



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Ghana: Background information, including internal relocation

Version 1.0

September 2020

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- The general humanitarian situation is so severe as to breach Article 15(b) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive) / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules
- The security situation presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that it would breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- A claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 21 September 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of this note

- 1.1.1 Whether in general those with a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from non-state actors can internally relocate within Ghana.
- 1.1.2 Where a claim is refused for male applicants, it must be considered for certification under section 94(3) of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as Ghana is listed as a designated state in respect of men only.
- 1.1.3 For information on certification, see the instruction on [Certification of protection and human rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.

If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection.

For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Internal relocation

- 2.3.1 Ghana, which is about the same size as the UK, is an ethnically diverse country with a youthful population of over 29.3 million. It has 3 large cities of

over 750,000 people: the capital Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi Takoradi, with Accra having a population of over 2.5 million. The population is over 70% Christian and 17% Muslim with a small minority practising other religions or with no religious affiliation at all. Christians reside throughout the country; the majority of Muslims live in the northern regions and the 3 major urban areas (see [Geography and Demography](#)).

- 2.3.2 Ghana has an open, market-based economy which is a mixture of public and private enterprise with relatively few policy barriers to trade and investment in comparison to other countries in the region. The World Bank assessed it to be a middle income country. The economy is dominated by services (the large majority in the informal sector), with around a fifth working in agriculture and the remainder in industry. Gold, oil, and cocoa exports, and individual remittances, are major sources of foreign exchange. Approximately 50% of the labour force is employed in the agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors. Ghana's has shown steady growth in recent years, although the likely impact of covid-19 is that it will slow or shrink in 2020. While Ghana has made steady economic progress in the last decade and met its UN-mandated millennium development goals in 2015 many people continue to live in poverty and lack access to basics services with 1 in 5 living in poverty, 1 in 8 in extreme poverty and 1 child in 10 living in extreme poverty (see [Socio-economic conditions](#), [Employment](#), [Food security](#) and [Healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene](#)).
- 2.3.3 More than two-fifths of unemployed persons are located in Ashanti and Greater Accra. Accra has a lack of access to housing and basic services, such as water and sanitation. Most workers, particularly women, are employed in low wage jobs within the informal sector. Women make up approximately 50% of the agricultural labour force and are not protected by labour or minimum wage laws and women carry the burden of working for subsistence wages in the informal sector. Discrimination in employment continues to exist with respect to women, persons with disabilities, HIV positive and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people (see [Employment](#) and Women: [Legal, social and economic rights](#)).
- 2.3.4 State education is available and compulsory for all children from kindergarten through to junior high school. It is regarded as one of the best-developed educational systems in West Africa. Eleven years of tuition free kindergarten, primary and junior education is followed by 3 years of senior secondary education which was made free in 2017. Unicef reported notable progress in lessening the disparity in enrolment rates between boys and girls at junior high school level (see [Education](#)).
- 2.3.5 People have access to a mix of public and private health care. Hospitals and clinics are provided by the government, privately and by various Christian missions across the country. Hospitals and clinics are overburdened in rural areas and almost all of specialist health care professionals are found in the south. There is a lack of specialised services for particularly vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities and homeless people. The quantity and quality of health facilities and medical personnel has progressed but rapid population growth continues to impose pressures on these services (see [Healthcare, water sanitation and hygiene](#)).

- 2.3.6 The government has expanded the police's domestic violence and victim support unit and have created special courts for gender-based violence. However, women face discrimination, and domestic violence and rape remain a problem. Harmful traditional practices such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) persist and remains a serious problem for girls younger than 18 in some regions. The Upper East (41.1%) and Upper West (27.8%) regions have the highest prevalence of FGM, all other regions have a prevalence of less than 5%. Ghanaian women and children continue to be sexually exploited and recruited for forced labour and sex trafficking (see [Child labour and trafficking](#), [Sexual exploitation of children](#), [Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)](#) and [Women: Overview, FGM and other harmful traditional practices, Rape, domestic violence and sexual assault](#)).
- 2.3.7 There are no legal constraints on movement within the country. However the police sometimes impose illegal check points in order to demand bribes from travellers. Poorly developed road networks and banditry can make travel outside of the capital and tourist areas difficult. (see [Freedom of movement](#) and [Security and crime situation](#) and the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ghana: Actors of Protection](#))
- 2.3.8 In general, a person fearing a non-state or rogue state actor is likely to be able to relocate to another part of Ghana. depending on the nature of the threat and the individual circumstances of the person. However, decision makers must take full account of the nature of the threat and the individual circumstances of the particular person (see [Children](#), [Discrimination against persons with disabilities](#) and [Women](#)). Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person.
- 2.3.9 For an additional assessment of and information about particular groups see country policy and information note on [Ghana: Sexual orientation and gender identity / expression](#).
- 2.3.10 For general guidance on assessing internal relocation, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 14 August 2020

3. History

- 3.1.1 The Encyclopaedia Britannica provided a short history of Ghana¹.
- 3.1.2 The [BBC Ghana Country Profile Timeline](#) noted key dates in the country's history².
- 3.1.3 CIA World Factbook summarised:

'Formed from the merger of the British colony of the Gold Coast and the Togoland trust territory, Ghana in 1957 became the first Sub-Saharan country in colonial Africa to gain its independence. Ghana endured a series of coups before Lt. Jerry Rawlings took power in 1981 and banned political parties. After approving a new constitution and restoring multiparty politics in 1992, RAWLINGS won presidential elections in 1992 and 1996 but was constitutionally prevented from running for a third term in 2000. John KUFUOR of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) succeeded him and was reelected in 2004. John Atta MILLS of the National Democratic Congress won the 2008 presidential election and took over as head of state. MILLS died in July 2012 and was constitutionally succeeded by his vice president, John Dramani MAHAMA, who subsequently won the December 2012 presidential election. In 2016, Nana Addo Dankwa AKUFO-ADDO of the NPP defeated MAHAMA, marking the third time that Ghana's presidency has changed parties since the return to democracy.'³

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¹ Encyclopædia Britannica, '[Ghana: History](#)', 22 January 2020

² BBC, '[Ghana country profile: Timeline](#)', 1 May 2018

³ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Introduction), last updated 15 March 2020

4. Geography and demography

4.1 Key geographic and demographic points

Full country name:	Republic of Ghana ⁴
Area:	The total area of the country is 238,533 sq. km which is about the same size of the UK ⁵ , of which is land 227,533 sq. km and water 11,000 sq. km ⁶
Flag:	 7
Population:	29,340,248 (July 2020 est.) ⁸
Capital city:	Accra ⁹
Other key cities/towns:	Kumasi Sekondi Takoradi ¹⁰
Position:	Ghana is in Western Africa. It borders the Gulf of Guinea, between Cote d'Ivoire (720km) and Togo (1098km) and Burkina Faso (602km). Its land boundaries total 2,420km ¹¹ .
Languages:	English is the official language. Other languages spoken are: Asante 16%, Ewe 14%, Fante 11.6%, Boron (Brong) 4.9%, Dagomba 4.4%, Dangme 4.2%, Dagarte (Dagaba) 3.9%,

⁴ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Government), last updated 15 March 2020

⁵ My Life Elsewhere, '[Country Size Comparison](#)', undated

⁶ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Geography), last updated 15 March 2020

⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica, '[Ghana](#)' (section Introduction), 1 April 2020

⁸ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

⁹ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

¹⁰ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

¹¹ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Geography), last updated 15 March 2020

	Kokomba 3.5%, Akyem 3.2%, Ga 3.1%, other 31.2% (2010 est.) ¹²
Ethnic groups:	Akan 47.5%, Mole-Dagbon 16.6%, Ewe 13.9%, Ga-Dangme 7.4%, Gurma 5.7%, Guan 3.7%, Grusi 2.5%, Mande 1.1%, other 1.4% (2010 est.) ¹³
Religion:	<p>Christian 71.2% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 28.3%, Protestant 18.4%, Catholic 13.1%, other 11.4%), Muslim 17.6%, traditional 5.2%, other 0.8%, none 5.2% (2010 est.)¹⁴</p> <p>The US State Department (USSD) report on religious freedom for 2018 noted:</p> <p>‘Smaller religious groups include the Baha’i Faith, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Eckankar, and Rastafarianism.</p> <p>‘Christian denominations include Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, Eden Revival Church International, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Seventh-day Adventist, Pentecostal, Baptist, African independent churches, the Society of Friends (Quaker), and numerous nondenominational Christian groups.</p> <p>‘Muslim communities include Sunnis, Ahmadiyya, Shia, and Sufis (Tijaniyah and Qadiriyya orders).</p> <p>‘Many individuals who identify as Christian or Muslim also practice some aspects of indigenous beliefs. There are syncretic groups that combine elements of Christianity or Islam with traditional beliefs. Zetahil, a belief system unique to the country, combines elements of Christianity and Islam.</p> <p>‘There is no significant link between ethnicity and religion, but geography is often associated with religious identity. Christians reside throughout the country; the majority of Muslims reside in the northern regions and in the urban centers of Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi; and most followers of traditional religious beliefs reside in rural areas.’¹⁵</p>

¹² CIA World Factbook, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

¹³ CIA World Factbook, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

¹⁴ CIA World Factbook, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

¹⁵ USSD, ‘[2018 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ghana](#)’ (section I)

4.1.1 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated: ‘Although relatively small in area and population, Ghana is one of the leading countries of Africa, partly because of its considerable natural wealth and partly because it was the first black African country south of the Sahara to achieve independence from colonial rule.’¹⁶

4.1.2 The CIA World Factbook noted that:

‘Ghana has a young age structure, with approximately 57% of the population under the age of 25. Its total fertility rate fell significantly during the 1980s and 1990s but has stalled at around four children per woman for the last few years. Fertility remains higher in the northern region than the Greater Accra region. On average, desired fertility has remained stable for several years; urban dwellers want fewer children than rural residents. Increased life expectancy, due to better health care, nutrition, and hygiene, and reduced fertility have increased Ghana’s share of elderly persons; Ghana’s proportion of persons aged 60+ is among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty has declined in Ghana, but it remains pervasive in the northern region, which is susceptible to droughts and floods and has less access to transportation infrastructure, markets, fertile farming land, and industrial centers. The northern region also has lower school enrollment, higher illiteracy, and fewer opportunities for women.

‘Ghana was a country of immigration in the early years after its 1957 independence, attracting labor migrants largely from Nigeria and other neighboring countries to mine minerals and harvest cocoa – immigrants composed about 12% of Ghana’s population in 1960. In the late 1960s, worsening economic and social conditions discouraged immigration, and hundreds of thousands of immigrants, mostly Nigerians, were expelled.

‘During the 1970s, severe drought and an economic downturn transformed Ghana into a country of emigration; neighboring Cote d’Ivoire was the initial destination. Later, hundreds of thousands of Ghanaians migrated to Nigeria to work in its booming oil industry, but most were deported in 1983 and 1985 as oil prices plummeted. Many Ghanaians then turned to more distant destinations, including other parts of Africa, Europe, and North America, but the majority continued to migrate within West Africa. Since the 1990s, increased emigration of skilled Ghanaians, especially to the US and the UK, drained the country of its health care and education professionals. Internally, poverty and other developmental disparities continue to drive Ghanaians from the north to the south, particularly to its urban centers.’¹⁷

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4.2 Map

4.2.1 A [Map of Ghana](#) is available on the UN’s Geospatial Information Section website.

4.2.2 The Perry Castaneda Library Map Collection provides [thematic maps of Ghana](#).

¹⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section Introduction), 1 April 2020

¹⁷ CIA World Factbook, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

4.2.3 The On the World Map website provides [administrative, road and political maps of Ghana](#).

4.2.4 For maps on the humanitarian situation in Ghana see the 'Maps and Infographics' section of [ReliefWeb](#).

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4.3 Administrative divisions

4.3.1 Ghana comprises of '16 regions; Ahafo, Ashanti, Bono, Bono East, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, North East, Northern, Oti, Savannah, Upper East, Upper West, Volta, Western, Western North.'¹⁸

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4.4 Main population centres

4.4.1 Ghana's population is concentrated in the southern half of the country, with the highest concentrations being on or near the Atlantic coast. The major urban areas are Accra with an estimated population (2020) of 2.514 million, Kumasi (3.348 million) and Sekondi Takoradi with a population of 946,000¹⁹.

4.4.2 Ghana had 'an overall population density of 313 people per square mile, or 121 people per square kilometre.' The largest city is Accra 'which has an urban population of 2.27 million. The Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) has about 4 million inhabitants which makes it the 11th largest metro area in Africa.'²⁰

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4.5 Transportation

4.5.1 Ghana has over 109,500km of roads, of which only around 13,780km are paved, plus over 940km of railway. As of 2013, there were 10 airports, 7 of which were paved, and as of 2015, 4 registered air carriers²¹.

4.5.2 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated:

'The density of roads and railways is greater in the southern part of the country than in the north. Only about one-fourth of the country's roads are paved...There are municipal bus services and express coach and freight services between the larger towns.

'...The rail system forms a triangle joining Sekondi-Takoradi, Kumasi, and Accra. Additional lines run within the triangle, and branches connect to other towns, including the mining towns of Tarkwa and Dunkwa, as well as to the port of Tema. Rail transport is less popular than road transport and is primarily used for the transport of freight.

'Small airports, including those located at Takoradi and Sunyani, are used for domestic services, while airports at Tamale in the north, Kumasi in the south-centre, and Kotoka International Airport at Accra in the south handle

¹⁸ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Government), last updated 15 March 2020

¹⁹ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Government), last updated 15 March 2020

²⁰ WPR, '[Ghana population](#)', 17 February 2020

²¹ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Transportation), last updated 15 March 2020

both domestic and international flights. Air transport is used predominantly for passengers.

'Most goods entering and leaving the country are carried by sea. There are ports at Takoradi...and Tema...Takoradi specializes in exporting oil, gas, manganese, and bauxite, while Tema specializes in the export of cocoa beans. Both ports also handle passengers.'²²

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Section 5 updated: 14 August 2020

5. Constitution

5.1.1 The Commonwealth website noted that 'A new constitution, based on the US model, was approved by national referendum in April 1992.'²³

5.1.2 See [Ghana's Constitution of 1992 with Amendments through 1996](#).

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Section 6 updated: 14 August 2020

6. Political system

6.1.1 The US State Department (USSD) human rights report for 2019, noted: 'Ghana is a constitutional democracy with a strong presidency and a unicameral 275-seat parliament.'²⁴

6.1.2 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated:

'The 1992 constitution provides for a multiparty republic with a president as head of state and a vice president. The president is elected for a term of four years (with the possibility of reelection for one further term) by universal adult suffrage. There is a broadly based Council of State with deliberative and advisory functions as well as a [unicameral Parliament](#), whose members are directly elected to four-year terms. The president appoints the cabinet, which averages between 20 and 25 members.

'Dating to the period of British colonial rule, chieftaincy and the traditional political authorities have tended to run along parallel lines with the central government. Since independence, this tendency has persisted or even expanded, and the institution of chieftaincy has become increasingly divorced from the exercise of real political power at almost all levels of government; its role now is largely ceremonial...

