

ASYLUM OFFICER TRAINING MATERIALS CONCERNING GHANA

-by Sharifa kalokola

US-CIS recently released 20 pages of materials that it had given to asylum officers concerning Ghana, in response to a FOIA request from the [Requesting Organization Name]. The pages are available on the “Asylum Officer Training 2017-2023” page at [Website Link], marked as “Ghana 2020.”

This article will give an overview of the materials.

There are various maps on pages [X], [Y], and [Z]. The report begins with an overview of Ghana’s political history, including key events such as [specific historical events or periods covered]. Page 2.

Corruption remains a challenge in Ghana, affecting government institutions, law enforcement, and judicial processes. Page 4.

The report also discusses significant human rights concerns, including abuses by security forces, restrictions on press freedom, and discrimination against marginalized groups. Page 5. Efforts to address these issues include initiatives by civil society organizations, although challenges persist. Pages 6-7.

Organized crime and trafficking, particularly human and drug trafficking, are notable concerns. Criminal networks operate across the region, affecting stability and safety. Page 8. Additionally, political and ethnic tensions contribute to localized violence and unrest. Page 9.

Land disputes and resource management are also highlighted, particularly in regions like [specific regions if mentioned], where conflicts arise over land ownership and resource extraction. Indigenous and rural communities are often disproportionately affected. Page 11.

Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and harmful traditional practices such as child marriage, is prevalent. Women and girls face significant vulnerabilities due to socio-cultural norms and inadequate legal protections. Page 13. More statistics and details on gender-based violence are provided on page 13.

Ethnic and religious minorities face discrimination and exclusion from socio-political participation, often leading to tensions and grievances. Page 17.

COMMENTS OF THE AUTHOR

Winning asylum from Ghana is challenging due to the need for clear evidence of persecution and the complex socio-political landscape.

About the author

Sharifa Kalokola is the Executive Director of African Immigrant Rights Council. Email: sharifakalokola@sharifakalokola



GHANA

*COI Briefing at ZAR,
Nov. 3, 2020*

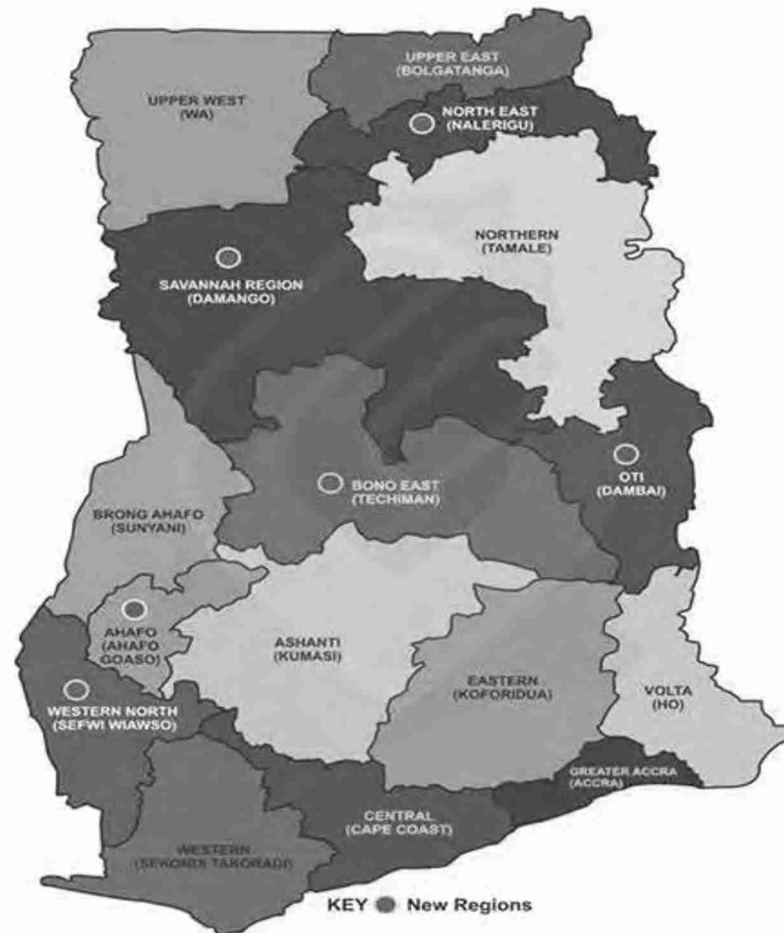
*By the RAIO Research
Unit*



Neighboring Countries



16 Administrative Regions (from 10 to 16 in 2016)



General Information

Capital: Accra

Population: 29,340,248 (July 2020 est.)

