

***In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful.***

**SPEECH BY JUSTICE SAEED KWAKU GYAN ON 9TH JANUARY, 2025 DURING THE 2025 NATIONAL JALSA [CONVENTION] OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSION, GHANA ON THE TOPIC: "JUSTICE AND PEACE - THE TRUE INGREDIENTS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT."**

[Recite Tashakhud, Taawwuz, and Surah al-Fatihah]

**Salutation:**

Maulana Noor Mohammed Bin Salih, our revered Ameer and Missionary-In-Charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, the honoured Chairman of this occasion of the 92<sup>nd</sup> National Convention (JALSA) of the Ahmadiyya Community in Ghana, Our most distinguished guest for today, who is none other than the former President of Ghana, Mr. John Dramani Mahama, who served a first term and, by the Grace of Allah, has been returned to the Presidency to serve a groundbreaking second term following a spectacular and decisive victory in Ghana's 7th December 2024 General Elections, the National Executive Council members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, together with our other Elders, the distinguished members of the entourage of our newly minted

President, as well as elected or re-elected Members of Parliament here with us, Our Noble Traditional and Religious Leaders herein present, the Members of the Diplomatic Corps who, as usual, are doing us the honours by gracing our National Annual Convention, Our precious Invited Guests from all over the world present here today, The respected Members of the Press, my beloved brethren of the glorious Islam, who are here today in their teeming thousands, and indeed my most distinguished ladies and gentlemen who, by Allah's Divine Grace and Mercy, are all gathered here at this sacred conference Ground, Please permit me this morning to heartily salute you with the blessed greeting of Islam: *Assalamu Alaikum Wa rahmatullah Wa bara Katuhu* — May the Peace, grace and Blessings of Almighty Allah be upon you all.

This year's Convention [JALSA] is clearly a unique one. It is the very first National Convention being held after last year's most spectacular and momentous Centenary Celebration of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, which took place at these very grounds. More significantly, it heralds the onset of a new dawn in Ghana, coming only two days after the swearing-in of a new, and

the 6th President, as well as the installation of the 9th Parliament of the 4th Republic of Ghana on 7th January, 2025.

Many had wondered whether it was safe and wise to fix this year's Annual Convention only two days after the scheduled inauguration of a new President, and especially against the backdrop of a perceived tension-clouded general election scheduled for 7th December, 2024. The fact that the Convention has started today, as planned, is a Divine Mercy and the clearest testimony of the faith and belief in our Motherland, Ghana, by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, as well as our unbending trust in Divine Providence. It also marks our obvious vote of confidence in the PEACE and bright future of our dear country.

I sincerely salute the Organisers for believing in Ghana and positively trusting the goodwill and good sense of Ghanaians to produce a generally free, fair, and safe general election that would sustain the security and stability of our dear nation. By God's Grace, the Organisers have proven that they are not among the people of the proverbial "little faith" alluded to in the Holy Bible.

I deeply thank the Organisers and pray for Allah's blessings on them for choosing me to share some thoughts and observations on

the Theme for this year's convention, namely: **JUSTICE AND PEACE — THE TRUE INGREDIENTS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

**AMEER CHAIRMAN**, before I proceed further, kindly permit me to grab this rare opportunity to congratulate President John Dramani Mahama, Ghana's new President, on resurrecting from the ashes of an incinerating 2016 general election defeat to win the 2024 elections in such a titanic manner, in a fashion that could only be attributable to the Hand of God in the affairs of Ghana. It is our prayer and hope that the unique lessons of the last elections would guide our new President, and that he would safeguard and uphold the trust the people have so splendidly bestowed on him in an election outcome which has confounded even the most cynical optimists in Ghana. May God be his helper and guide, and protect him and his government in the obviously challenging times ahead. Amen.

