that the introduction of CI 129 substantially increased retirement and gratuity payments for officers without the requisite budgetary allocations to operationalise the policy.

Speaking at the annual West African Soldiers Social Activities (WASSA) in Accra last Friday, the

• Continued on page 03

# Pay GH¢1bn to retired soldiers

• Continued from page 01

President said the failure to fund the policy over the four years after its introduction had resulted in accumulated arrears owed to about 3,000 personnel of various ranks.

"I have asked the Minister of Finance to make releases for the 1995 and 1996 year groups for their outstanding arrears at the existing rates, while steps are taken to clear their outstanding arrears under CI 129," he said.

## WASSA

The WASSA is marked each year to create an informal environment for the GAF to socialise and also give the Command the opportunity to interact and appreciate the contributions of all ranks and the civilian staff.

This year's programme, which was graced by President Mahama, brought together high ranking officers of the GAF and other civilian staff.

Other dignitaries present were the Minister of Finance, Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, who is also the acting Minister of Defence, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Ernest Brogya Genfi, senior officers from other security services and other state officials.

The occasion was enlivened by performances from the GAF Central Band and celebrated hip-life artistes, King Promise and Kofi Kinaata, who lit up the evening with dazzling performances to the delight of guests.

## Commissioning

As part of the event, the President commissioned a fleet of pickup trucks, buses and land cruisers to enhance mobility and operational efficiency of the military.

He also cut the sod for the construction of 10,000 housing units for the GAF.

On personnel welfare, the President, who is also the Commander-in-Chief of GAF, announced that a new salary structure for the GAF would take effect in March this year, adding that arrears for January and February would also be

settled within the same period.

"It pleases me to announce that your new salary scales will start in March and the arrears for January and February will also be paid in March," he said.

He also acknowledged that accommodation remained a major challenge for the GAF, disclosing that the current housing deficit stood at approximately 14,000 units nationwide.

He said the government was addressing the situation through strategic interventions, including a partnership between the Defence Industries Holding Company and FT Global Investment Ltd to deliver 10,000 housing units over the next five years.

The first phase of the project, involving 2,000 housing units, he said, had already commenced, alongside the ongoing Barracks Regeneration Programme aimed at improving living conditions for service personnel and their families.

## FOBs

On operational readiness, President Mahama announced that two forward operating bases (FOBs) in the northern part of the country were ready for commissioning, with adequate funding provided in the current budget to complete four additional bases before the end of the year.

## Retooling, security

President Mahama further announced plans to procure armoured personnel carriers, strategic drones and advanced communication systems, alongside the establishment of the country's first cyber and electronic warfare centre at the Tamale Air Force Base to strengthen border surveillance and national defence capabilities.

"This centre will be responsible for maintaining surveillance of our borders and will also have an assault capacity in the event that our country comes under attack," the President explained.

Additional acquisitions, he said, would include offshore patrol vessels for the Ghana Navy, four new Eurocopter helicopters for the Ghana Air Force and a new executive jet to support official travel and other critical state duties.

## Commendation

The acting Minister of Defence commended officers and men of the GAF for another year of dedicated service, describing the occasion as an opportunity to reflect on collective achievements and renewed commitment to the nation.

Dr Forson acknowledged the sacrifices and invaluable contributions of service personnel, stressing that their dedication and resilience had enabled the country to remain united in the face of both internal and

external security challenges.

He assured personnel and the general public that the Ministry of Defence would continue to provide strategic

policy direction to keep the GAF modern, responsive and operationally ready, while aligning defence priorities with emerging security threats within the country and the wider sub-region.

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Lt Gen. William Agyapong, commended the government for its retooling efforts aimed at enhancing the operational effectiveness of the GAF.

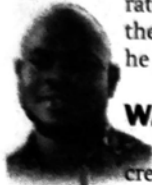
He also expressed gratitude to sister security agencies, diplomatic missions, ally governments and corporate institutions for their continued support.

Lt Gen. Agyapong said the GAF was pursuing internal initiatives to improve self-reliance, including managing its own travel and tour arrangements and expanding ventures such as bakery services, block making, poultry, crop farming and food processing, with the aim of generating additional resources to support logistics and welfare needs.

Visit [www.graphic.com.gh](http://www.graphic.com.gh)

Graphic Online

For more News



By Joshua Bediako Koomson



• Some of the vehicles that were commissioned. Picture: BENEDICT OBUOBI