

**Ghana National Council Of Metropolitan Chicago (GNC) President's Emissary
Report on the Conflict between Paa Kwesi Sam and Nana Marfo.**

Special Report: Four Pages.

October 25, 2008.

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Introduction:

A misunderstanding between Paa Kwesi Sam and Nana Marfo on March 8 2008 led Nana Marfo to slap Paa Kwesi Sam. The GNC subsequently banned Nana Marfo from all activities organized by the Council. The GNC ban was issued to the community through the GNC website and letters to the various leaders of the affiliate organizations.

As a result of the incident, the Okuapeman Association, an affiliate of the GNC and the sponsoring organization of Paa Kwesi Sam to the Council became aggrieved and boycotted all social events Nana Marfo was to emcee in the community.

Attempts by some elders and respected members in the community to resolve the issue between Nana Marfo and Paa Kwesi amicably was not yielding any positive results. Meanwhile, the tension and apparent divisions this matter was creating in the community were seriously deepening. As a result of these developments, the former president of the GNC, Mr. Reuben Hadzide contacted the current president, Mr. John Henry Assabill, to mediate on his, John Henry's behalf, to bring peace between Paa Kwesi Sam, the victim, and Nana Marfo on one hand and Nana Marfo and the Okuapeman Association.

Cause of Conflict:

On March 8 2008 at the dinner Party Organized by the GNC to mark Ghana's Independence Anniversary celebrations at the Westin Hotel, 6100 N River Road, Rosemont Illinois, a misunderstanding between Nana Marfo, one of the emcee's at the function and Paa Kwesi Sam, a member and Business manager of the GNC, led Nana Marfo to slap Paa Kwesi Sam across his left cheek.

Gracious Paa Kwesi:

Paa Kwesi disregarded instigations from his friends, members of the community and others to report the matter to the police because he was of the opinion that the situation could be handled by the elders in the community peacefully and quickly. Not even an evidentiary material offered by the hotel security could compel Paa Kwesi Sam to report the matter to the police.

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Nana Marfo Takes Responsibility:

Immediately after the incident, Nana Marfo contacted the Council of Ghanaian Churches in the community to mediate and help bring the matter to a peaceful end. Nana Marfo called many times and apologized to Paa Kwesi and his wife. He also apologized to Paa Kwesi's mother and knelt before her in the presence of some members of the community.

Forgiving, Forgetting and Healing:

Paa Kwesi and Nana Marfo "face-off" for Peace:

On October 11 2008, on the instructions and backing of the current president of the GNC, Mr. Reuben Hadzide met Paa Kwesi Sam and Nana Marfo at the Star Bucks Coffee Shop at Bolingbrook Illinois.

The former president explained to both Paa Kwesi and Nana Marfo about his mission and mandate from the president, John Henry Assabill and asked both of them to direct the community on how we can attain peace in this matter and move on. Nana Marfo talked about previous instances where similar actions by Paa Kwesi Sam in relation to handling the microphone might have provoked him into slapping Paa Kwesi on March 8. He however stated that despite the previous instances, he erred grievously and should not have done what he did. Nana Marfo then went on and knelt down on his knees before Paa Kwesi Sam and apologized to Paa Kwesi Sam for his, Nana Marfo's awful behavior.

After a brief narration of the incident that led to the slap and another incidence the same night between him, Paa Kwesi Sam and Nana Marfo, Paa Kwesi felt the previous incident might have triggered Nana Marfo to behave the way he did. Paa Kwesi went on and unconditionally accepted the apology from Nana Marfo and considered the matter between him and Nana Marfo closed.

Okuapeman Elders and Paa Kwesi Accept Apology from Marfo:

On October 17, 2008, Nana Marfo, Beatrice Sarfo, Nana Kweku Duah, an elder of the Asanteman Association of Chicago met with elders representing the Okuapeman Association. The elders present at the meeting were the chief of Okuapeman, William Bonsu, Martin Bonsu ,Boafo Papafio,Nana Sipi,Nana Sanaa Darko and Nana Kofi Marfo, at the Ramada Hotel , 4900 S Lake Shore Drive. The meeting was called by Reuben Hadzide in consultation with the president of the GNC, John Henry Assabill. John Henry Assabill chose the venue and also sponsored the meeting.

Reuben Hadzide informed the gathering that Paa Kwesi Sam and Nana Marfo have made peace between them but since Okuapeman is the sponsoring organization of Paa Kwesi, he, Nana Marfo would like to apologize to the members of the Okuapeman for what

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happened. Nana Marfo again knelt down on both knees in the presence of all and apologized to Paa Kwesi and the Okuapeman Association. The Okuapeman chief and elder's wholeheartedly accepted his apology and gave Nana Marfo advice on how to handle and conduct himself henceforth. Nana Marfo thanked them and promised never to repeat such a behavior because the incidence has been a bitter lesson to him and his family.

The meeting came to a close with a prayer from Martin Bonsu.

The cost of "peace" in our community to the president on that day was \$267.86.

Accountability versus Integration:

Do traditional concept of post-conflict healing, reconciliation, and reintegration resolve the need for justice and accountability? We cannot answer all these questions here but we will propose that in the future, each case must be handled on its own merit and once a resolution is reached between the warring parties, **the community must accept their wishes and move forward.**

Nana Marfo took absolute responsibility for what he did against Paa Kwesi Sam and has in one way or the other paid dearly for it.

Paa Kwesi has also unconditionally accepted Nana Marfo's apology, and we should appreciate his magnanimity and regard him as a hero for his decision to resolve the problem peacefully despite the tremendous pressure to do otherwise.

Recommendations:

To respect the wishes of Paa Kwesi Sam and to the president of the GNC for his peace process, promote peace and prevent further acrimony and divisions in the community, we urge the GNC to remove the ban imposed on Nana Marfo with immediate effect.

As a growing community, we are unfortunately bound to experience incidents like this, but it is our wish that when an incident of this nature occurs, the council must act immediately to resolve it in a shortest time possible.

The council must also consider an adhoc arbitration committee as soon as an incident occurs and mandate the committee to do everything possible to bring peace among the factions involved. The saying goes that "little drops of water make the mighty ocean" so can we argue that little problems ignored lead to big divisions amongst us. Banning Nana Marfo was one way of resolving the problem but not a solution to the problem!

Community elders, former president's, and council members experience should be tapped in future cases to help resolve some of these cases immediately before they get out of hand.

We must always remember that the price of peace is immeasurable!

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Conclusion:

We wish to thank the president of the GNC for his foresight in helping to bring peace to the community in this matter. We also extend our sincere thanks to Paa Kwesi, Nana Marfo , Nana Kwaku Duah, Beatrice Sarfo and the Okuapeman Association's representatives for their time and also making sure that we arrived at a peaceful conclusion in this matter.

Our gratitude goes to elders and council members, especially the moderator of the GNC, Mr. Kwasi Yeboah, for their advice and suggestions when the going was getting tough for us in the critical part of the negotiations and deliberations.

We are humbled and honored to serve you once again.

Signed

Reuben Hadzide, President, Bedzra Consultant LLC

and former President of the GNC.