

GHANA

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY INFORMATION AND POLICY UNIT

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1. Scope of Document

1.1. This assessment has been produced by the Country Information & Policy Unit, Immigration & Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information obtained from a variety of sources.

1.2. The assessment has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to catalogue all human rights violations. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum claims made in the United Kingdom.

1.3. The assessment is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain.

1.4. It is intended to revise the assessment on a 6-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35 asylum producing countries in the United Kingdom.

1.5. An electronic copy of the assessment has been made available to:

Amnesty International UK

Immigration Advisory Service

Immigration Appellate Authority

Immigration Law Practitioners' Association

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

JUSTICE

Medical Foundation for the care of Victims of Torture

Refugee Council

Refugee Legal Centre

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

2. Geography

2.1. Ghana is a West African coastal state comprising the area formerly known as the Gold Coast together with the part of Togoland which had been administered by the British Government. It is situated on the Gulf of Guinea and is bordered by Cote d'Ivoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north and Togo to the east. The country covers an area of 238,537 square kilometres, and is divided into ten regions. The capital city of Ghana is Accra. [1][3]

2.2. The last census of 1984 enumerated the population at 12.3 million but the United Nations most recent estimate, made in 1998, put the total population at 19 million. English is the official language but there are a number of other major national languages. The main one is Akan, while others include Ga- Adangme and Ewe. [1][3]

Economy

2.3. The economy remains dependent on agriculture, with approximately 41% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 59% of employment derived from this sector, according to government statistics. Gold, cocoa, and timber are the traditional sources of export earnings, although cocoa and gold revenues fell due to the drop in the prices of these commodities on the world market. Tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner. Service sector growth outpaced both agriculture and industry. In 2001, the economy grew at a rate of 3.7%, up from 3.0% in 2000, due to the fall in the world price of gold and cocoa and the fluctuating price of crude oil. Inflation fell from 40% to 21%. Per capita GDP remained at approximately \$320 (2,304,000 cedis), and the national currency the cedi remained relatively stable during 2001. [2] For further information on geography and the economy, refer to Europa yearbook source [1].

3. History

3.1. The land now known as Ghana received its first contact with Europeans in the second half of the fifteenth century by Portuguese traders. Later visits from various European nations eventually resulted in the British Government assuming control in the nineteenth century. Independence was achieved on 6 March 1957 with the amalgamation of the Gold Coast and British Togoland to form a fully self-governing member of the Commonwealth. [1][3]

3.2. Since achieving independence Ghana has experienced relatively little in the way of political stability. The country became a republic on 1 July 1960, and Kwame Nkrumah, who had been Prime Minister of this state and its predecessor since 1952, was made President. Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) became the sole legitimate political party when the country was declared a one-party state in February 1964 and when a military coup deposed Nkrumah in the same month, the scene was set for a long period of political uncertainty. Following the Nkrumah regime, Ghana has seen numerous coups and changes of government. The official ban on party politics [1][3] For further information on geography and the economy, refer to Europa yearbook source [1]

4. State Structures

The Constitution

4.1. The Constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government, and citizens exercised this right through a democratic process in presidential and parliamentary elections held in December 2000, which despite a few incidents of intimidation and election fraud, domestic and international observers judged be generally free and fair. The political system includes recognised opposition parties, which express their views freely within Parliament and won a majority of the parliamentary seats in the election. [2]

4.2. The Constitution was approved by a national referendum on 28 April 1992, and enshrined in it is a multi-party political system. Executive power is vested in the President who is also the Head of State. The President is elected by universal suffrage for a term of four years and appoints a Vice-President. The President can serve no more than two four-year terms. The constitution guarantees the fundamental human rights and freedoms of every Ghanaian citizen. [9]

4.3. The Constitution invests legislative power in the 200 member one chamber Parliament, which is elected for a four-year term. The President with the approval of Parliament appoints the Council of Ministers. The Constitution also provides for a 25 member Council of State comprising presidential appointments and regional representatives, and a 20 member National Security Council, both of which act as advisors to the President. It is also written into the Constitution that if no presidential candidate receives more than 50% of the votes cast, a new election between the two candidates with the highest number of votes is to take place within 21 days. [1][9]

Political System

4.4. The Fourth Republic was inaugurated on 7 January 1993. Its constitution provides for an elected executive president, a council of state, a unicameral parliament and an

independent judiciary. The constitution forbids legislation to make the country a one-party state and guarantees the right of Ghanaians to belong to a political party of their choice. Parties must, however, be registered and for this they are required to have a national organisation represented in all regions and must not be based on ethnic, tribal or religious grouping. [9] Legislative power is vested in the 200 member Parliament, which is elected by universal suffrage for four years. [1][2]

4.5. In July 1999, the new National Reform Party (NRP) received its final certificate of registration. The NRP leader is Goosie Tanoh. The Party was formed from a splinter group that defected from the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC). The law requires that within 60 days of receiving their final certificate the party must submit detailed records of its assets and accounts. A few days after receiving its final certificate the NRP were linked to the Convention Party (CP) in possible alliance talks. The Convention Party had formerly been called the People's Convention Party (PCP).

[49][50][51][55][56]

4.6. Presidential and Parliamentary elections took place on 7 December 2000. Opposition leader John Kufuor (NPP) polled 48.4% of the vote, not enough to win the first round, which required a 50% majority. John Atta Mills (NDC) scored 44.8% with the five other parties scooping the remaining votes. In the parallel parliamentary elections, the NPP achieved a majority taking 101 seats (out of 200 seats). NDC took 92, and the turnout was 62%. The Presidential run-off between Kufuor and Mills took place on 28 December 2000. Kufuor won this round, taking 57% of the votes cast. President Rawlings stood down from office on 7 January 2001, and John Kufuor was formally sworn in as President. The elections were reported to be generally free and fair. [2][5][37][38][39]

4.7. In March 2001, the Sports Minister Mallam Yusif Issah was dismissed from his post, after \$45,000 that he was carrying as bonuses for the national football team went missing. Mr Issah had only recently been appointed to this post. [10] A number of former ministers, and people linked to the previous regime have been detained, or are being investigated. These enquiries appear to be based on evidence of corruption during the Rawlings' period. [11] In December 2001 the former deputy Finance Minister Victor Selormey was sentenced to an 8-year prison term for his part in fraud and corruption during his period in office. [12][13] These investigations do not appear to be part of a concerted attempt to suppress dissent, or intimidate those who may be opposed to the Government. They seem to be solely aimed at addressing corruption and abuses, and appear not to be being pursued for vindictive or partisan reason.

4.8. There has been friction between the present Government and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Ex-president Rawlings' party, that formed the previous government. On being elected, one of President Kufuor first action was to cancel the national holiday, which celebrates Rawlings' second coup on 31 December. [6][7]

Judiciary

4.9. The civil law in Ghana is based on the Common Law, doctrines of equity and general statutes, which were in force in England in 1874 (as modified by subsequent Ordinances). Ghanaian customary law forms the basis of most personal, domestic and contractual relationships. Criminal Law is based on the Criminal Procedure Code, 1960, derived from English Criminal Law, and since amended. The Superior court system comprises of the Supreme Court, a Court of Appeal and a High Court of Justice. Inferior

courts include Circuit Courts, Circuit Tribunals and Community Tribunals among others. Trial by jury is practised in criminal cases and the Criminal procedure Code provides that all trials on indictment shall be by a jury or with the aid of Assessors. [1]

4.10. The constitution establishes both the judicial and financial independence of the judiciary. It abolished the tiers of public tribunals and replaced them by Regional Tribunals under the control of the Chief Justice. Chairmen of Regional Tribunals are required to have the qualifications to be a High Court judge. The public tribunals were, however, able to complete consideration of cases partly heard before them on the coming into force of the constitution. A right of appeal from the Regional Tribunal to the Supreme Court had already been established. The integrity of the legal system is undermined by a lack of financial resources. [1][9][21]

4.11. It would appear that the judiciary is sometimes subject to executive influence. The Constitution enables the government to nominate the members of the Supreme Court, and confirmation of appointment is the responsibility of parliament, which is dominated by the government's party. The Chief Justice also has the power to appoint justices of his choice to hear cases. [2]

4.12. However, the Government appears to usually respect the courts' independence, and is responsive to criticism. The Attorney General has stated that the Government would move to abolish Community Tribunals, which are run by appointed panels and police, and replace them with magistrate courts. This follows representations made by the Ghana Bar Association and other legal organisation. [2]

4.13. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty, trials are public and defendants have a right to be present, to be represented by an attorney, to present evidence and to cross-examine witnesses. The authorities respect and observe these rights in practice. [2]

4.14. Traditional courts continue to operate and the Chieftaincy Act 1971 gives village and paramount chiefs powers in local matters, including the implementation of customary tribal laws dealing with minor issues such as land disputes and customary divorce. Tribal customs are permitted but any customary practice that infringes an individual's fundamental human rights or which dehumanises or is injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person is specifically proscribed by the constitution. [9]

4.15. The integrity of the legal system is compromised by a severe lack of financial, human, and material resources. There were no official charges of corruption on the part of judges. However, in September 1999, a privately owned paper published an alleged report by the Serious Fraud Office that found evidence of malpractice in the awarding of contracts by the judicial service. The Government had not responded to this report. [2]

Military

4.16. As a military regime, the Government of President Rawlings (the then PNDC) aligned itself closely with other left-wing countries such as Libya, Cuba and the former Eastern Bloc. The country has, however, attempted to forge stronger links with more developed nations in the search for financial and technical aid. Although relations with various neighbouring countries were tense during the 1980s (most notably Togo and Cote d'Ivoire), general improvements have occurred since Ghana's transition towards democracy. Ghana's respectability in the region was also aided by Rawlings' year as chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) until July

1995. Ghana has contributed troops to the Nigerian-led ECOMOG, a regional intervention force, which has been stationed in Liberia and Sierra Leone. [36]

(i) National Service

4.17. Under the 1980 National Service Act, there is a compulsory national service, which includes eight weeks of military training. Both men and women, who are over 18, must perform two years national service, upon completion of their studies. This can be one year before entering university and one year after graduation. Education establishments must provide the National Service Secretariat with a list of graduates. Failure to perform national service can result in a sentence of up to imprisonment for five years, and means that a person is debarred from taken an official post, and is unable to obtain a passport. However, there is no information of anyone ever being convicted for this offence. There is no provision for conscientious objection in the Ghanaian armed forces, and this would appear to apply to National Service as well. [8]

Internal Security

4.18. The police, are under the jurisdiction of an eight-member Police Council, and are responsible for maintaining law and order. A separate department, the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI), handles cases considered critical to state security and answers directly to the executive branch. Although the security apparatus is controlled by and responsive to the Government, monitoring, supervision, and education of the police in particular remain poor. There are credible reports that the Police have committed some serious human rights abuses. [2]

4.19. Police have use excessive force on occasions in 2001. Numerous incidents of extra judicial killings from earlier years remained unsolved: There were continued credible reports that members of the police beat prisoners and other citizens, and arbitrarily arrested and detained persons, sometimes at the behest of business rivals. Police corruption remains a problem. [2]

4.20. In January 2001, a non-partisan coalition of Ghanaian women, Sisters Keepers, demanded that President John Kufuor fire the police chief because of his inability to end the serial killing of women in Accra, the Ghana News Agency reported. "We can no longer tolerate the anti-people and anti-women attitudes repeatedly demonstrated by the head of the police," Elizabeth Akpalu, the co-ordinator of the coalition, said. She added that IGP Peter Nanfuri had "not deployed or organised to serve the public interest". So far, 30 women have been killed since 1997. Most have been found naked with torn clothes left nearby. Inspector General Nanfuri, under public pressure to quit, said in December last year that resignation would be "cowardly, defeatist and a disgrace". In late January 2001, it was announced that Inspector General Nanfuri had been asked to go on "leave", and Mr Ernest Owusu-Poku had replaced him. [22]

