



**WACCE**  
West Africa Centre For Counter- Extremism

## Ghana

### *WACCE Country Security Report 2015*

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## Abstract

This report is an annual Country Security Summary on Ghana for 2015. The year was characterized by the murders of at least 6 chiefs whilst road accidents claimed 1,634 lives. There have been 7 alleged contract-killing incidents including a sitting District Chief Executive (DCE), a local chief as well as a regional political party chairman. Overall, there were 525 murder cases during the year 2015. Incidents of terrorist recruitment and radicalization have emerged as a new key security challenge with at least 13 people allegedly recruited to join ISIS and other groups. The terrorist threat in West Africa is projected to be more imminent than ever in 2016 given the miasma of insecurity created over West Africa in the last 6 years. Effective inter-agency coordination, local community and CVE initiatives are required to prevent the vulnerabilities from degenerating into real threats.

Inter and intra-party factionalism, violence and killings within political parties, the existence and use of party vigilante groups (Azorka Boys by NDC and Bolga Bull Dogs by NPP), the fierce contention over the credibility of electoral register and the existence of prolonged unresolved land and chieftaincy conflicts not only pose a major security and governance challenge, but also project 2016 as a potentially perilous campaign and election year.

Effective short-to-medium term measures using collaborative leadership finesse, consultations and the effective of the National Peace Council are required involving all stakeholders to guarantee a stable and peaceful atmosphere for 2016 elections.

## Introduction

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The Ministry of the Interior is the sole ministry responsible for internal security and the maintenance of law and order in the Republic of Ghana. The Security Intelligence Agencies Act, 1996 (526) is the legislative instrument that establishes and regulates security and the provision of security in Ghana. The ministry which headed by a Minister supervises other purposely created agencies in order to achieve the overall purpose of the Ministry. These agencies include the Ghana Police Service, Ghana Prisons Service, Ghana Refugee Board, Ghana Immigration Service, National Disaster Management Office (NADMO), National Commission on Small Arms among others. Other security agencies include the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI), Economic and Organized Crimes Organization (EOCO) and the National Security Secretariat (National Security).

Ghana remains largely politically stable in spite of economic challenges amplified by electricity power crisis and corruption scandals. However the threats posed by terrorist radicalization and recruitment, increasing uncompromising and tense political atmosphere expressed in the media over corruption scandals, inter and intra-party violence, the existence of prolonged unresolved land and chieftaincy conflicts throughout the country raise serious security concerns and require urgent action.

Chieftaincy related incidents occupied a key spot during 2015. There were at least 6 chieftaincy related killings during the year. The Bawku, Bimbila, Dagbang, and Nkonya-Alavanyo conflicts which in the past few years have claimed at least 70 lives continue to portend anxiety for security as there exist uncompromising positions over their settlements. New threat zones such as the Nakpanduri chieftaincy conflict add to the chieftaincy security challenge in Ghana and require comprehensive approach and measures that can help identify, explain and counter the underpinnings of the conflicts as soon as possible with all stakeholders involved.

The recurrent Fulani herdsmen menace characterized by deaths and reprisal attacks with the local farming communities resulting in at least 7 deaths in 2015 is a

worrying issue. An all-inclusive comprehensive approach and sustainable solutions such as formalizing and ensuring proper cattle ranching practices are required to tackle this issue.

Overall, murder cases reduced from 543 in 2014 to 525 in 2015. Robbery cases also recorded 9% reduction from 1,116 in 2014 to 1,011 in 2015. These figures are expected to further go down in 2016 with the enhanced Police Visibility and community policing programs.

First half of the year (2015) recorded 6,384 motor crashes involving 9,914 vehicles and claimed 944 lives. Total casualty for 2015 was 1,634. Road safety education and outreach need to be intensified to reduce the spate of road accidents and casualties.

The terrorist threat is projected to be more imminent than ever in 2016 given the miasma of insecurity created over West Africa in the last 6 years. But the greatest worry of the State security should be homegrown terrorism - threats emanating from within.