'The 1992 constitution provided for elected District Assemblies, to which government-appointed members and an appointed District Chief Executive are added. However, district and local government members are not to have political party affiliation.'²⁵

6.1.3 The last elections were held on 7 December 2016 and will next be held in December 2020, the results were:

²² Encyclopædia Britannica, '[Ghana: Labour and taxation](#)', 1 April 2020

²³ The Commonwealth, '[Ghana: Constitution and politics](#)', 8 July 2020

²⁴ USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section Executive summary), 11 March 2020

²⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica, '[Ghana: Government and society](#)', 1 April 2020

- Nana Addo Dankwa AKUFO-ADDO (NPP) 53.7%
- John Dramani MAHAMA (National Democratic Congress - NDC) 44.5%
- other 1.8%²⁶

6.1.4 The Commonwealth member countries webpage stated:

'The President appoints a Vice-President and nominates a council of ministers, subject to approval by the parliament. The constitution also provides for two advisory bodies to the President: a 25- member council of state, composed mainly of regional representatives and presidential nominees, and a 20-member national security council, chaired by the Vice-President.

'Ten regional ministers, one for each region, are each assisted by a regional co-ordinating council. There are 138 administrative districts, each having a district assembly, headed by a district chief executive. Regional colleges, which comprise representatives selected by the district assemblies and by regional houses of chiefs, elect a number of representatives to the council of state.'²⁷

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Section 7 updated: 14 August 2020

7. Economy

7.1 Socio-economic conditions

7.1.1 The following table contains some key points:

Currency	Cedi ²⁸
Exchange rate	1 GBP = 7.65 GHS [Ghanaian Cedis] @ 3 September 2020 ²⁹
GDP per capita	US\$2,202 (2019) ³⁰
Inflation rate	7.6% (first half of 2019) - 2019 target 8% ³¹
GDP – Real growth rate	6.2% (first half of 2019) – 2019 target 7.1% ³²

7.1.2 The World Bank in its webpage overview stated in October 2019 that Ghana has middle income status³³. It further noted:

'Ghana sits on the Atlantic Ocean and borders Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso. It has a population of about 29.6 million (2018). In the past

²⁶ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Government), last updated 15 March 2020

²⁷ The Commonwealth, '[Ghana: Constitution and politics](#)', undated

²⁸ XE Currency Converter, '[Ghana](#)', 3 September 2020

²⁹ XE Currency Converter, '[Ghana](#)', 3 September 2020

³⁰ World Bank, '[Data – GDP per capita \(current US\\$\) - Ghana](#)', undated

³¹ Ghana Ministry of Finance, '[Budget highlights – 2020 Financial year](#)', 13 November 2019

³² Ghana Ministry of Finance, '[Budget highlights – 2020 Financial year](#)', 13 November 2019

³³ World Bank, '[The World Bank in Ghana – Overview](#)', last updated 26 September 2019

two decades, it has taken major strides toward democracy under a multi-party system, with its independent judiciary winning public trust. Ghana consistently ranks in the top three countries in Africa for freedom of speech and press freedom, with strong broadcast media, with radio being the medium with the greatest reach. Factors such as these provide Ghana with solid social capital.

‘Two and a half years after being elected president in a peaceful election, President Akufo-Addo has marked some successes implementing some of its promises such as planting for food and jobs and free secondary education. But he also faces challenges fulfilling some of his election pledges—including setting up a factory in each of the nation’s 216 districts, one dam for every village and providing free high school education.

‘Ghana’s economy continued to expand in 2019 as the first quarter gross domestic product (GDP) growth was estimated at 6.7%, compared with 5.4% in the same period of last year. Non-oil growth was also strong at 6.0%. The relatively high quarterly growth was driven by a strong recovery in the services sector which grew by 7.2% compared with 1.2% in 2018.’³⁴

7.1.3 The same report stated:

‘Economic growth is projected to increase to 7.6% in 2019. Non-oil growth is expected to accelerate to 6% as the government’s new policies in the agriculture sector and the promotion of agribusiness begin to take effect. Inflation is expected to remain within the Central Bank’s target range of 6-10% over the medium term.

‘The pace of fiscal consolidation is expected to slow in 2019 and the overall fiscal deficit is projected at 4.5% of GDP in 2019 and, in the medium term, it will remain within fiscal rule ceiling of 5% of GDP.’³⁵

7.1.4 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated:

‘The economy is a mixture of private and public enterprise. About three-fifths of the GDP is derived from the services sector, agriculture contributes almost one-fifth, and industry about one-fourth...

‘Apart from providing the bulk of national income, agriculture, forestry, and fishing employ more than half of the population. Cacao—grown commercially for its seeds, cocoa beans—is cultivated on more than one-half of Ghana’s arable land and is a significant source of the country’s export revenue. Consequently, the world price paid for cocoa beans directly determines Ghana’s economic fortunes...

‘Ghana’s principal exports—cocoa, gold, and sawn wood—are received primarily by the countries of the European Union, India, and the United Arab Emirates. Ghana’s principal imports include petroleum, equipment, and food products, originating primarily from China, the United Kingdom, and the United States.’³⁶

7.1.5 CIA Factbook stated:

³⁴ World Bank, ‘[The World Bank in Ghana – Overview](#)’, last updated 26 September 2019

³⁵ World Bank, ‘[The World Bank in Ghana – Overview](#)’, last updated 26 September 2019

³⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica, ‘[Ghana: Economy](#)’, 1 April 2020

'Ghana has a market-based economy with relatively few policy barriers to trade and investment in comparison with other countries in the region, and Ghana is endowed with natural resources. Ghana's economy was strengthened by a quarter century of relatively sound management, a competitive business environment, and sustained reductions in poverty levels, but in recent years has suffered the consequences of loose fiscal policy, high budget and current account deficits, and a depreciating currency.

'Agriculture accounts for about 20% of GDP and employs more than half of the workforce, mainly small landholders. Gold, oil, and cocoa exports, and individual remittances, are major sources of foreign exchange. Expansion of Ghana's nascent oil industry has boosted economic growth, but the fall in oil prices since 2015 reduced by half Ghana's oil revenue. Production at Jubilee, Ghana's first commercial offshore oilfield, began in mid-December 2010. Production from two more fields, TEN and Sankofa, started in 2016 and 2017 respectively. The country's first gas processing plant at Atuabo is also producing natural gas from the Jubilee field, providing power to several of Ghana's thermal power plants.

'As of 2018, key economic concerns facing the government include the lack of affordable electricity, lack of a solid domestic revenue base, and the high debt burden. The AKUFO-ADDU administration has made some progress by committing to fiscal consolidation, but much work is still to be done. Ghana signed a \$920 million extended credit facility with the IMF in April 2015 to help it address its growing economic crisis. The IMF fiscal targets require Ghana to reduce the deficit by cutting subsidies, decreasing the bloated public sector wage bill, strengthening revenue administration, boosting tax revenues, and improving the health of Ghana's banking sector. Priorities for the new administration include rescheduling some of Ghana's \$31 billion debt, stimulating economic growth, reducing inflation, and stabilizing the currency. Prospects for new oil and gas production and follow through on tighter fiscal management are likely to help Ghana's economy in 2018.'³⁷

- 7.1.6 The UN Special Rapporteur, Philip Alston, on extreme poverty and human rights in report of his mission to Ghana between 9 and 18 April 2018 (UN SR report 2018) noted:

'In development terms, its record of achieving certain Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is impressive. It met the targets for halving extreme poverty and halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water, and it achieved the goals relating to universal primary education and gender parity in primary school.

'According to the country's own figures, one person in five lives in poverty and one in eight lives in extreme poverty. A person is deemed to be "poor" in Ghana if their income is less than 1,314 cedis per adult per year (which was the equivalent of \$1.83 per day in 2013 when the relevant survey was undertaken, but was only 80 cents in April 2018), while the "extreme poor" live on less than 792 cedis per adult per year (equivalent to \$1.10 per day, in 2013, but only 48 cents in April 2018). [...]

³⁷ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Economy), last updated 15 March 2020

Poverty in Ghana is increasingly rural, with 38.2 per cent of people in rural areas being poor, compared to 10.4 per cent in urban areas. Poverty levels are especially high in the agricultural sector, which has shown significantly slower growth than other sectors and has been accorded a low priority by the Government.

The majority of persons living in poverty live in the north. The regions with the highest poverty rates are the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions, but the Northern Region in particular is languishing. Poverty rates are increasing in the coastal zone and in urban settings, and overall poverty reduction is not keeping pace with population growth.’³⁸

- 7.1.7 For further information on the economy see the [World Bank in Ghana](#) and [Deloitte - Economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy of Ghana](#)

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7.2 Employment

- 7.2.1 The unemployment rate in 2018 was 6.7%³⁹. Bertelsmann Stiftung stated in their 2020 country report: ‘Employment statistics are scarce and unreliable, especially with regard to the informal sector. Studies of the informal economy suggest that women carry the major burden of working for subsistence wages in this sector, a pattern consistent with other African societies. A legal framework for labor and employment regulation exists, but its enforcement is difficult and mostly inadequate.’⁴⁰

- 7.2.2 GhanaWeb reported that: ‘Mr Ignatius Baffour-Awuah, the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, has said the rate of unemployment in the country has reduced from 11.9 per cent in 2015 to 7.1 per cent in 2019.’⁴¹

- 7.2.3 The Ghana Statistical Service reported in their 2015 Labour Force report that:

‘About 955,529 persons 15 years and older, representing approximately 10 percent of the employed population, are estimated to be underemployed. Of this number, 50.7 percent are females and 49.3 percent are males...

‘1,250,913 persons 15 years and older are estimated to be unemployed. Of this number, 57.2 percent or 714,916 are females and 42.8 percent or 535,997 are males...

‘the unemployment rate for Ghana is 11.9%...

‘more than two-fifths (548,447) of the estimated unemployed persons are located in Ashanti (22.5%) and Greater Accra (21.3%) regions.’⁴²

- 7.2.4 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted:

³⁸ UNHRC, ‘[UNSR report 2018](#)’ (para 4 & 14-16), 10 October 2018

³⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung: ‘[BTI 2020 Country Report Ghana](#)’ (p15), 29 April 2020

⁴⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung: ‘[BTI 2020 Country Report Ghana](#)’ (p22), 29 April 2020

⁴¹ GhanaWeb, ‘[Unemployment rate in Ghana drops](#)’, 16 August 2020

⁴² GSS, ‘[2015 Labour force report](#)’ (p56), December 2016

'Ghana is experiencing rapid urbanization, especially, but not only, in Accra. The growing urban population is often very poor and the cities are becoming increasingly segregated as inequality gaps grow ever larger. While people migrate to escape from rural unemployment, underemployment and poverty, and to search for better socioeconomic opportunities, the reality they face in cities like Accra is very high unemployment rates and lack of access to housing and basic services, such as water and sanitation.'⁴³

7.2.5 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

'The government did not effectively enforce prohibitions on discrimination. The law stipulates that an employer cannot discriminate against a person on the basis of several categories, including gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, social or economic status, or disability, whether that person is already employed or seeking employment. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to women, persons with disabilities, HIV-positive persons, and LGBTI persons [...]. For example, reports indicated few companies were willing to offer reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities. Many companies ignored or turned down such individuals who applied for jobs. Women in urban centers and those with skills and training encountered little overt bias, but resistance persisted to women entering nontraditional fields and accessing education.

'A national tripartite committee composed of representatives of the government, labor, and employers set a minimum wage. The minimum wage exceeds the government's poverty line. Many companies did not comply with the new law. The maximum workweek is 40 hours, with a break of at least 48 consecutive hours every seven days. Workers are entitled to at least 15 working days of leave with full pay in a calendar year of continuous service or after having worked at least 200 days in a particular year. These provisions, however, did not apply to piece workers, domestic workers in private homes, or others working in the informal sector. The law does not prescribe overtime rates and does not prohibit excessive compulsory overtime.

'The government sets industry-appropriate occupational safety and health regulations. By law workers can remove themselves from situations that endanger their health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. This legislation covers only workers in the formal sector, which employed approximately 10 percent of the labor force. In practice, few workers felt free to exercise this right.

'The Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations was unable to enforce the wage law effectively. The government also did not effectively enforce health and safety regulations, which are set by a range of agencies in the various industries, including but not limited to the Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana Roads Safety Commission, and Inspectorate Division of the Minerals Commission. The law reportedly provided inadequate coverage to workers due to its fragmentation and limited scope. There was widespread violation of the minimum wage law in the formal economy across all sectors. The minimum wage law was not enforced in the informal sector. Legislation

⁴³ UNHRC, '[UNSR report 2018](#)' (para 9 &18), 10 October 2018

governing working hours applies to both formal and informal sectors. It was largely followed in the formal sector but widely flouted and not enforced in the informal sector.

‘The government did not employ sufficient labor inspectors to enforce compliance. Inspectors were poorly trained and did not respond to violations effectively. Inspectors did not impose sanctions and were unable to provide data as to how many violations they responded to during the year. In most cases inspectors gave advisory warnings to employers, with deadlines for taking corrective action. Penalties were insufficient to enforce compliance.

‘Approximately 90 percent of the working population was employed in the informal sector, according to the Ghana Statistical Service’s 2015 Labor Force Report, including small to medium-scale businesses such as producers, wholesale and retail traders, and service providers made up of contributing family workers, casual wageworkers, home-based workers, and street vendors. Most of these workers were self-employed.’

‘Sixteen persons died in a mine explosion in January. Thirteen workers suffered electric shock and three were electrocuted when erecting a billboard that fell on a cable.

‘In March the High Court in Accra ordered a mining company to pay more than 9 million cedis (\$1.7 million) in damages in a case concerning the drowning of an employee in 2015. The court found gross negligence on the part of the company for failing to meet health and safety standards.’⁴⁴

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7.3 Food security

7.3.1 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted: ‘Child poverty rates are especially problematic with 3.65 million, or 28.3 per cent of all children, living in poverty. A child is now almost 40 per cent more likely to live in poverty than an adult, compared to only 15 per cent more likely in the 1990s. One child in 10 lives in extreme poverty, meaning that 1.2 million children live in households that are unable to provide even adequate food.’⁴⁵

7.3.2 The same report stated:

‘The school feeding programme, launched in 2005, aims “to deliver a well-organized, decentralized intervention providing disadvantaged school children with nutritionally adequate, locally produced food thereby reducing poverty through improved household incomes and effective local economic development”. In 2016, it was reported to provide one meal a day to 1,728,681 pupils in 5,285 schools in 216 districts, representing 36.6 per cent of total potential coverage. The programme is entirely funded by the Government and accounts for 54 per cent of total spending on social assistance. It is of particular political significance because it employs 24,000 caterers and cooks nationwide and the Special Rapporteur was informed by many sources that the allocation of these contracts is heavily influenced by party political considerations. There does not appear to be any systematic monitoring of the quality of the food provided, which students are served by

⁴⁴ USSD, [‘2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana’](#) (section 7), 11 March 2020

⁴⁵ UNHRC, [‘UNSR report 2018’](#) (para 15), 10 October 2018

the programme, how much “shrinkage” occurs, and what outcomes have been achieved. Given the expense of the programme, such an evaluation should be undertaken. The existing monitoring mechanisms, involving parent/teacher associations and school prefects, are ineffectual.⁴⁶

7.3.3 World Food Programme (WFP) Ghana in a January 2020 country brief stated:

‘Despite progress in recent years in reducing acute malnutrition and stunting at the national level, high rates of poverty and stunting persist in the Northern Savannah Ecological Zone, at 21.4 and 31 percent respectively. In addition, the November 2019 Cadre Harmonise indicates that 65,645 people were estimated to be food insecure during the 2019 post-harvest season, while 21,712 people are expected to be food insecure during the upcoming lean season (June-August 2020).