4.21. In August 2001, President Kufuor directed Interior Minister Malik al-Hassan Yakubu to investigate three cases of alleged police misconduct, where military and police personnel raided the homes of civilians. The home of the national organiser of the Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere (EGLE) party, Alhaji Seidu, and the palace of the ruler of the Sefwi Wiawso local community were both raided. Another team of military personnel stripped searched a resident of Damongo, in the Northern Region, then searched property. [40]

4.22. Heavy handed policing was implicated in the deaths of approximately 130 people at

the Accra Sport Stadium on 9 May 2001, when police used tear gas in response to crowd trouble. This action caused a stampede towards the exits, which had been closed. The actions of the police have been widely criticised, and there were protest against the police, and riots in which the police were targeted. In a television address, police chief Ernest Owusu-Poku said that, on behalf of the Ghana Police service, he was sorry for the deaths and injuries and he offered his condolences to the victims' families. A commission has been set up to investigate the events that triggered this tragedy. A former sports minister Mr Enoch Mensah was briefly detained in connection with the rioting against the police. [41][42][43][44]

Legal Rights/Detention

4.23. Arbitrary arrest and detention remain problems. The Constitution provides for protection against arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile and states that an individual detained shall be informed immediately, in a language that the detained person understands, of the reasons for the detention, and of the right to a lawyer and to an interpreter, at state expense. It also requires judicial warrants for arrest and provides for arraignment within 48 hours. However, in practice many abuses occur, including detention without charge for longer than 48 hours and failure to obtain a warrant for arrest. Authorities do not routinely notify prisoners' families of their incarceration; such information is often obtained only by chance. Human rights activists criticised the common practice of arresting persons on Friday and keeping them in detention over the weekend until court was in session on Monday, which they described as a deliberate circumvention of the 48-hour detention rule. People are also detained for trivial offences or on unsubstantiated accusations. [2]

4.24. The court has unlimited discretion to set bail, which can be prohibitively high. The court may refuse to release prisoners on bail and instead remand them without charge for an indefinite period, subject to weekly review by judicial authorities. While the Constitution allows judicial authorities to hold citizens for up to 48 hours without filing charges, in practice it is common to remand a prisoner to investigative custody. The Constitution requires that a detainee who has not been tried within a "reasonable" time be released either unconditionally or subject to conditions necessary to ensure that he appear at a later date for court proceedings. In June 1999, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice's (CHRAJ) reported that there were a number of remand prisoners held for periods ranging from 1 week to 8 years. As of July 2000, approximately 20%, or approximately 2,000 of the 9,783 inmates nationwide, were remand prisoners. In October 2000, the acting Ashanti Regional Director of the CHRAJ stated that more than one-third of the inmates of Kumasi Central Prison are remand prisoners. One-third of these were still detained even after the warrants committing them to prison had expired. He criticised the judicial system for imposing prison sentences instead of levying fines, which could prevent further overcrowding of the prisons. [2]

Prisons and Prison conditions

4.25. There are frequent reports that a large number of prisoners are held in detention for extended periods, sometimes years, without going to trial. Ghana's prisons are antiquated and overcrowded but are subject to inspection by investigative teams from the CHRAJ. While the CHRAJ has access to the prisons, the Government resisted granting access to the press. The Government permitted foreign diplomats to visit prisons during 2001. Non-Governmental organisations (NGO's) are not given access to prisons on a routine basis. [2]

4.26. A total of 106 inmates are reported to have died in 2000 of various diseases, with

HIV/AIDS claiming 20 lives, according to the 2000 Annual Report of the Ghana Prisons Service; as quoted by local media. Other main causes of death included diarrhoea, pneumonia, anaemia, hypertension, and asthma. The report said inadequate state funding has caused prison conditions to deteriorate over the last few years. Malnutrition and lack of medical equipment were the two areas most affected by the lack of funds.

[54]

4.27. Prisons in most cases are poorly maintained, and conditions are harsh. According to the CHRAJ Inspection Report for the Year 2000, which was not released publicly by the end of 2001, prison conditions have improved over previous years. The Director General of Prisons has described the prisons as overcrowded and under-financed and has stated publicly the need to improve living conditions for the prisoners. Three of the country's largest facilities, which were intended to hold 1,600 inmates, currently hold approximately 3,800. The Ghana Prisons Service 2000 Annual Report stated that the average number of prisoners in lock-up on a monthly basis was 9,507, an increase of 3.5 % from 1999. Bedding was available for only 30% of the inmates, and there was no funding for clothes. Medical facilities are inadequate and the prisons supply only the most basic medicines. Overcrowding contributed to a high prevalence of communicable diseases. In February 2001 the prisoners' daily food allowance was increased, and in August the Director General asked the Government to further increase this allowance. While the Government has agreed that conditions in the prisons are not acceptable, it has stated that lack of funding prevents it making more improvements. [2]

4.28. Juvenile offenders are supposed to be sent to a dedicated facility; however, this facility is under-utilised, and the CHRAJ and the Prisons Service confirmed reports of some children as young as 14 years old housed with the general prison population. Women are housed separately from men. However, pre-trial detainees are housed with convicted prisoners. [2]

4.29. The Prisons Service has formed an assessment team to inspect facilities. In April 2000, the Minister of Interior stated that the Prisons Service would recruit 288 persons to increase staff at the prisons. He also stated that work would begin by the end of 2000 to upgrade prison and staff accommodations and construct three new prisons. However, no steps were taken to implement these measures during 2001. [2]

4.30. Families still supplement prisoners' food and bribe prison guards for visitation rights. Prisoners also suffer from lack of medicine unless paid for or provided by the inmates or their families, and many die of preventable diseases such as malaria because of a lack of medication. In April 2000, President Rawlings granted amnesty to some 1,000 prisoners based on recommendations of the Prisons Service Council. Many had served a third of their sentences, and none had been convicted for rape, robbery, or narcotics. However, a retired military officer from the PNDC era who had been sentenced to death after being convicted of killing an intruder on his farm also was released after serving 10 years in prison. [2]

Medical Services

4.31. The Government provides medical care at a nominal rate, in 1992 there were 49 general hospitals and about 300 rural health clinics, there are also private health care facilities. However, there were strikes in 1999, when health workers took action over the non-payment of extra duty allowance and to demand better working conditions. There is a community health insurance scheme, but this has been criticised for not addressing the problems of health care amongst the poor. [1][60][61]

4.32. The Ghanaian Ministry of Health allocated 10 million Cedis to health care for the rural poor in 2000. The amount, which constitutes 3% of the budget for the health sector, will cover the needs of senior citizens, infants, pregnant women, and people whom the Department of Social Welfare has classified as rural paupers. The ministry's plans were outlined in a report on Ghana's achievements in implementing the goals of the 1995 World Social Summit that was held in Copenhagen. The report notes that since the introduction of a "cash and carry" health delivery system in Ghana, 69% of the sick, mostly rural dwellers have been unable to pay for medical services. [57] The present Ghanaian Government, has expressed its intentions to improve the provision in care, and has advocated various means to do this, including the greater use of medical insurance. [69]

4.33. Sickle Cell Anaemia is a hereditary condition that afflicts many people in Ghana, although the precise figure is hard to ascertain. This illness has many complications, the main ones being respirator and circulation problems. The severity of its symptoms varies from case to case, and is characterised by acute attacks of ill health and lethargy which are referred to as a "crisis". This condition is usually diagnosed in childhood, often before the sufferer is a year old. This condition can be life threatening, and limit the ability of a patient to lead a normal life. There are provisions for its treatment in Ghana, but patients are usually expected to meet some of the costs of this care. [45]

4.34. Ghana has an estimated 600,000 HIV/AIDS case as of April 2001. Ghana is active in promoting HIV/AIDS prevention and care, especially among the young. The present Government has made dealing with HIV/AIDS a priority. However, the availability of certain drugs maybe limited, and the cost prohibitive. [23][24][25][68] The estimate for those living with aids is given as 3% of the adult population. [5]

4.35. Ghana has a National AIDS Control Program, which encourages safe sex practices among sex workers, through its education programme, and providing condoms. However, the infection rate remains high and there is a danger of a major AIDS/HIV epidemic, which will result in many social problems, and have an impact on the economy. [62][63]

4.36. In June 2001, Ghana's Health Ministry drew up a five-year plan to combat HIV/AIDS at a cost of about \$45 million, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) reported. The plan includes the earmarking of about \$30 million for the treatment of people living with HIV, about 120 of whom die daily, GBC reported the deputy director-general of the Ghana Health Service, Sam Adjei, as saying. Director-General Adjei said the plan focuses on reducing HIV transmission, promoting care and support for people with HIV, developing the information and research needed to fight the virus and setting up an HIV/AIDS programme for the some 28,000 health workers in Ghana. [65] The World Bank has recently provide a \$25 Million loan to Ghana to combat AIDS, and the Ghanaian Government has agreed to provide additional funds to add to this loan. The money will be spent on prevention, control and monitoring the spread of HIV/AIDS. [67]

4.37. Ghana also hopes to begin manufacturing generic versions of HIV/AIDS drugs soon, the Accra radio JOY FM reported Minister Anane as saying. Two local pharmaceutical companies have been short-listed but the Government plans to contract only one. The Government is also negotiating with a Thai firm to help the local company manufacture the drug, JOY FM reported. Locally produced drugs would substantially reduce the costs to consumers. Anti-retroviral cocktail costs on average \$55 per month. A consignment of drugs necessary in the prevention of mother-to-child infections is expected to be delivered in October 2001. [66]

4.38. The Constitution specifically provides for the rights of the disabled, including protection against exploitation and discrimination. In practice the disabled are not discriminated against in any systematic or overt manner. The Constitution also states that "as far as practicable, every place to which the public has access shall have appropriate facilities for disabled persons." However, in practice this provision has yet to be implemented. [2]

Educational System

4.39. The Ghanaian Government is committed to protecting the rights and welfare of children. However, costs associated with schooling, such as uniforms and school supplies, preclude some children from attending school. While the Government states that basic education is free, in practice schools impose fees per term, the sum varying from school to school and students must also purchase uniforms and books. In addition teachers often withhold material during their regular lessons and ask students to pay additional fees for after-hours 'tutoring' in those subjects as a way to supplement their incomes. Some children are unable to attend school because they must work to supplement their family's income, and travel long distances to reach the school; or there is a lack of teachers, especially in more rural areas. The Government has taken some concrete steps to support education, including support of "informal" schools (NGO-sponsored schools that are not regulated by the Government and provide non-traditional education), and increased emphasis on making sure students progress from one school grade to another. According to UNICEF's "Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Ghana 2000", using Ministry of Education (MOE) data, 79.4 % of eligible children were enrolled in primary school in 1999, with a ratio of 10 boys to 9 girls. According to MOE data for 1996-97, 58.9% of students in the 12-14 year age range were enrolled in junior secondary school. The dropout rate is decreasing, from 9.1% nation-wide in 1998 to 8% in 1999; however, the school enrolment rate has also dropped slightly from 2.58 million in 1997 to 2.56 million in 1999. Overall enrolment probably is even lower, taking into account the country's almost 2.4% annual population growth. [2]

