

Ghana Votes 2016...

EC, political parties fight over future of Election Steering Committee

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• President Mahama interacting with Mr Jon Benjamin, the British High Commissioner to Ghana. Picture: EBOW HANSON



I'm committed to fair polls
• Mahama assures

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Put Ghana first

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• Rawlings, Kufuor urge EC, stakeholders

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News



• Former President Kufuor (arrowed) with other members of the foundation and the NGO.

Put Ghana first

• Rawlings, Kufuor urge EC, stakeholders

By Political Desk

TWO former Presidents have shared their thoughts on the electoral process, underscoring the need for all measures to be put in place for a peaceful Election 2016.

Speaking at separate functions, former President Jerry John Rawlings called on all stakeholders in the forthcoming

presidential and parliamentary elections to ensure the highest level of transparency to guarantee

a peaceful process, while former President John Agyekum Kufuor tasked the Electoral Commission (EC) to put Ghana first in the conduct of this year's

It appears people have reached a saturation point, nevertheless what is important is for all stakeholders to ensure that the highest level of vigilance is maintained to guarantee peaceful elections.

elections.

At a meeting with Mr Robert Porter Jackson, the new American

Envoy to Ghana, in Accra last Wednesday, Ft. Lt. Rawlings said "it appears people have reached a saturation

point. Nevertheless, what is important is for all stakeholders to ensure that the highest level of vigilance is maintained to guarantee peaceful elections."

President Rawlings, during the courtesy call, also called for United States' support in ensuring an impartial and credible electoral process.

Mr Kufuor, on the other hand, made the remarks when he presented 800 cartons of bottled water to the Egyekrom Refugee Camp near Elmina in the Central Region last Friday.

The gesture was made by On Guard for Humanity, a Canadian non-governmental organisation, in collaboration with the John Agyekum Kufuor Foundation.

The On Guard for Humanity manufactures water in bio-degradable containers for people in conflict areas. Its mission is to respond to major natural and



• Former President Rawlings and Ambassador Jackson in a warm handshake after the meeting.

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Put Ghana first — Rawlings, Kufuor

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other disasters in Canada and abroad, in addition to assisting victims of war and armed conflicts.

Kufuor on EC

Shirley Asiedu-Addo, reports from Egeikrom in the Central Region that, former President Kufuor explained that the EC was required to work with a clear conscience and patriotism and desist from any action that would throw the country into any form of instability.

He said that would also mean that the EC worked with utmost diligence and the "fear of God" to ensure

peaceful, free and fair elections this year.

He said although the Constitution stipulated that the EC was independent, it was not independent of the people it served.

He also urged the government to ensure that all measures were put in place for peaceful elections, saying that any act that could cause instability and turn Ghanaians into refugees in other countries must be avoided, adding that the life of a refugee was not anything to be desired and urged all to guard against it.

Former President Kufuor became an honorary member of On Guard for Humanity in 2014 to pursue the distribution of clean drinking water to

communities experiencing water distress globally.

He said the EC should referee this year's general election with a good conscience and work in the interest of the good people of Ghana.

Improve living conditions

He further called on the government to use its mandate to ensure that the people experienced improved and humane living conditions.

Mr Kufuor advised the refugees to be law-abiding guests of the country.

The Chief Executive Officer of On Guard for Humanity, Dr Alberto de Sousa Costa, pledged the organisation's commitment to support the well-being of the vulnerable, especially victims of wars and disasters.

The Camp Manager, Mr Edward Thompson, appealed for support for the refugees, saying there had not been any food supplies to the camp for five months.

The Chairman of the refugees' association, Mr Dayoro Jean Michel, called for support for the refugees in the form of training to enable them to earn a living.

Rawlings with US envoy

Former President Rawlings asked the United States and other nations to help check the spread of extremist tendencies.

He intimated that there was the need to do justice to the Tuareg people in Mali, stating that it was imperative and important that the rights of the Tuaregs were also recognised if West Africa wanted to contain throat-slitting extremist groups from gravitating towards the sub-region.

On the unstable situation in Libya, he said the people should be allowed to elect their leaders through a democratic process without due influence or imposition of puppet regimes by the West.

Flt Lt Rawlings, who is a former African Union High Representative for Somalia, also called on the United States to help avert famine in Somalia as millions of men, women and children were at risk of starvation due to drought.

At the global level, he welcomed the United States' renewed relationships with Cuba and Iran and commended the Obama administration for staying the course, in spite of strong opposition to moves for better relations with Tehran.

"Men and women of conscience would be gratified about the new relationship between the United States and Cuba and most especially that it is happening in the lifetime of Fidel Castro," the former President said.

Flt Lt Rawlings also called on the United States to bring its influence to bear on the Yemeni issue because the media were not giving much attention to the plight of the starving and thirsty victims of the war.

He called on the United States to use its influence to address the humanitarian situation to allow medical supplies, water and food to reach the deprived.

"People are being starved of food, medical aid and water, yet we don't hear reports of war crimes allegations made against those responsible. And yet we are hollering, ranting and raving about the same issues in Syria," the former President said.

Flt Lt Rawlings and Ambassador Jackson also discussed the transfer of two Guantanamo Bay detainees to Ghana and the political situation in Nigeria.

Ambassador Jackson said he was happy to be in Ghana and cited trade, health, education, peace, building strong institutions and good governance as his priority areas.

Present at the meeting were Fred Odisho of the American Embassy; Nana Fredua Agyeman Manu, an entrepreneur and investment banker; Dr Anthony Dzegede, an agricultural engineer, and Dr Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings, the NDC parliamentary candidate for Klotey Korle.

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