



Australian Government

Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Ghana

Ghana – GHA37370 – Bawku – Mamprusis
– Kusasis – Communal violence –
Christians – State protection – Internal
relocation

16 September 2010

1. Deleted.

2. Please comment on the availability of state protection in Bawku in relation to tribal violence between the Mamprusis and Kusasis. Please also comment on the availability of state protection in other parts of Ghana in relation to such violence, such as in Accra, Kumasi or other major cities.

Authorities have made attempts to provide state protection and halt the violence in Bawku. This was with limited success, however, as violence has continued sporadically to the present day.¹ State protection is more widely available in other areas of Ghana; however, even there security forces face limitations.

State Protection in Bawku

Authorities have taken action in an attempt to stop the violence between Mamprusis and Kusasis in Bawku. The aforementioned *My Joy Online* January 2008 article reports that the Upper East Regional Minister had toured the region and 15 people had been arrested. Furthermore, 165 police personnel had been deployed and 150 more were to be added. A number of Military personnel from the Tamale Air Borne Force were to be added to the 70 soldiers already on the ground.² With regard to the violence in the early months of 2009, a March 2009 article stated that a combined military and police search had led to the arrest of 27 people connected with the violence.³ More recently, in November 2009, it was reported that 29 people had been arrested in relation to the ongoing violence.⁴ An article from Peace FM in the same month stated that the Minister for the Interior renewed the curfew in Gushegu

¹ 'Ministry renews curfew on Bawku, Gushegu' 2010, GhanaWeb website, 6 September <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/regional/artikel.php?ID=189834> Accessed 14 September 2010 – Attachment 5

² 'Bawku violence: Fighting erupts, despite Military presence' 2008, *My Joy Online*, 2 January <http://news.myjoyonline.com/news/200801/11978.asp> Accessed 14 September 2010 – Attachment 2

³ 'Bawku violence: John Mahama to broker peace, police nab 27' 2009, *Joy FM*, 3 March – Attachment 6

⁴ '3 shot dead, 7 injured at Bawku' 2009, *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 6 November - Attachment 7

township (in the Bawku area) and “noted with satisfaction the relative peace and calm prevailing in the area”.⁵

State Protection in other parts of Ghana

More generally throughout Ghana, including in Accra, Kumasi and other major cities, the availability of state protection is better. The UK Home Office, in a 2009 Operational Guidance Note, argued that there is “no evidence that ethnic group/tribal members would not be able to seek and receive adequate protection from the state authorities were they to face ill-treatment at the hands of rival ethnic groups or tribes”. This includes those fleeing conflict between the Mamprusis and Kusasis. It adds that inter-ethnic clashes are usually “short-lived or quickly subdued by the state authorities”.⁶ This latter assertion is arguable, though, given that violence in Bawku has continued sporadically for several years.^{7 8} The UK Home Office concluded that claims of not being able to obtain state protection from tribal violence were unfounded, that “[s]uch claims would not engage the UK’s obligations under the 1951 Convention”.¹⁰ A DFAT report from 2001 concurred with the Home Office view that state protection was adequate in Ghana and stated that the country had had no serious unrest in the preceding 20 years.⁹

The availability of state protection throughout the country is, however, often tempered by authorities’ willingness and ability to enforce the law. In its 2010 report, the US Department of State (US DOS) stated that there were “significant barriers” to the nationwide provision of police services to prevent and solve crimes such as homicide, “including a lack of office accommodation, police vehicles, and equipment outside of the capital”.¹⁰ An *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)* article reported in June 2008 of the rise of vigilante groups in Accra – due to the poor level of policing. However, it also reported that the European Commission had provided funding for police and judicial reforms including “court automation, building more law courts, appointing more judges and compulsory weekend courts to speed up the pace of justice”.¹¹

On several occasions police were either unwilling or unable to act on crimes committed as a result of tribal issues. The US DOS reported that:

[T]he Paramount Chief of the Goaso traditional area in the Brong Ahafo region ordered his men to beat with canes a 28-year-old woman for not kneeling before him. When the victim reported the incident to the police, the police refused to accept the complaint and detained the victim and her mother without charges. They were later released.¹⁴

⁵ ‘Ghanaian government renews curfew in strife-torn northern region’ 2010, *Ghana Broadcasting Corporation*, 12 April – Attachment 8

⁶ UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note: Ghana*, 9 January – Attachment 9

⁷ ‘Ministry renews curfew on Bawku, Gushegu’ 2010, GhanaWeb website, 6 September <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/regional/artikel.php?ID=189834> Accessed 14 September 2010 – Attachment 5

⁸ ‘Graphic Front Page Stories’ 2008, *Daily Graphic*, June http://tettehmoako.blogspot.com/2008_06_01_archive.html Accessed 14 September 2010 – Attachment 3

⁹ DIMA Country Information Service 2001, *Country Information Report No.261/01 – Ghana: AVAILABILITY OF STATE PROTECTION IN GHANA*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 23 September 2001), 26 September – Attachment 10

¹⁰ US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009 – Ghana*, March, Section 1a-1e – Attachment 11

¹¹ ‘Ghana: Vigilante groups fill security vacuum’ 2008, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Refworld Website, 23 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/486261232.html> - Accessed 8 April 2010 – Attachment 12

A March 2010 My Joy Online article cites the inaction of authorities to arrest those responsible for the kidnap and beating of a tribal chief.¹² During a tribal dispute in July 2009, the 18 policemen called to the scene were reportedly unable to prevent a riot.¹⁴

The aforementioned UK Home Office Operational Guidance Note stated that though the police service came under criticism following incidents of brutality, corruption, and negligence, the public had recourse to lodge complaints with the Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Unit (PIPS). Those with allegations of human rights abuse could seek redress through the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ).¹³

3. Please comment on the availability of internal relocation to escape the violence between Mamprusis and Kusasis. To what extent does the risk of violence extend to other parts of the country, especially Accra, Kumasi or other major cities?