4.40. There is little or no discrimination against female children in education, but girls and women frequently drop out of school due to societal or economic pressures. The Government actively campaigns for girls' education and in 1997 established a girls' education unit within the basic education division of the Ghana Educational Service. Although the percentages of girls enrolled in school increased from 1996, but participation is still low. In September 1999, the Government estimated that girls' enrolment in primary school had increased from 75% in 1992 to 81% in 1997. Enrolment of women at the university level has increased by 5% from 1993 to 1998. A 1997 country report by the Ghana National Commission on Children further substantiated the gap between enrolment of boys and girls, particularly at the high school level. In the 8 districts examined, there were 22,418 boys and 14,318 girls enrolled at the high school level. In the report, officials attribute the lower female enrolment to the fact that many girls marry early or become pregnant. In the 1998-99 academic year, the University of Ghana enrolled 852 women and 2,226 men. In May 2000 the former First Lady launched an initiative to establish the country's first women's university. [2]

4.41. The Ghanaian chapter of the international non-governmental organisation ActionAid recently donated English and mathematics textbooks to eight primary schools in Tamale in the Northern Region. ActionAid has distributed at least 3,700 mathematics books and 3,200 English language books to Tamale area schools. ActionAid said its effort was aimed at easing the financial burden on poor parents who every year have difficulty in paying for school equipment and other needs, the Accra daily reported. The

NGO has also built schools for needy communities in the area. Education is compulsory for all children from six to 16 years. Ghana has a 61.5% adult literacy rate for females above 15 years old and 79.4% for males in the same age category, according to the UN Human Development Report of 2001. [31]

5. Human Rights

5A Human Rights Issues

Overview

5.1. The Constitution of the Fourth Republic, inaugurated on 7 January 1993, guarantees the fundamental human rights and freedoms of every Ghanaian citizen. There is no evidence to suggest that individuals' constitutional rights have been systematically abused. The constitution made provision for the establishment of the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), established by Parliament in 1993, it is charged with investigating alleged violations of human rights and taking action to remedy proven violations. The CHRAJ continues to hold workshops to educate the public, traditional leaders, the police, and the military on human rights issues. CHRAJ mediates and settles cases brought to it by individuals with grievances against Government agencies or private companies. The majority of the complaints lodged with the Commission were from those who believed that they suffered injustice as a result of public or private employers' abuse of power, unfairness, and high handedness. [2][9][21]

5.2. The Cabinet approved for ratification Convention 182 of the 87th Session of the International Labour Organisation in June 1999. This Convention relates to the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour. The Geneva Convention Bill 1998 was also proposed for ratification, which relates to sanctions for breaches of four Geneva conventions. [59][64]

5.3. On 28 January 2000 the Ghanaian cabinet recommended six international human rights treaties for parliamentary ratification. These treaties are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, CCPR 1996, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, CESCR 1996, and the Optional Protocol to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, OPC. The others are the International Convention on the protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and members of their Families 1990, UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1994, and the Convention on the Non-Application off Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity. [59][64]

5.4. There are a number of civil rights organisations active in Ghana. They are generally free to campaign and make representations. However, access to prisons has been restricted at times. [2]

Freedom of Speech and the Media

5.5. The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and in practice these provisions generally were respected; however, there were occasional reports that Government officials pressured Government media outlets to cease or minimise coverage of opposition politicians. Opposition political parties and others frequently criticise the Government, and the Government has allowed more control of print and

electronic media to be transferred to the private sector. In February 2000, the Supreme Court ruled in a 4-year-old case that the President couldn't appoint chief executives to the state-owned media. Unlike in the previous year, there was only one libel suit filed by a minister in 2001. [2]

5.6. There are more than a dozen newspapers including three Government-owned dailies, two Government owned weeklies, and several privately owned newspapers published daily, weekly, biweekly, or triweekly. Several of the privately owned newspapers increased to daily circulation from weekly or bi-weekly. Two of the Government owned dailies have national circulation. However, most newspapers circulate only in regional capitals, and many of the smaller private newspapers are available only in Accra. Unlike in previous years, there were no reports that independent newspapers were unable to obtain advertising revenues due to Government pressure on businesses. Some privately owned newspapers were harshly critical of the Government's policies of President Kufuor and his ministers and advisors. The Government at times alleged that some reporters and editors failed to abide by professional ethical guidelines. On many occasions, both the Government and National Media Commission (NMC), a constitutionally mandated independent government body publicly urged the media to act responsibly. [2]

5.7. According to the National Communications Authority, Accra has 1 government-owned and 12 private FM radio stations, and there are about 40 private FM stations across the country. Most stations are independent and air a wide range of viewpoints. There are several private metropolitan television stations that broadcast in Accra and in Kumasi. One semi-private Accra station began broadcasting in Kumasi. There is one government-owned television station that broadcasts nation-wide. There are also three private cable networks that serve Accra and Kumasi. [2]

5.8. The Government readily granted accreditation to foreign journalists. The BBC and Radio France International have full-time FM re-broadcasting stations in Accra, and several foreign radio broadcasts, including Voice of America (VOA), have part-time affiliations with local stations in several cities. Foreign periodicals were sold in Accra and other major cities and circulated freely even when they contained articles critical of the Government. Most citizens obtain their news from the electronic media, the VOA, and the BBC radio service. Several companies have cable or satellite rebroadcasting stations that serve the country's three major cities. [2]

5.9. There are currently three Internet Service providers (ISP's) in the country. In July 2000 the National Communications Authority closed three other ISP's on the grounds that they were providing Internet telephone services, which violated a 5-year exclusivity agreement that the Government had given to two telephone companies. The companies asserted that they were unable to monitor telephone use of their ISP and should not be held responsible for such use. The Government maintains that such use could be monitored. [2]

5.10. The present Ghanaian Government appears to respect press freedom, and there appears to few infringements of this. However, major Government media outlets exercise some restraint in their coverage. In July 2001 Ghana's parliament voted unanimously to repeal the country's criminal libel law, which had been used in the past to prosecute journalists. The abolition of the law fulfils a campaign promise by President John Kufuor during the December 2000 presidential elections. The first deputy speaker of parliament, Freddy Blay, said that the absence of the law was not a license for journalists to publish falsehoods. [19][20]

5.11. The Criminal Libel and Seditious Laws had provided for 10 years' maximum imprisonment for reporting intended to injure the reputation of the State. According to the Amendment to the law, all prosecutions instituted under the repealed laws pending before any court or tribunal were discharged. However, at the end of 2001, many civil libel cases were still pending. The voluntary use of the NMC as an alternative mediating body to the courts has increased. The NMC is charged with maintaining journalistic standards, including the investigation, mediation, and settlement of complaints made against or by the media, but it does not have legally binding authority to implement its recommendations. Resolutions recommended by the NMC include retraction, apology, and the printing of rejoinders. Of the 79 cases reviewed as of 4 October 2001, 45 cases were resolved, 4 were withdrawn, and the remaining cases were pending; 50 cases were brought by private individuals, 4 cases by former Government ministers, and 25 cases by organisations or institutions. Seventeen cases were brought against state-owned media, and 62 cases against the privately owned media. Two cases were resolved in favour of the media, one each for the state-owned and private media. The NMC has published its standards and guidelines. [2]

Freedom of Religion

5.12. The constitution guarantees freedom of religious observance, practice and teaching. There is no evidence of any religious persecution in Ghana. Traditional religious practices are common, but rites and customs, which dehumanise or are injurious to the physical and mental well being of a person, are prohibited. The Government has taken steps to promote interfaith understanding. At Government meetings and receptions there is usually a multi-denominational invocation, and religious leaders from various faiths are often present. There are generally amicable relations between the various religious communities, and spokesmen for these communities often advocate tolerance toward different religions; however, there was some tension among some religious groups. Public debate continued over religious worship versus traditional practices and respect for the rights and customs of others in a diverse society. [4][9]

5.13. Religious institutions that wish formal recognition are required to register with the Registrar General's Department. This is a formality only, and there were no reports that the Government denied registration to any group. Most traditional religions, with the exception of the Afrikania Mission, do not register. Formally recognised religions are exempt from paying taxes on ecclesiastical, charitable, and educational activities that do not generate income from trade or business. However, religious organisations are required to pay taxes on business activities that generate income. Foreign missionary groups generally have operated throughout the country with a minimum of formal restrictions. [2]

5.14. Approximately 40% of Ghana's population are at least nominally Christian. Christian denominations include Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Mennonite, Evangelical Presbyterian, Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal Zionist, Christian Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, F'eden, numerous charismatic faiths, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), Seventh-Day Adventist, Pentecostal, Baptist, and the Society of Friends. Christianity often includes an overlay of traditional beliefs. About 30% of the population adhere to traditional indigenous religions or other religions. These religions include a belief in a supreme being, referred to by the Akan ethnic group as Nyame or by the Ewe ethnic group as Mawu, and lesser gods who act as intermediaries between the supreme being and man on earth. Veneration of ancestors also is a characteristic, as they too provide a link between the Supreme Being and the living and may even be reincarnated at times. The religious leaders of those sharing

these diverse beliefs commonly are referred to as priests and are trained in the arts of healing and divination. These priests typically operate shrines to the supreme deity or to one of the lesser gods, relying upon the donations of the public to maintain the shrine and for their own maintenance. [4]

5.15. Muslim make up about 25% of the population. Three principal branches of Islam are represented in the country: the orthodox Sunnis and Tijanis, and the Ahmadis; the orthodoxy of the latter group has been questioned. The Shi'a branch virtually is absent from the country's Islamic community. There have been isolated disputes between various Islamic groups. However, these are comparatively minor, and the present Government has been even-handed in its approach to such incidents. [4]

5.16. On 5 October 2000, a Government medical team, assisted by the police, forcibly immunised approximately 40 children from the First Century Gospel Church (Faith) in Jamestown, Accra, against poliomyelitis. When church members resisted the team's attempts to conduct the immunisations, police arrested seven persons, including the church's pastor. Church doctrine does not allow the administration of modern medicine to its members, and according to local reports, health teams had been prevented from immunising the children for several years. Reports indicated that the local community supported the immunisations as being in the greater national interest. [4]

5.17. The Government took some steps to promote interfaith understanding. In June 2001, Parliament formed a joint committee to address problems surrounding the annual ban on drumming in the Ga traditional area prior to the Homowo Festival. There has been tension between practitioners of the ethnic Ga tradition, and members of some charismatic churches over the annual ban by Ga traditional leaders on drumming and noise-making prior to the Ga "Homowo" (harvest) festival. Traditionalists believe that their beliefs should be accorded due respect, while some Christians resent the imposition of bans, which they believe infringes on their right to worship as they please. In April 2000, religious and traditional leaders agreed to modify the ban, requiring drumming to be subdued and confined to the churches. However, on 20 August 2000, youth in Teshie (Greater Accra Region) attacked the Open Heaven Mission International Church, seized drums and injured six worshipers. On 7 May 2001, the first day of the ban, the Ga Traditional Council (GTC) announced that the agreement it had reached with local churches in 2000 was not applicable for 2001 and that the ban would apply to all drumming and noise-making. Christian churches countered that the ban was unconstitutional and that they would not observe it. Several incidents of violence were reported during the 2001 ban on drumming. On 13 May 2001, groups of young men attacked and damaged two charismatic churches, resulting in a number of injuries. On 20 May 2001, groups of young men attacked additional charismatic churches and stole musical equipment and money. On 23 May 2001, the Forum of Religious Bodies in Ghana issued a statement, calling for peaceful coexistence and further negotiation with the GTC; however, a GTC leader stated that no agreement had been reached with the churches, and that he did not endorse any compromise. Although no agreement was reached, there were no reports of violence during the final two Sundays of the ban. [4]