**Ameer Chairman**, the subject of the topic I am to speak on is extremely vast and wide-ranging, which makes it quite difficult to deal with it comprehensively in our present circumstances and

within the allotted time. The subject is, however, of critical importance and very vital and pressing at this time of our nation. The issue of Justice and Peace has been sublimely captured and summarized in a speech by Mirza Masrool Ahmad, the current and 5th International Head and Leader of the World-wide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (The 5th Khalifa), which is published in his book entitled *World Crisis and the Pathway to PEACE*, which I seek your leave to quote extensively here:

"The truth is that peace and justice are inseparable — you cannot have one without the other. Certainly, this principle is something that all wise and intelligent people understand. Leaving aside those people who are determined to create disorder in the world, no one can claim that in any society, country, or even the entire world, there can be disorder or a lack of peace where justice and fair dealing exist. Nevertheless, we find in many parts of the world that disorder and lack of peace are prevalent. Such disorder is visible both internally within countries, and externally in terms of relations between various nations. Such disorder and strife exist even though all governments claim to make policies that are based on justice. All claim that the establishment of peace is their primary objective. Yet, in general, there is little doubt that

restlessness and anxiety are increasing in the world and so disorder is spreading. This clearly proves that somewhere along the line, the requirements of justice are not being fulfilled. Therefore, there is an urgent need to try and end inequality, wherever and whenever it exists."

From the above, it is obvious that justice and peace are a universal construct and imperative in human development. There cannot, therefore, be any true and sustainable development in any nation, state, or community without a firm foundation of peace and justice being present.

Simply put, peace stems from the existence of an orderly society, and justice emanates from fair dealing and ensuring for everyone their due, thereby preventing inequality and inequity. I believe that it is this situation that can minimize agitation and restlessness among the people of any nation, which tend to generate or create violent conflict that undermines stability and national security, thus stultifying the sustainable progress and development of the nation.

In this connection, I could not agree more with Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the 4<sup>th</sup> Khalifa, when he asserts in his book *Islam's*

*Response to Contemporary Issues*, that the single most important malady of the world today is the absence of peace. He points out that man has achieved high material progress through science and technology and yet man is still generally not content or happy, leading to increasing fear, premonition, lack of trust, and dissatisfaction, especially among the younger generation.

Peace, thus, is not just the absence of violent conflict; it is the prevalence of a situation which de-motivates negative dissent, the creation of suspicion and disharmony, and the circumstances that trigger conduct which prevents people from living together or otherwise interacting cooperatively to achieve a sanitized environment for the satisfactory welfare and well-being of all.

In a speech delivered in Canada on 22nd October 2016, the Fifth Khalifah and the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community also rightly declared as follows:

*"Human nature is such that it is impossible for people to agree on everything, and so disagreements will occur from time to time, but the key is to solve these disputes with justice and fairness, rather than prioritize one's own interests above others. To bring any conflict to an end, justice is a pre-requisite.*

*If a person is not fair and ethical, then whatever grievance or problem that exists will only increase hatred and contempt."*

Of course, war is the wildest and most open manifestation of violent conflict, which creates the worst disruption of peace and hence undermines the development of any nation. Rev. Ekpenong of Calabar University, Nigeria, has declared that violent conflict is the major hindrance to African development. "It inflicts human suffering through death, destruction of livelihoods, constant displacement, and insecurity." It also disrupts the process of production, creates conditions for the pillage of the country's resources and diverts their application from development purposes to servicing war. Accordingly, peace and justice can only be the essential and rational condition for sustainable and meaningful development, since violence and conflict disrupt productive activity and even destroy what has already been achieved.

Ameer Chairman, Coming Closer home, the on-going Bawku Chieftaincy conflict, which has been left to fester and has thereby led to the senseless slaughter of many innocent Ghanaian citizens is a typical example of an ugly spectacle of human conflict as well as a monstrous evidence of the terrible damage that the want of

peace and justice could cause to an important part of our country and hinder development.

Millions upon millions of the nation's scarce resources continue to be squandered on the security forces deployed in Bawku and its environs in a vain attempt to ensure peace and security.

**PEACE**, therefore, connotes the maintenance of a just order in society and the primary resolution of conflict through non-violent means to facilitate the progress of the State.

