

STATEMENT BY KWAME F. BLAY (C.E.O., WESTERN GROUP) IN RESPONSE TO SINO AFRICA ACCUSATIONS

My attention has been drawn to the recent wave of media publications and online stories surrounding a property dispute in the Borteyman area of Accra, in which I am being accused by Sino Africa, a company owned by Mr. Joseph Siaw Agyepong of Zoom Lion, of forcibly 'stealing' land.

This accusation is not only unfounded but also deeply misleading. It represents a calculated distortion of the facts, seemingly aimed at stirring public sentiment by exploiting the current political climate. The matter is under judicial review, and while I would prefer to respect the legal process, it is crucial that the truth be clarified to protect my reputation and ensure the public is well-informed.

I am the Director of Terraform Development Ltd., a Ghanaian company duly incorporated to carry out infrastructural and construction projects. Terraform Development legally acquired a 29-acre plot of land from Royal Bell Investment Ltd. through a valid lease and title deed. After fulfilling all legal and financial obligations, we began construction work, including erecting a perimeter wall around the property.

To my surprise, in October 2021, I was named as the second defendant in a lawsuit filed by Sino Africa against Royal Bell Investment Ltd., claiming that the land – which had already been registered with two prior titles – belonged to Zoom Lion.

It is worth noting that the property had been previously owned by the Nii Abotsi Borlabi Family with a title and subsequently Raymond Bell Investments also with a title deed before Terraform Development acquired the property and obtained a legal title. Where was Mr. Siaw and his assigns during the ownership and registration of all three titles starting from 2008?

Terraform Development had already begun construction works before the legal action was initiated by Sino Development. Since then, Terraform Development has faced persistent harassment, including repeated attacks by land guards, who have torn down our perimeter walls under apparent instruction from agents of Sino Africa.

I find it particularly disingenuous that Sino Africa, in a recent press conference, claimed to be law-abiding, when in reality, they have repeatedly disrupted our peaceful and legal possession of the property.

In an effort to resolve the issue amicably, I personally met with Mr. Joseph Siaw. However, our discussions failed to yield a resolution, as Mr. Siaw demanded an exorbitant payment of \$12 million for the land, as well as for him to be made Chairman of the project, and for me to introduce him to our investors. This request was, of course, rejected outright, as it was neither fair nor based on any legal grounds.

The matter was then brought before the High Court, where Terraform Development won a judgment affirming our legal ownership of the land. Notably, the Nungua Stool, the traditional landowners from whom both parties trace their lease, testified in support of Terraform Development and confirmed that they had never sold the land to Sino Africa. The court, having reviewed all the evidence and documentation, ruled in our favor and issued an injunction against Sino Africa, preventing any further attempts to disturb our legal possession or development of the property.

While Sino Africa has appealed the court's decision, as is their right, and that process is ongoing, the courts also granted a stay of execution of the reliefs sought in the judgement and further maintenance of the status quo. Considering our company was in possession of the property and already constructing before the legal process was initiated, the status quo remains as instructed by the courts.

It is therefore troubling to witness how Mr. Siaw and his associates have sought to manipulate the media in an attempt to vilify me and my company, and to garner public sympathy through a distorted narrative. They have even attempted to politicize the issue, possibly in anticipation of future political shifts, despite the fact that Sino Africa and Mr. Siaw have been beneficiaries of significant support from the outgoing government and like a typical weather cock hoping to mend a bridge at my personal expense.

I am also disheartened by the repeated efforts to associate this legal matter with my father, Mr. Freddie Blay, and to portray this as a political issue. This is not a matter of politics, but a straightforward legal dispute between two private entities, governed by the rule of law.

As citizens of Ghana, we are all subject to the same laws, regardless of our status or influence. I firmly believe that the court's decision should be respected, and that all parties should act in accordance with the law.

Thank you.

Kwame Blay

C.E.O., Western Group