## Ghana: Country Profile Summary

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Full name	Republic of Ghana
Population	26.7 million (World Bank, 2014)
Capital	Accra
Area	238,533 sq km (92,098 sq miles)
Languages	English, African languages including Akan, Ewe and Mole Dagbani
UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)	0.558, 135th in the world
Currency	Ghana Cedi (GHS)
Main exports	Gold, cocoa, timber, tuna, bauxite, aluminium, manganese ore, diamonds, oil
GDP	\$38.62 bn (World Bank 2014 est.)
GDP Growth	4.1% (Ghana Statistical Service 2015)
Police Forces	32,000
Police/Civilian Ratio	120 (per 100, 000)
Life Expectancy Birth	64 years (men), 66 yrs (women)

## Economic Factors

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Ghana's economy has been challenged by electricity power crisis compelling some businesses to lay off workers, relocate or close down altogether. The economy recorded GDP growth rates of 9.3% for 2012, 7.3% for 2013, 4.0% for 2014 and is projected to grow at 4.2% for 2015.

A gaping budget deficit and the eventual resort to an IMF bailout remained a key program of economic attention among economic and political actors during 2015. The existence of marginalized economic and political conditions, youth unemployment, corruption scandals, and anti-government sentiments, labor agitations and protests by political and pressure groups created a polarized economic environment. The imposition of new transactional taxes on banks has created some disquiet. These need to be reviewed to stem the tide of anti-government sentiments in 2016.

With a workforce of a little over 32,000, Ghana has a police – civilian ratio of 1 police personnel to 834 civilians, below the UN minimum standard (1:500). The Ghana Police Service has about 660 police stations catering for 170 metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (Ghana Police Service, 2014). This still leaves a huge constraint on a lot of communities, cities and towns with poor or no security services at all.

### Chieftaincy-Related Violence and Conflicts

2015 was characterized by the murders of at least 6 chiefs including the chief of Atwima Koforidua, Chief of Chinto and his driver in the Eastern region, the Adontenhene of Nkonya-Ahenkro in June after an earlier murder in Nkonya in February. The Bawku, Bimbila, Dagban, Nkonya-Alavanyo conflicts which in the past have claimed at least 70 lives continue to threaten internal security.

With a challenged internal security apparatus, Ghana's response to the increasing and ever more overwhelming

land, ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts have been ad hoc. The temporariness of measures expressed in the usual curfew impositions and the Regional Security Council (REGSEC) meetings in the aftermath of violence do little to tackle the real causes of these conflicts.

A holistic security approach and measures that identify, explain and counter the economic, political, religious, social and cultural foundation of the conflicts should be devised and implemented with all stakeholders involved. These processes and measures must be properly nurtured to a point where the society is fully resilient enough to contain any subsequent potential security challenge.

## Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization in Ghana

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2015 changed the content and context of security discourse regarding terrorism. Before this year, terrorism involving Ghanaians both at home and abroad remained

largely a remote possibility in the Ghanaian psyche. The term however entered public discourse in August 2015 when Ghanaians woke up to the shocking reality of a young man, graduate from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), who left home to join the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Not only were ordinary Ghanaians and authorities shocked at Nazir Nortey Alema's story, but they also were terrified by the subsequent discovery that more than twelve (12) others including a lady perhaps have joined ISIS. Dozens others have been arrested, some currently detained by security for allegedly plotting

terrorist attacks and or engaging in terrorist training.

WACCE's research revealed that Alema was radicalized online. Others such as Mohammed Shakira followed the same path of radicalization. In Ghana, the path to terrorist radicalization remains largely unknown. The cyber space however remains the key platform for terrorist radicalization, training and recruitment. It is thus important to ensure comprehensive legislation and



outreach involving local groups, the Ghana Police and religious leaders on tackling online radicalization in Ghana.

### **Political Violence**

Many events during the year provide cause for security concern.

- The perceived factionalism within the New Patriotic Party (NPP) resulting in the death of a Regional party chairman
- The existence of party security groups (Azorka Boys by the NDC and Bolga Bull Dogs by NPP) and their roles in violence
- The fierce contention over the credibility and replacement of the electoral register
- The dismissal of NPP's national party chairman and General Secretary including other executive members; remain both a party and national security challenge.
- The numerous corruption allegations and scandals involving government officials, including that involving the Ghana Police Service (recruitment scandal), and military pensioners agitations expose major security vulnerabilities that need to be properly managed by the end of the first quarter of 2016.