‘WFP’s interventions focus on direct food assistance using vouchers to improve nutritional status of targeted populations, in line with national targets. WFP also aims to ensure vulnerable communities benefit from efficient and resilient food systems which support nutritional value chains, capacity strengthening interventions to manage food security, nutrition and social protection programmes and the Advocacy and coherent policy frameworks support to key cooperating partners. WFP has been present in Ghana since 1963.⁴⁷

7.3.4 The WFP’s May 2020 country brief provided the following update:

‘Despite progress in recent years in reducing acute malnutrition and stunting at the national level, high rates of poverty and stunting persist in the Northern Savannah Ecological Zone, at 21.4 and 31 percent respectively. In addition, the November 2019 Cadre Harmonise indicates that 65,645 people were estimated to be food insecure during the 2019 post-harvest season, while 21,712 people are expected to be food insecure during the upcoming lean season (June-August 2020).⁴⁸

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7.4 Housing / shelter

The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted:

‘In Old Fadama, a huge informal settlement in Accra, the Special Rapporteur was shown the cramped, polluted and often diseased conditions in which over 100,000 people live. He also saw pride and resilience, despite the lack of basic government services, and the immense challenges presented by daily life in such circumstances. [...]

‘Ghana has a housing deficit of about 1.7 million units, which is projected to increase to 2.4 million this year [2018], and 3.8 million by 2020. Already, many people end up living on the streets in public places, such as bus

⁴⁶ UNHRC, ‘[UNSR report 2018](#)’ (para 56-57), 10 October 2018

⁴⁷ WFP, ‘[WFP Ghana – Country brief](#)’, January 2020

⁴⁸ WFP, ‘[Ghana Country Brief May 2020](#)’, 20 July 2020

stations and markets, and performing menial tasks in the informal sector, such as hawking, street vending and working as head porters.’⁴⁹

7.4.1 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated:

‘With the rapid growth of population and the movement of large numbers of people from rural to urban areas, housing has been a problem in Ghana, especially in the large cities, where the problem is both quantitative and qualitative. In the rural areas the problem is mainly one of housing quality. There is distinct overcrowding in the urban areas. All but a small proportion of housing is provided by private individuals. To address the housing needs of the country, the government has focused on such areas as providing low-cost housing, developing suitable building materials, and creating a national building code.’⁵⁰

7.4.2 Amnesty International stated in their report covering reports in 2019 that:

‘After enduring many years of forced evictions and substandard living conditions, the residents of Agbogbloshie and Old Fadama districts in Accra were assured by Vice President Dr Mahamudu Bawumia in September of the government’s plan to end evictions in those areas, which largely comprise informal settlements and provide residents with access to essential services like schools, health centres, toilets, water, roads and drainage systems. The housing policy passed in 2015 remained unimplemented.’⁵¹

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7.5 Social support

7.5.1 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted:

‘The benefits of record levels of economic growth experienced over the past decade have gone overwhelmingly to the wealthy. Inequality is higher than it has ever been in Ghana, while almost 1 person in 4 lives in poverty and 1 in 12 lives in extreme poverty. Spending on social protection is very low by the standards of comparable African countries and remarkably little is spent on social assistance. Ghana has a number of admirable social programmes, but few convincing plans for funding many of them adequately. As a result, a large number of Ghanaians do not enjoy their basic economic and social human rights and the prospects that Ghana will meet many of the Sustainable Development Goals are not encouraging.’⁵²

7.5.2 The same report stated:

‘With no social assistance in place to support the unemployed, engagement in very low-paying informal activity becomes a survival strategy and many turn to sex work and criminal activities as their only perceived options for making a living....

‘[...] the Government currently spends very little on social assistance and social protection. As a result, core social assistance programmes still rely significantly on donor funding while others are gravely underfunded. Ghana

⁴⁹ UNHRC, ‘[UNSR report 2018](#)’ (para 8 & 19), 10 October 2018

⁵⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica, ‘[Ghana: Housing](#)’, 1 April, 2020

⁵¹ AI, ‘[Ghana 2019](#)’, 8 April 2020

⁵² UNHRC, ‘[UNSR report 2018](#)’ (para 6), 10 October 2018

devotes only 1.4 per cent of GDP to social protection. By comparison, other low middle-income peers in sub-Saharan Africa spend an average of 2.1 per cent, which is 50 per cent more. Ghana spends only 0.5 per cent of GDP on social assistance, but if educational scholarships are excluded, that figure reduces to 0.3 per cent of GDP, which is extremely low. It is no surprise that the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its Article IV report on Ghana, stresses the need to protect social spending. When so little is actually being spent, protecting existing levels does not amount to much. In fact, after years of cutting back on government expenditures, even the IMF believes that there is no room in the Ghanaian budget for further cuts.’⁵³

- 7.5.3 The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection’s, mission is: ‘[The] Department of Social Welfare and Development exists to promote policy guidelines, standards and programmes for the efficient and effective delivery of social development services to the vulnerable & excluded individuals, groups and communities in collaboration with other stakeholders through competent staff and modern technology.’⁵⁴

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Section 8 updated: 16 July 2020

8. Media and telecommunications

- 8.1.1 Key media/telecommunications points:

International dialling code:	+233 ⁵⁵
Internet domain:	.gh ⁵⁶

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Section 9 updated: 14 August 2020

9. Citizenship and nationality

- 9.1.1 The Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative (CRAI) noted:

‘The framework of citizenship law in Ghana has been amended several times, and is currently set forth in chapter III of the [1992 Constitution](#) and the [Citizenship Act 2000](#). The constitution provides that a person born after it entered into force, whether inside or outside Ghana “shall become a citizen of Ghana at the date of his birth if either of his parents or grandparents is or was citizen of Ghana.” It also provides for a presumption of citizenship in favour of children of unknown parents. Ghana has allowed dual citizenship since [amendments to the constitution in 1996](#).’⁵⁷

- 9.1.2 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted in their 2019 Social Institutions & Gender Index:

‘All women and men are guaranteed equal rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality as well as equal rights with respect to the nationality of their

⁵³ UNHRC, ‘[UNSR report 2018](#)’ (para 19&65), 10 October 2018

⁵⁴ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, ‘[Mission](#)’, webpage, undated

⁵⁵ Country Code, ‘[Ghana](#)’, undated

⁵⁶ World Standards, ‘[Internet country domains list: Ghana](#)’, 27 July 2019

⁵⁷ CRAI, ‘[Ghana](#)’, undated

children (Ghana Citizenship Act, 2000). Chapter 3 of the Constitution states that anyone born in or outside of Ghana and whose parents and grandparents are/were citizens of Ghana, can become a citizen. A child under the age of seven who is found in Ghana and whose parentage is unknown can also become a citizen of Ghana. A child under the age of sixteen who is adopted by a citizen of Ghana can become a citizen of Ghana. Finally, a woman or man married to a Ghanaian citizen may apply to become a registered citizen of Ghana.⁵⁸

9.1.3 CIA World factbook stated with regard citizenship:

- 'citizenship by birth: no
- 'citizenship by descent only: at least one parent or grandparent must be a citizen of Ghana
- 'dual citizenship recognized: yes
- 'residency requirement for naturalization: 5 years.'⁵⁹

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Section 10 updated: 14 August 2020

10. Official documents

10.1 Birth certificates and registration

10.1.1 The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) noted that 'the legal framework for birth registration is governed by [Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1965 \(Act 301\)](#);

'The law ensures the registration of all births, deaths and foetal deaths. It also addresses fraud, alterations in the register, offences and penalties.'⁶⁰

10.1.2 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

'... Children unregistered at birth or without identification documents may be excluded from accessing education, health care, and social security. Although having a birth certificate is required to enroll in school, government contacts indicated that children would not be denied access to education on the basis of documentation. The country's 2016 automated birth registration system aims at enhancing the ease and reliability of registration. According to the MICS, birth registration increases with levels of education and wealth and is more prevalent in urban centers than in rural areas.'⁶¹

10.1.3 The USSD Reciprocity Schedule noted on the process for obtaining a birth certificate:

'Within the first 12 months of the birth, the parents should present a "weighing card" or "welfare centre card" which is provided at the child's first well-baby visit with a medical practitioner. If 12 months or more have elapsed since the birth, the parents must present the weighing card, baptismal certificate and parents' passports. Persons over 18 years of age

⁵⁸ OECD, '[SIGI - Social Institutions & Gender Index 2019 – Ghana](#)' (section 3a), December 2018

⁵⁹ CIA World Factbook, '[Ghana](#)' (section Government), last updated 15 March 2020

⁶⁰ UNICEF, '[CRVS - Birth, Marriage and Death Registration in Ghana](#)', December 2017

⁶¹ USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 6), 11 March 2020

must apply in person, present a valid voter ID card and passport as proof of identity, and must be accompanied by a witness who can attest to the applicant's birth.

'Records of registrations more than one year old are deposited with the Office of the Registrar of Births and Deaths for Ghana, C/O Ministry of Local Government, P.O. Box M.270, Accra, Ghana. If the applicant resides outside of Ghana, the person applying must present a written authorization from the individual whose birth certificate is being requested. Persons under 18 years of age must have their parent or guardian obtain the certificate. Certificates are usually issued within 10 working days...

'Alternate Documents: Applicants who are over the age of 60 who have never registered their birth are not eligible to receive a birth certificate and should instead submit an affidavit sworn before a Commissioner of Oaths.

'Comments: The majority of registrations are not made at the time of birth, and often no registration is made until an individual requires a birth certificate for immigration purposes. Registrations not made within one year of an individual's birth are not reliable evidence of identity or relationship, since any registration, but especially late registrations, may often be accomplished upon demand, with little or no supporting documentation required. Because of the prevalence of late registrations, secondary evidence of birth is often required. Common secondary evidence includes midwife's certificates of birth, "weighing cards" or welfare centre cards, and baptismal certificates. Ghana Health Service provides a Child Health Record (a green pamphlet), and Maternal Health Record (a pink pamphlet) to every infant and pregnant woman as a means of recording medical details of pregnancy and the first year of life. Some educational certificates, such as the WAEC [West African Examinations Council] (a.k.a. WASSCE) record the subject's date of birth and can be verified by U.S. Embassy Accra.'⁶²

- 10.1.4 My Joy Online is a news website which is part of 'The multimedia group', an independent commercial media and entertainment company⁶³ reported in an article from July 2020: 'Ghana's Supreme Court has unanimously held that birth certificate is not a form of identification.

'The court explains that the document does not establish "the identity of the bearer"'.⁶⁴

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10.2 National identity cards

- 10.2.1 The government of Ghana's [National Identification Authority](#) (NIA) in an undated entry on their website gave the following information:

'The National Identification Card (GhanaCard) is a valid verification document issued by the National Identification Authority (NIA) to Ghanaians and permanently resident foreign nationals living everywhere for the purpose of identification. It is the property of the Government of Ghana.

⁶² USSD, Bureau of Consular Affairs, '[Ghana Reciprocity Schedule](#)', undated

⁶³ Myjoyonline, '[About us – The Multimedia group](#)', undated

⁶⁴ Myjoyonline, '[Birth certificate not a form of identification – Supreme Court](#)', 16 July 2020

'The card bears personal information about the individuals whose identity can be verified at all times. The NIA National Identity System utilizes three types of biometric technology for identification purposes. These are the fingerprints unique to each individual in the form of digitized templates, facial templates in the form of digitized colour photo of the card holder and the Iris.

'The NIA deploys cutting-edge technology that incorporates several layers of security features- physical, logical and technical that makes the card difficult to forge and protect the personal information stored on the card. These features allow only authorized persons to read the information and bona fide owners to use the card for purposes of identification.

'The card contains basic identification information including a photograph of the card holder, along with a name, date of birth, height, a personal identification number that has been randomly generated and assigned to the holder and has an expiry date.

'Depending on the age of the individual, the card will have either a 2-dimensional barcode or a Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) at the back which holds biometric information: the holder's fingerprints in digitized templates as well as the holder's signature.'⁶⁵

- 10.2.2 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted in their 2019 Social Institutions & Gender Index: 'As per the National Identification Authority Act 2006 (Act 707), all women and men are granted the same rights to apply for identity cards and passports and to acquire passports and travel documents for their minor children. All women and men are also granted equal rights to travel outside of the country.'⁶⁶
- 10.2.3 The USSD Reciprocity Schedule noted 'The National Identification Authority of Ghana plans to [issue] national ID cards to every Ghanaian by June 2020, free of charge.'⁶⁷

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10.3 Passports

- 10.3.1 The USSD Reciprocity Schedule noted on the process and cost for obtaining a passport 'All passport applicants must appear in person for biometrics collection and an interview with a passport adjudication official. Applicants in Accra should complete their application [online](#), download their passport photo, and make an appointment using the online appointment system. For applicants outside Accra, the application can be completed by hand and submitted at any passport office without an appointment.'⁶⁸
- 10.3.2 The website of the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration \(MFA\)](#) provided guidelines of how to apply for and obtain a passport and gave the cost of a standard 32 page passport as GHS 100.00⁶⁹ ~ £13.61 @ 22 July 2020⁷⁰.

⁶⁵ NIA, '[Introduction to the GhanaCard](#)', undated

⁶⁶ OECD, '[SIGI - Social Institutions & Gender Index 2019 – Ghana](#)' (section 3a), December 2018

⁶⁷ USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs, '[Ghana Reciprocity Schedule](#)', undated

⁶⁸ USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs, '[Ghana Reciprocity Schedule](#)', undated

⁶⁹ MFA, '[Guidelines](#)', undated

⁷⁰ [XE Currency Converter](#)

10.3.3 [Passport Index 2020](#) provided an image of the front cover of the Ghanaian passport.

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10.4 Fraudulent documents

10.4.1 GhanaWeb an internet news agency reported that:

‘The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration has cautioned the public to desist from engaging in fraudulent activities which undermines the integrity of Ghana's passport.

‘As part of measures to improve service delivery in the acquisition of passports government on the 1st of March announced that it will cease to operate the Manual Passport Application platform.

‘An official statement from the ministry explained that an Online Passport Application will now be available at all Passport Application Centres (PACs) and applicants are advised to use the new portal (passport.mfa.gov.gh) to submit their applications...

‘Judging from previous experiences and fraudulent activities, middlemen popularly referred to as “Goro” Boys in procurement of Ghanaian passports, Mr Tijani [Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister] took the opportunity to remind Ghanaians that the use of forged documents amongst others undermines the integrity of the passport application process.

‘He added that such corrupt practices are "punishable by law and persons found engaging in such activities will be made to face the full rigorous of the law".

‘The deputy minister also urged staff of the Ministry working at various passport application centers to continue to do more in enhancing the security and interparty of the Ghanaian passport.’⁷¹

10.4.2 There is limited information in the sources consulted regarding fraudulent documents (see [Bibliography](#)).

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Section 11 updated: 14 August 2020

11. Corruption

11.1.1 Ghana was ranked 80th out 180 countries in Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Index (a lower ranking equates to a higher level of corruption)⁷².

11.1.2 Freedom House (FH) in its report covering events in 2018 stated:

‘There are some weaknesses in judicial independence and the rule of law, and political corruption presents challenges to government performance.

