

26th February, 2018
Office of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman(CAO)
2121 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20433
USA

Dear Sir/Madam

AVE MARIA HOLDINGS VS GHANA PORTS & HARBOURS AUTHORITY

We wish to lodge a complaint concerning the Tema Port Expansion Project located in Tema, Ghana. Our company, Ave Maria Resort and Wellness Centre(Avemaria) is situated near the Tema main Harbor and now within the Project area

Ave Maria has been in existence for over 60 years. Formally known as Sir Halcrow Beach Club, the resort is of historical and geographical significance and is less than a minute walk to the Meridian Rock, widely considered to be the geographic mark of the Centre of the world. In 2002, Ave Maria Holdings was granted a lease by the Ghana Ports and Harbors Authority (GPHA) for 25 years to be renewed for another 25 years upon expiry to develop the resort.

Avemaria have suffered greatly as a result of the IFC sponsored project, the Tema Port Expansion Project in Ghana(the Project). We were told at the beginning of the Project that Avemaria would not be affected but this was later changed that the Project would indeed affect Avemaria. GPHA gave us one month to leave the premises and to discuss compensation due to us later.

We know that in accordance with IFC rules any compensation due to us should be settled before we can give vacant possession of the property. GPHA has repeatedly resorted to all kinds of intimidations including road blocks, digging trench in front of our main gate, mishandling of our staff and customers by armed security persons, and issuing press statements on closure of the facility which has significantly impacted the flow of business. Moreover, the fact that construction has already began is greatly impacting on the health and safety of Avemaria staff and clients.

GPHA still insists that Avemaria leave the property before any agreement on compensation is reached. GPHA has given us up to 11th March 2018 to vacate the property or face the wrath of their security personnel.

Leaving the property without having received compensation will be very difficult and unfair due to the following reasons:

- 1) We have over 30 permanent and outsourced staff entitled to redundancy pay before we close down;
- 2) Over the past 14 years of operation, we have built an enviable image and we would like to continue with our business;
- 3) We have signed trade agreements with companies like APSTAR, Expedia and other international hotel suppliers and also our own paid up club members to take care of such that if we are not going to be relocated by the IFC partners we should be paid enough compensation to purchase an equivalent property to continue our business

We have written several letters to IFC about this maltreatment from the GPHA but have had no response. Kindly find attached our most recent correspondence to IFC and a press briefing by the Director General of GPHA on the demolition of Ave Maria and payment of compensation.

We would be grateful if the CAO would investigate these issues with the IFC project partners in Ghana and advice especially on the process of relocation and payment of compensation.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs. Teresa Efua Ntim
Executive Director