Size: slightly smaller than Oregon

Languages: English (official); indigenous language

Life Expectancy: 63.8 years (2019)

Literacy: 76.6% (2015)

GDP; GDP per capita: \$69.76 billion; \$2,270 (2020)

Key Exports: Oil, gold, cocoa, timber, tuna, minerals, diamonds

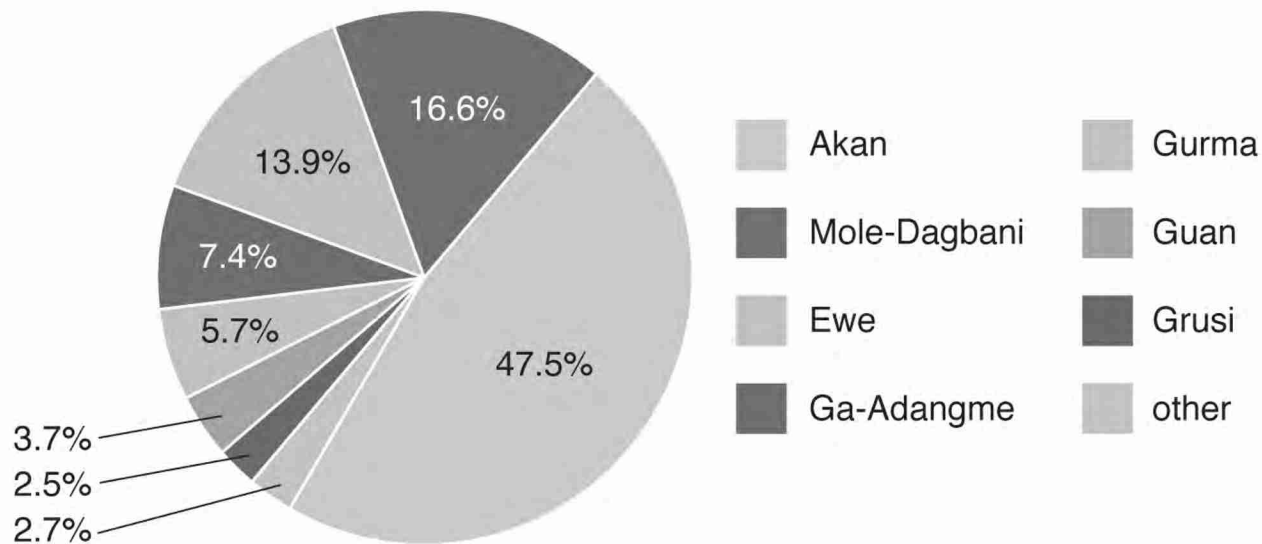
HDI Ranking: 142 of 189 (2019)

Dual Citizenship: allowed

Source: Map and facts from [CIA](#), GDP from [IMF](#), HDI and Life Expectancy from [UNDP](#).

Ethnic/Linguistic Groups

Ethnic composition (2010)

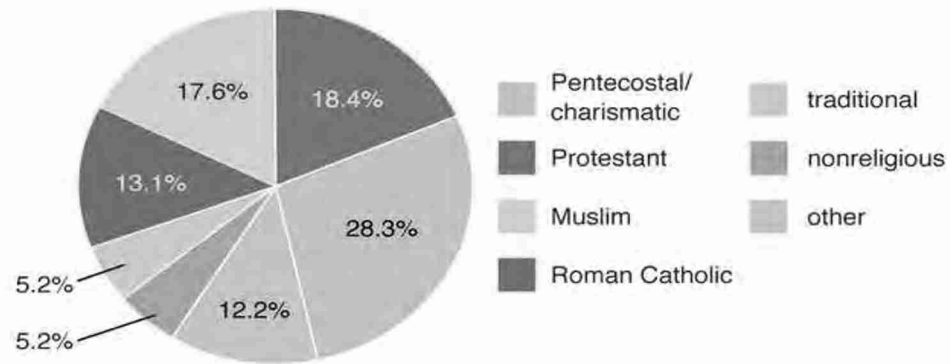


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There is no evidence that the government targets individuals on account of their ethnicity or language.