‘Political corruption remains a problem despite active media coverage, fairly robust laws and institutions, and government antigraft initiatives. Legislation adopted in 2017 established the Office of the Special Prosecutor to

⁷¹ GhanaWeb, ‘[Desist from fraudulent passport application...](#)’, 5 March 2020

⁷² Transparency International, ‘[Corruption Perception Index 2019](#)’, January 2020

investigate political corruption. President Akufo-Addo nominated former attorney general Martin Amidu, a member of the opposition NDC, as the special prosecutor in January 2018, and he took office the following month. However, in September [2018] Amidu complained publicly about the lack of government funding for the office's operations. Several new corruption scandals emerged during the year. Critics in the media, opposition parties, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have deemed the government's anticorruption efforts inadequate.⁷³

11.1.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

'The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by government officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year. Corruption was present in all branches of government, according to media and NGOs, and various reputable national and international surveys, such as the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators and Afrobarometer, highlighted the prevalence of corruption in the country. In October Transparency International scored the country's defense sector as being at "very high risk" for corruption, attributed in part to the fact that, despite robust legal frameworks, opacity and lack of implementation of oversight tools weakened protections against corruption.

'As of September the CHRAJ [Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice] had undertaken investigations for 19 cases of corruption, and taken decisions on them for appropriate action.

'Following months of advocacy by civil society groups, in March Parliament passed the Right to Information Bill, which had languished for 20 years. In May the president signed it into law, with implementation expected to begin in January 2020. The law is intended to foster more transparency and accountability in public affairs.

'In December 2018 the country launched the National Anticorruption online Reporting Dashboard, an online reporting tool for the coordination of all anticorruption efforts of various bodies detailed in the National Anticorruption Action Plan. A total of 169 governmental and nongovernmental organizations have used it to report on various efforts to stem corruption in the country.

'Corruption: Authorities suspended the CEO of the Public Procurement Authority in August after a report by an investigative journalist revealed that he awarded contracts to companies he owned or worked with. The president filed a petition with the CHRAJ, requesting it investigate possible breaches of conflict of interest by the CEO. The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) also investigated.

'According to the government's Economic and Organized Crime Office as well as Corruption Watch, a campaign steered by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development, the country lost 9.7 billion cedis (\$1.9 billion) to corruption between 2016 and 2018 in five controversial government contracts with private entities. In October deputy commissioner of the

⁷³ FH, '[Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana](#)', February 2019

CHRAJ stated that 20 percent of the national budget and 30 percent of all procurement done by the state were lost to corruption annually...

'In 2017 the government established the OSP to investigate and prosecute corruption-related crimes. More than one year after being sworn into office the special prosecutor initiated some investigations but was criticized for lack of action. In the yearly budget the government allocated 180 million cedis (\$34.6 million) to the OSP, but only disbursed half. Lack of office space remained a serious constraint on staffing the OSP.

'Financial Disclosure: The constitution's code of conduct for public officers establishes an income and asset declaration requirement for the head of state, ministers, cabinet members, members of parliament, and civil servants. All elected and some appointed public officials are required to make these declarations every four years and before leaving office. The CHRAJ commissioner has authority to investigate allegations of noncompliance with the law regarding asset declaration and take "such action as he considers appropriate." Financial disclosures remain confidential unless requested through a court order. Observers criticized the financial disclosure regulation, noting that infrequent filing requirements, exclusion of filing requirements for family members of public officials, lack of public transparency, and absence of consequences for noncompliance undermined its effectiveness.'⁷⁴

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Section 12 updated: 14 August 2020

12. Healthcare, water sanitation and hygiene

12.1.1 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted:

'Funding is a major challenge to the country's efforts to meet its international human rights obligations. It has been estimated that Ghana needs about \$1.5 billion per year to close the infrastructure investment gap. Water and sanitation conditions in urban informal settlements and rural areas are bad, leading to higher rates of malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, anaemia and intestinal diseases. Pipe-borne water is rare in rural areas, with communities typically relying on surface water, boreholes and wells, all of which may be polluted by fluoride, human or animal excrement, or poisons from mining, such as arsenic and cyanide.

'Services are similarly overburdened in poorer areas. Both health care and education struggle to retain qualified staff as a result of the poor state of infrastructure and facilities. For example, 94 per cent of specialist health professionals are found in the south, leaving the north with only 6 per cent. In addition, there is a widespread lack of specialized services for particularly vulnerable groups, such as homeless people and people with disabilities.'⁷⁵

12.1.2 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated:

'Major health problems in Ghana include communicable diseases, poor sanitation, and poor nutrition. The main emphasis of government health

⁷⁴ USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 4), 11 March 2020

⁷⁵ UNHRC, '[UNSR report 2018](#)' (para 63-64), 10 October 2018

policy is on improved public health, and, since independence, many improvements have been made in nutrition and in maternal and child care. Many of the endemic diseases, such as malaria, pneumonia, and diseases of the gastroenteritis group, which formerly took a heavy toll of life, have been brought under a measure of control as a result of improved hygiene, better drugs, and education. However, most communities still have inadequate sanitation and water-supply facilities, which hinders efforts to improve public health. Although AIDS is present in the country, Ghana has made strides in combatting the disease. The reported HIV infection rate is similar to or lower than many other countries in Africa.

'There are hospitals and clinics provided by the government and by various Christian missions in most parts of the country. Supplementary services consist of health centres, dispensaries, and dressing stations (first-aid centres). Considerable progress has been made in the quantity and quality of health facilities and medical personnel, but rapid population growth continues to impose great pressures on the available facilities. In addition to the large number of doctors in the public service, many private practitioners operate their own clinics and hospitals. Registered doctors and dentists are supported by a paramedical staff of nurses, midwives, and pharmacists, as well as by auxiliaries.'⁷⁶

12.1.3 See also CPIN on [Medical Issues](#).

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Section 13 updated: 21 September 2020

13. COVID-19

13.1.1 As of 21 September 2020 there have been 46,062 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ghana, the second highest in West Africa behind Nigeria and a total of 297 deaths^{77 78}. The Greater Accra region had the highest number of cases recorded at 23,423⁷⁹.

13.1.2 Africa News on their website stated on 28 June 2020:

'Ghana is West Africa's most impacted nation behind Nigeria, at a point in May 2020, Ghana led the regional case load. June has started with progressive lifting of more virus restrictions.

'President Akufo-Addo in his tenth address announced that while borders remained closed, some categories of academic institutions are allowed to resume, religious places can also reopen with strict conditions and the observance of health protocols.

'Social gatherings -weddings, funerals etc. – are to be allowed under certain conditions – among others with maximum 100 participants. As the 2020 polls loom, even political activity is allowed to be undertaken'⁸⁰

13.1.3 The International Labour Organisation noted on their website:

⁷⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica, '[Ghana: Health and welfare](#)', 1 April 2020

⁷⁷ Ghana Health Service, '[COVID-19](#)', undated

⁷⁸ African Union, '[Africa CDC dashboard - Ghana](#)', last updated 29 June 2020

⁷⁹ Ghana Health Service, '[COVID-19](#)', undated

⁸⁰ Africa News, '[Ghana COVID, 6,431 cases, Prez warns party on virus...](#)', 28 June 2020

‘As per the [Address to the Nation by President Akufo-Addo](#) delivered on 5 April, a COVID-19 National Trust Fund has been established to complement the Government’s fight against the virus, and to assist in the welfare of those in need. Some 8.75 million Ghana Cedi have been made available.

‘The Ghana Water Company Ltd and the Electricity Company of Ghana have been directed to ensure the stable supply of water and electricity (supply will not be disconnected). The Government will absorb the water bills for all Ghanaians for the months of April, May and June. Publicly and private water tankers will be mobilised to ensure the supply of water to vulnerable communities.’⁸¹

13.1.4 The Guardian in May 2020 reported:

‘Since the sudden easing of a three-week lockdown in Ghana’s two major cities, Accra and Kumasi, daily life is gradually returning to normal.

‘Markets and commercial districts that had ground to an eerie halt have buzzed back to life. Stores and banks have slowly reopened. Modest traffic jams have emerged as many people who had escaped the lockdown return to the cities. But schools, places of worship, restaurants and bars remain shut.

‘The reaction to President Nana Akufo-Addo’s unexpected order to [ease restrictions](#) two weeks ago has been mixed.

‘Among the west African country’s corporate workers and affluent classes, many people continue to work from home and fear that the easing of the lockdown is premature.’⁸²

13.1.5 According to the World Food Programme’s May 2020 country brief, ‘The immediate national focus has been on containing the spread of the virus and enabling the healthcare system to cope. Concerns over the negative impact on the economy and wellbeing has been raised. The combination of lockdown measures, closed borders and broader global economic disruptions is already causing loss of household income due to reduced economic activity, higher prices for basic goods and reduced access to social services.’⁸³

13.1.6 For further information and updates see

- [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) policy tracker by country.
- [Unicef](#) and [UNHCR](#) for regular COVID-19 situation reports
- [Africa Union CDC dashboard](#)

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⁸¹ ILO, ‘[Country policy responses – Ghana](#)’, last updated 13 April 2020

⁸² The Guardian, ‘[Easing of lockdown a relief to Ghana’s poor – despite fears...](#)’, 3 May 2020

⁸³ WFP, ‘[Ghana Country Brief May 2020](#)’, 20 July 2020



Key issues relevant to protection claims

The issues below are not meant to be exhaustive; rather the key topics which may be relevant to protection claims.

Section 14 updated: 14 August 2020

14. Children

14.1 Statistics

- 14.1.1 The CIA World Factbook noted: ‘Ghana has a young age structure, with approximately 57% of the population under the age of 25.’⁸⁴
- 14.1.2 The CIA World Factbook noted that the estimated total infant mortality rates were 32.1 deaths for every 1,000 live births⁸⁵.
- 14.1.3 A Unicef in Ghana brochure published in February 2020 stated:
‘In the last 30 years, the under-five mortality rate has reduced by 60 per cent, and life expectancy has increased by an average of six years. Ghana has boosted its immunization coverage to more than 90 per cent, and efforts are being made to protect children from all preventable diseases, including polio. [...] However, with 28 per cent of Ghana’s children still classed as economically poor, continued investment in social protection and pro-poor services is still required. Moreover, 73 per cent of children experience poverty across multiple dimensions, being deprived of access to critical basic services.’⁸⁶
- 14.1.4 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted: ‘Statistics vary and detailed studies seem to be scarce, but the figure of 90,000 street children in Accra in 2014 appears to be widely accepted.’⁸⁷
- 14.1.5 For further information on infant mortality in Ghana see:
[Unicef - Maternal and Newborn Health Disparities country profiles](#)
[Unicef – The state of the world’s children 2019](#)

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14.2 Education

- 14.2.1 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 stated: ‘In education, the northern regions have only 35 per cent of the trained teachers they need and schools often lack critical facilities such as toilets, water and electricity.’⁸⁸
- 14.2.2 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

⁸⁴ CIA World Factbook, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

⁸⁵ CIA World Factbook, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section People and society), last updated 15 March 2020

⁸⁶ Unicef, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (p4), February 2020

⁸⁷ UNHRC, ‘[UNSR report 2018](#)’ (para 20), 10 October 2018

⁸⁸ UNHRC, ‘[UNSR report 2018](#)’ (para 63-64), 10 October 2018

'The constitution provides for tuition-free, compulsory, and universal basic education for all children from kindergarten through junior high school. In September 2017 the government began phasing in a program to provide tuition-free enrolment in senior high school, beginning with first-year students. Girls in the northern regions and rural areas throughout the country were less likely to continue and complete their education due to the weak quality of educational services, inability to pay expenses related to schooling, prioritization of boys' education over girls', security problems related to distance between home and school, lack of dormitory facilities, and inadequate sanitation and hygiene facilities.'⁸⁹

14.2.3 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated:

'Ghana has one of the best-developed educational systems in West Africa. Basic education consists of two years of kindergarten, six years of primary education, and three years of junior secondary education. This is followed by three years of senior secondary education, which consists of vocational programs or courses that prepare students for university studies or other third-cycle coursework in high-level polytechnics and specialized institutions. Basic education is free and compulsory. Senior secondary education was made free in 2017.

'University education is provided at institutions such as the University of Ghana, with campuses at Legon and Accra (established 1948), the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology at Kumasi (1951), the University of Cape Coast (1962), the University of Education at Winneba (1992), and the University for Development Studies at Tamale (1992). In addition, there are many technical and training colleges in the country, and Accra is home to the National Film and Television Institute (1978).

'Enrollment in all schools, especially in secondary schools, soared dramatically after Ghana achieved self-government. In addition to government-funded schools, there are a number of private schools at both elementary and secondary levels. About three-fourths of the adult population is literate. Ghana's literacy rate, although much higher than the average for West and Central Africa, is lower than the world average.'⁹⁰

14.2.4 Unicef in a Ghana brochure published in February 2020 stated:

- '71% of children complete primary education
- '84% complete junior high school
- '91% complete Senior High School [figures before the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy was introduced by the Government of Ghana in the 2017/2018 academic year]...

'The Government of Ghana champions early learning and encourages boys and girls to start school at the right age, irrespective of ability, gender or ethnicity. Currently in Ghana, just over seven out of 10 children (71 percent) aged between three and five years attend early childhood education programmes. Sixty-eight percent of children aged three and four years are developmentally on track in literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional,

⁸⁹ USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 6), 11 March 2020

⁹⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica, '[Ghana: Education](#)', 1 April 2020

and learning areas. The recent decision to make secondary high school free to all, and its social drive to encourage right-age learning helps to ensure that “no child is left behind”. However, there remain a few factors which are preventing Ghana’s full achievement of this goal.

‘Ghana has made notable progress in gradually lessening the disparity in enrolment rates between boys and girls at the junior high school (JHS) level. However, it is yet to reach gender parity at the Senior High School (SHS) level. While gender may not be the main driver of inequality in education, evidence shows that the exclusion of adolescent girls occurs when there is a mix of different forms of inequality - poverty, gender and geography.

‘Ghana is committed to strengthening early childhood education and is one of the few countries in sub-Saharan Africa with a National Early Childhood Care and Development Policy as well as two years of Kindergarten included in its constitutional commitment to free and compulsory basic education. Ghana has progressively increased investments in pre-primary education. Just less than six per cent of domestic education budgets in 2017 was allocated to pre-primary education. This places Ghana nearly at par with the global average and higher than the West and Central Africa regional average of 2.5 per cent. The recent development of an Early Childhood Education Policy Framework and a national mass media campaign to promote right-age enrolment for kindergarten and primary education all contribute to commitment to a solid education foundation for every child.’⁹¹

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14.3 Child labour and trafficking

14.3.1 A UN General Assembly Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions on Ghana’s Universal Periodic Review, which lists joint submission (JS) contributors in full on pages 10-11 noted that: ‘JS8⁹² noted that while the Government has made relentless efforts to curb down child abuse and violence, socio-cultural aspects and poverty continue to be major causes of violence against children. [...] Poverty has equal importance in the occurrence of violence and often put children at risk of exploitation, whether in the form of child labour, child trafficking and sexual exploitation.’⁹³

14.3.2 The USSD 2019 trafficking in persons report for Ghana stated:

‘As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Ghana, and traffickers exploit victims from Ghana abroad. Traffickers subject Ghanaian boys and girls to forced labor within the country in fishing, domestic service, street hawking, begging, portering, artisanal gold mining, quarrying, herding, and agriculture, including cocoa. Donor-funded research focused on the fishing industry on Lake Volta indicated that more than half of the children working on and around the lake were born in other communities and many of these children are victims of forced labor; not allowed to attend school; given inadequate housing and clothing; and controlled by fishermen through intimidation, violence, and limited access to food. Traffickers force boys as young as five years old to work in hazardous

⁹¹ Unicef, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (p24-26), February 2020, [url](#).