Pope Paul VI once positively *declared that: "Development is the new name for peace," emphasizing that "excessive economic, social, and cultural inequalities among peoples arouse tensions and conflicts, and are a danger to peace."*

It can, consequently, be argued that development can only exist and expand into sustainable progress of any nation if peace and justice reign, because chaos, tensions, conflicts, and war inevitably constitute strictures to improvement and hence lead to less, and hence, the under development of society.

**What then is development?** It has been suggested that development involves the "progressive realization of the possible

and balanced flourishing of human and natural resources." Accordingly, it may be submitted that the development of a nation may largely consist of the optimum improvement of the human being as a factor of production, as well as the optimum mobilization of human beings so as to practically convert all other available resources for the balanced growth and advancement of a nation, in order to achieve the proper and satisfactory welfare and progress of the people in any country.

Meeting human needs goes beyond satisfying people's material desires. It includes meeting their physical, mental, spiritual, intellectual, moral, psychological, personal, social, and economic requirements. Development of a country hence implies the advancement and consistent transformation of a country's infrastructural, industrial productivity, as well as its economic and social capacity to facilitate a high living standard for its citizens.

**And what about JUSTICE?** Justice has a dual nature: the formal and informal; direct and indirect. Its informal mode is its more dominant character and consists of the wider society's deep perception of the fair and proper allocation and distribution of the

State's resources for the greater good of all in society, irrespective of class, colour, caste, or religion.

The formal or direct nature of justice has a more openly structured and systemic image, fashioned and operating under the law for the more regulated resolution of conflicts in the country. It is substantially represented by the courts and other bodies or entities acknowledged and recognized for handling disputes and settling conflicts. The Supreme Court is the highest or apex Court of Ghana; and at the lowest, we have the District or Magistrate Court, together with other arbitral Tribunals. In between these, we have the Court of Appeal, the High Court, and the Circuit Court.

Justice (Mrs.) Mariam Gyasi Jawhary, a distinguished Ahmadi Muslim lady who was recently appointed a Justice of the Court of Appeal, has, in a lecture delivered after her appointment, provided an admirable outline of justice in its more formal form.

She stated as follows: Justice to the lawyer means the application of the rule of law, that is, the certainty of applying legal rules developed over centuries to resolve disputes between citizens and the citizen and the state. It is also the ethical, philosophical idea that people are to be treated impartially, fairly, properly, and reasonably by the law and by arbiters of the law; that laws are to

ensure that no harm befalls another, and that where harm is alleged, remedial action is taken.

It may also be defined as a scheme or system of law in which every person receives his/her due from the system, including all rights, both natural and legal.

Article 125 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution provides that justice emanates from the people and shall be administered in the name of Ghana by the Judiciary, which shall be independent and subject only to the Constitution. Thus, judicial power in Ghana is vested in the judiciary to the exclusion of the Executive and the Legislature. The judicial power is exercised through the judicial process, which has the judge/magistrate, the lawyer, and court staff as the principal actors.

It is through the integrity, hard work, and cooperation of these main actors that the litigant is able to receive quality justice—justice that is prompt and substantial. And justice that is effectual and brings finality to disputes, through the proper enforcement of decisions reached in the court.

In a case decided in 1844, a British judge distilled the court process in the manner as follows: "The court in which we sit is a temple of justice, and the advocates at the Bar (lawyers) as well as

the judge upon the Bench are equally ministers in that temple. The object of all equally should be the attainment of justice by the ascertainment of the truth through the trial process." He stated further that the frailty of human beings does not make this object always achievable, but the higher objective of advancing justice through the ascertainment of truth should never be forgotten.

The foregoing clearly emphasizes that the formal justice enjoined on the courts is a sacred duty imposed on all those involved in the justice delivery process, to be guided, in their conduct and decision-making, by a single-minded determination to follow the path of **TRUTH**, transparency, accountability, and responsibility in order to ensure fairness, fair play, and uprightness.

