

**REMARKS BY THE MINORITY LEADER, HON. CASSIEL  
ATO FORSON, (PhD) TO WELCOME HON. MEMBERS OF  
PARLIAMENT BACK TO THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE  
EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC,  
DELIVERED IN PARLIAMENT ON TUESDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY 2024.**

1. Rt. Honorable Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make this statement to welcome your good self and colleague members of Parliament back, for the commencement of the fourth session of the eighth Parliament.
2. Mr. Speaker, the break from parliamentary business in the chamber gave Hon. Members the opportunity to reconnect and interact with our constituents.
3. Now that the parliamentary primaries of the Majority side have ended, I wish to congratulate all those who secured the mandate to contest for parliamentary elections in December 2024.
4. For the Members who could not secure the ticket to be parliamentary candidates, I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Your contribution to Ghana's democracy will forever be remembered.

5. Mr. Speaker, let me shift my attention to some very important issues which have consequences on our elections and ramifications for the peace and security of our dear country.
6. The announcement by the Electoral Commission that, it is doing away with indelible ink from the electoral process must be of great concern to all of us in this chamber.
7. Rt. Hon. Speaker, this announcement by the Electoral Commission constitutes an attack on the integrity of Ghana's electoral process and poses a great danger for our country.
8. This Electoral Commission enjoys taking unwholesome decisions, being disruptive, fancies courting public disaffection and enjoys being roundly condemned by right thinking people.
9. The other time, during the limited voter registration exercise, the Electoral Commission took a decision to restrict first-time voters to register only at the offices of the Electoral Commission.
10. The Electoral Commission was severely condemned for that decision because it had the potential to disenfranchise or deprive the vast

majority of first-time voters the opportunity to have their names captured on the voter register.

11. Mr. Speaker, you are fully aware of how that decision to restrict first-time voter registration to only the Electoral Commission offices imposed huge unplanned financial burden on all Members of Parliament and political parties.
12. This is because Members of Parliament had to come in to salvage the mess of the Commission by making sure that first-time voters were ferried to the offices of the Electoral Commission in order not to deprive them of the opportunity to register, to vote and to actively take part in our democracy.
13. Mr. Speaker, that unwholesome decision by the Electoral Commission subjected first-time voters to great frustration and inconveniences as well as significant and unplanned expenditure on the part of Hon. Members.
14. Rt. Hon. Speaker, with parliamentary and presidential elections on the horizon, the Chair of the Electoral Commission, says there would be no need for indelible ink in the 2024 elections.

15. The EC claims that doing away with indelible ink in Ghana's electoral process forms part of its measures to improve the electoral process and ensure a robust identification system.
16. The truth of the matter is that the use of indelible ink in our electoral process does no harm to the conduct of free and fair elections in Ghana.
17. In fact, indelible ink adds another layer to the integrity of elections by ensuring that voters are visibly, transparently, and physically verified in addition to biometric verification.
18. Indelible ink has not only become a feature of our elections in the Fourth Republic, but it is also a time-tested method of easily identifying persons who have already cast their ballot and therefore helps to easily prevent multiple voting.
19. It also helps in building confidence in the conduct of elections and add to the credibility and integrity of elections.

20. The fact that Biometric Verification Device is part of our electoral process is not good enough reason for the Electoral Commission to do away with indelible ink.
21. This is because when Biometric Verification Device fails, indelible ink on a voter's finger provides the surest way to identify a person who has already voted.
22. Mr. Speaker, we will not countenance the elimination of indelible ink from the electoral process. We will not! ***Read my lips***, we will not! Touch wood, we will not!
23. Rt. Hon. Speaker, again with general elections on the horizon, the Electoral Commission and those behind it have announced their intention to change the date for this year's general election from December to November.
24. Let me say it here and now that the NDC Minority Caucus in Parliament will not support any such change at this time.

25. This is because there are more pertinent and pressing issues that require the immediate attention of the Electoral Commission than a change of date for general elections.

26. As I speak, the Electoral Commission is yet to release its calendar for the 2024 elections. The EC must focus all its energy and attention on provision of the 2024 election calendar.

27. Mr. Speaker, if the Electoral Commission decides to embark on a comprehensive and meaningful reforms after the 2024 elections, in consultation with political parties and other interest groups including faith-based organizations, our side of the Caucus in Parliament may reconsider our position.

28. For now, WE WILL NOT support the Electoral Commission's decision to change the date for the 2024 general elections.

29. Mr. Speaker, following the approval of the Ministry of Finance budget, this house resolved to suspend the payment of the GRA-SML contract pending the outcome of the parliamentary investigations into the matter.
30. Mr. Speaker, I urge you to fast-track that process in the interest of the suffering Ghanaian.
31. The hardship and poverty that our people are facing is overwhelming. Many of our compatriots continue to suffer excruciating pain and hardships as a result of corruption.
32. Mr. Speaker, corruption has now become an epidemic in the body politic of our dear country. We desperately need to find a way out of this mess if we want our democracy to survive.
33. I call on the government to implement measures that will alleviate the suffering of the people of Ghana and take positive steps to reduce the poverty and hardships facing the people of Ghana.

34. Mr. Speaker, we in the Minority Caucus are excited to be back in this august house. As always, we are here to hold the government accountable for its policies, programmes, and actions.
35. We are also here to protect and defend the interest of the people of Ghana.
36. Let me assure the people of Ghana, including the business community that the NDC Minority in Parliament, will always do what is in their best interest for the survival and growth of our country.
37. Rt. Hon. Speaker, may I once again seize the opportunity to welcome Hon. Members back to this August House for the resumption of the people's business.
38. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.