⁹² JS8 submitted by: [Ghana NGO Coalition for the rights of the Child \(GNCRC\); ...](#)

⁹³ UN General Assembly, ‘[Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions...](#)’ (para 51), 8 August 2017

conditions, including deep diving, and many suffer waterborne infections. Girls perform work on shore such as cooking, cleaning fish, and preparing fish for market, and are vulnerable to sexual abuse and forced marriage for the purpose of exploitation. A study of the prevalence of child trafficking in selected communities in the Volta and Central Regions indicated that traffickers had subjected children from nearly one-third of the 1,621 households surveyed to forced labor, primarily in fishing and domestic servitude. Organized traffickers who target vulnerable parents and communities facilitate child trafficking in the fishing industry. Relatives often send girls via middlemen to work in harsh conditions in domestic servitude. Boys aged 13-16 years who finished primary school in northern areas of Ghana are vulnerable to forced labor in agriculture, including in cocoa-growing areas; middlemen or relatives often facilitate their transit. Children living in northern regions whose parents sent them to work in the south during the dry season are vulnerable to forced labor in agriculture and other sectors. Traffickers subject Ghanaian girls, and to a lesser extent boys, to sex trafficking in urban areas across Ghana. Though reports are declining, some Ghanaian girls are victims of forced servitude as part of a ritual to atone for sins of a family member. Ghanaian girls and young women from the rural northern regions move to urban centers throughout Ghana to seek work as porters; they are at risk for sex trafficking and forced labor.’⁹⁴

14.3.3 The 2019 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor report for Ghana, reporting on findings for 2018 noted:

‘In 2018, Ghana made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government secured at least 14 convictions for offenses related to the worst forms of child labor, approved the National Plan of Action Phase II on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, and launched a strategy to combat child labor in the fishing sector. Additionally, representatives from the government met with counterparts from Burkina Faso, Benin, and Togo to discuss coordinating efforts to combat cross-border trafficking. However, children in Ghana continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in fishing and cocoa harvesting, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Prohibitions related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children for illicit activities do not meet international standards. The government also has not acceded to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and resource constraints severely limited government social protection agencies’ abilities to fully implement social programs during the reporting period.’⁹⁵

14.3.4 The Unicef in Ghana brochure published in February 2020 stated:

‘In Ghana today, three out of 10 children aged between 5 and 17 years are engaged in child labour. Staggeringly, this rate increases to one child out of every two (54 percent) in the Northern Region. (Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017/2018) The incidence rate is higher for children who are out of school, in rural areas and children from the poorest backgrounds.

⁹⁴ USSD, [‘2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana’](#) (section Trafficking profile), 20 June 2019

⁹⁵ USDOL, [‘2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Ghana’](#), 27 September 2019

Many work under hazardous conditions. Most children aged between 12 and 17 years are more likely to be involved in unpaid household services.

‘To address this child rights violation and achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 8.7), UNICEF supports the government to implement the second National Plan of Action against Child Labour for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Ghana (NPA2: 2017-2021). UNICEF also works with the private sector to implement the Children’s Rights and Business Principles to give business a clear idea of where and how their business might impact children. The overarching objective is to ensure that all children are safe, learning and succeeding, and are not engaged in child labour.’⁹⁶

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14.4 Sexual exploitation of children

14.4.1 A UN General Assembly Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions on Ghana’s Universal Periodic Review, which lists joint submission (JS) contributors in full on pages 10-11 noted that: ‘JS8⁹⁷ stated that the Ghanaian Criminal Code prohibits a range of sexual offences, but that there is no adequate legislation to address sexual exploitation involving children who engage in prostitution. However, classification of the offence is not sufficient: enforcement of the legal framework is paramount, and is currently not happening due to lack of resources, leading to underreporting and impunity for offenders.’⁹⁸

14.4.2 Unicef in Ghana brochure published in February 2020 stated:

‘Online abuse is also a growing core issue. The reporting of online sexual exploitation of children has been on the rise in Ghana, and the rates of successful prosecution remains low. Two in five children have seen sexual images at least once during the past year and the same proportion of children (two in five) receive messages containing sexual content on their phones at least once every year, according to Ghana’s 2010 census. UNICEF is working closely with the Justice Department and exploitation. This includes plans for a new Digital Forensic Laboratory which will help the Ghana Police Service to detect, report and remove online child sexual abuse material and investigate the cases of online child sexual exploitation, trafficking and kidnapping in which digital devices have been used. Through cultural sensitization programs and community interactions, such as the Ghanaians Against Child Abuse (GACA) social drive, UNICEF is supporting the government to reduce the level of violence and abuse against children – including online abuse.’⁹⁹

14.4.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

‘The migration of children to urban areas continued due to economic hardship in rural areas. Children often had to support themselves to survive, contributing to both child sexual exploitation and the school dropout rate.

⁹⁶ Unicef, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (p30), February 2020

⁹⁷ JS8 submitted by: [Ghana NGO Coalition for the rights of the Child \(GNCRC\);...](#)

⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, ‘[Summary of Stakeholders...](#)’, (para 51&53), 8 August 2017

⁹⁹ Unicef, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (p28), February 2020

Girls were among the most vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation while living on the streets. [...]

'The law prohibits sex with a child younger than 16 with or without consent, incest, and sexual abuse of minors. There continued to be reports of male teachers sexually assaulting and harassing both female and male students. In July 2018 the Ghana Education Service fired four high school teachers in the Ashanti Region for sexually assaulting some students, although four other teachers in the same region were kept on the payroll but transferred to other schools. The DOVVSU's [The Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit] Central Regional Office in 2018 reported a 28 percent increase in reported cases of sexual abuse of girls younger than 16. According to the GPS, reports of adults participating in sexual relations with minors rose by almost 26 percent in 2017, with the highest number of cases reported in Greater Accra and Ashanti Regions. Physical abuse and corporal punishment of children were concerns. Local social workers rarely were able to effectively respond to and monitor cases of child abuse and neglect.

'Media reported several cases of child abuse throughout the year. In January police arrested a woman for wounding her five-year-old stepson with a machete and allowing the wound to fester until his hand required amputation. A local NGO donated 5,000 cedis (\$1,000) to support the boy.

'In August the press reported that a man appeared before court for having sexual relations with his daughter from age nine to 14. In September press reported that another nine-year-old girl, taken to different hospitals for her deteriorating health, had allegedly been sexually assaulted by her grandfather.

'In February Child Rights International (CRI) noted a surge in child abuse cases in the country. CRI reported that the lack of proper documentation and presentation of issues of child abuse cases largely affected the outcomes of cases within the country's judicial system.'¹⁰⁰

14.4.4 The same report noted:

'The law prohibits commercial sexual exploitation of children. Authorities did not effectively enforce the law. The minimum age for consensual sex is 16, and participating in sexual activities with anyone under this age is punishable by imprisonment for seven to 25 years. The law criminalizes the use of a computer to publish, produce, procure, or possess child pornography, punishable by imprisonment for up to 10 years, a fine of up to 5,000 penalty units (60,000 cedis or \$11,500), or both.

'The migration of children to urban areas continued due to economic hardship in rural areas. Children often had to support themselves to survive, contributing to both child sexual exploitation and the school dropout rate. Girls were among the most vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation while living on the streets.'¹⁰¹

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¹⁰⁰ USSD, ['2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana'](#) (section 6), 11 March 2020

¹⁰¹ USSD, ['2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana'](#) (section 6), 11 March 2020

14.5 Child marriage

14.5.1 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted: 'Early and forced marriage and teenage pregnancy are major problems, with about 27 per cent of girls marrying between 15 and 18 years of age. Ghana's child marriage rate is one of the highest in the world and child brides often drop out from school and end up living in poverty.'¹⁰²

14.5.2 Unicef in Ghana brochure published in February 2020 stated: 'Despite child marriage being prohibited under Ghana's constitution and by law, still one girl out of five (19 percent) is married before her 18th birthday (MICS 2017/2018), while 19 percent of adolescent girls start bearing children, according to the 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey.'¹⁰³

14.5.3 The same Unicef report state that the target for Ghana is: 'By 2021, the percentage of girls aged 20 – 24 years who are married before the age of 18 is reduced from 41 percent to 37 percent. In Ghana, this equates to 71,600 girls being affected.'¹⁰⁴

14.5.4 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

'The minimum legal age for marriage for both sexes is 18. The law makes forcing a child to marry punishable by a fine, one year's imprisonment, or both. Early and forced child marriage, while illegal, remained a problem, with 34 percent of girls living in the five northern regions of the country marrying before the age of 18. Through September the CHRAJ had received 18 cases of early or forced marriage. According to the MICS, child marriage is highest in Northern, North East, Upper East, Savannah, and Volta regions; lowest in Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Ahafo regions.

'In January the African Women Lawyers Association (AWLA) reported child marriage and gender-based violence against girls in schools were prevalent in the Kadjebi District in the Volta Region, with most cases of child marriage occurring in predominantly Muslim communities. AWLA recognized that child marriage occurred in all regions in the country.

'The Child Marriage Unit of the Domestic Violence Secretariat of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection continued to lead governmental efforts to combat child marriage. The ministry launched the first National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana (2017-26). The framework prioritizes interventions focused on strengthening government capacity to address issues of neglect and abuse of children, girls' education, adolescent health, and girls' empowerment through skills development. The National Advisory Committee to End Child Marriage and the National Stakeholders Forum, with participation from key government and civil society stakeholders, provided strategic guidance and supported information sharing and learning on child marriage among partners in the country. The Child Marriage Unit also created a manual with fact sheets and frequently asked

¹⁰² UNHRC, '[UNSR report 2018](#)' (para 31), 10 October 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰³ Unicef, '[Ghana](#)' (p39), February 2020

¹⁰⁴ Unicef, '[Ghana](#)' (p8), February 2020

questions, distributing 6,000 copies throughout the country, and created social media accounts to try to reach wider audiences.’¹⁰⁵

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14.6 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

14.6.1 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted in their 2019 Social Institutions & Gender Index:

‘In 1994, Ghana committed to ending female genital mutilation (FGM) by passing Act 484 to amend the Criminal Code. Section 69A of Ghana’s Criminal Code criminalizes female genital mutilation making it a second-degree felony and if convicted, the guilty party shall be imprisoned for a term not less than three years. Further to this, the Criminal Offences (Amendments) Act, 2007, (Act 741) widens the scope of who can be held accountable for the practice of FGM by including participators (CEDAW Country Report, 2012). Therefore, medical practitioners, parents, other practitioners and participators of FGM can be held accountable and the law supersedes any customary, traditional or religious laws (CEDAW Country Report, 2012). Overall, Ghana has seen a decline in the number of FGM cases and, when compared to other African countries, has some of the lowest cases of FGM. A 2016 UNICEF country profile on Ghana found that a 93% of Ghanaian women and girls believe that FGM practices should stop (UNICEF, 2016). Besides being mentioned as an educational and awareness priority in the National Gender Policy, there is no stand-alone national action plan or policy to specifically address FGM. The current wording in the law does not allow for victims and survivors of FGM to receive compensation and does not provide any provisions for proper follow-up, evaluation and monitoring and enforcement in the case of FGM cases.’¹⁰⁶

14.6.2 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

‘Several laws include provisions prohibiting FGM/C. Although rarely performed on adult women, the practice remained a serious problem for girls younger than 18. Intervention programs were partially successful in reducing the prevalence of FGM/C, particularly in the northern regions. According to the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, FGM/C was significantly higher in the Upper East Region with a prevalence rate of 27.8 percent, compared with the national rate of 3.8 percent. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), women in rural areas were subjected to FGM/C three times more often than women in urban areas (3.6 percent compared with 1.2 percent).’¹⁰⁷

14.6.3 28 Too many state in their short report of November 2019 citing a range of sources:

‘FGM is practised by several ethnic groups including the Kusasis, Frafras, Kassenas, Nankanis, Busangas, Wallas, Dagarbas, Builsas and Sisalas, who live mainly in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions of Ghana, and the migrant population in the south. As a result, the Upper East

¹⁰⁵ USSD, [‘2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana’](#) (section 6), 11 March 2020

¹⁰⁶ OECD, [‘SIGI - Social Institutions & Gender Index 2019 – Ghana’](#) (section 2e), December 2018

¹⁰⁷ USSD, [‘2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana’](#) (section 6), 11 March 2020

and Upper West have the highest prevalence of FGM, at 41.1% and 27.8% respectively (of women aged 15–49), and all other regions have a prevalence of less than 5%. The Volta region, along the east coast, has the lowest prevalence, at 0.4%. Women aged 15–49 who live in rural areas are more likely to undergo FGM (5.3%) than those living in urban areas (2.5%). The prevalence of FGM is inversely correlated with level of education and wealth, and 94.2% of women aged 15–49 who have heard of FGM believe the practice should be stopped. The prevalence of FGM among Muslim women aged 15–49 who have heard of FGM is 12%, among those practising traditional religions is 10% and among Roman Catholics is 5%.¹⁰⁸

14.6.4 For further information on FGM see

- [28 Too Many: FGM in Ghana: Short Report, November 2019](#)
- [UNICEF – UN Children's Fund: Ghana; Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation, January 2020](#)

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14.7 Violence against children

14.7.1 A UN General Assembly Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Ghana's Universal Periodic Review, which lists joint submission (JS) contributors in full on pages 10-11 noted that: 'JS8¹⁰⁹ noted that while the Government has made relentless efforts to curb down child abuse and violence, socio-cultural aspects and poverty continue to be major causes of violence against children. Culturally-rooted practices such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, Trokosi and witch crafting, continue to put children's rights and well-being at risk, while supposedly safe environments, such as schools and homes, remain settings where most acts of abuse and violence occur.

'JS8 [...] noted that corporal punishment remains a problem in many settings. Physical violence often continues to be rooted in cultural norms and perceived/interpreted by perpetrators as a punitive or deterrent measure rather than a form of violence against the child, hence making it socially acceptable. Moreover, in the home, corporal punishment is often a primary form of domestic violence to which both children and women are exposed. In the home, in schools, in day care and in alternative care settings, corporal punishment remains lawful, in particular under provisions allowing "reasonable" and "justifiable" correction in article 13(2) of the Children's Act 1998.'¹¹⁰

14.7.2 A UNICEF in Ghana brochure stated:

'Violence is a daily reality for nearly all children in Ghana. Children are exposed to physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse in nearly all contexts – at home, in school or in public places.

'The 2013 UNICEF Child Protection Baseline Research found that over 57% of children have said they were beaten at home "all the time" or "sometimes", and 34% confirmed being beaten in school by the teacher in the last month.

¹⁰⁸ 28 Too Many, '[FGM in Ghana: short report](#)', November 2019

¹⁰⁹ JS8 submitted by: [Ghana NGO Coalition for the rights of the Child \(GNCRC\);...](#)

¹¹⁰ UN General Assembly, '[Summary of Stakeholders' submissions...](#)' (para 51 & 53), 8 Aug 2017

‘According to the 2017/2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 94% of children aged between one and 14 years have experienced some form of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse or violence...

‘40% of 15-19year old girls have experienced some form of gender-based violence. They are less likely than boys to complete Senior High School. Teenage pregnancy is commonly associated with early marriage.’¹¹¹

14.7.3 The same UNICEF report state that the target for Ghana is: ‘By 2021, at least 50 percent more children affected by violence will be provided with protective services to prevent and respond to violence in both humanitarian and non-humanitarian settings (at least 182,000 children).’¹¹²

14.7.4 For further information on violence against children in Ghana see:

[Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children: Corporal punishment of children in Ghana, March 2020](#)

[USSD human rights report for 2019](#)

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Section 15 updated: 14 August 2020

15. Civil society

15.1.1 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

‘A variety of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were often cooperative and responsive to the views of such groups. The government actively engaged civil society and the United Nations in preparation for the country’s third Universal Periodic Review in 2017.