It is this imperative to do justice, anchored on truth and openness, that has led to the saying that justice must not only be done but must manifestly be seen to be done. A justice so dispensed will engender trust and optimum confidence in our courts system and promote peace and avoid chaos since it will prevent rampant recourse to self-help among the citizens in the handling of their conflicts and disputes. An openly trustworthy, independent, and transparent courts system not only ensures peace in the country,

but it also promotes confidence in the international community, thereby ensuring international investment and boosting trade, hence achieving progress in the country.

A failing and unreliable court system perceived to be controlled by the Executive and external forces leads to instability and insecurity in the country and discourages international investment and its retention. It is no wonder that the former Minister of State Security, the Hon. Mr. Kan Dapaah, once had cause to publicly declare that the perceived notion in the country that the courts invariably gave judgment in favour of the government was an existential national security threat.

It is, therefore, troubling that in more recent times, the public's trust and confidence in our judicial system have tumbled. The Supreme Court, the highest court of the land, which should otherwise receive the greatest honour and trust, has of late been derided and mocked by the public, giving it such painful nicknames as the *Unanimous Seven FC*. The people's judgment of our judges and justice delivery system is devastating, with many, sometimes uncharitably, characterizing our honourable judges and other operatives in the court system as corrupt.

A former Chief Justice, Her Ladyship Justice Sophia Akuffo, has in a recent observation distressingly characterized the judgements of the Supreme Court as being too predictable.

Of late, the image of the judiciary has taken a significant hit. The **Ibrahim Index of African Government (IIAG)**, a key initiative of the MO Ibrahim Foundation, published every two years and receiving maximum international media coverage, provides a statistical measure of government performance in African countries.

The IIAG governance framework comprises four components, one of which is Security and Rule of Law. The 2024 Index stated that Ghana's judiciary had recorded a steep decline in autonomy over the past eight (8) years, reporting a drop from **100% to 50%** in judicial autonomy. The Index defines judicial autonomy as the ability of the judiciary to operate free from political pressure or influence.

Even more concerning is the **Afrobarometer Report of 2024**. Its survey showed that only 30% of Ghanaians expressed "*a lot of trust*" in the courts, with another **22%** saying they only "*somewhat*" trusted the courts. On the perception of corruption, as high as **44%** of the people surveyed felt that "*most or all*" of the

judges and magistrates were corrupt. Of course, the police topped the list, with even the seat of government performing poorly on the people's perception of them as corrupt and thus unreliable.

Whereas most judges may be decent and act according to the dictates of their judicial oaths, and hence not all judgments may be procured through improper considerations, a judicial system that elicits such a high negative perception and image is a gross danger to the progress and development of the nation.

As expressed earlier, justice is a sacred trust. The **Holy Quran** speaks of absolute justice in terms of the Islamic concept to establish peace and human progress. Speaking on the topic of *“Justice – Prerequisite to a Peaceful World”* on 22/10/2016, the worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission delivered himself as follows:

*"At many places in the Holy Quran, Allah the Almighty has commanded Muslims about being just and treating others in the best way."*

In **Chapter 4, Verse 136**, the Holy Quran demands the very highest possible standard of justice. It requires that a Muslim should be willing to forgo all personal interests for the sake of the truth. Muslims are commanded to put aside their own desires or

personal relationships and to be witnesses for the sake of Allah. The verse instructs that a person must be willing to testify against himself, his parents, and loved ones in order to establish justice. Islam teaches that a Muslim's first loyalty must always be to the truth, and so one must never hide the facts or give false testimony. A person should never be governed by personal desires, as this leads to bias and prejudice and takes a person away from what is fair and right.

**Quran Chapter 16, Verse 91** enjoins not only to speak the truth and be just but to favour others. Thus, the Qur'an directs that we should do good and not expect reward or recognition, as we do to our kindred. As a mother, for example, treats her infant child. It means a person should offer sympathy and compassion in an altruistic and benevolent spirit. Thus, the Holy Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad Mustapha (S.A.W), is reported to have stated that one cannot attain faith until he wishes for his brother that which he wishes for himself.