5.18. Belief in witchcraft is still strong in many parts of the country. Rural women can be banished by traditional village authorities or their families for suspected witchcraft. Most accused witches are older women, often widows, who are identified by fellow villagers as the cause of difficulties, such as illness, crop failure, or financial misfortune. Many of these banished women go to live in "witchcamps," villages in the north populated by suspected witches. The women do not face formal legal sanction if they return home, but most fear that they may be beaten or lynched if they return to their villages. In the past, there were reports that forced labour occurred in witchcamps; however, there were no

such reports during 2001. Legislation passed in 1998 provides protection to alleged witches. In the past, human rights NGO's estimated that the number of occupants of the witches' camp was growing; however, there are no definitive statistics on the number of women living in northern witchcamps, and international and domestic observers estimate that there are fewer than 850 women in the camps. The CHRAJ and human rights NGO's have mounted a campaign to end this traditional practice but have met with little success. Various organisations provide food, medical care, and other forms of support to the residents of the camp. [4]

5.19. In addition to banishment, suspected witches are subject to violence and lynching. In April 2001, a man living in Tongor in the Volta Region chopped off the hands of a 75-year-old aunt, claiming that she was a witch. Police arrested the assailant, but there were no further developments in the case by the end of 2001. In August 2000, an 80-year-old woman in the Volta region was brought before a community tribunal when a local teacher accused her of being a witch. In his statement to the tribunal, the teacher said his bank account was out of money, animals had been eating the produce on his farm, and he recently had become impotent, all of which he attributed to witchcraft on the part of the woman. The tribunal ruled that the woman had to compensate the teacher with a portion of rum, a pot of palm wine, and a fine. In April 2001, the local press reported that the woman took the case to the CHRAJ and filed a suit in circuit court against the tribunal members and the teacher, claiming that the accusation of witchcraft and subsequent tribunal hearing subjected her to slander and public humiliation. There were no further developments in the case during the period in 2001. [4]

Freedom of Assembly & Association

5.20. The Constitution provides for freedom of peaceful assembly, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, at times it restricted this right. The Government does not require permits for demonstrations, but in some cases, at least 5 days notice in advance is required so that the police can institute precautionary measures. The law also provides for curfews and arrest without warrants in specified instances. [2]

5.21. The University in Accra banned campus demonstrations. However university students obtained a waiver and demonstrated peacefully against proposed fees in May 1998. In August 1998 police used water cannons, tear gas and rubber bullets and truncheons to dispel protestors at an unauthorised demonstration. On 13 August 1999 police used tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons to disperse students who had gathered in Accra to demonstrate against fee increases. The People's National Convention (PNC) expressed disgust at the manner in which the police disrupted the peaceful demonstration. Three days later students in Kumasi also demonstrated against the increase in university fees and general hardships. [46][47][48][52][53]

5.22. The ban on campus demonstrations remained in effect during 2001, but was not enforced. In May 2001, the Ministry of Education began discussions with student representatives at the University College of Education Winneba (Central Region) to resolve student demands for a refund of their student fees. Students had held demonstrations and boycotted classes for 3 days. Unlike in previous years, police did not use force to disperse any student protests during 2001. [2]

5.23. The Government permitted several peaceful demonstrations and rallies during the year. On 4 June 2001, the anniversary of the date of his first coup, former President Rawlings, and other opposition leaders, spoke at a rally in Accra attended by hundreds of NDC supporters. Rawlings accused the Government of harassing and intimidating

NDC activists and denounced the removal of 4 June as an official holiday. There were no reports of violence, and the rally dispersed peacefully. On 11 June 2001, the previously unknown Coalition for the Defense of Democracy (CDD), held a march to oppose what they described as anti-democratic statements made by former President Jerry Rawlings on 4 June 2001. Hundreds of persons marched through the city and gathered on the grounds of the Accra Sports Stadium, where organizers addressed the marchers. The march ended at the Parliament building where the CDD leadership presented a petition to the Speaker of Parliament. Security forces guarding the route prevented the marchers from proceeding past former President Rawlings' house as planned. There were no reports of violence or injuries. However, on at least one occasion, police used force to disperse a demonstration. On 19 March 2001, police used rubber bullets to disperse a group of workers who were blockading the factory at the Ghana Textile Manufacturing Company (GTMC). [2]

5.24. Political parties generally held rallies and national congresses without hindrance during 2001. However, in 2000 the police prevented the NRP from holding a rally in the Labadi district of Accra, although the NRP had given the police the required advance notice of the event. Allegedly the police stopped the rally to prevent potential conflict because the NDC had planned a rally for the same day. The NRP held its rally at a later date. [2]

5.25. The Constitution provides for freedom of association and the Government generally respects this right in practice. NGO's are Required to register with the Registrar General's office and the Department of Social Welfare, but this registration is routine. The Electoral Commission (EC) must accredit political parties. The parties must show evidence of a "national character," such as official representation in all 10 of the country's regions. The EC evaluates whether the party has shown evidence of a viable national support base before granting accreditation and can annul the registration of a party that fails to meet the criteria for being a viable party. These rules appear to be generally operated in an evenhanded manner. [2]

Employment Rights

5.26. The Constitution provides for freedom of association, and this extends to trade union activity, but this right is restricted by the Trades Union Ordinance. This Ordinance confers broad powers on the Government to refuse to register a trade union, and by the Industrial Relations Act (IRA), which governs trade union activities; however, the Government has not interfered with the right of workers to associate in labour unions and has encouraged pluralism in labour organisations. The IRA governs trade unions and their activities. The percentage of workers belonging to unions appears to be decreasing from 9% in 1998 as more of the workforce enters the informal sector where there is no union activity. The Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare has estimated that 86% of the work force is employed in the informal sector, and that number is expected to increase. The Ghana Federation of Labour (GFL) is intended to serve as an umbrella organisation for several other labour unions, which were either previously part of or not encompassed, by the Trades Union Congress (TUC). The TUC, the largest labour organisation in the country, consists of 17 national unions. Unions have the right to affiliate with international bodies. The TUC is affiliated with the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity headquartered in Accra and also is a member of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. [2]

5.27. Led by experienced union leaders, the TUC has been a vocal and constructive critic of the Government's economic policies. Civil servants have their own union, the Civil Servants Association, which operates outside of the TUC umbrella. The law

recognises a right to strike, but there have been no legal strikes since independence. Under the IRA, the Government established a system of settling disputes, first through conciliation, then through arbitration. Parties in a dispute may request compulsory arbitration. A union may call a legal strike if the Government does not call for formal arbitration. However, no union has ever gone through the complete process. There were numerous unsanctioned strike actions during 2001, none of which met the requirements for a legal strike detailed in the IRA. The IRA prohibits retribution against strikers, and this law is enforced. On 2 May 2001, Accra textile traders were told that they could not hold a demonstration to protest a textile price hike because they lacked a police permit. Instead they presented a petition to the Government on the issue. [2]

5.28. On 19 March 2001, police used rubber bullets to disperse a group of workers who were blockading the factory at the Ghana Textile Manufacturing Company (GTMC). The strikers action was directed against co-workers, who were part of a rival union, the Textile Garment and Leather Employees Union (TEGLU), from entering the GTMC factory. In April 2001, two members of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Unions (ICU) were sentenced to 6 months in jail for "being on a premises for an unlawful purpose." On 7 April 2000, they had entered the grounds of Akosombo Textiles Limited (ATL) to address workers and convince them to leave TEGLU in favour of the ICU. A tribunal ruled that the action of the two ICU members actions were contrary to the country's labour laws. [2]

People Trafficking

5.29. There are no laws that specifically address trafficking in persons, and trafficking in persons is a problem; however, the Government can prosecute traffickers under laws against slavery, prostitution, and underage labour. The country is a source and a destination country for trafficked persons; however, the Government is beginning to acknowledge that trafficking is a problem. [2]

5.30. Trafficking is both internal and international, with the majority of trafficking in the country involving children from impoverished rural backgrounds. The most common forms of internal trafficking involves boys from the Northern Region going to work in the fishing communities in the Volta Region or in small mines in the west. Girls from the north and east are often trafficked to the cities of Accra and Kumasi to work as domestic helpers, porters, and assistants to local traders. In the previous year, over 100 boys reportedly were contracted out to Lake Volta fishermen. [2]

5.31. Teenage girls from the rural areas are also sent by their relatives to work in the cities as housemaids for little pay. Often an assurance is given that after several years' service, they would be sponsored to train in dressmaking or hairdressing. However, often an excuse is found to fire the housemaid before such apprenticeship begins. Children between the ages of 7 and 17 also are trafficked to and from the neighbouring countries of Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, and Nigeria to work as farm workers, labourers, or household help. [2]

5.32. Much of the recruitment of children is done with the agreement of the parents, who were sometimes given money in advance or promised regular payments from the recruiter, and are also assured that their children will be cared for. Some parents send their children to work for extended family members in urban areas. The treatment of children sent to work for relatives varies. Many children are given to professional recruiters, usually women, who place the children with employers in cities. Children in these circumstances are usually paid very little. In many cases, the children never receive the education or vocational training the recruiters promised. Girls may be forced into prostitution and are often sexually abused by their employers. [2]

5.33. Women are also trafficked to Western Europe, mostly Germany and the Netherlands. International traffickers promise the women jobs; however, the women often are forced into prostitution once they reach their destination. The women are sent sometimes directly to Europe, while others are trafficked through other countries. Some young women are trafficked to the Middle East, particularly Lebanon, where they work in menial jobs or as domestic help. There also is a growing trade in Nigerian women transiting Ghana on their way to Western Europe and reportedly the Middle East to work in the sex industry. Traffickers in person from other countries reportedly used Accra as a transit point to Europe and reportedly the Middle East. There is reportedly some trafficking in persons from Burkina Faso, mostly transiting Ghana on the way to Cote d'Ivoire. [2]

5.34. The law, which defines the rights of children and codifies the law in areas such as child custody, health, and education, does not address specifically trafficking. The country is a signatory of ILO Convention 182 and various ministries were working with the ILO and NGO's to address trafficking. In February the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment, in conjunction with ILO/IPEC, issued a "National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Child Labour in Ghana." Law enforcement authorities are not trained or given resources to deal with the problem. They also have a difficult in identifying persons who are being trafficked because of the fluid nature of family relations in the country. For example, a friend often is called a "cousin," and an older woman an "aunt," even if there is no blood relation. [2]

Freedom of Movement

5.35. The Constitution provides for these rights, and the Government generally respects them in practice. Citizens and foreigners are free to move throughout the country. Police checkpoints exist nation-wide, but most are unmanned during daylight hours. Security officers control checkpoints nation-wide to prevent smuggling, seize illegal weapons, and catch criminals. On 8 September 2001, the Ghana Police Administration announced that police would erect security checkpoints throughout the country in response to an upsurge in highway robberies, and periodic customs checkpoints and patrols were established. The Inspector General of Police has advised Regional Police Commanders to monitor the activities of police personnel working at the checkpoints. There were numerous reports that police used checkpoints to solicit bribes. Police roadblocks and car searches are a normal part of travel at night in larger cities. In February and August 1999, taxi drivers went on strike in Koforidua to protest at extortion by motor transport and traffic unit police, and in 2000 in Accra, police established additional roadblocks in an effort to combat a series of local murders of women. The police administration has admitted that the force has a problem with some members occasionally erecting illegal barriers to solicit bribes from motorists. In 2000 soldiers mounted checkpoints around the Brong-Ahafo regional capital of Sunyani and outside the Ashanti regional capital of Kumasi prior to national elections. Both towns were opposition strongholds. The Government stated that it was responding to reports of arms movements before the elections; however, many observers viewed these checkpoints as an attempt to intimidate voters or to discourage them from travelling to vote where they were registered. Citizens generally are free to travel internationally and to emigrate or to be repatriated from other countries. [2]