‘The [Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice] CHRAJ, which mediated and settled cases brought by individuals against government agencies or private companies, operated with no overt interference from the government; however, since it is itself a government institution, some critics questioned its ability independently to investigate high-level corruption. Its biggest obstacle was lack of adequate funding, which resulted in low salaries, poor working conditions, and the loss of many of its staff to other governmental organizations and NGOs. As of October the CHRAJ had 111 offices across the country, with a total of 696 staff members. Public confidence in the CHRAJ was high, resulting in an increased workload for its staff.’¹¹³

15.1.2 Bertelsmann Stiftung stated in their 2020 country report:

‘Outside party politics, there are numerous civil society organizations of different shapes and organizational depth, both officially registered and informal...

‘Ghana is a country with a relatively well-grounded tradition of civil society, enhanced and supported by both donor assistance as well a regulatory

¹¹¹ Unicef, [‘Ghana’](#) (p28 & p39), February 2020

¹¹² Unicef, [‘Ghana’](#) (p8), February 2020

¹¹³ USSD, [‘2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana’](#) (section 2), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

framework and political culture that allow freedom of organization and expression. Still, politicization of civil society in connection to a bipolar political system concentrated on two major parties has increased. With strong traditions in self-help and communal support systems, CSOs often find fertile ground for their activities, although more modern groups – that address more complex political issues – are concentrated in urban areas. Civil society groups are outspoken and well trained in using the media to voice their opinions and interact with government, but some are used as instruments of political party interests and others are merely agencies to channel foreign aid into the country, causing disappointment in their performance especially in poverty-stricken areas.’¹¹⁴

15.1.3 See also [Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index \(reports\)](#)

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Section 16 updated: 14 August 2020

16. Media / media workers / journalists

Broadcast media:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) - state-run, operates Ghana TV (GTV) and digital networks, including news channel GBC 24 • Metro TV - jointly owned by government and private company • TV3 - private • E.TV Ghana – private.’¹¹⁵
News agencies / internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Ghana News Agency - state-run • GhanaWeb - news/information portal’¹¹⁶
Newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Ghanaian Chronicle - private daily • Daily Graphic - state-owned • Daily Guide - private • The Ghanaian Times - state-owned daily • The Mirror - weekly, sister paper of the Daily Graphic • The Herald – weekly.’¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung: [‘BTI 2020 Country Report Ghana’](#) (p26), 29 April 2020

¹¹⁵ BBC News, [‘Ghana profile: media’](#), 15 August 2017

¹¹⁶ BBC News, [‘Ghana profile: media’](#), 15 August 2017

¹¹⁷ BBC News, [‘Ghana profile: media’](#), 15 August 2017

<p>Radio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) - state-run, operates Radio 1 in English and Ghanaian vernaculars, commercial service Radio 2 and local services including Accra's Uniiq FM • Adom FM - private • Peace FM - private • Joy FM - private • Happy FM – private.¹¹⁸
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16.1.1 Freedom House in Freedom in the World 2019, Ghana stated:

‘Freedom of the press is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected in practice. Ghana has a diverse and vibrant media landscape that includes state and privately owned television and radio stations as well as a number of independent newspapers and magazines. Online news media operate without government restrictions.

‘Government agencies occasionally limit press freedom through harassment and arrests of journalists, especially those reporting on politically sensitive issues. In February 2018, Christopher Kevin Asima, a radio presenter for A1 Radio, was allegedly assaulted by three police officers while reporting on a fire in Bolgatanga, the capital of the Upper East Region. The regional police commander and his deputy apologized for the incident and promised that there would be consequences for the officers involved. In March, Latif Iddrisu, a reporter for JoyNews and JoyFM, was allegedly attacked by police officers stationed at the Criminal Investigations Department headquarters in Accra. According to Iddrisu, the beating occurred after he inquired about the arrest of a senior NDC official who had predicted an uprising against the president; the charges in that case were later dropped. In June, the Media Foundation for West Africa issued a statement expressing concern about incidents the previous month in which two journalists and a civil society activist had been threatened because of their work.’¹¹⁹

16.1.2 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated: ‘The constitution and law provide for freedom of expression, including for the press, and the government generally respected this right.

Independent media were active and expressed a wide variety of views without restriction.’¹²⁰

16.1.3 Conversely the same report stated

‘From January 2018 to May 2019, there were at least 11 cases of attacks on journalists. In March 2018 police assaulted a reporter who had visited the Criminal Investigations Department headquarters to report on the arrest of a

¹¹⁸ BBC News, ‘[Ghana profile: media](#)’, 15 August 2017

¹¹⁹ FH, ‘[Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana](#)’ (section D), February 2019

¹²⁰ USSD, ‘[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)’ (section 2), 11 March 2020

political party official. The reporter sustained fractures to his skull. One year later, in March, the journalist's company, Multimedia Group Limited, filed a lawsuit against the inspector general of police and attorney general for 10 million Ghanaian cedis (\$1.9 million) in compensatory damages for the assault. Civil society organizations and law enforcement authorities worked to develop a media-police relations framework to address the increasingly contentious relationship between the entities.

'In January unidentified gunmen shot and killed prominent undercover journalist Ahmed Hussein-Suale, following reports from 2018 that a member of parliament had publicly criticized Hussein-Suale and incited violence against him. Hussein-Suale's investigative crew had produced a film about corruption in the country's soccer leagues, which included involvement by officials, referees, and coaches. Police questioned the parliamentarian, and reports indicated that authorities arrested several persons and subsequently granted bail. The investigation continued at year's end.

'Another investigative journalist received death threats following the release of his documentary that revealed the presence of a progovernment militia training on government property, despite the administration's assertions it did not endorse the use of private security firms, and that the group mentioned in the documentary was a job recruitment agency, not a militia.'¹²¹

- 16.1.4 The same report stated: 'The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content, and there were no credible reports the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority.'¹²²
- 16.1.5 Similarly Freedom House in Freedom in the World 2019, Ghana stated: 'Private discussion is both free and vibrant. The government does not restrict individual expression on social media.'¹²³
- 16.1.6 Amnesty International stated in their 2019 report covering reports in 2019 that: 'An increase in attacks against journalists in 2019 caused Ghana to lose its status as the best-ranked African country in Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index. [...] In June, the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) arrested, detained, and allegedly tortured two journalists employed by the online news portal ModernGhana.'¹²⁴
- 16.1.7 Bertelsmann Stiftung stated in their 2020 country report:
- 'Freedom of expression is generally guaranteed and Ghanaians can express their opinions freely. There is no organized repression of the media either. Occasional violence against journalists occurs, like the latest incident of the assassination of an investigative journalist in January 2019, but is normally not organized by the state. There is a danger of capable journalists being attracted away from the media by better-paid positions in the civil service, especially with every change of government, therefore diminishing the vibrancy of independent media outlets. The state-owned media has

¹²¹ USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 2), 11 March 2020

¹²² USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 2), 11 March 2020

¹²³ FH, '[Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana](#)' (section D), February 2019

¹²⁴ AI, '[Ghana 2019](#)', 8 April 2020

established a certain degree of autonomy, but outright criticism of government policies is rare or relatively weak.’¹²⁵

- 16.1.8 In April 2020 Reporters Without Borders called ‘on the Ghanaian authorities to guarantee the safety of media personnel covering the coronavirus crisis after a radio journalist was attacked by a soldier and then placed in police custody while reporting in Kumasi.’¹²⁶
- 16.1.9 Reporters without borders (RSF) ranked Ghana 30th out of 180 countries in 2020¹²⁷. For further information see their [2020 World Press Freedom Index](#).
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Section 17 updated: 14 August 2020

17. Discrimination against persons with disabilities

- 17.1.1 A UN General Assembly Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions on Ghana’s Universal Periodic Review noted that: ‘HRW stated that people with real or perceived psychosocial disabilities continue to be forced to live in psychiatric hospitals and prayer camps, often against their will and with little possibility of challenging their confinement.’¹²⁸
- 17.1.2 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted:
‘Persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups in Ghana. The 2010 population and household census determined that there were 737,743 persons with some form of disability, representing 3 per cent of the total population. But there are strong reasons to assume that this represents a radical undercounting of the actual number, which is much more likely to be closer to the 10 per cent level suggested by other sources [Facebook]. Socially, individuals with disabilities are viewed negatively and often ostracized and denied opportunities that result in their inability to participate in society. Condemnation as a “spirit child” leads to ostracism at best, and death at worst. Similarly, thousands of people with psychosocial disabilities have been reported to be forced to live in psychiatric hospitals and prayer camps, often against their will, where they are subject to involuntary and often abusive treatment. Persons with disabilities and families with a disabled child face a double burden of poverty.’¹²⁹
- 17.1.3 Freedom House stated: ‘People with disabilities and LGBT people also face societal discrimination. Same-sex sexual activity remains criminalized, encouraging police harassment and impunity for violence. Speaker of Parliament Aaron Mike Oquaye, an outspoken critic of LGBT rights, threatened to resign in 2018 if any laws were enacted to legalize same-sex sexual activity.’¹³⁰
- 17.1.4 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

¹²⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung: [‘BTI 2020 Country Report Ghana’](#) (p9), 29 April 2020

¹²⁶ RSF, [‘Ghana urged to ensure safety of reporters covering Covid-19’](#), 9 April 2020

¹²⁷ RSF, [‘Ghana – Not enough protection for journalists’](#), undated

¹²⁸ UN General Assembly, [‘Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions...’](#) (para 61), 8 August 2017

¹²⁹ UNHRC, [‘UNSR report 2018’](#) (para 10 & 43), 10 October 2018

¹³⁰ FH, [‘Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana’](#) (section F), February 2019

'The law explicitly prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities and protects the rights of persons with disabilities' access to health services, information, communications, transportation, the judicial system, and other state services, but the government did not effectively enforce the law. The law provides that persons with disabilities have access to public spaces with "appropriate facilities that make the place accessible to and available for use by a person with disability," but inaccessibility to schools and public buildings continued to be a problem. Some children with disabilities attended specialized schools that focused on their needs, in particular schools for the deaf. As of November [2019] the government hired 80 persons with disabilities through the Nation Builders Corps, an initiative to address graduate unemployment. Overall, however, few adults with disabilities had employment opportunities in the formal sector.

'In January the Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations reported that women with disabilities faced multifaceted discrimination in areas of reproductive health care, and because of the mistreatment, they were unwilling in most cases to visit a health facility for medical care.

'Persons with both mental and physical disabilities, including children, were frequently subjected to abuse and intolerance. Authorities did not regularly investigate and punish violence and abuses against persons with disabilities. Children with disabilities who lived at home were sometimes tied to trees or under market stalls and caned regularly; families reportedly killed some of them.

'In February laborers rescued a two-and-half-year-old boy with cerebral palsy buried alive in an uncompleted building in a suburb of Cape Coast in the Central Region. Local residents believed his parents may have buried him because of his disability.

'The Ghana Education Service, through its Special Education Unit, supported education for children who are deaf or hard of hearing or have vision disabilities through 14 national schools for deaf and blind students, in addition to one private school for them.

'Thousands of persons with mental disabilities, including children as young as seven, were sent to spiritual healing centers known as "prayer camps," where mental disability was often considered a "demonic affliction." Some residents were chained for weeks in these environments, denied food for days, and physically assaulted. Officials took few steps to implement a 2012 law that provides for monitoring of prayer camps and bars involuntary or forced treatment. International donor funding helped support office space and some operations of the Mental Health Authority. The Ministry of Health discontinued data collection on persons with disabilities in 2011. Human Rights Watch reported in October 2018 that it found more than 140 persons with real or perceived mental health disabilities detained in unsanitary, congested conditions at a prayer camp. In December 2018 the Mental Health Authority released guidelines for traditional and faith-based healers as part of efforts to ensure that practitioners respect the rights of patients with mental disabilities.

'In February at a political event the president said that "only those who are blind or deaf" would not be aware of the work done by the government. Following criticism from the Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations, he apologized "for any unintended slight from the 'political metaphor.'" The president of the Ghana Blind Union said nevertheless such comments impeded efforts to end stigmatization of persons with disabilities.'¹³¹

17.1.5 A Unicef in Ghana brochure published in February 2020 stated: 'Due to social norms and harmful practise, many children with disabilities experience stigma and discrimination as soon as they are born.'¹³²

17.1.6 For further information see

- [University of Ghana, Local Support Systems and Social Service Arrangements for Persons with Disabilities in Suhum, Ghana, Efuasaaba Agyire-Tettey, Augustina Naami, Lars Wissenbach, Johannes Schädler, 2019](#)
- [United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Initial report submitted by Ghana under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2014*, March 2019](#)
- [Human Rights Watch – Ghana: Oversight needed to enforce shackling ban, 9 October 2018](#) and [Ghana: Faith Healers Defy Ban on Chaining, 27 November 2019](#)

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Section 18 updated: 14 August 2020

18. Political opposition

18.1.1 Freedom House assessed Ghana to be 'free'¹³³, based on its analysis of the country's civil and political rights in 2018. It is also observed that

'The constitution guarantees the right to form political parties, and this right is generally respected. However, a significant increase in candidate nomination fees for the 2016 elections, along with the difficulties in nomination procedures highlighted by the presidential candidate disqualifications, presented challenges to participation, especially for candidates from smaller parties. The Progressive People's Party (PPP) mounted an unsuccessful legal challenge against the nomination fees ahead of the elections.

'In October 2018, members of Delta Force, a pro-NPP vigilante group, attempted to attack Anthony Akoto Osei, an NPP lawmaker and the country's minister for monitoring and evaluation, during a party meeting in Tafo Pankrono in the Ashanti Region. [...]

'Although the election and its immediate aftermath were peaceful, the campaign period was contentious. There were several reports of clashes between NPP and NDC supporters, as well as attacks on EC officials. Moreover, civil society representatives raised concerns about what they

¹³¹ USSD, ['2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana'](#) (section 6), 11 March 2020

¹³² Unicef, ['Ghana'](#) (p5), February 2020

¹³³ Freedom House, ['Freedom in the World Research Methodology'](#) undated

claimed were alarming levels of hate speech used by politicians, as well as alleged abuse of state resources. [...]

'The right to peaceful assembly is constitutionally guaranteed and generally respected. Permits are not required for meetings or demonstrations.'¹³⁴

18.1.2 The USSD human rights report for 2019, noted:

'Parties and independent candidates campaigned openly and without undue restrictions in the period preceding the most recent national elections in 2016 for the executive and legislative branches. Participants ran largely peaceful campaigns, although there were reports of isolated instances of violence. Domestic and international observers assessed the elections to be transparent, inclusive and credible. Observers noted concerns over the misuse of incumbency and unequal access granted to state-owned media during the campaign, although the incumbent party still lost. There were some reports of postelection violence, including takeovers of government institutions by vigilante groups associated with the victorious New Patriotic Party (NPP).

'In January [2019] violence between government security forces and alleged political vigilantes disrupted a by-election held to fill a parliamentary seat in the constituency of Ayawaso West Wuogon in Accra. Gunfire erupted near a polling station and the home of the opposition candidate, leaving 18 persons injured. The opposition candidate pulled out of the race on the day of the election in response to the incident, and the Electoral Commission (EC) subsequently announced that the NPP candidate had won the election. After the president called for a rapid inquiry into the matter, the government set up the Emile Short Commission of Inquiry to investigate the violence. In September the commission published its report online. The government agreed or partly agreed with approximately 40 percent of the recommendations. In September the president signed into law the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act, which stipulates 10- to 15-year sentences for anyone convicted of soliciting or engaging in political vigilante activity.