Religious Affiliation (2010)

Religious affiliation (2010)



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No evidence that government targets individuals on account of their religion

Treatment of LGBT People

- Widespread discrimination and abuse both in public and in family settings—LGBT are often victims of family violence...” (HRW, 2018)
- Violent attacks, discrimination in education, and a climate of homophobia. (Submission to the 117th Session of the Human Rights Committee, June-July 2016)
- Hate speech against LGBTI by some religious and political leaders and the media. (Amnesty International, 2019)

Treatment of LGBT People (continued)

- Intimidation, arbitrary arrest, and blackmail and lack of access to remedies for such violations.” (UN Special Rapporteur, 2018)
- Stigma and discrimination against LGBT people undermines their ability to find meaningful work. (UN Special Rapporteur, 2018)
- Landlords and tenants urged to report anyone they suspected to be LGBT.
- Ghana Gay Blackmail List, which exposes “notorious persons who steal, abuse & blackmail gay men.”

Same-sex Relationships are Criminalized

- Listed among sexual offenses under the 1960 criminal code, Chapter 6, section 104
- The law is a colonial legacy and doesn't explicitly refer to LGBT but is interpreted as such.
- Listed under the name “the crime of unnatural carnal knowledge,” which is defined as “sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with an animal.”

Government Officials Attitudes towards LGBT People

- President Akufo-Addo: “This government has no plans to change the law on same-sex marriage.” 2017
- Speaker of Parliament Mike Oquaye: “ I would rather resign than subscribe to these delusions [referring to gay rights legislation].” 2018
- Second Deputy Speaker of Parliament Bagbin: “Homosexuality is worse than [an] atomic bomb...there is no way we will accept it in (this) country.” 2018

General Negative Attitude towards LGBT People

- According to a 2018 survey, approximately 60 percent of citizens “strongly disagree” or “disagree” that LGBTI persons deserve equal treatment with heterosexuals. (US Country Reports 2019)
- Posting at the airport until May 2016: The posting further warned: “Ghana imposes extremely harsh penalties on such sexually aberrant behavior....If you are in Ghana for such activity, then for everybody’s good, including your own, we suggest you go elsewhere.”

Cases of LGBT People Being Caught in the Act

- Entertainment personality (Albert Appiah, a.k.a Kinto) beaten by a mob after he was allegedly caught attempting to have intimate relations with fellow man.
- Two men arrested after having been caught during a homosexual act in Amasaman, in Accra.
- Two students of St Paul's Boys High School in Denu, a small town in south-eastern Ghana, attacked by fellow students who caught them having sex
- Two men were arrested and forced to pose naked after they were caught having sex in Accra hotel.
- Three boys suspended from school following a 'caught-in-the-act' report."

Cases of LGBT People Being Caught in the Act (Continued)

- Three girls reported, arrested, jeered at by a crowd, intimidated by police, kicked out of their soccer training camp, and rejected by their families. All for being suspected of homosexuality. (HRW, 2018).
- “A mother of a young woman organized a mob to beat up her daughter and another woman because she suspected they were lesbians and in a same-sex relationship. The two young women were forced to flee the village.” (HRW 2018)
- August 2005, a lesbian obtained arrested in Accra for "luring an 18-year-old girl into lesbianism." Refworld 2006

Steps to Protect LGBT People

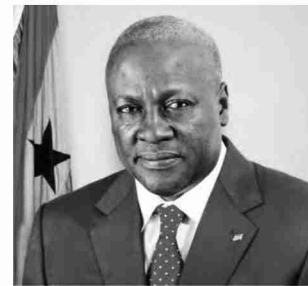
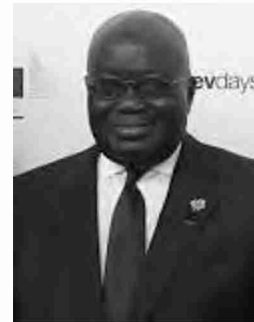
- “Police officials and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) have taken some steps to protect LGBT people.” (HRW, 2018).
- No reports of convictions for LGBT-related “offenses.”
- A coalition of LGBTI-led organizations from throughout the country, officially registered in November 2018. (US Country report 2019).
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) has been vocal for Ghanaian LGBTs.
- Apparent existence of local LGBT organizations: LGBT+ Rights Ghana and The Gay and Lesbian Association of Ghana

Political Stability

- “Since 1992, Ghana has held competitive multiparty elections and undergone peaceful transfers of power between the two main political parties.” (Freedom House 2020)
- “Ghana continues to be seen as one of the most democratic countries in Africa.” (2020 World Press Freedom Index).
- “International and domestic observers generally praised the 2016 parliamentary and presidential elections. The NPP captured 169 seats, while the NDC, which held a majority going into the vote, took the remaining 106 seats.” (Freedom House 2020)