The miasma of insecurity created over the fierce contestation for power, contention over the electoral register, the inter and intra-party factionalism, killings within political parties, the existence of prolonged unresolved land and chieftaincy conflicts and the increasing use of political vigilante groups not only pose a major security and governance challenge, but also project 2016 as a potentially perilous campaign and election year. To overcome these challenges, political parties need to employ refined language in their discourse and desist from language that can inflame passions amongst their members or opponents. They should exhaust internal party dispute resolution mechanisms before resorting to the law courts and avoid rebellious commentary or public protests.

The Electoral Commission (EC) needs to deepen public confidence in its activities and engage broadly including

with the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), National Peace Council, the various religious bodies and civil society organizations and the media in the deepening of peace messages.

### **Armed Robbery, Burglary and Assault/Rape**

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Armed robbery, burglary and assault, rape and muggings particularly at the beaches and crowded places continue to be the leading reported cases of crime in 2015. Robbery cases recorded 9% reduction from 1,116 in 2014 to 1,011 in 2015.

Rape cases also reduced by 24% from 514 cases in 2014 to 415 in 2015, while defilement cases also registered 12% reduction from 55,684 cases in 2014 to 49,739 in 2015.

There have been burglary attempts directed at expatriate residences. But perpetrators generally lack the sophistication required to overcome home alarm systems and security guards. Being careful and or avoiding crowded places, instituting personal security measures both at home and as an individual are key to ensuring safety.

### **Contract Killings**

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Data from WACCE's Security Alert system suggests that there is a growing trend of criminality – Contract Killings. This is where individuals or groups are sponsored to kill others for monetary or other gains. It remains a major source of individual insecurity for many within the country in the last two years. Last year 2014, there were more than 8 reported incidents of alleged contract killings which included a Bank manager, two chiefs, a popular music producer and a businessman. So far this year 2015 there have been 7 alleged contract-killing incidents including a sitting District Chief Executive (DCE), a chief as well as a regional party chairman.

Such killings are often motivated by varied factors including chieftaincy disputes, land, economic, and political factors. But this phenomenon also suggests a general lapse in collaborative community security monitoring, warning and response and requires the intervention of pragmatic security strategies to curb the threat. This may jeopardize the current peace and personal safety if not managed properly. A stronger police-

civilian (local community) integration policing approach is required to ensure a seamless and timely flow of relevant information to avert such occurrences.

## Cyber Fraud

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Fraud through cyber space is common and increasing mainly in the urban centres including Accra, Tema, Koforidua, Kumasi, Tamale. At its zenith in the Northern Region, the Regional Minister was moved to issue a directive for the arrests of suspected cyber fraudsters in Tamale, a hot spot for this crime.

The phenomenon referred to as sakawa is on the high increase often targeted at foreigners including Americans, British, Canadians and Australians. This fraud scheme is common throughout West Africa.

Law enforcement needs to be strengthened and focused on this nature of crime working in collaboration with community groups and local religious leaders.

## Road Accidents

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Road accidents remain the key source of accident fatality. The Accra-Cape Coast road, Accra-Aflao and the Accra-Kumasi-Tamale roads have been the most perilous during the year with Accra recording the highest number of accidents.

2014 recorded 1,856 fatalities involving 13,133 road accidents. First half of the year (2015) recorded 6,384 crashes involving 9,914 vehicles and 944 casualties. Total casualty for 2015 is 1,634. Road accidents are estimated to cost Ghana about 1.6% of her GDP annually.

Road safety education and outreach need to be intensified to reduce the spate of accidents and casualties. Road and vehicle standards as well as driver fitness need to be continuously enhanced. It is also recommended that travelers by road follow safety tips, traffic regulations and desist from driving outside of Accra and main urban areas during the night.

## Fires and Floods

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There have been more than 3,000 fire incidents during 2015. These included the Central Medical stores and

several markets throughout the country. This was compounded by flood disasters. In June a single flood disaster coupled with fire outbreak at a fuel pumping station claimed more than 150 lives.