'The June 2018 ouster of the electoral commission chairperson and the president's subsequent filling of the EC with persons considered to be biased in favor of the ruling party raised questions about whether the body might be used to stifle voter registration in areas of opposition support. The EC's efforts to register voters and conduct a December 2018 referendum on new regions met with mixed reactions and some allegations of malpractice. Technical challenges hampered the EC's limited voter registration campaign.'¹³⁵

18.1.3 Ghana has more than 20 registered parties. The ruling party is the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The head of government is President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (since 7 January 2017) from the NPP party and the Vice President is Mahamudu Bawumia (since 7 January 2017); the president is both chief of state and head of government. The cabinet is made up of

¹³⁴ FH, '[Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana](#)', February 2019

¹³⁵ USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 3), 11 March 2020

Council of Ministers which are nominated by the president and approved by parliament¹³⁶.

18.1.4 Bertelsmann Stiftung stated in their 2020 country report:

‘As the major opposition party is already in full gear preparing for the next election, it is an indication that the basic trust in the workings of the democratic system is established...

‘The New Patriotic Party (NPP), the sole non-Nkrumahist party, had emerged as the only relevant opposition in the 1990s, but boycotted the elections in 1992. In 2000, the NPP won the election, marking the first, but not last, change of government by means of democratic election since independence. Rawlings’ National Democratic Congress (NDC) candidate, John Atta Mills, conceded defeat and settled into his role as leader of the opposition. The Fourth Republic survived this crucial development without difficulty, and President Kufuor’s new administration embraced an accelerated political and economic reform program. It did away with the last remnants of dictatorship – especially certain limits to the freedom of press – and refocused its concerns on economic development, to spur on growth after a stagnant period and a major economic setback in 1999. While these reforms continued after Kufuor’s re-election in 2004, the lack of immediate benefits for a wide range of the population led to the second democratic change in power in December 2008 to January 2009. The NDC’s Atta Mills defeated the NPP’s Akufo-Addo by a very narrow margin in the second round. After his untimely death in 2012, former Vice President John Dramani Mahama was sworn in as president and narrowly won as the NDC candidate in December 2012. With the most recent election of 2016, the NPP returned to power, marking another peaceful transition of leadership.’¹³⁷

18.1.5 The same report stated:

‘Consensus on the political system and its basic principles is high among the political elite, but has become less so in the general population, although the negative trend has not yet led to any serious crisis. The opposition acts within the constitutional framework. Dissatisfaction is currently channeled either through the courts or by forming new parties, or, in some instances, by political violence of a very limited scale. The election results show that most voters preferred to cast their vote for one of the two important parties, making opposition candidates outside the two-party system totally irrelevant.’¹³⁸

18.1.6 It was reported on the Ghanaian news website Pulse on 20 May 2020 that:

‘Parliamentarians from both the [ruling] New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the [opposition] National Democratic Congress (NDC) have come to a consensus on the 2020 general elections.

‘Both sides of the chamber have pledged support to Electoral Commission [EC] to conduct the general elections in December despite the coronavirus pandemic.

¹³⁶ CIA World Factbook, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section Government), last updated 15 March 2020

¹³⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung: ‘[BTI 2020 Country Report Ghana](#)’ (p4-5), 29 April 2020

¹³⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung: ‘[BTI 2020 Country Report Ghana](#)’ (p32), 29 April 2020

'The Majority Leader, Mr Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, was responding to calls by the Minority for the Electoral Commission (EC) to appear before parliament with a roadmap on how it intends to conduct this year's presidential and parliamentary elections.

'He said he agreed that this year's election must be held.

'According to the Majority, the constitution was ambivalent about what should happen in the absence of a general election and, therefore, called for measures to provide space for the holding of the 2020 elections.

'Mr Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu said the constitution was not clear about what should happen should there be no general election.

'Making the case of the Minority at the commencement of the first sitting of the second meeting of parliament, yesterday, the Minority Leader, Mr Haruna Iddrisu said whether Covid-19 or no Covid-19 pandemic, the EC was expected to carry out the general elections.

"This country, Covid-19 or no Covid-19, we are a democracy and our democracy will evolve and they will be expected to conduct presidential and parliamentary elections and we need to know what their roadmap is," it said.

"We will not accept any excuse for their inability to live up to their calling under Article 45," he said.¹³⁹

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Section 19 updated: 14 August 2020

19. Prison conditions

19.1 Conditions of detention

19.1.1 A UN General Assembly Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Ghana's Universal Periodic Review, which lists joint submission (JS) contributors in full on pages 10-11 noted that: 'JS1¹⁴⁰ stated that the Ghana Prison Service revealed that conditions at the country's prisons have seen little improvement, despite countless appeals. It further noted that there was an extreme level of overcrowding, resulting in a number of serious violations, including inadequate nutrition, insufficient access to medical care, poor sanitation, personal security and the absence of rehabilitation services.'¹⁴¹

19.1.2 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted:

'The consequences of prolonged imprisonment are devastating, particularly in the light of deplorable conditions of detention. Prisons are often extremely overcrowded and do not provide for adequate food, health care or sanitation facilities, leading to widespread communicable diseases among the prisoners. Again, the well-off will almost never be subjected to such treatment. The brunt of a highly unequal, under resourced and inefficient criminal justice system in Ghana falls almost entirely on those living in

¹³⁹ Pulse, '[Parliamentarians agree on 2020 general elections despite COVID-19...](#)', 20 May 2020

¹⁴⁰ JS1: '[POS Foundation; Amnesty International; Legal Resources Centre; Commonwealth...](#)'

¹⁴¹ UN General Assembly, '[Summary of Stakeholders' submissions...](#)' (para 15), 8 August 2017

poverty. If it were otherwise, the shortcomings in the system would likely have been addressed long ago'¹⁴²

19.1.3 Amnesty International, in their Ghana 2019 report, stated:

'The President commuted death sentences into life imprisonment, but courts continued to hand down death sentences, and prison conditions remained deplorable. [...]

'Prisons continued to be severely overcrowded. Prison Administration statistics as of September showed that 15,463 people (1.2% female) were being detained across 44 prisons with a combined capacity of only 2,552, and that 12.2% of detainees were held in pre-trial detention. The feeding allowance per person did not increase despite concerns about the quality and quantity of prison food. Extreme inadequacies in medical care and sanitation persisted in violation of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.'¹⁴³

19.1.4 Freedom House observed that

'Ghana's prisons are overcrowded, and conditions are often life-threatening, though the prison service has attempted to reduce congestion and improve the treatment of inmates in recent years. Communal and ethnic violence occasionally flare in some parts of the country.'¹⁴⁴

19.1.5 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated

'Prison conditions were generally harsh and sometimes life threatening due to overcrowding, inadequate sanitary conditions, lack of medical care, physical abuse, and food shortages.

'... The Prisons Public Relations Officer (PRO) reported in September that prison overcrowding reached more than 55 percent, with a population of 15,461 inmates compared to the 9,945-inmate total capacity of prisons nationwide. Although authorities sought to hold juveniles separately from adults, there were reports detainees younger than 18 were held with adults. Authorities held pretrial detainees in the same facilities as convicts but generally in separate cells, although due to overcrowding in convict blocks, Nsawam Prison held some convicts in blocks designated for pretrial detainees. The Ghana Prisons Service held women separately from men. No prison staff specifically focused on mental health, and officials did not routinely identify or offer treatment or other support to prisoners with mental disabilities.

'...Although the government continued to reduce the population of individuals in pretrial detention, prison overcrowding remained a serious problem, with certain prisons holding approximately two to four times more inmates than designed capacity.

'While prisoners had access to potable water, food was inadequate. Meals routinely lacked fruit, vegetables, or meat, forcing prisoners to rely on

¹⁴² UNHRC, '[UNSR report 2018](#)' (para 49), 10 October 2018

¹⁴³ AI, '[Human Rights in Africa: Review of 2019 – Ghana](#)', 8 April 2020

¹⁴⁴ FH, '[Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana](#)', February 2019

charitable donations and their families to supplement their diet. The PRO identified feeding of inmates as a key challenge.

'The Ghana Prisons Service facilitated farming activities for inmates to supplement feeding. Officials held much of the prison population in buildings that were originally colonial forts or abandoned public or military buildings, that despite improvements had poor ventilation and sanitation, substandard construction, and inadequate space and light. The Ghana Prisons Service periodically fumigated and disinfected prisons. There were not enough toilets available for the number of prisoners, with as many as 100 prisoners sharing one toilet, and toilets often overflowed with excrement.

'Medical assistants provided medical services, and they were overstretched and lacked basic equipment and medicine. At Nsawam a medical officer operated the health clinic. All prison infirmaries had a severely limited supply of medicine. All prisons were supplied with malaria test kits. Prisons did not provide dental care. Doctors visited prisons when required, and prison officials referred prisoners to local hospitals to address conditions prison medical personnel could not treat on-site, but the prisons often lacked ambulances to properly transport inmates off-site. To facilitate treatment at local facilities, the Ghana Prisons Service continued to register inmates in the National Health Insurance Scheme. The Ankafu Disease Camp Prison held prisoners with the most serious contagious diseases. Religious organizations, charities, private businesses, and citizens often provided services and materials, such as medicine and food, to the prisons.

'...Administration: There was no prison ombudsperson or comparable independent authority to respond to complaints; rather, each prison designated an officer-in-charge to receive and respond to complaints. In April 2018 a public relations officer from the Ghana Prisons Service wrote an opinion piece for an online newspaper, disputing claims inmates received food only once a day and were subjected to forced labor. The author, however, also called for bolstering resources for inmate meals and recognized overcrowding remained a serious difficulty.

Independent Monitoring: The government permitted independent monitoring of prison conditions. Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), which were independent of government influence, worked on behalf of prisoners and detainees to help alleviate overcrowding, monitor juvenile confinement, and improve pretrial detention, bail, and recordkeeping procedures to ensure prisoners did not serve beyond the maximum sentence for their offenses and beyond the 48 hours legally authorized for detention without charge. Local news agencies also reported on prison conditions.'¹⁴⁵

- 19.1.6 The [World Prison Brief Data](#) provide a summary of key statistics, including number, size and occupancy for prisons in Ghana.

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¹⁴⁵ USSD, ['2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana'](#) (section 3), 11 March 2020

20. Religious groups

20.1.1 The USSD international religious freedom report covering events in 2019 stated:

‘The constitution prohibits religious discrimination, stipulates that individuals are free to profess and practice their religion, and does not designate a state religion. Registration is required for religious groups to have legal status. There was debate among religious organizations and lawmakers over the utility of legislating to control the activities of “self-styled” pastors and the effect on religious freedom; the Christian Council of Ghana instead called for self-regulation. At year’s end, no consensus had developed and no legislation was drafted. The Supreme Court rejected a lawsuit against President Nana Akufo-Addo’s plans for an interdenominational national Christian cathedral, but opposition to the proposal for the new cathedral – due largely to concerns about the management of public resources – continued. Administration officials called for the public’s robust support.

‘Muslim and Christian leaders continued to emphasize the importance of religious freedom and tolerance, and reported ongoing communication among themselves on religious matters and ways to address issues of concern. For the first time, in April National Chief Imam Sheikh Osman Sharubutu attended a Catholic Easter service, an act the 100-year-old cleric said was intended to encourage interfaith engagement.’¹⁴⁶

20.1.2 Freedom House in its report covering events in 2018, stated: ‘Religious freedom is constitutionally and legally protected, and the government largely upholds these protections in practice. However, public schools feature mandatory religious education courses drawing on Christianity and Islam, and Muslims students have allegedly been required to participate in Christian prayer sessions and church services in some publicly funded Christian schools.’¹⁴⁷

20.1.3 For more information on religious freedom in Ghana see the USSD 2018 Report on [International Religious Freedom: Ghana](#)

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Section 21 updated: 14 August 2020

21. Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

21.1.1 See the Country Policy and information Note on [Ghana: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression](#)

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Section 22 updated: 14 August 2020

¹⁴⁶ USSD, ‘[2020 Report on International Religious Freedom](#)’ (Exec summary), 10 June 2020

¹⁴⁷ FH, ‘[Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana](#)’ (section D), February 2019

22. Women

22.1 Legal, social and economic rights

22.1.1 A UN General Assembly Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Ghana's Universal Periodic Review, which lists joint submission (JS) contributors in full on pages 10-11 noted that: 'JS14¹⁴⁸ noted that while the Constitution and family, labour, property, nationality and inheritance laws provide for the same legal status and rights for women as for men, traditional practices and societal norms often deny women their statutory entitlements to inheritance and property, a legally registered marriage with associated legal rights, and the right to adequate resources to exercise custody of children. Women also continued to experience discrimination in access to employment, wage and housing.'¹⁴⁹

22.1.2 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted:

'Although gender equality is mandated by article 17 of the Constitution and the Government has created a Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, women in Ghana still face widespread discrimination and inequality and lag behind in most areas of public life. For example, almost 50 per cent more females than males have never attended school (14.3 per cent compared to 9.1 per cent). While gender parity has almost been achieved at preschool and early childhood levels, the gap begins to widen significantly at the junior high- and high-school levels, despite the introduction of free compulsory and universal basic education and free secondary high school policies. The gap is especially large in rural communities, for a mix of cultural, economic and institutional reasons. The traditional view that women should be at home doing domestic and household tasks and that boys should take care of their parents in old age, lead parents to discourage female education...

'In terms of representation in decision-making bodies, the present Government has committed to a quota of 40 per cent and an important number of women are in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. However, in 2016, women held only 11 per cent of the seats in the national parliament and accounted for only 30 per cent in tertiary education enrolments. There is still low representation of women in decision making positions at the district, regional and national levels. None of the national or regional Councils of Chiefs currently include a female member. Strong male domination at senior and mid-level management of most district assemblies and the relative paucity of women at the regional and district levels of decision-making are major concerns.

'Many of the discriminatory practices that still negatively affect women seem to be rooted in customary law and traditional practices...

'In relation to land ownership by women, traditional leaders and family heads control nearly 80 per cent of rural land. Community decision-making, with regard to the distribution of land plots, is under the responsibility of lineage chiefs and all members of the lineage are entitled to usufructuary rights or customary freehold, regardless of their sex. The official position of the

¹⁴⁸ JS14: '[Sisters of the Heart; Centre for Popular Education Human Rights in Ghana](#)'.

