



## Another scandal hits "family & friends"

# GOV'T COOKS UP AIRPORT COVID-19 TESTING DEAL FOR OFFSHORE CRONIES



reopening of Ghana's airport for international travel under the condition that each arriving traveller will be subjected to a mandatory COVID-19 test costing a staggering US\$ 150 per test.

President Akufo Addo on Sunday, during his periodic Covid-19 update was full of praises for the controversial testing at the airport. Before then, the President's cousin and right-handman Gabby Asare Otchere-Darko was all over social media praising the "warriors" at the front-line of COVID-19 testing in Ghana.

However, amidst all the accolades, the Akufo Addo administration was cooking a deal that is set to add to the list of growing corruption scandals in the administration.

The company that was handed the contract on a silver platter is Frontier Healthcare

**W**hile Ghana is battling to curb the devastating effect of the pandemic COVID-19 outbreak in the country, the Akufo Addo administration in a characteristic style, has deployed a contractor linked to tax havens to cash in on multi-million dollars made daily from Covid-19 test of travellers at Ghana's Kotoka International Airport (KIA).

As at the last count, over 46,000 people have been infected by

COVID-19 in Ghana and some 290 people have died. Worldwide, more than 31 million infections have been reported, while almost one million people have died.

However, amidst this catastrophe, a quite web of high-level COVID-19 profiteers are milking Ghanaians and travellers to Ghana in the guise of COVID-19 prevention protocols. A comprehensive investigation and paper trail by Whatsup News uncovers a long line of hardcore individ-

uals with the lead characters cited for multi-million-dollar bribery, crude oil theft, election rigging and bribery of electoral regulators, among others.

These individuals, some of who are linked to Ghana's Presidency are beneficiaries of a sole-sourced contract from the Akufo Addo administration to undertake the expensive COVID-19 tests at KIA.

A few weeks ago, the Akufo Addo administration announced the

*Cont. to Page 2*



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## Cont. From Page 1

Services Limited. A painstaking investigation by Whatsup News tracked the owners of Frontier Healthcare Services Limited through several convoluted Shell Companies registered in notorious tax havens such as Panama and Dominica on the Caribbean Islands.

Whatsup News uncovered the true owners of Frontier Health Services which is also registered in Ghana. Apparently, Frontier Health Services is owned by Healthcare Solutions Limited, a company which is in turn owned by The Peters Family, an opaque company registered in the Dominica, a tax haven notorious for how easily corrupt politicians and shady businesses hide their wealth and tax credentials.

Critics have raised red flags about the rip-off of the COVID-19 testing endorsed by the Akufo Addo administration. Indeed, it is estimated that at peak times, some 8,000 international travellers pass through the KIA. With the current COVID-19 travel restrictions, fewer travellers are arriving at KIA, but so far, Ghana is estimat-



ed to be making several million dollars a week from COVID-19 testing at the airport, with Frontier Health Services pocketing the lion's share.

The rapid testing system deployed at the KIA was developed by Ghana's main medical research centre, the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research.

Yet, Noguchi gets a paltry US\$4 of the US\$150 taken from arriving passengers. The KIA and the Ghana Health Service receive US\$4 and US\$3 respectively, with the rest going to Frontier Health Services and its owners registered in notorious tax havens.

Policy think-tank IMANI Africa has raised alarms that Frontier Ser-



vices is not qualified to undertake the tests at KIA, and has confirmed that the company is a front for individuals with questionable presence in Dominica.

Several other experts and civil society organisations have spoken out against the fleecing of travellers in the guise of COVID-19 testing by the Akufo Addo administration.

For instance, the Bureau of Public Safety (BPS), a non-profit organization involved in public safety advocacy has asked for the immediate withdrawal of the US\$150 COVID-19 test at KIA, saying it is a rip-off and a "direct contravention of the World Health Organization's Interna-

tional Health Regulations (IHR)."

Earlier, a whistleblower from Noguchi, Dr Kofi Bonney had told the media that the test being conducted at KIA was an Antigen test, and it was the cheapest test for COVID-19 that should not cost more than US\$ 30.

Indeed, he argues that the test is not even exactly accurate. "Scientifically with the PCR test, within 72 hours, it's enough. I don't know why we have to do an antigen test which is less sensitive upon arrival. If we look at the tests that have been done over the years, we have a varying sensitivity percentage between 34% to around 80%," Dr. Bonney stated in an interview with Accra-based Joy News.

"So if you are looking at these figures that means about half of the people who will take anti-gen tests, the results may not be correct," he said.

Whatsup News is in possession of documents and evidence to demonstrate a plausible motive by powerful individuals in government to use the current test as a cash cow.