City authorities need to take pragmatic and quick measures in redesigning and remodeling of the built environment. Significant investment is required for the expansion of drains and in time, as these perennial floods are likely to be repeated in 2016. Innovative firefighting techniques, the right equipment and a more proactive culture of service men is required to stem the tide of fire outbreaks in 2016.

## Religious and Cultural Underpinnings

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Protests along ethnic and religious lines are not common in Ghana. Grievances are often put forward by a delegation of chiefs and religious leaders to the president, Minister or any other State official.

However in February some Muslim students in the Western Region of Ghana took to the streets to protest over a government directive to ban headscarves during the West African Examinations Council's (WAEC) exam photograph taking exercise and at exams. Resultant narratives immediately characterizing local media discourse revealed deep-seated grievances. The outbursts that emerged alarmed many as it tended to expose religious divisions. But this was quickly resolved following a media blackout on the issue as the religious leaders including the National Peace Council resorted to peaceful dialogue.

Going forward youth groups at the school level should be targeted early for civic education.

## WACCE - The Role of Civil Society

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Homegrown terrorism, the kind that has dominated West Africa in the last decade is largely a 'local problem' rooted in the local economic, political, social, ideological, security, religious and cultural realities of the population. Successful measures thus necessarily ought to go beyond the State's show of force to include the active support and participation of civil society and the local community that addresses such underlining causes of the threat.

If exhaustively and effectively utilized, the inclusion of civil society can significantly alter the outcomes of counter-terrorism measures. Not only is civil society and the local population effective at assisting with relevant information and in timely manner, civil society is also a powerful agency for countering violent extremism and narratives. They can counter the narratives of radicalizers and put in its stead positive ones.

Such counter messages are often more powerful and effective when they come from civil society, community leaders and members themselves rather than the State.

## **Conclusion and Insight into 2016**

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Flood related disasters, fire outbreaks, incidents of political violence and the renewal of chieftaincy and land disputes, age-old Fulani herdsman menace and armed robbery are expected to feature in 2016. With the enhanced Police Visibility program, the experiences learnt during the year and the acquisition of new tools and equipment by the Ghana National Fire Service and the city council preparedness if put to use effectively, the above threats are expected to be tamed.

WACCE views the threat of radicalization as a medium to long term challenge. The incidences of political violence, the existence of prolonged unresolved conflicts and of international events such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the war in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan has a proclivity to serve as conveyor belt to terrorist radicalization and recruitment among the young vulnerable population. State security, religious leaders, community groups and the youth ought to be engaged in education aimed at dissuading vulnerable youth from getting radicalized and or undertaking terrorist violence and also by providing economic opportunities for the youth and marginalized communities.

The Muslim communities and leadership have been slow to recognize or acknowledge the threat of radicalization amongst their communities. Yet vulnerabilities and actual cases continue to emerge. Avoiding the issue can increase misconceptions of Islam and obfuscate the Ghanaian public's ability to appropriately couch discourse around the subject of terrorism and violent extremism.

The time has come for Ghanaian policy makers together with the Muslim communities to not only initiate proper national conversation about countering the rise of homegrown radicalization and terrorist recruitment but also undertake sustainable initiatives at the local community level aimed at dissuading vulnerable members from being radicalized, recruited and or undertaking terrorist attacks.

Going forward;

1. State needs to initiate and deepen consultations and involvement of civil society and various religious, interest and political groups in programs directed at countering radicalization and terrorist recruitment.
2. Avoid or limit the political use of the term 'terrorism' or ascribing blame onto political opponents.
3. Deepen inter-agency coordination, information sharing and community policing practices with the involvement of the local community members and leadership
4. Address the local underpinnings of radicalization such as poverty, marginalization, negative religious ideals, divisive and tribal politics and youth unemployment.
5. The deficit in research literature on the subject of radicalization locally makes it difficult even impossible to situate the appropriate discourse around the subject. This leads many to resort to generalizations and assumptions that have a tendency to undermine, even jeopardize appropriate security preparedness. State needs to invest in research to help provide security clarity and effective policies and measures.

**Sources:**

- WACCE database
- Bank of Ghana
- Ghana Statistical Service
- Ghana National Population Council
- Ghana Police Service
- Ghana National Road Safety Commission
- Ghana National Fire Service
- Ghanaweb
- Myjoyonline
- World Bank

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