That equally underpins the **Biblical philosophy** of doing unto others what one expects to be done to him. This is a sure means to solve the problems of society and our world and to transform all forms of hatred into peace, tolerance, and mutual respect, thereby

establishing sustainable national peace and development through transparent and objective justice.

**The flipside of justice is injustice.**

A just leader is a blessing to a nation, and by his policies and actions, he promotes national development, peace, and harmony among the people. An unjust leader betrays his trust and pursues policies and actions that bring suffering and strife to his people, thereby ultimately disturbing the peace of his people and leading to the destruction and ruin of his nation.

The proper conduct of state actors all over the world helps to ensure justice and peace and, therefore, the progress and development of their nation. Corruption together with mismanagement constitutes arguably one of the nastiest faces of informal justice in a country and leads to wrong policy formulation or execution, thereby positively undermining the sustainable growth of every society and nation.

For many years now, revelations before the **Parliament Public Accounts Committee** have established staggering evidence of thievery and mismanagement in Ministries, Departments, Assemblies, and other state Agencies or Organizations. The figures

thrown up for each year far exceed the amount of money Ghana goes to the IMF or the World Bank to borrow to support its national programs and development. Yet the culprits walk the streets free, while ordinary folk who steal a bunch of plantain or a tuber of yam are mercilessly prosecuted and sent to jail.

That is the nature of our justice system as a nation.

In a recent public interview, our former Vice President, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, claimed that his government's most monumental and far-reaching project in the Northern Region was the completion of the long-standing **Pwalugu Dam project**. He said it was the greatest achievement for the Northern Region by any government since independence. Yet, only a day after the interview, TV footage of the dam showed embarrassingly that not a thing had been done on the said project. Sadly, a stunning amount of about **\$12 million** had reportedly been spent on the alleged project.

Another depressing example is the Power **Distribution Services (P.D.S.)** scandal by reason of which the nation tragically lost **One Hundred and Ninety Million United States Dollars (\$190,000,000)** through the cancelation of the U.S.A.'s

Millennium Challenge Corporation (M.C.C.) Power Compact which was meant to support the development of the Electricity Sector of Ghana's economy.

Far more troubling, and a clear blot on the conscience of our nation as well as a definite subversion of our country's positive development, are the **skeletons and ghosts of abandoned projects** dotted all over Ghana left by successive governments. The lack of a **National Development Program** has led to each government adopting its own development agenda and jettisoning work, policies, programs, and projects commenced by previous governments. This is monumental injustice done to the people and a continuing spanner in the works of national development.

Another glaring and hilarious example of a travesty of justice in this country has found itself in the **Russia-Ukraine war**. Since its onset, the government of President Nana Akufo-Addo had systematically assailed our ears with reports of the crippling effect of the war on Ghana's development and the suffering it has brought to the people. Yet, not too long ago, President Akufo-Addo took a plane to Ukraine and sat before President Zelensky, the leader of the war-ravaged Ukraine, begging for grain for the

consumption of the people of a peaceful and fundamentally agrarian Ghana.

These and many other oddities in our country prove that until our people—and more particularly, our leaders—at all levels stand by the truth and pursue justice in all that we do, national development and progress will elude our country because the **PEACE** deficit in our nation will widen and instability and insecurity will prevail to the detriment of our national growth and prosperity.

Ameer Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, for the sake of the future **peace** and **progress** of our **Motherland**, we cannot conclude this speech without seeking your special leave and kind consideration to allude to and highlight some red flag occurrences and notable distressing experiences of our country. This will involve identifying certain recent past conduct and policies of state actors which, in my humble opinion, **while typifying occurrences in successive governments**, constitute gross political and socio-economic injustices that have tended to undermine the peace and harmony of our nation and **immeasurably** impeded the progress and development of this country.

These matters have caused considerable personal harm, injury, and pain to a significant portion of our people and have dangerously undermined their confidence, hope, and **trust** in the nation, and, especially, the citizens' **belief** in their leaders.