5.36. The law includes provisions for the granting of refugee and asylum status in accordance with the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The authorities co-operate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organisations in assisting refugees. The

country has a liberal policy of accepting refugees from other West African nations. The Government provides first asylum. The country continued to provide first asylum for many Liberians, Togolese and Sierra Leonean refugees. [2]

5B Human Rights - Specific Groups

Women

5.37. The Ghanaian constitution makes the provision that women are afforded the same rights and freedoms as men and that there should be no discrimination on account of a person's gender. Women are guaranteed equal rights with regard to employment, training and promotion and the constitution states that workplaces should provide child-care facilities, thereby removing possible obstacles to women's occupational progress. Although in reality women may still be subject to some level of societal discrimination, usually within traditional rural communities, various groups exist to promote and protect the role of women. One such group is the "31st December Women's Movement" headed by Nana Rawlings (wife of the ex-Head of State). [21][58]

5.38. In 1998 Parliament passed legislation that amended the 1960 Criminal Code to provide additional protection for women and children. The legislation added new definitions of sexual offenses and strengthened punishments for others. The provisions of the bill ban the practice of "customary servitude" (known as Trokosi). This law also provided protection for women accused of witchcraft, double the mandatory sentence for rape, raise the age of criminal responsibility from 7 years to 12, criminalised indecent assault and forced marriages, and raise punishments for defilement, incest, and prostitution involving children. [2]

5.39. Rural women can be punished with banishment by traditional village authorities for being pregnant out-of-wedlock or suspected witchcraft. The press reported that hundreds of women accused of witchcraft were sent to penal villages in the Northern Region by traditional authorities such as a shaman. The CHRAJ estimates that over 5,000 women are residents in witches' camps in the Northern Regions. Although the women face no legal sanction if they leave, most fear that they would be beaten to death if caught outside the penal villages. In 1999 the Presbyterian Church sponsored a "go home" project to reintegrate into society women accused of witchcraft and forced to live at the Gambaga "witches" village. A total of 55 of 200 such women have reunited with their families. The project also provided for loans to enable the liberated women to become more financially independent and to contribute to the well being of their families. [2] In April 2001, Janet Tibu filed a lawsuit against village elders who had accused her of witchcraft, this case is still ongoing. [26]

5.40. Women in urban centres and those with skills and training encounter little overt bias, but resistance to women entering non-traditional fields persists. Only about one quarter of university students are women, although women's enrolment is increasing. Women, especially in rural areas, remain subject to burdensome labour conditions and traditional male dominance. Traditional practices and social norms often deny women their statutory entitlements to inheritances and property, a legally registered marriage (and with it, certain legal rights), and the maintenance and custody of children. Women's rights groups are active in educational campaigns and in programs to provide vocational training, legal aid, and other support to women. The Government also is active in educational programs, and former President Rawlings and his wife were among the most outspoken advocates of women's rights. In August 2000, the Government established a

women's desk responsible for addressing the gender imbalance in the civil service. [2]

5.41. Violence against women, including rape and domestic violence, remains a significant problem. A 1998 study revealed that particularly in low-income, high-density sections of greater Accra, at least 54% of women have been assaulted in recent years. A total of 95% of the victims of domestic violence are women, according to data gathered by the International Federation of Woman Lawyers (FIDA). These abuses usually go unreported and seldom come before the courts. The police tend not to intervene in domestic disputes. However, 1998 legislation doubled the mandatory sentence for rape. The media increasingly report cases of assault and rape. The police administration's Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) that handles cases involving domestic violence, child abuse, and juvenile offences. Located in Accra and Kumasi, the WAJU works closely with the Department of Social Welfare, FIDA, and the Legal Aid Board. During the year, the Accra Branch of this unit recorded 658 cases, including 204 defilement cases, 58 rapes, 5 cases of incest, 28 indecent assaults, 232 instances of assault and wife battery, and 9 abductions. In 2000 FIDA held a seminar to co-ordinate Government and NGO support of the country's first domestic violence bill. FIDA presented the draft bill to the Director of Legislative Drafting of the Parliament, who is responsible for converting proposed bills into proper legislative format for eventual consideration by Parliament. The bill has not gone before Parliament but during 2001, it was sent back to FIDA with recommendations for redrafting. [2]

5.42. In August the Commissioner of Police in charge of the WAJU stated that the fees charged by medical personnel to conduct examinations, required by the police in cases of suspected sexual assault, were too high. The Commissioner stated that the fees, deterred many poor women from pursuing their cases. [2]

5.43. The percentage of women in Government and politics does not correspond to their percentage of the population; however, there are no legal obstacles to the participation of women in Government. There are 18 female M.P.'s. Several ministers and Council of State members are women. In 2000 a group of female parliamentarians and women's rights activists petitioned the Electoral Commission (EC) to waive registration fees for female candidates to encourage more women to run for office. The EC refused on the grounds that this would make competition for parliamentary seats unfair. [2]

(i) Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

5.44. Female genital mutilation (FGM), which is widely condemned by international health experts as damaging to both physical and psychological health, is a serious problem. A 1998 study estimated that 9 to 12% of women have been mutilated, but some estimates are as high as 30%. A Ministry of Health survey conducted between 1995 and 1998 found that FGM is practised among nearly all the northern sector ethnic groups, up to 86% in rural parts of the Upper West and Upper East Regions. A 1998 study reported that 51% of all women who had undergone FGM were excised before age 1, and 85% of total excisions were performed on girls under the age of 15. A 1999 survey indicated that more than 50% of the women who were mutilated indicated that they disapproved of the practice. Officials at all levels have spoken out against the practice, and local NGO's are making some progress through their educational campaigns to encourage abandonment of FGM and to retrain practitioners. There were no reports of arrests in 2001. There have been seven arrests for the practice of FGM since the 1994 law that made FGM a crime. Of those arrested, two offenders have been prosecuted and convicted. In some cases in which FGM is performed, the victims actively seek out practitioners, sometimes without their parents' knowledge, in a quest to become ready for marriage. [2]

5.45. Members of the legal community advocate legislation to close loopholes in the FGM law, including extending culpability to family members and others who aid in carrying out FGM and to Ghanaians who commit the crime outside the country's borders. Any person who conceals information about an instance of FGM would be liable. In addition, FGM would be banned no matter how medically safe the procedure is made, dispelling a belief by some that FGM is acceptable as long as the girls' health is protected. Traditional chiefs became more outspoken in their opposition to the practice of FGM. [2]

(ii) The Trokosi system

5.46. Trokosi, also known as Fiashidi, is a religious practice involving a period of servitude lasting up to 3 years. It is found primarily among the ethnic Ewe group in the Volta Region. A virgin girl, sometimes under the age of 10, but often in her teens, is given by her family to work and be trained in traditional religion at a fetish shrine. This can be for a period lasting between several weeks and 3 years as a means of atonement for an allegedly heinous crime committed by a member of the girl's family. In exceptional cases, when a girl of suitable age or status is unavailable, a boy can be offered. The girl, who is known as a Trokosi or a Fiashidi, then becomes the property of the shrine god and the charge of the shrine priest for the duration of her stay. As a charge of the priest, the girl works in the shrine and undergoes instruction in the traditional indigenous religion. In the past, there were reports that the girls were the sexual property of the priests; however, while instances of abuse may occur on a case-by-case basis, there is no evidence that sexual or physical abuse is an ingrained or systematic part of the practice. Shrine priests generally are male, but may be female as well. The practice explicitly forbids a Trokosi or Fiashidi to engage in sexual activity or contact during her atonement period. During that time, she helps with the upkeep of the shrine, which may include working on the shrine's farm, drawing water, and performing other agricultural or household labour. Trokosi may or may not attend school. During the atonement period, most girls do not live in the shrines, which generally are little more than fenced-in huts with small courtyards; many remain with their families or stay with members of the shrine living nearby. The girl's family must provide for the girl's needs during her stay, including food and clothing; however, in some cases families are unable to do so. After she has completed her service to the shrine, the girl's family completes their obligation by providing items, which may include drinks, cloth, money, and sometimes livestock, to the shrine for a final release ritual. After the release ritual, the girl returns to her family and resumes her life, without, in the vast majority of cases, any particular stigma attaching to her status as a former Trokosi shrine participant. [2]

5.47. Generally the women continue to associate themselves with the shrine, a voluntary association involving return visits for ceremonies. In many instances, when a Trokosi woman dies, years if not decades after she has completed her service and resumed her life in the village, her family is expected to replace her with another young girl, thus continuing the association of the family to the shrine from generation to generation. In very occasional cases, the family abandons the girl or cannot afford the cost of the final rites, in which case she may remain at the shrine indefinitely. She also may leave the shrine and return to her village, with her family's association then sundered with the shrine. Shrines rarely have more than 4 girls serving their atonement at any one time, and there were no more than 100 girls serving their atonement periods at Trokosi shrines throughout the Volta Region in 2001. [2]

5.48. Trokosi was made illegal In June 1998, when the Ghanaian Parliament passed and the President signed legislation to ban the practice of Trokosi. This was a part of

comprehensive legislation to protect women and children's rights. According to human rights groups, such as International Needs, which have been campaigning against Trokosi for years, the practice has decreased in recent years because other belief systems have gained followers, and fetish priests who die have not been replaced. The followers of Trokosi claim this to be a religion, but the Ghanaian authorities do not recognise it as such. However, the process of eliminating this practise is obstructed by some traditionalist in the local areas, who oppose the actions of the Government and human rights groups in curbing this practise. [4][27]

Children

5.49. The Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC) is a policymaking and co-ordinating body established to improve the lives of children. The GNCC has provided the Women and Juvenile Unit of the police force with office equipment. The GNCC also has administered training programs for law enforcement and judicial officials around the country to familiarise them with the Children's Act and other pertinent child labour legislation. [2]

5.50. There have been newspaper reports of children being sold into slavery for either sexual exploitation or labour, such as 10 to 12 year-old boys toiling in the service of fisherman in exchange for a yearly remittance to their families. A 1999 report described this practice as rampant in 156 fishing villages along the Afram River and settlements along the Volta Lake in the Afram plains. Labour legislation sets a minimum employment age of 15 years and prohibits night work and certain types of hazardous labour for those under 18 years of age. In practice child employment is widespread, and young children of school age often perform menial tasks during the day in the market or collect fares on local buses. [2]

5.51. According to the 1998 Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service, only 11% of children are engaged in income-generating work; however, according to UNICEF, this study may have undercounted the number of working children because of its methodology. A 1997 World Bank study indicated that children represented 12.6% of the country's total work force. Approximately 80% of child labourers are in rural areas. In 2000 UNICEF reported that approximately 60% of children in the labour force in 1997 worked in the agricultural sector, while 34% worked in the trade and services sector. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that 12% of children between the ages of 10 and 14 work. Children under 10 work as domestic labourers, porters, hawkers, miners, quarry workers; they also work in agriculture. The fishing industry on Lake Volta has a particularly high number of child labourers engaged in potentially hazardous work. According to an ILO representative, child labour in the tourism industry is also increasing. Child labourers are poorly paid and subject to physical abuse; they receive little or no health care and generally do not attend school. In practice child employment is widespread, and young children of school age often perform menial tasks during the day in the market or collect fares on local buses. An ILO survey conducted in three rural districts between 1992 and 1993 concluded that 11% of school-age children were employed for wages and another 15% work without remuneration. In 2000 the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare estimated that 18,000 children are working in Accra and 800,000 countrywide. Of those, 70% have no education while 21% only have a primary education. [2]

5.52. The migration of children from rural to urban areas is increasing, due

to economic hardship. Children are driven to the streets to fend for themselves, increasing child labour and the school dropout rate. Observance of minimum age laws is

eroded by local custom and economic circumstances that encourage children to work to help support their families. A 1996 ILO survey revealed that the economic activity of more than 75% of children between ages 5 and 14 takes place in the context of a family enterprise. [2]

