

The Day Ghana Stood Still

Written by Cordie Aziz

Tuesday, 14 August 2012 00:00



Pictured: Former President Rawlings and his wife at the funeral on Wednesday

Last Friday, for the first time since arriving in Ghana, the streets were silent in Accra. Market women packed up their provisions and textiles from street shops, taxi drivers took the day off and grocery stores and diplomatic missions closed their doors. Friday was also the first time a President had died in Ghana.

President John Evans Atta Mills was the subject of controversy at times, but then again most powerful people are. He rose to power thanks to former President Rawlings. Rawlings, was the dictator of the junta military that controlled Ghana for 11 years. When he decided to switch from fatigue to business suits, he chose Atta Mills as his Vice President. And the rest, as they say, is history.



Pictured: President John Evans Atta Mills funeral.

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International media may have people believe it was a sudden death, but Atta Mills' health was one of the most controversial issues in the country. In fact, when news came he was dead, many did not react. After all, a rumor of his death swirled around every few months. It was not until the traditional flutes started playing over radio and tv airwaves that many

Ghanaians realized, that the death of Atta Mills was, in fact, not a rumor. It was also this time that Ghanaians started to show a tremendous amount of brotherhood.

Now, for the record, Ghanaians are naturally a friendly people. However, it is a voting year and, well, everyone, worldwide, knows how politics can split a house. But over the past week, the only political rhetoric you hear is let us do what is best for Ghana. Members of the opposing party now when they talk about the NDC party, don't seem as harsh. Instead, they want to honor the memory of a fallen Ghanaian and continue to push the county forward. It is amazing how a man's sins die with him.

The death of Atta Mills has brought about a solidarity amongst Ghanaians that I have not seen since coming. When it was time to view the body in the State House, thousands of Ghanaians lined the streets. It was the first time where tribe, class and political affiliation did not matter. They quietly nodded to each other in the streets and had quiet discussions about the P



resident's death. And the sea of red, black and white clothing Wednesday-Friday was an amazing site.

Pictured: Funeral goers surrounding the State House.

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There is an old saying that God doesn't make any mistakes and after watching the Atta Mills funeral I am inclined to believe it is true. It is an amazing thing to think that a man, running for President , dies less than four months before the election; an election that many people thought would tear Ghanaians apart. Now, because of his death, Ghanaians have been brought together with one thought in their mind, "Let us do what is best for Ghana." If you ask me, this is the greatest legacy President Atta Mills left with his people. May he rest in peace knowing his country is better than when he left.

Cordie Aziz is a former congressional staffer who relocated to Ghana in 2011 after losing her job. She is passionate about encouraging young entrepreneurs to do business in Africa and helping people actualize their dreams. Find her on twitter @GoneiiGhana.