

Security Situation

A report by the
CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & DEFENSE STUDIES
West Africa

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Summary Report of the Center for Strategic and Defense Studies on the Security Situation in Ghana

I. Introduction

The internal security situation in Ghana is one of relative calm, notwithstanding the existence a diverse range of existential threats.

The present report focuses, however, on the following range of strategic national threats – border security, maritime security, cyber security, illegal mining, herdsmen menace, human trafficking and armed robbery.

II. Border Security

While Ghana has forty-one (41) official Points of Entry and Exit (PoEs), large swathes of the country's frontiers can still be characterized as porous and inadequately monitored. The porosity of the borders facilitates smuggling, arms, drugs and human trafficking as well as related cross-border crimes.

Observing that our Border Security Committees (BORDSECs) were fragile and that key agencies tasked with border management responsibilities like the Customs Division/GRA (CD/GRA) and Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) lacked optimum collaboration. We facilitated CD/GRA and GIS to assent to an MOU which has since helped to foster better inter-agency cooperation. We are currently in a process of extending assent to the MOU to all agencies with border equities, to improve joint action and information-sharing.

III. Maritime Security

Since the country's commercial discovery of hydrocarbons, offshore threats such as illegal oceanic fishing, piracy, maritime terrorism, oil bunkering, narcotic trafficking, and oil-related environmental degradation within its maritime domain have scaled up significantly, adding to the national threat profile.

Recent piracy attacks, underscore anticipated challenges which could confront the Marine Police and the Ghana Navy in the ensuing years – unless countered. Our

naval and maritime authorities are, however, working with domestic and regional partners to diminish the scale of these anticipated maritime threats.

IV. Cyber Security / Cyber Crime

Cyber security and cybercrime are very pressing concerns of the Government of Ghana (GoG) as the number of cybercrimes perpetrated each year improves in sophistication. Our intelligence forecast is that GoG and other entities will progressively rely on electronic transactions in future. We are therefore hardening as a matter of national priority our cyber space to secure particularly financial, commercial and regulatory electronic transactions from attack.

Although a national cyber security policy and strategy exists, gaps exist in definitions, responsibilities and a coordinated strategy for the nation's Computer Emergency Readiness Teams (CERTs). Here our National Cyber security Secretariat is working with various domestic and external partners to devise a clearer national strategy. The desired end state for GOG is, however, to have effective systems, strategies, legal frameworks and capacity to ensure cyber due diligence and cyber hygiene, so as to prevent, detect and effectively prosecute cyber offences.

V. Illegal Mining

The activities of illegal miners also pose a major environmental and public health threat and persist despite a Government moratorium on their operations. As a countermeasure the Government of Ghana commissioned "Operation Vanguard" a bi-agency taskforce, comprising military/police contingents to combat illegal mining across the country, targeting parts of Ashanti, Eastern and the country's Western Region where illegal alluvial and pit-mining operations had gained notoriety for destruction to water bodies among others.

Over the period of intervention by state security agencies, some water bodies have begun regaining their natural state, although a lot is required to restore affected water bodies to acceptable quality levels.

There has nonetheless, been adverse opposition some elements within the target areas including the Ghana Association of Small Scale Miners (GASSM) who while pledging to support government to ensure better mining regulation have increasingly called on Government to lift the ban on small scale mining in order to alleviate alleged hardships that has befallen them.

VI. Herdsmen Menace

There has also been rising violent tensions between local farmers and nomadic herdsmen with many lives have been lost, and several persons have been displaced as a result of the long-standing conflict between the two groups.

Following recent clashes between nomadic herdsman and crop farmers in some parts of the country, resulting in loss of lives and property, government re-launched OPERATION COWLEG, which comprised police and military personnel tasked to flush out the herders and their cattle from those areas. This has, however, forced the herdsman to relocate to other areas of the savanna which is also attracting the wrath of farmers in these areas.

In a bid to address the issue holistically, government has initiated the National Cattle Ranching Project in the Kwahu Afram Plains of the Eastern Region where herdsman will be encouraged to send their cattle for grazing so as to minimize the conflict with farmers.

VII. Human Trafficking

Human trafficking or modern-day slavery of unsuspecting Ghanaian females aged between eighteen (18) and thirty-five (35) years, through unapproved routes along the Ghana-Togo border en route Togo to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries is another growing existential threat.

Intelligence indicates that the majority of travelers are recruited by internal and external agencies under the pretext of agency recruitment for lucrative jobs abroad. Checks revealed that victims are employed as domestic helps and mostly treated inhumanely by their hosts. Further there are weak or no laws criminalizing the abuse of domestic hands in the Gulf Region who for the most part are perceived as slaves.

The Government of Ghana placed a temporary ban on exportation of labour from Ghana to countries where such infractions have been recorded. We are weighing proposals to vet/license of all immigration recruitment agencies/agents and diplomatically engaging Gulf State missions in Ghana to issue visas to only licensed labour recruitment agencies, among other countermeasures.

Meanwhile, Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) and Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of the Ghana Police Service are vigorously monitoring exit points of the country for unsuspecting teenage travelers heading to Gulf States and advising potential victims.

VIII. Armed Robbery

Rising armed robbery is also one of the key threats which threaten national security. Mainly prevalent in the Greater Accra, Ashanti, Eastern and Northern Regions, the scourge of organized armed robberies have impacted the security situation.

In recent times it has been observed that robbery attacks on forex bureau and mobile money vendors across the country have spike especially in the Greater Accra Region where most victims have been at the mercy of these criminals in broad daylight.

We launched OPERATION CALM LIFE, comprising military and police personnel, to restore visible security within the country, and it has largely been successful. Key

strategies adopted include, visibility policing; frequent and random swoops on suspected criminal dens; day and night patrols within crime-prone areas as well as highways across the country; increased electronic surveillance and introduction of motorbike patrol teams.

IX. Conclusion

As indicated above, the general security situation in Ghana is one of relative calm notwithstanding that the Ghanaian State continues to grapple with various socio-economic and law enforcement threats.