5.53. In 1998, the President signed into law legislation to provide additional child labour protection and strengthen the punishment for violators under a comprehensive children's act. The act incorporates the existing labour legislation's minimum age for employment and prohibitions on night work and hazardous labour. In addition, the legislation allows for children, age 15 years and above, to have an apprenticeship whereby the craftsmen and employers have the obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment along with training and tools. Fines and imprisonment for violators are increased considerably. The traditional practice of forced childhood marriage also became illegal under the 1998 Children's Act. [2]

5.54. In 2000 the acting executive secretary of the GNCC expressed concern about the increasing use of child labour in fishing enterprises, and advocated greater law enforcement of child labour laws, and appealed to parents and fishing communities to combat the practice. Officials only occasionally punish violators of regulations that prohibit heavy labour and night work for children. Inspectors from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare are responsible for enforcement of child labour regulations. They visit each workplace annually and make spot checks whenever they receive allegations of violations. [2]

5.55. Trafficking in children has also been reported. In April 2001, Police arrested a number of suspected child traffickers in northern Ghana. One man and a woman were handed over to Ghanaian authorities at the border locality of Paga by their Burkinabe counterparts after being caught in Burkina Faso in late March 2001, with 14 children aged 10 to 18 years. The group was on its way to The Gambia where the children were to have worked for fishermen. A third man caught with false identification documents was reported to still be in detention in Burkina Faso. According to a BBC report, another man was caught with six children whom he claimed to be taking to work on his orange farm in the centre of the country. He said he had taken the children from a village in the Upper West region with the consent of their parents. [2][28]

Ethnic Groups

5.56. Ghana is a multicultural country whose national borders encompass several tribal groups. Almost all Ghanaians have a sense of tribal as well as national identity and tribal rivalries occur. Discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, however, is strictly forbidden in the constitution and no one particular tribal group is favoured by the Government. Although some political parties draw greater support from one tribe than another, none is tribally based and no such party can be legally registered. [2][9]

5.57. In August 1997, a number of disturbances occurred in the Brong-Ahafo Region leaving three people dead and displacing more than 1,000 people from their homes. The riots in the Banda area of the Wenchi District were the result of land disputes between the chiefs of the Brohoni and Menji tribes. Riot police were subsequently brought in, in an attempt to contain any further incidents. [32][33]

5.58. In December 2001, There were violent clashes between the Mamprusi and Kusasi ethnic groups in Bawku in the northeast of Ghana. There were reports that 50 people were killed, and over 5,000 were displaced because of the fighting. The army was deployed to restore order. There were also clashes between the Japaak and Tanmon

ethnic groups in March 2002, which resulted in a number of deaths. The security forces were again required to suppress this violence. [29][30]

5.59. However, the most significant recent incident of ethnic violence, was between two clans of the Dagbon tribe, this was over a long running dispute regarding kingship of the tribe. In late March 2002, the incumbent king Ya-Na Yakubu Andani, was killed, together with 28 of his followers. He had been supported by the Andani clan, which had taken over the kingship from the Abudu clan. The Ghanaian government acted quickly to address this violence. A state of emergency was declared, a curfew imposed, and police and army units were rapidly deployed. The Ghanaian Government has expressed its intention to bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice. This dispute has political overtones, as the clan believed to be responsible for these killings, the Abudu, supported the NPP in the elections. [14][15][16]

5.60. Two ministers, with close links to this area, Minister for Information and Presidential affairs Malik Al-Hassan Yakubu, and Northern Region Minister Prince Imoru Andani have resigned. There is nothing to indicate that these ministers were in anyway involved in this violence, but their links to the region have resulted in their role being questioned. President Kufuor accepted their resignations "with regret and without prejudice. [17][18]

Homosexuals

5.61. The practice of homosexual acts is illegal in Ghana though the law is not strictly enforced and homosexuality is generally regarded with tolerance. [34][35]

5C. Human Rights - Other Issues

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

5.62. NGO's interested in human rights continued to grow in number and effectiveness, and there were at least 20 NGO's operating in 2001. These NGO's operated without Government interference. The Government appears to co-operate with and to be responsive to human rights NGO's, with the exception of granting ready access to prisons. Prominent NGO's include the Red Cross, Amnesty International (AI), the International Federation of Woman Lawyers (FIDA), Women in Law and Development in Africa, and Ghanalert. The Government co-operates with international humanitarian organisations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). [2]

Chronology of Events

1957 On 6 March, Ghanaian independence from the Commonwealth is achieved, led by Dr Kwame Nkrumah of the Convention People's Party (CPP).

1960 Ghana becomes a republic on 1 July, with Dr Nkrumah as President.

1964 Ghana is a one-party state, with the CPP as the sole authorised party.

1966 Dr Nkrumah is removed from his political office in a coup d'etat on 24 February. The coup leaders establish the National Liberation Council (NLC), led by General Joseph

Ankrah.

1969 General Ankrah is replaced by Brigadier Akwasi Afrifa in April, a new constitution is introduced and the ban on party politics is lifted the following month. In August, an election for a new National Assembly is held, the Progress Party (PP) wins and is led by Dr Kofi Busia, who is subsequently appointed Prime Minister. The PP government takes office in October.

1972 The army seize power in January, the constitution is abolished and all political institutions are replaced by the National Redemption Council (NRC) under the chairmanship of Lt-Col Ignatius Acheampong.

1975 The NRC is replaced by the Supreme Military Council (SMC) also led by Acheampong.

1976 Acheampong announces plans for a return to civilian rule in the form of union government.

1978 A referendum is held in favour of union government. On 5 July, Acheampong's deputy, General Akuffo assumes power in a bloodless coup.

1979 January - The ban on party politics is lifted and 16 new parties are subsequently registered.

May - A coup staged by junior officers of the armed forces, led by Flt-Lt Jerry Rawlings, fails on 15 May and he is subsequently imprisoned.

June - Following his release by other officers, Rawlings seizes power on 4 June and establishes an Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Acheampong, Akuffo, Afrifa and other senior officers are convicted on charges of corruption and executed. On 18 June, a general election takes place, contested by 5 parties and won by Dr Hilla Limann's People's National Party (PNP), which forms a coalition government with the United National Convention (UNC).

September - Dr Limann is inaugurated as President.

1980 September - Limann announces an amnesty for all political exiles and refugees except those sentenced in absentia by the AFRC. Most prisoners sentenced by special courts during the term of the AFRC are freed in 1980 after applying to the courts for reconsideration of their convictions. However, at the end of 1981, at least 27 such prisoners are still being held.

October - The government announces that a number of agricultural development schemes established by Rawlings are being turned into camps for training active subversives. About 10 people are questioned and detained, one of them being Kojo Tsikata, a former army Captain and close associate of Rawlings.

March & May 1980 and February 1981 - Several attempts to seize power by members of the armed forces are reported.

1981 Throughout the year, prisoners convicted of economic crimes during the rule of the AFRC try to get their sentences revoked by the courts and some prison sentences are quashed. However, in November, the Supreme Court rejects a writ submitted by B S K

Kwakye, former Inspector General of Police, alleging that his 25-year prison sentence imposed in his absence by the AFRC was unlawful. The government swiftly orders the re-arrest of all those sentenced by the AFRC and its courts, who had been released since the return to civilian rule in September 1979.

December - On 31 December, Rawlings seizes power for the second time. He abolishes the constitution and assumes chairmanship of a Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). Limann and other prominent members of the PNP are imprisoned or placed in preventative detention.

1982 March - On 2 March, the PNDC issues a Preventative Custody Law (PNDC Law 4) naming 492 persons to be taken into preventative custody for an indefinite period. A number are later released during the year, but by the end of 1982, at least 22 of the people named in PNDC Law 4 are still detained without trial. People's Defence Committees (PDCs) replace City and district councils, in order to create mass participation at local level in the revolution. Military personnel staged an abortive coup.

June - On 30 June, 3 High Court judges and a retired army major are abducted from their homes and shot. Although the commission of inquiry is still in progress at the end of the year, 5 people had already been charged with murder and complicity to murder.

November - On 23 November, soldiers stage a coup attempt, suppressed by PNDC troops. Sgt Aloga Akata-Pore (a member of the PNDC) is arrested and detained.

1983 The final report of the Special Investigation Board appointed to investigate the murders of the three High Court judges and former army officer is issued on 30 March, recommending the prosecution of ten people on charges of murder or conspiracy to murder. The ten include Joachim Amartei Kwei and Aloga Akata-Pore (former members of the PNDC) and ex-Captain Kojo Tsikata, the Head of Security and Special Advisor to the PNDC. A special Adjudicator states that there was insufficient evidence to prosecute five of them, including Tsikata and Akata-Pore. Former President, Hilla Limann and the former Vice-President are released on bail by the end of the year.

February & March - Minor attempts to overthrow the government are made.

May - University students are engaged in violent protests. The PNDC close the universities and turn them into training schools for revolutionary cadres.

June - On 19 June, military exiles from Togo, led by Sergeant Malik, infiltrate Accra, but troops loyal to the PNDC suppress the coup. Hundreds of people are detained following the attempted coup either for their suspected involvement or because they had welcomed the apparent overthrow of the PNDC. Three representatives of the "Free Press" newspaper, which had frequently criticised the government, are also arrested under PNDC Law 42.

August - The perpetrators of the coup attempts of November 1982 and June 1983 are put on trial. Four are executed on 13 August.

1984 Three leading conspirators who had been put on trial are executed in March. The three representatives of the Free Press are released. The universities are re-opened and in December, PDCs are redesignated Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR). The right of habeas corpus against detention under PNDC Law 4 is removed.

1985 February - A number of alleged plotters are arrested in Kumasi and accused of

planning to assassinate Rawlings. Later in February, a coup plot is detected in the army and two Majors and three Sergeants are tried.

May - Five conspirators allegedly linked to dissidents in Togo are executed.

1986 A number of people are tried for their involvement in a conspiracy to overthrow the government by dissident Ghanaians, and several death sentences are subsequently carried out. In August, Victor Owusu, leader of the disbanded Popular Front Party (PFP), is arrested for alleged subversion.

1987 In January, 340 prisoners are released, yet the PNDC announces further arrests in connection with an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the government and in November more arrests are made, including former officials of the PNDC.

1988 Three universities are closed for four months following renewed student unrest.

1989 In January, the student loan scheme provokes considerable student discontent, and newspaper and magazine licences become subject to review under new legislation in March. On 24 September, it is alleged that Maj. Courage Quarshigah, former commander of the military police, together with four other members of the security forces, conspired to assassinate Rawlings and overthrow the government. A number of arrests are made and Flt-Lt William Kofi Domie dies in detention on 29 September. He had allegedly hanged himself. In January 1990, five further arrests are made in relation to the alleged coup. (The plot was never proven and all alleged participants had been released by mid-1992.)

1990 There is increasing demand for an end to the ban on political activity and association. In July, a national commission for democracy (NCD) is established to review Ghana's political and economic future through regional debate, despite criticism from the new Movement for Freedom and Justice (MFJ). On 30 December, Rawlings announces proposals for the establishment of a constitution by the end of 1991.

1991 On 10 May, the PNDC endorse the restoration of a multi-party system. However, it is emphasised that the formation of political associations remains prohibited. An alliance of opposition movements, human rights organisations and trade unions, known as the Co-ordinating Committee of Democratic Forces in Ghana (CCDFG) demands that a constitutional conference be convened to determine a schedule for transition to democracy. Rawlings announces that presidential and legislative elections will take place in late 1992.

