



# MINORITY CAUCUS

## Parliament House - Accra (Ghana)



*In case of reply, the number and date of this letter should be quoted.*

**Contact:**

Telephone: +233 302 633 030

Fax: +233 302 664 530

Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

Date: **08 – 12 - 2023**.....

### **PRESS STATEMENT**

#### **NDC MINORITY IN PARLIAMENT REACTS TO GOVERNMENT'S SUSPENSION OF LAYING OF IMPORT RESTRICTION REGULATIONS**

The Minority Caucus has noted with relief the announcement by the government to suspend the laying of the proposed regulations on Restriction of imports of Selected Strategic Products, 2023.

The Minority has always maintained that these regulations will breed corruption, because not only are they arbitrary and opaque but they are designed to encourage arbitrary exercise of discretionary power in the hands of one person, particularly the Minister of Trade and Industry.

We have argued that by vesting too much unfettered and unchecked power in the Minister to determine who qualifies or not to be granted a permit to import into the country as many as twenty (24) commodities, the regulations lend themselves to abuse of power, state capture and rent-seeking conduct reminiscent of the days of 'essential commodities' and 'price control'.

Indeed, various stakeholders including the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA), the Food and Beverages Association of Ghana, Importers and Exporters Association of Ghana, the Ghana Institute of Freight Forwarders, Chamber of Automobile Dealership Ghana and the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, have all joined us in all kicking against these proposed import restrictions.

The Minority in principle is not against any legal regime or policy that seeks to protect indigenous businesses by regulating imports. What we are vehemently against is a law that confers unfettered discretionary power on a single individual, in this case a Minister of Trade, to issue import license and to restrict the quantity of certain imports into the country, without any checks and balances.

It defied sound logic for this Akufo-Addo/Bawumia government to seek to restrict imports contrary to what it had signed on to with regard to Ghana's current IMF programme. One of the quantitative performance criteria in Ghana's current IMF bailout is a requirement to avoid the imposition or intensification of restrictions on imports for balance of payment reasons.

At a time Ghanaians are facing extreme misery and reeling under countless taxes, including those contained in the 2024 Budget, we do not consider it right that government would introduce import restrictions that will fuel inflation and hoarding.

We are happy that the government has jettisoned these regulations after stiff resistance and opposition in Parliament by the Minority Caucus.

We wish to assure the Ghanaian people and the business community that the Minority will always be on their side and put their interest first. Ghana First!

**\*\*\*END\*\*\***

SIGNED.

**CASSIEL ATO FORSON, MP (PhD)**

MINORITY LEADER