

## Press Statement

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, 16 August 2023

### ACA Calls for Thorough Investigation and Government Action into 'Gold-Not Gold' Case

The Alliance for Community Action wishes to emphasize the urgency of addressing the ongoing 'Gold-Not Gold' case that has gripped our nation. In the face of this evolving situation, it is imperative, that the authorities keep the public informed, to the full extent possible, on the progress of their investigations.

Our organization urges thorough investigation and unwavering transparency from the competent authorities, especially the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) and civil aviation bodies. This incident cannot be brushed aside as an isolated occurrence. Rather, it is our contention that this scam has far-reaching implications that demand our collective attention.

We recognize that beneath the questions that have captured public attention lies a deeper inquiry into the motivations behind this illicit act. We must strive to understand why this transaction was orchestrated in the first place, uncovering the intricacies that led to its execution.

While immediate action is crucial, it is equally vital that the Zambian government takes a comprehensive approach. We call upon the government not only to address the specific incident but also to delve into the backgrounds of the detained individuals and their associates, if any, who frequently traverse our borders. It is only through meticulous examination of records that we can discern intentions, trace potential patterns, and better comprehend the underlying issues.

Our nation's stability and security are at stake, and we must respond with the seriousness and resolve that the situation demands. The Drug Enforcement Commission, in particular, must demonstrate a steadfast commitment to delving into the matter, leaving no stone unturned in the pursuit of truth.

**For the Right to Accountability**

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The Commission must be transparent and accountable to citizens at every juncture of their investigations. We do not ask the DEC to reveal information that may jeopardize their investigations but that the Commission shares sufficient information to avoid any speculations and unfounded claims.

We further call upon the authorities to probe any possible links to Trade-Based Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in this incident. In making this request, we wish to draw the attention of the public to the 2022 FIC Trade-Based Money Laundering (TBML) Report, which unveils the alarming realities of Zambia's trade landscape. The report sheds light on export under-reporting and import over-reporting, exposing how these practices obstruct resource mobilization efforts for developing countries like ours.

A particularly concerning case outlined in the report sheds light on a company within the extractive sector that manipulated trade transactions with an offshore entity. This manoeuvring not only resulted in tax evasion but also inflicted significant losses on our national economy. The involvement of international banks and audit firms underscores the pressing need to address systemic vulnerabilities. We are alarmed by what now seems to be an emerging trend of criminals sidestepping formal channels, opting instead to transport cash and high-value items in unconventional ways as was seen in the current incident. This audacious behaviour further underscores the need for robust action against these threats.

In conclusion, we urgently call upon the Zambian government to rise to the occasion. The 'Gold-Not Gold' scam underscores the pressing need to combat trade-based money laundering and associated risks. Our commitment to safeguarding the future of our nation demands nothing less than a comprehensive, strategic, and unwavering response.

**Issued by:**

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