December - Rawlings orders the arrest of the Secretary General of the MFJ, John Ndeugre, for allegedly failing to stand when the national anthem was played. An Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) assumes the functions of the NCD.

1992 April - A national referendum is held on 28 April, and the adoption of the draft constitution is approved by 92% of the votes cast.

May - Legislation is introduced to end the ban on political association, imposed in 1981. Political parties are required to apply to the INEC for legal recognition. 21 former organisations remain proscribed and emergent parties are not permitted to use the names or slogans of these organisations.

June - Six opposition groups obtain legal status and a coalition of pro-government organisations, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), is formed to contest the

elections on behalf of the PNDC. The Eagle, or Egle, Party refuses to join the coalition, although they later did so, together with the National Convention Party (NCP).

September - Rawlings retires from the armed forces and is nominated as the presidential candidate of the NDC. This is to be contested by candidates of the People's Heritage Party (PHP), the National Independence Party (NIP), the People's National Convention (PNC) which nominated Dr Hilla Limann, and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Prior to the election there are reports of violence between NPP and NDC supporters.

October - The legislation, which permitted indefinite detention without trial, is repealed.

November - The presidential election takes place on 3 November and Rawlings is declared the winner with over 50% of the votes cast. Although Commonwealth observers deem the conduct of the elections to be free and fair, the NPP disagree. A curfew is imposed in Kumasi following riots in which opposition supporters killed an NDC ward chairman. Explosives are detonated in Accra and Tema. A prominent member of the PHP and opposition supporters are detained in connection with the bombings.

December - On 29 December, the legislative elections are boycotted by the opposition parties on account of the alleged electoral fraud of the previous month. The NDC therefore receives the majority of seats. Only 29% of the electorate votes.

1993 January - Rawlings is sworn in as president of the Fourth Republic.

March - The two main perpetrators of the bombings are fined and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

November - A 20-member national security council, chaired by Kow Arkaah, is established.

December - The PHP, NIP and a faction of the PNC merge to form the People's Convention Party (PCP).

1994 February - 500 people are killed in the ethnic clashes of the Northern Region between those of Konkomba and Nanumba origin. Government troops are dispatched and impose a state of emergency in seven districts for three months. Six thousand Konkombas reportedly flee to Togo.

March - Twelve people are killed at Tamale (the capital of the Northern Region) when security forces fire on Dagomba demonstrators who had allegedly attacked Konkombas.

April - Negotiations between the ethnic groups involved in the conflict begin. It is reported that the authorities had discovered a conspiracy to overthrow the government, which involved threats to kill Quarshigah and the editors of two private newspapers. The opposition question the veracity of these claims.

May - The NPP announces its withdrawal from the conciliation discussions between the government and the opposition, due to lack of progress. The state of emergency in the Northern Region is extended.

June - A peace agreement is signed by the seven ethnic factions involved in the fighting in the Northern Region, imposing an immediate cease-fire. Government troops are to remain there and a negotiating team is established to attempt to resolve inter-ethnic

differences.

August - The state of emergency is ended as the government announces that order has been restored.

September - Five civilians who had allegedly conspired to overthrow the government are charged with treason.

October - There is an increase in tension in the Northern Region when further arrests are made, after several people are killed.

November - Following a joint rally of the NPP, PNC and PCP, the parties announce that they will present a single candidate to contest the presidential election in 1996.

1995 February - Valued-added tax (VAT) is imposed, leading to widespread protests.

March - About 100 people are killed as a consequence of ethnic violence in the Northern Region and a curfew is imposed.

April - A joint committee of prominent members of the Konkombas and Nanumbas is established.

May - On 11 May 1995, the peaceful "Kume Preko" march in Accra, organised by the Alliance For Change (AFC) to protest against the imposition of Value Added Tax and the high cost of living, was violently disrupted by armed men purporting to belong to the Association of CDRs. The violence resulted in the deaths of five people (four demonstrators and one alleged ACDR member). The police moved quickly to contain the violence and a number of arrests were made, although no one was subsequently charged due to a lack of evidence. Later marches organised by the AFC passed off peacefully

June - VAT is suspended and the old sales tax re-instated.

November - A Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice commences investigations into allegations of corruption on the part of government ministers and civil servants.

1996 January - Opposition parties demand that Rawlings resign following allegations that he had assaulted Vice-President Arkaah during a meeting.

February - Three journalists who had published a report alleging the government's complicity in a case of drug trafficking involving a Ghanaian diplomat are arraigned. The NCP and the PCP merge to form the People's Convention Party (PCP), which later disbanded. Six people are killed in the Techiman area following a dispute over tribal status and authority.

May - A violent confrontation between two Muslim factions in Atebubu leads to one death and damage to property.

August - The NPP and PCP announce their formation of an electoral alliance, to be known as the Great Alliance. The NCP is to support the NDC. A demonstration is organised by taxi-drivers.

September - Rawlings is nominated as presidential candidate of the NDC.

October - At least twenty people are wounded in clashes between the NDC and NPP militant supporters in Tamale and Kibi.

November - A network of Domestic Election Observers, comprising 25 groups, is created to oversee the December elections.

December - Presidential and parliamentary elections take place on 7 December. Rawlings and the NDC are re-elected, despite reducing its majority of seats. International observers declare that the elections had been conducted fairly and that 76.8% of the electorate had voted. Fifteen people are injured in clashes between NDC and opposition supporters in Bimbilla, north of Accra, following the announcement of the election results.

1997 January - Rawlings is sworn in as President on 7 January.

March - A new Council of Ministers is appointed, although ten members of the previous administration remain in office. Ghana celebrates 40 years of independence. The Minister of Finance announces the re-introduction of VAT two years after widespread unrest led to its withdrawal.

May - The head of the US Information Service is expelled from Ghana because of "activities unacceptable from a diplomat". He had allegedly become personally involved in the criminal libel case brought by the government against the editors of the Free Press for publishing an article accusing government members of drug trafficking. In what was assumed to be a retaliatory measure, the US authorities expel a Ghanaian diplomat in June.

August - Serious disturbances in Wenchi District of Brong-Ahafo Region result in the deaths of three people. The troubles are a result of a land dispute between the chiefs of the Brohani and Menji tribes.

October - On 30 October 1997 in Nima, a slum area in Accra, one youth was killed (though some press reports claimed that two were killed) when police fired on a crowd of rioters protesting at the failure of authorities to collect their refuse. After the riot the Interior Minister testified before Parliament that the lives of the police were threatened before they resorted to the use of arms.

November - More than 2,000 are arrested in the diamond-mining town of Akwatia in the Eastern Region in a joint police and military operation, following clashes between police and illegal diamond traders. On 30 November 1997 a policeman shot and killed a taxibus driver's assistant after a traffic violation. The driver was later caught and beaten by army and police personnel. The policeman responsible for the killing was jailed pending immediate and full-scale investigations. The police commander denounced the action regardless of whether a traffic violation had been committed.

1998 January - four people were killed and 26 wounded in a dispute between rival Moslem sects over the ownership of a graveyard in the western town of Wenchi. The trouble started when the Tijaniyyas allegedly tried to stop members of the Al-Suna sect from burying dead members of their sect. Police are reported to have made more than 60 arrests after members of the orthodox Tijaniya Moslem group attacked members of the Al-Suna sect with guns and machetes, killing four of them. By mid-January order had returned but the area remained tense. The regional crime officer said a screening

exercise would be carried out to see who would be brought to trial. On 23 January the former President Hilla Limann died.

May - Three people were reported to have been shot dead by police at Aflao according to Ghanaian radio. The first one was shot when police used their guns in an attempt to ward off a group who turned on police who had come to the aid of a woman they were attacking. The group then caught up with the police, and attacked one. The police later opened fire when the group began attacking the police station, killing two more members of the group.

July - Two journalists were jailed for one month each in for contempt in connection with an article written about President Rawling's wife Nana Konadu Agyeman.

The Interior Minister has said that the cases of those killed during the 11 May 1995 demonstration organised by the Alliance for Change have been closed because "no clear point of responsibility can be identified" regarding the killing of 4 civilians at the demonstration. The Alliance for Change expressed shock at this statement.

October - There was a violent demonstration by students at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, which resulted in the university being closed. On 5 October however it opened again, and the registration of continuing and fresh students proceeded smoothly. It was reported that the campus was calm.

1999 January - On 13 January, a farmer was fatally shot and 12 policemen injured during a riot at Juaso, outside of Kumasi in the Ashanti Region. A former chief held a year-end party for his supporters although the police had prohibited the gathering. The 36-year-old farmer was reportedly hit by a warning shot fired by the police. The ex-chief and more than 60 townspeople were arrested by a joint police and military team in connection with the riot

February - A high court sentenced four people to death at the end of a long running treason trial. A fifth was discharged and acquitted. The prosecution said the accused, led by two fugitive army officers had planned to overthrow the government by force in September 1994. On 14 February, police fired live bullets indiscriminately into a Konkomba market crowd, while attempting to stop looting, killing a 15-year-old boy and injuring two other persons. On 25 February, the King of the Ashanti, King Otumfuo Opoku Ware II died. The Asante are Ghana's largest ethnic group. There followed consultative meetings between the Ashanti Queen Mother and the Kumasi Traditional Council. Barima Kwaku Dua, the youngest son of the Queen Mother, was nominated as successor and crowned King Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. He was 'enstooled' in Kumasi, the Ashanti capital on 26 April.

June - The Minority group in Parliament tabled a motion to challenge the level of coverage of political parties by the state-owned media. On 24 June, an employee of the National Security Council allegedly shot and killed an agricultural officer following a traffic dispute near Abelemkpe in Accra. The suspect, who reported having shot an armed robber, was arrested and released on bail. The case is ongoing.

July - A new party the National Reform Party (NRP) receives its final registration certificate. The party was formed by defectors from the NDC

August - Students demonstrate in Accra and Kumasi over fees and general hardship. Police use tear gas, rubber bullets and water canons against the students in Accra. On 12 August, the Deputy Superintendent of Police allegedly shot a vendor at Soe, near

Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region, in a dispute over the siting of a kiosk. The vendor died 3 days later. A stray bullet fired by police during the confrontation injured one other person. The police are investigating. The Inspector General of Police (IGP) attended the vendor's funeral. On August 19, a policeman allegedly shot and killed a passenger in a truck after the driver refused to stop when signaled to do so in Winneba in the Central Region. The policeman reportedly was on the lookout for armed robbers and tried to deflate the truck's tires with an AK-47, killing the victim by mistake. The incident is under investigation.

September - On 25 September, a policeman reportedly shot and killed a driver at his residence in Korpeya. The police maintained that the policeman shot him in self-defence.

November - On 13 November a plainclothes police inspector shot and killed the driver of a timber truck at a police barricade in Barekese. Initial reports stated that the man was shot accidentally in a scuffle with the police, but eyewitnesses reported that there was no scuffle and the driver was killed deliberately. Police authorities suspended the inspector immediately and initiated an investigation that was underway at year's end. There was a serious disturbance in November 1999 during a football game between an Islamic and Methodist middle school. Property belonging to Muslims in the town of Agona Nyakrom, was destroyed. Youths attacked Muslims in this area including the headmaster of the Islamic school, who was badly beaten. Five people were shot during these disturbances. Newspapers report that as a result of this incident, large numbers of Muslims had moved out of the area

December - On 24 December 24, a patrol team of police and military personnel shot and killed two passengers in a taxi in Tema. The taxi driver reportedly had failed to stop at a checkpoint. The police say they fired warning shots, but witnesses said there were more than 10 bullet holes in the vehicle and the tires were flat from the shooting. At year's end, there had been no further action.