Ghana: one of the few Stable Countries

- No record of civil war
- Peaceful transfer of power since the 1990s (see the last 3 presidents)
- Home for refugees from neighboring countries



H.E. PROF. JOHN EVANS ATTA MILLS
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Overall Government's Human Rights Record

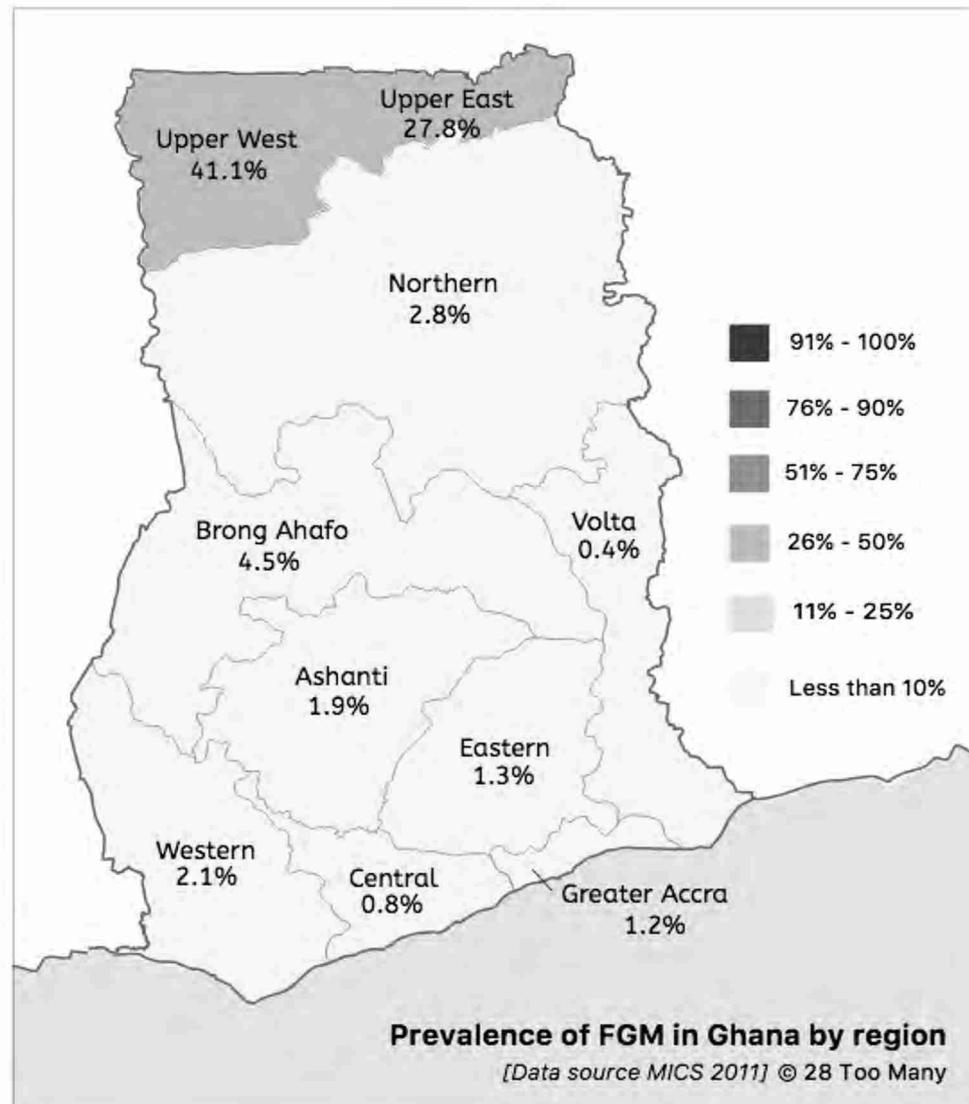
- There were no reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities...There were a few reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. In some cases authorities claimed the victims were suspected robbers. (US Country Report 2019)
- Ranked 30th out of 180 countries surveyed in the 2020 report on freedom of speech. (2020 World Press Freedom Index)
- Ranked as FREE in the 2020 Freedom in the World (Freedom House)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Girls usually undergo FGM before the age of 5
- 84% of FGM cases are carried out by traditional practitioners called *wanzams*
- FGM has been illegal since 1994
- Limited cases of prosecutions
- 94.2% of women aged 15-49 believe FGM practice should be stopped

Prevalence of FGM

The prevalence of FGM in women aged 15-49 is 3.8%.



Questions?

- Q&A session
- If you have more questions, please submit them to the RAIIO Research Unit, RAIOResearch@uscis.dhs.gov