Mr Speaker, I would like to join my Hon Colleagues in thanking the Hon Member for Pru East for making that important Statement.

Mr Speaker, in recent times, it appears that armed robbery is on the ascendancy once more. If armed robbery is on the ascendancy, then the Hon Member who made the Statement is very right in calling for the Ministry of the Interior, which has oversight responsibility of the Ghana Police Service to, as a matter of urgency, put measures in place to forestall the further occurrence of incidents of armed robbery in the country.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, let me add quickly that between the years 2010 - 2014, the erstwhile Government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) actually put in place some measures to deal with the rising incidents of armed robbery and other major crimes such as murder, defilement, et cetera.

The result was that, close to 2,000 vehicles were bought for the Ghana Police Service alone. These vehicles were deployed across the length and breadth of our country. Mr Speaker, the purchase of those vehicles clearly made the Police Service very mobile and the resultant effect, then, was that, we started witnessing a decline in incidents of armed robbery in the country and, of course, of the other major crimes such as murder, rape and defilement.

Mr Speaker, at about the same time, the Ghana Police Service was able to set up the Formed Police Unit, which is the combat unit of the Service. The formation of that unit contributed largely to the ability of the Service to deal rapidly with issues of armed robbery and other major crimes in the country.

Mr Speaker, also, in 2010, the Police Service was then able to roll out the visibility concept, and we are all witnesses to how it has dealt with crime in the country.

However, Mr Speaker, from that time up till now, vehicles that have been in the Service for close to four years definitely would have broken down. Some of those vehicles have given way.

So, my passionate appeal is for the Government of Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, to emulate the shining example of its predecessor Government, the NDC, by ensuring that the Police Service is resourced with vehicles, so that once again, they can have the mobility that they once enjoyed, to be able to deal with incidents of armed robbery in this country. Their vehicles have broken down.

Mr Speaker, in 2014, in fact, the rate of crime had reduced by about 16 per cent because of the measures that had been rolled out. [Interruption.] So, we can easily return to the drawing board, take valuable lessons from the past, put our Police Service back on track, and make them combat ready.
Mr Speaker, I am happy that the Hon Deputy Minister-designate for the Interior, the Hon Henry Quartey is here with us — [Interruption.] Mr Speaker, I can now describe him as my successor. They can take valuable lessons. We are here and prepared to assist them at all times to equip and retool the Police Service, to offer us the service that is most desirable.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The other point I would wish to underscore is the fact that, police to population ratio leaves much to be desired. At the time we left office, police to population ratio had improved from one police officer to 1000 population to one police officer to 700 population. Mr Speaker, that was a marked improvement, but that still falls short of the minimum standard approved by the United Nations (UN) benchmark for police to population ratios.

Mr Speaker, the UN benchmark is one police officer to 500 population, and that is even the minimum. So, Mr Speaker, that is why the Administration of President Mahama resorted to the recruitment of men and women into the Ghana Police Service to make up for the shortfall, so that we can improve upon our police visibility, and deploy many more police officers to the various parts of this country, to ensure that they are able to police our population very well. [Interruption.]

So, Mr Speaker, once again —

Mr Speaker, once again, I wish to make a passionate appeal to H.E. President Akufo-Addo, to make it his priority to ensure that the youth are recruited into the Police Service, so that we can reach the UN minimum standard. When that is attained, I have no doubt in my mind that incidents of crime would be reduced like it happened in 2014, when the figure came down to 15 per cent in relation to the major crimes in this country.

Mr Speaker, having said that, I cannot resume my seat without adding that the Police Service needs to roll out training courses for the men and women in the Service, so that from time to time, just like their counterparts in the military, they are taken to the various training centres and refreshed. That way, they would always be combat ready, and would be in the position to respond effectively to incidents of crime.

Mr Speaker, something happened recently in Sandema.

Yes, Mr Speaker, I am concluding.

It was a market day in Sandema —

Mr Speaker, thank you very much —

Mr Speaker, I crave your indulgence for just one minute.
Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I would add my voice in calling for the police to beef up security in the Builsa North and South Districts, which have also witnessed incidents of armed robbery in recent times.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.