2000 January - Mr Cabral Blay Amihene the editor of the Independent newspaper was detained by the military, after publishing an article which said that soldiers had refused to obey an order relating to march, and was held overnight on 13/14 January 2000. In light of this incident, the Ghana Journalist Association held a meeting to discuss the intimidation of journalists, and urged that only Constitutional methods be used to seek redress against journalists who print articles where the truth is disputed.

December - Presidential and Parliamentary elections took place on 7 December 2000. Opposition leader John Kufuor polled 48.4% of the vote, not enough to win the first round. John Atta Mills scored 44.8% with the five other parties scooping the remaining votes. In parallel parliamentary elections, the NPP achieved a majority taking 101 seats. NDC took 92. The Presidential run-off between Kufuor and Mills took place on 28 December 2000. Kufuor won taking 57% of the votes cast, and he was formally sworn in as President of Ghana on 7 January 2001.

2001 February - Petrol prices rise by 60% following the government's decision to remove Fuel subsidies.

May - Over 130 people were killed in Accra football stadium following a stampede. Police were criticised for their handling of crowd trouble, which preceded the stampede. There were riots against the police following this tragedy.

December - The former deputy Finance Minister Victor Selormey was sentenced to an 8-

year prison term for his part in fraud and corruption during his period in office.

2002 March - The incumbent king Ya-Na Yakubu Andani, was killed, together with 28 of his followers

POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

United Nkrumahist Party

Informally launched 13 June 1998. Has been granted a provisional certificate of registration by the Electoral Commission under the Political Parties Law 1992.

Main parties since May 1992

Ghana was ruled by the **Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)** military regime from 31 December 1981 until the restoration of democracy with the inauguration of the Fourth Republic on 7 January 1993. The ban on the formation of political organisations in Ghana was lifted by the PNDC on 18 May 1992 and the following are the main parties/organisations:

Convention Party (CP). (Formerly called the **People's Convention Party - PCP**) In December 1993, formed by NIP, People's Heritage Party (PHP) and faction of PNC; Chair, Abubakar Alhassan. The largest Nkrumahist grouping.

Democratic People's Party (DPP). Formed in Accra, 1992; Chair, Daniel Martin.

EGLE (Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere) Party. Formed in Accra, 1992; Chair, Owuraku Amofa.

Ghana Democratic Republican Party (GDRP). Formed in Accra, 1992, Chair, Kofi Amoah.

Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP). Founded 1996. Founder and Chair, Dan Lartey, businessman and unsuccessful NIP (National Independence Party) Presidential candidate in Nov 1992.

National Democratic Congress (NDC). Formed in Accra, 1992; Chair, Alhaji Huudu Yahaya.

New Patriotic Party (NPP). Formed in Accra, 1992; Chair, Samuel Arthur Odoi-Sykes, Secretary General Daniel Botwe.

National Reform Party (NRP). Founded in 1999. Chair Peter Kpordugbe.

People's National Convention (PNC). Formed in Accra, 1992; former leader was Dr Hilla Limann but 1996 Presidential candidate was Edward Mahama. Chair Dr. John Edwin.

United Ghana Movement (UGM). Founded 1996. Chair, Nii Armah Tagoe.

For the purposes of the 1996 elections, two political alliances were formed: the **Progressive Alliance** consisting of the NDC, EGLE and DPP, and the **Great Alliance** which was made up of the NPP, PCP and the PNC. Other political parties, which were formed following the lifting of the ban on political activity in 1992, but which are no longer part of the political scene are:

Inter-Party Co-ordinating Committee (ICC). Formed by NPP, PHP, NIP and PNC after major opposition parties withdrew in protest from the December 1992 Assembly elections to offer some form of credible extra-parliamentary opposition.

National Independence Party (NIP). Formed in Accra, 1992, originally by Botsio and Gbedemah, who both later crossed to the PHP, largely comprising members of the Kwame Nkrumah Welfare Society (KNWS); Chair, Alhaji Ayarma.

New Generation Alliance (NGA). Formed in Accra, 1992.

Nkrumah National Party. Formed in Accra, 1992; led by Kwesi Pratt; formed largely from KNRG, URF, DAG.

People's Heritage Party (PHP). Formed in Accra, 1992; Chair, Frimpong Ansah; Deputy Chair, Alhaji Farl.

Popular Party for Democracy and Development (PPDD). Formed in Accra, 1992; Chair, Kwame Wiafe; Secretary General, Kwesi Pratt. Nkrumahist. Merged with PCP in May 1996.

The Committees for the Defence of the Revolution

In 1982, the military government abolished the city and district councils and replaced them with People's Defence Committees (PDCs) and, in the workplace, Workers' Defence Committees (WDCs), in an attempt to create mass participation at the local level in the revolution. These were reorganised as Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) in 1984. Also in 1984, the Civil Defence Organisation (CDO) was created as a voluntary militia to assist with matters of internal security. They were reorganised in 1987/88 to adopt a role less geared to para-military activities.

The Association of CDRs

The CDRs were subsequently disbanded in January 1993 and have no status under the 1992 Constitution. Their successor, the Association of CDRs (ACDR), is a purely voluntary organisation, which has lost most of the political influence of its predecessor and its members are not able to act outside the law. Whilst the CDO's political influence is significantly reduced, it still has the ability to mobilise people in support of the President, if required.

By 1990, although freedom of political expression was limited and some abuses of civil rights still occurred, the situation was that only a very small number of active opponents of the PNDC had any reason to fear persecution. In July that year, at least partly in response to Western pressure, the PNDC set up the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), chaired by Justice Annan, to organise a series of regional debates on Ghana's political and economic future.

PROMINENT PEOPLE

Accra Five - (Kwame Ofori Appiah, Alex Ofei, Emmanuel Kofi Osei, Owusu Boakye, Sylvester Addae-Dwomoh) businessmen, based in London, who were arrested in Ghana on 2 September 1994 and were subsequently charged with treason. It is alleged that they offered money to any soldier willing to support a coup attempt and that they attempted to announce their take-over of the government from Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. In February 1999 four of the accused were found guilty and sentenced to death. These were Alex Ofei, Kwame Ofori Appiah, Sylvester Addai Dwomoh and John Owusu Boakye. Emmanuel Osei Kofi was found not guilty.

Gen. Ignatius Kutu Acheampong - leader of the National Redemption Council (NRC) which seized power in a military coup on 13 January 1972. To offset rivalries within the NRC, Acheampong replaced it with the Supreme Military Council (SMC) in 1975, though he was in turn replaced by Gen. William Akuffo in 1978. When the AFRC came to power in June 1979, Acheampong was executed along with a number of others including Akuffo and Afrifa, following his conviction on charges of corruption.

Karim Salifu Adam - a former soldier and member of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Adam is alleged to have recruited groups of young men to work as builders in Burkina Faso but once there to have given them military training to support his coup plans. Arrested on 23 May 1994 on his return to Ghana, his trial began in May 1996 and has yet to reach a conclusion.

Lt-Gen. Akwasi Afrifa - replaced Ankrah as chairman of NLC in April 1969 before the restoration of civilian rule later that year. When the AFRC came to power in June 1979, Afrifa along with other senior officials was executed following his conviction on charges of corruption.

Gen. William Akuffo - took over from Acheampong as SMC leader on 5 July 1978 and pressed ahead with plans to return the country to civilian rule. Ousted when Rawlings staged a second coup on 4 June 1979 (the first in May being unsuccessful) and was subsequently executed.

Edward Akufo-Addo - non-executive civilian president from August 1970 until NRC seized power in 1972.

Gen. Joseph Ankrah - head of National Liberation Council (NLC), 1966-69.

Kofi Annan - United Nations (UN) Secretary General.

Prof. Adu Boahen - unsuccessful 1992 presidential candidate for the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

Dr Kofi Busia - leader of the Progress Party (PP) which was victorious in the August 1969 elections. Busia held the office of Prime Minister from 1 October of that year until the military coup of January 1972.

Alhaji Damba - implicated in a series of small explosions, which took place on 5-7 November 1992 following the presidential election results, for which a shadowy

organisation calling itself "Farighan" claimed responsibility. Suspicion fell on Damba, his wives (three in all) and family who were arrested. Damba himself fled but he and others were sentenced in absentia to terms of between two and ten years. Damba is now living in exile in Nigeria.

Flt-Lt William Kofie Domie - arrested in September 1989 for alleged involvement in a plot to overthrow the government (see Quarshigah). Domie died in detention on 29 September 1989, after committing suicide by hanging. All others allegedly involved were later released.

Cpl Halidu Giwa, Sgt Malik and Lance Cpl Adjongba - the leading conspirators in the June 1983 jailbreak and coup attempt. Executed in March 1984 following recapture, after they had been sentenced to death in absentia.

"The three judges" - on 30 June 1982 three Justices of the High Court (Mr Justice Fred Poku Sarkodee, Mrs Justice Cecilia Koranteng-Addow and Mr Justice Kwadwo Agyei Agyepong) and a retired army officer (Maj. Sam K. Acquah) were kidnapped from their homes by four armed men. Their corpses were found in the Accra Plains a few days later. Amidst allegations that these killings were politically motivated and that the government was responsible, an inquiry was launched. The findings of the Special Investigation Board were particularly damning for Capt. Kojo Tsikata (see below) who was named as "the brains behind the plot".

J A Kufuor - defeated NPP presidential candidate in 1996, who gained 39.9% of the vote. On 24 October 1998 Kufuor was elected to stand as the NPP's presidential candidate at the 2000 presidential election. He successfully contested the election and was inaugurated as president on 7 January 2001.

Dr Hilla Limann - President of Ghana from 1979-81 as leader of the People's National Party (PNP), until the 31 December 1981 coup, which preceded the PNDC regime. Although arrested after this coup Limann was subsequently released and later went on to challenge for the presidency in 1992 as the candidate of the People's National Convention (PNC). Died 23 January 1998.

J H Mensah - senior NPP politician.

John Atta Mills - Former Vice-President and favoured by Rawlings as his successor when he steps down in 2000. He was unsuccessful in the December 2000 presidential elections.

Dr Kwame Nkrumah - founder of the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1949, prime minister of the Gold Coast (and later Ghana) from 1952 until independence. Became first Ghanaian president in 1960 and was deposed by a military coup in February 1966. Went into exile until his death in 1972.

Victor Owusu - unsuccessful Popular Front Party (PFP) candidate who stood against Limann in 1979 elections.

Maj. Courage E K Quarshigah - alleged architect of the September 1989 attempt to assassinate Rawlings and overthrow the PNDC government. The "Quarshigah conspiracy" as it later became known was never proven and no one ever stood trial. All those accused were eventually released, Quarshigah being freed in 1992.

Flt-Lt Jerry John Rawlings (President from 1992 to 2001) Former President of Ghana and Head of State since 31 December 1981 when he seized power by way of a military coup. Rawlings had previously staged an unsuccessful coup in May 1979 and was imprisoned. However, he was subsequently released by other officers and seized power on 4 June of the same year before establishing the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Rawlings then returned the country to democratic civilian rule about three months later, maintaining that his regime's major concern had been the eradication of corruption (a number of senior officials were executed during AFRC rule). However, following a period of unpopular PNP rule, Rawlings returned to power, this time with the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). The PNDC military government held power from the end of 1981 until 1992 when political activity resumed. Rawlings became presidential candidate for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and was successful in both the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections, though he is due to stand down in 2000. He stood down, and handed over power on 7 January 2001 to his successor John Kufuor.

Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings - wife of the ex-President, and head of the 31st December Women's Movement.

Capt. Kojo Tsikata - former National Security Advisor to the President. A close ally to Rawlings, Tsikata was implicated in the political killing of three judges and a retired army officer in June 1982. Bowed out of politics shortly before the 1996 elections.

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