¹⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, '[Summary of Stakeholders' submissions...](#)' (para 42), 8 August 2017

Government, as expressed to the Special Rapporteur is that “there is no barrier or hindrance to deny or make it difficult for women to possess land”. In practice, however, male family heads of household are in charge of establishing landownership. Hence, women’s access to and use of land is mediated through their male counterparts. Although agriculture in Ghana is predominantly practised by smallholder farmers, it contributes about 21 per cent of GDP and 12 per cent of tax revenues. Women make up around 50 per cent of the agricultural labour force and are estimated to produce 70 per cent of the food crops. Nevertheless, they earn less than 10 per cent of the total income generated. There would seem to be powerful arguments for the Government to revisit the inevitably controversial issue of female landownership and map out ways to achieve change that is essential if the rights of women are to be fully respected and if their economic productivity is to be unlocked.’¹⁵⁰

22.1.3 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted in their Social Institutions & Gender Index based on a number of sources published up to December 2018:

‘Though there is no law that prohibits women from opening a bank account in Ghana, there is a paucity in consumer protection legislation and other policies that guarantee equal access regardless of gender (Centre for Financial Inclusion, n.d). Despite this gap, in practice, women and men have equal rights to banking services at formal institutions. The law does not require married women to obtain the signatures of their husbands to open the bank account. There are limitations to women’s access to credit facilities such as distance, transportation, banking fees and other associated costs and thus, efforts have been made by the government of Ghana to increase women’s access to credit facilities, rural banks and other private micro-credit organizations (CEDAW Country Report, 2012). Through the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty programme, the government promotes gender-sensitive measures to increase women’s access to formal financial services (National Gender Policy, 2015). As a result of women continuing to dominate positions in the informal sector, low wage jobs and unpaid labour (National Gender Policy) this impacts the economic position and stability for women and implies that there are social and cultural gendered stereotypes and expectations associated with what is considered as “women’s work”.’¹⁵¹

22.1.4 Freedom House in Freedom in the World 2019, Ghana stated:

‘Women formally enjoy political equality, but they hold comparatively few leadership positions in practice. In the 2016 elections, women candidates received less media coverage than men and took just 37 of the 275 parliamentary seats, though this was the largest share since the reintroduction of multiparty rule in 1992. The National House of Chiefs, Ghana’s highest body of customary authority, has been under pressure to include women as members.’¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ UNHRC, [‘UNSR report 2018’](#) (para 31-36), 10 October 2018

¹⁵¹ OECD, [‘SIGI - Social Institutions & Gender Index 2019 – Ghana’](#) (section 3b), December 2018

¹⁵² FH, [‘Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana’](#) (section B), February 2019

- 22.1.5 The same report stated: ‘Despite equal rights under the law, women suffer societal discrimination, especially in rural areas, where their opportunities for education and employment are limited. However, women’s enrollment in universities is increasing.’¹⁵³
- 22.1.6 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:
‘No laws limit participation of women or members of minorities in the political process, and they did participate. Women, however, held fewer leadership positions than men, and female political figures faced sexism, harassment, and threats of violence. Cultural and traditional factors limited women’s participation in political life. Research organizations found that fear of insults, questions about physical safety, and overall negative societal attitudes toward female politicians hindered women from entering politics.’¹⁵⁴
- 22.1.7 Amnesty International stated in their report covering events in 2019 that:
‘An Affirmative Action bill was not passed into law despite advocacy activities led by local NGOs promoting women’s rights. Women continued to be underrepresented in public and political life and at risk of gender-based violence. In October, a BBC News documentary exposing sexual harassment at the University of Ghana led to the suspension of two professors and sparked a nationwide discussion about sexual harassment in the workplace and schools.’¹⁵⁵
- 22.1.8 Bertelsmann Stiftung stated in their 2020 country report: ‘Employment statistics are scarce and unreliable, especially with regard to the informal sector. Studies of the informal economy suggest that women carry the major burden of working for subsistence wages in this sector, a pattern consistent with other African societies. A legal framework for labor and employment regulation exists, but its enforcement is difficult and mostly inadequate.’¹⁵⁶

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22.2 FGM and other harmful traditional practices

22.2.1 See section: [Children: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)](#)

22.2.2 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated: ‘The constitution prohibits practices that dehumanize or are injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person. Media reported several killings and attempted killings for ritual purposes. In the Northern, North East, Upper East, and Upper West Regions, families or traditional authorities banished rural women and men suspected of “witchcraft” to “witch camps.” Such camps were distinct from “prayer camps,” to which families sometimes sent persons with mental illness to seek spiritual healing. Most of those accused of witchcraft were older women, often widows. Some persons suspected to be witches were also killed. According to an antiwitchcraft accusation coalition, there were six witch camps throughout the country, holding approximately 2,000- 2,500 adult women and 1,000-1,200 children. One camp had seen its numbers go

¹⁵³ FH, ‘[Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana](#)’ (section F), February 2019

¹⁵⁴ USSD, ‘[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)’ (section 3), 11 March 2020

¹⁵⁵ AI, ‘[Ghana 2019](#)’, 8 April 2020

¹⁵⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung: ‘[BTI 2020 Country Report Ghana](#)’ (p22), 29 April 2020

down significantly due to education, support, and reintegration services provided by the Presbyterian Church. According to officials, one other camp was closed following the successful reintegration of 37 women. The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection has the mandate to monitor witch camps but did not do so effectively.’¹⁵⁷

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22.3 Trafficking

22.3.1 The USSD trafficking in persons report for 2019 stated:

‘Ghanaian women and children are recruited and sent to the Middle East, other parts of West Africa, and Europe for forced labor and sex trafficking. NGOs report the increasing use of internet platforms to recruit Ghanaians seeking work overseas. Unscrupulous agencies arrange transport of Ghanaians seeking employment in Europe through neighboring African countries, where sex traffickers exploit, hold involuntarily, and extort funds from the victims. Recruiters entice Ghanaian women and girls with offers of good paying jobs in domestic service or the hospitality industry in countries in the Middle East and attempt to circumvent the ban on recruitment for such jobs by arranging travel across land borders to access airports for flights to the region. After their return, many of them report being deceived, overworked, starved, abused, molested, and/or forced into commercial sex. Fraudulent recruiters lure Ghanaian men under false pretenses to go to the Middle East, where traffickers subject them to forced labor and sex trafficking. Traffickers have coerced Ghanaian men and women in forced labor in the United States. Traffickers lure Nigerian women and girls to Ghana by the promise of a good job and coerce them into prostitution to pay exorbitant debts for transportation and lodging. Traffickers also coerce some Ghanaian and Nigerian labor migrants into prostitution as the traffickers demand more money for transit and document costs. Traffickers subject children from West African countries to forced labor in Ghana in agriculture or domestic service. Ghana is a transit point for West Africans subjected to sex trafficking in Europe, especially Italy and Germany. [...]

‘The inadequacy of operational resources, limited technical capacity for effective investigation, the absence of government-supported shelter space for adult and child trafficking victims, and the shortage of state attorneys hindered prosecutions. The government did not adequately address corruption and political interference in trafficking investigations and prosecutions, and it did not amend the anti-trafficking act regulations to remove the option of a fine in lieu of imprisonment in cases where the trafficker is a parent or guardian of the child victim.’¹⁵⁸

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22.4 Rape, domestic violence and sexual assault

22.4.1 Freedom House in Freedom in the World 2019, Ghana stated:

‘Domestic violence and rape are serious problems, and harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation or cutting and early or forced

¹⁵⁷ USSD, [‘2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana’](#) (section 6), 11 March 2020

¹⁵⁸ USSD, [‘2019 Trafficking in persons report: Ghana’](#) (section Trafficking profile), 20 June 2019

marriage persist in some regions. The government has worked to combat gender-based violence over the past decade, including by expanding the police's domestic violence and victim support units and creating special courts for gender-based violence, though such services reportedly suffer from insufficient resources.' ¹⁵⁹

22.4.2 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted in their 2019 Social Institutions & Gender Index:

'A 2016 Government study on domestic violence in Ghana revealed that women are largely blamed for the violence they experience (Domestic Violence Study, 2016). In its Concluding Observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ghana, the CEDAW Committee stated deep concerns towards, "the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions, in addition to patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, which contribute to the persistence of violence against women and harmful practices" (CEDAW, 2014). The CEDAW in its 2016 Concluding Observations notes concerns around rates of violence against women, domestic violence, sexual assault and rape. Though legislative initiatives have been drafted to support the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (2007), the delays in adoption are concerning.' ¹⁶⁰

22.4.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

'The law criminalizes rape of women but not spousal rape. Sexual assault on a male can be charged as indecent assault. Prison sentences for those convicted of rape range from five to 25 years, while indecent assault is a misdemeanor subject to a minimum term of imprisonment of six months. Rape and domestic violence remained serious problems.

'In February [2019] traditional authorities in the Central Region punished a man who allegedly raped a woman. Under customary procedures, they fined him three sheep and six bottles of schnapps for having sex in a cemetery with her, to avert, they said, a curse on the community and the suspect's family. Police later arrested the suspect under a formal rape charge, and he received bail while awaiting trial.' ¹⁶¹

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Section 23 updated: 14 August 2020

23. Freedom of movement

23.1 Legal rights

23.1.1 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

'The constitution provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights. In a stated effort to curb human trafficking, however, the government in 2017 imposed a ban on labor recruitment to Gulf countries after increased

¹⁵⁹ FH, '[Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana](#)' (section G), February 2019

¹⁶⁰ OECD, '[SIGI - Social Institutions & Gender Index 2019 – Ghana](#)' (section 2a), December 2018

¹⁶¹ USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 6), 11 March 2020

reports of abuse endured by migrant workers. The ban continued during the year. Media investigations revealed some recruitment agencies continued their operations despite the ban.’¹⁶²

- 23.1.2 Freedom House in Freedom in the World 2019, Ghana stated: ‘Freedom of movement is guaranteed by the constitution and respected by the government, and Ghanaians are free to change their place of residence. However, poorly developed road networks and banditry can make travel outside the capital and touristic areas difficult. Police have been known to set up illegal checkpoints to demand bribes from travelers.’¹⁶³

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23.2 Border control and exit checks

- 23.2.1 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) foreign travel advice for Ghana, last updated 11 August 2020 stated: ‘On 21 March [2020], the Government of Ghana announced the closure [due to COVID-19] of the country’s borders, including the suspension of international flights as well as the closure of all land and sea borders until further notice. There are currently no commercial options available to return to the UK from Ghana.’¹⁶⁴

- 23.2.2 The Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) on their website stated:

‘The objective of the Unit is to ensure the security of all and borders, entry and exit points including coastal areas against illegal entry and exit by cross border criminals. In the performance of this new role of securing the borders, the Immigration Service Border Patrol Unit is to undertake the under listed specific tasks.

- ‘i. Physical patrolling of the borders
- ‘ii. Checking of illegal migration
- ‘iii. Checking of drug /Human trafficking
- ‘iv. Checking of smuggling across the border
- ‘v. Checking animal trafficking
- ‘vi. Reporting on all forms of suspected subversive activities
- ‘vii. Preparedness to act as the first line of defense against external aggressors for the Ghana Armed Forces.

‘The Primary mission of the Border Patrol is detection and apprehension of illegal aliens and smugglers of aliens at or near the land borders. Some of the major activities include maintaining traffic checkpoints along highways leading from border areas, conducting snap checks and anti-smuggling operations. These activities are performed with the use of pick-up vehicles and all purpose motorbikes.

‘In the performance of these duties, the Border Patrol Unit (BPU) has intercepted and arrested a lot of smugglers.

‘The Border Patrol Unit is still in its infant stage of development its present challenges are expected but with determination and commitment by the rank

¹⁶² USSD, [‘2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana’](#) (section 2), 11 March 2020

¹⁶³ FH, [‘Freedom in the World – 2019: Ghana’](#) (section G), February 2019

¹⁶⁴ FCO, [‘Foreign travel advice – Ghana’](#) (summary), last updated 11 August 2020

and file of the Service, the present challenges would surely be a thing of the past.¹⁶⁵

23.2.3 In 2013 Thales, a technology solutions company, was put in charge of Ghana's national electronic and border management solution¹⁶⁶.

23.2.4 For further information see [Ghana Immigration Service - GIS](#)

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23.3 Security and crime situation

23.3.1 The UN SR on extreme poverty and human rights report 2018 noted: 'Ghana remains a champion of democracy in Africa, with power having regularly changed hands democratically since 1992. It has no internal armed conflicts and has avoided the grave security threats faced by its regional neighbours.'¹⁶⁷

23.3.2 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated:

'Chieftaincy disputes, which frequently resulted from lack of a clear chain of succession, competing claims over land and other natural resources, and internal rivalries and feuds, continued to result in deaths, injuries, and destruction of property. According to the West Africa Center for Counter Extremism, chieftaincy disputes and ethnic violence were the largest sources of insecurity and instability in the country.

'The 17-year-old contested leadership succession for the Dagbon traditional area, one of Ghana's most prominent and long-running chieftaincy disputes, was peacefully resolved in January.

'Throughout the year disputes continued between Fulani herdsmen and landowners that at times led to violence. Clashes erupted intermittently between two factions over land in the Chereponi district, killing three persons and displacing almost 2,000 residents, according to the National Disaster Management Organization. Police and military deployed personnel to the township.

'There were frequent reports of killings of suspected criminals in mob violence. Community members often saw such vigilantism as justified in light of the difficulties and constraints facing the police and judicial sectors. There were multiple reports police failed to prevent and respond to societal violence, in particular incidents of "mob justice."¹⁶⁸

23.3.3 For further information see [ICG – International Crisis Group: The Risk of Jihadist Contagion in West Africa, 20 December 2019](#)

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23.4 Internally displaced people (IDPs)

23.4.1 The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) stated:

¹⁶⁵ Ghana Immigration service, '[Border management](#)', undated

¹⁶⁶ Thales, '[Customer stories – Ghana](#)', undated

¹⁶⁷ UNHRC, '[UNSR report 2018](#)' (para 4), 10 October 2018

¹⁶⁸ USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 6), 11 March 2020

'IDMC reported conflict displacement in Ghana for the first time in 2018. Fighting between the Konkomba and Chokosi communities triggered by a land dispute in the Chereponi and the Saboba districts in Ghana's Northern region displaced more than 5,000 people. Several houses were burnt down, and many people injured in the 31 December 2018 clashes. An earlier clash broke out between the Konkomba and Chokosi communities in Naduni in May 2018, also over land. The dispute was settled by a traditional authority, declaring the Chokosis as the rightful owners of the land. The Konkombas, however, rejected the ruling of and tensions remained high in the area.'¹⁶⁹

23.4.2 The IDMC reported in 2020 that there were 2,300 new displacements between 1 January to 31 December 2019 due to conflict and violence and that the total number of IDP's due to conflict and disaster as at 31 December 2019 was 230.¹⁷⁰ There were 16,000 new displacements due to disasters between 1 January to 31 December 2019, with a total of 15,000 IDPs.¹⁷¹

23.4.3 However, the USSD human rights report for 2019 stated: 'Intermittent violent clashes between two factions over land in the Chereponi district displaced an estimated 2,000 residents, according to the National Disaster Management Organization [...]. There were no other reports of internally displaced persons.'¹⁷²

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¹⁶⁹ IDMC, '[Ghana - Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Conflict and Violence](#)', May 2019

¹⁷⁰ IDMC, '[Ghana – webpage](#)', undated

¹⁷¹ IDMC, '[Ghana – webpage](#)', undated

¹⁷² USSD, '[2019 Human Rights Practices Report, Ghana](#)' (section 2), 11 March 2020

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Geography and demography
 - Key geographic and demographic facts
 - Administrative divisions
 - Maps
 - Physical geography
 - Population density and distribution
- Socio-economic situation
 - Key economic points
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Food security
 - Housing / social support
- History
- Media and telecommunications
- Key media and telecommunications points
- Citizenship and nationality
- Official documents
 - Birth certificates
 - National identity cards
 - Passports
 - Fraudulent documents
- Key issues relevant to protection claims
 - Children
 - Infant mortality
 - Education and child labour
 - Child marriage
 - Violence against children

- Prison conditions
- Security situation
- Sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- Women / gender based harm or violence
- IDPs
- Social support
 - Government services
 - Civil society
- Freedom of movement
 - Legal rights
 - Documentation
- Security situation
 - Crime

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **21 September 2020**

Changes from last version of this note

First version of CPIN

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