

Stay Away From Achimota Forest: Mr President You Are Setting a Very Dangerous Precedent on Your Achimota Forest Reserve Decision

Mr. President, you are admired by many across the globe due to your speeches which suggest you are committed to the protection of our environment. However, your decision to recategorise portions of the Achimota Forest, the only green belt in Accra, contradicts what we usually hear you say about the environment. My understanding from the press conference addressed by Hon. Abu Jinapor, Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, is that you agreed to degazette that portion of the Forest Reserve to the Owoo family because the State did not pay compensation for the said land and that the forest reserve has been encroached.

Mr. President, with due respect, I think this decision if not reversed will set a very bad and dangerous precedent in forest management in Ghana. In Ghana, we have about 128 gazetted production forest reserves which was acquire without the state paying compensation for just like that portion of the Achimota Forest you have just degazetted. With this decision, you are opening a cobweb for other Chiefs and their subjects to advocate for their lands converted into forest reserves to be degazetted. The implication should this happen is obvious.

The argument that the Achimota Forest has been encroached which also informed the decision for portions to be degazetted in itself is very worrying. The truth is most of our prime Forest Reserves in the Western North and other parts of the country have also been encroached. For this matter, would the chiefs and their subjects be justified when they also request that you degazette portions of those forest reserves to them?

This precedent is not good Your Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo.

Respectfully Mr. President, reconsider your decision for future generation will not forgive us when this happens.

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