I, respectfully, submit that bad governance, with its attendant maladministration, leading to the abuse of power and arrogance, coupled with unbridled corruption and exploitation of the masses, constitutes a very clear and tangible injustice. This has, over the years, systematically damaged the growth of our country and, of late, driven the economy into the gutter, thereby causing insufferable pain and havoc to the majority of the people.

Some of the immediate past government's policies and programs remain a classical example of this national malaise.

While in opposition, its key figures vociferously condemned the then government's borrowing policies. However, when they assumed power, they ironically borrowed incessantly, sinking the country's international credit rating, and, thereby the economy, into junk status.

In an attempt to salvage or otherwise manage the threatened economic crash and save the nation from total bankruptcy, the

government embarked upon what they termed a Debt Exchange Program. The result was that people who had previously trusted the assurance of the absolute security of government bonds, and accordingly, purchased the bonds to protect and safeguard their future and old-age financial sustenance, suddenly found themselves practically losing their investments and access to their locked-up monies.

The government initially loudly and stoutly denied that they would inflict a “haircut” on the people as part of the projected Debt Exchange Program, only to turn round and impose a “haircut” policy which, in its ruthless execution, could only be described as a “head-cut” for the victims.

We all witnessed, in this connection, the crying shame of pensioners in this country— for the first time in our nation’s history—repeatedly and despondently picketing at the Ministry of Finance in a futile attempt to reclaim the value of their matured bonds. Many prominent Ghanaians have either died or suffered grave health injuries as a result of the heartless implementation of what had been touted as a successful Debt Exchange Program.

The loss of faith and confidence in government bonds and the anticipated damage to the health of the nation and its economy can only be imagined.

Another disastrous adventure was the so-called Financial Restructuring Program, which saw the government reportedly squandering a staggering over **25 billion cedis** to collapse virtually all Ghanaian local banks as well as other financial institutions, when it arguably required only between **8 and 10 billion cedis** to salvage them and thereby keep their employees at work. That action by the government of Ghana was practically a mortal blow to the heart of our nation's developmental drive. The net effect of that policy is that foreign banks are now in near-total control and dominance of the banking and financial sector of our country.

Finally, more significantly, and even more **painfully**, His Excellency President Nana Akufo-Addo, who had initially raised very high the bar of national hope and expectation by way of a solemn **promise** to run a humble, trustworthy, disciplined, corruption-free, and openly accountable and responsible government, sadly ended up being tragically and rather regrettably characterized as the unrepentant "Clearing Agent" of corruption

and misconduct by his appointees. He also became the paralyzed supervisor of **impunity**, misgovernance, and public irresponsibility, to the frustration and bitterness of most Ghanaians.

Ameer Chairman, the foregoing narrative may seem to reflect the regrettable penchant of Ghanaians to embark on "what went wrong" at the end of the tenure of successive governments. These after-the-event condemnations may not be the best for our nation. Nonetheless, it is our hope that the new government will take serious lessons from our deplorable recent experiences, which eventually led to the most stunning and scathing manifestation of the ordinary Ghanaian's ultimate sense of justice and self-value in delivering a truly incomprehensible, incredible and decisive verdict, during the **7th December 2024 national elections**.

The outcome of the 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2024 Elections, constitutes the clearest and most comprehensive message to the Ghanaian political class and social elite that the ordinary Ghanaian citizen can no longer—and should no more—ever be taken for granted. The overwhelming vote cast for the new government may be a historical advantage to the new President and his team in

government. However, it equally represents a quintessential premonition and clear warning to discard the arrogance of power and impunity, to assume an open and listening ear, to stay focused on pursuing national developmental goals, to cut and resist waste, to be sensitive to the needs and cries of the ordinary Ghanaian, and to mobilize and galvanize the collective energy, confidence, and trust of a united Ghana to build the country we want in the troubling times ahead.

That is the only way we could say that true and tangible justice has been achieved to promote the peace and development of our dear nation, Ghana.

May God bless and protect our dear nation, making us great and strong and a worthy country in the comity of nations.

Ameer Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, thank you, and may God bless you abundantly for your enduring patience and kind attention. **ASSALAMU ALAIKUM W.W.**