In 2009 reports, both the UK Home Office and DFAT held the opinion that someone fleeing tribal violence in their home region could safely relocate to another part of Ghana such as Accra or Kumasi. This was despite tribal conflicts having occasionally spilled over into Accra.

Internal Relocation

In the context of the conflict between Mamprusis and Kusasis, a DFAT report from December 2009 confirmed that Mamprusi men would not likely be harmed for their tribal/ethnic identity in Kumasi or Accra. The conflict between Mamprusis and Kusasis is not pervasive throughout Ghana; instead, it is restricted to the Bawku area, that is the townships of “Gushiegu, Pusiga etc”.¹⁴ The aforementioned UK Home Office 2009 report adds that ethnic or tribal disputes, including the conflict between Mamprusis and Kusasis, are sporadic and regionalised and therefore “safe relocation to a different area of the country to escape this threat is generally feasible”.¹⁷ DFAT also states that Mamprusis do not have particular distinguishing physical features. It is language, rather than tribal markings, that identify who comes from which tribe. This means it would be difficult for anyone to identify a Mamprusi in a large city like Accra.¹⁸ The US DOS human rights report for 2010 adds that the Government allows freedom of movement throughout the country as per the constitution.¹⁵

Tribal Violence in Accra

There were some reports of tribal violence occurring in Accra. A tribal dispute from the Northern Region dating back to 2002 led to clashes in Accra in August 2009 where two men were killed at the Kokomba Yam Market.¹⁶ In November 2009, a tribal dispute was presented

¹² Kyei-Mensah-Osei, K. 2010 ‘Sacrificing Ghana’s tribal unity on the alter of Political Expediency’, My Joy Online website, 24 March <http://news.myjoyonline.com/features/201003/43789.asp> - Accessed 8 April 2010 – Attachment 13

¹³ UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note: Ghana*, 9 January – Attachment 9

¹⁴ DIMA Country Information Service 2009, *Country Information Report No. 09/97 – Ghana: CIS Request No. GHA 9814; Mamprusi in Ghana*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 11 December 2009), 11 December – Attachment 14

¹⁵ US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009 – Ghana*, March, Section 1a-1e – Attachment 11

¹⁶ ‘Staging a comeback to power in 2012 – NPP should act now or never!’ 2010, My Joy Online website, 27 July <http://news.myjoyonline.com/features/201007/49728.asp> Accessed 14 September 2010 – Attachment 15

to the “Greater Accra House of Chiefs” for resolution.¹⁷ None of the reports that were found stated that violence between Mamprusis and Kusasis extended to Accra and Kumasi. It is worth noting that the Kusasis are not the dominant tribal grouping in Accra. It is the Ga-Adangbe tribe, who are said to have their traditional lands in and around Accra.¹⁸

4. Please comment on the risk of harm in Ghana due to being Christian (including Seventh Day Adventists or Pentecostals). Please also comment on the above issues of state protection and internal relocation in the context of harm arising from being Christian.

The risk of harm in Ghana due to being Christian (including Seventh Day Adventists or Pentecostals) is low due to the Government’s attitude toward freedom of religion, the fact that Christians are the largest religious group, the availability of state protection, and the feasibility of relocation.

The Ghanaian Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion according to a 2009 US DOS report. The law “at all levels” was said to “protect this right in full against abuse, either by governmental or private actors”. The Government even took steps to promote interfaith understanding that included: using Christian and Muslim prayers, and indigenous invocations at meetings; Presidential and Vice-Presidential statements promoting religious coexistence; the current President’s receiving of both Christian and Muslim leaders upon assuming office; and a call for the creation of both Christian and Muslim national days of prayer. The US DOS added that it found no reports of religious prisoners in the country.²³

The risk of harm to someone for being Christian is also less likely because Christians constitute the largest religious group in the country, making up approximately 69 percent of the population, according to the 2000 census. Muslims make up 15.6 percent and 8.5 percent adhere to indigenous religious beliefs. Muslims, however, contend that their community is substantially larger than 15.6 percent. In fact, it was reported that it was the Muslim community who felt they were victims of social exclusion due to the dominance of Christian prayers in public settings and the omnipresence of Christian slogans.¹⁹

The aforementioned UK Home Office report stated there was “no evidence that Christians or converts to Christianity would not be able to seek and receive adequate protection from the state authorities were they to face societal discrimination or ill-treatment at the hands of Muslims or members of other religious groups”. It adds that “safe relocation for Christians and converts to Christianity to a different area of the country to escape this threat is generally feasible”.²⁰

Attachments

1. Deleted.

¹⁷ Attenkah, R. 2009 ‘Ghana: Self-Styled Chief Jailed for Contempt’, All Africa, 20 November <http://allafrica.com/stories/200911201024.html> - Accessed 8 April 2010 – Attachment 16

¹⁸ ‘Ghana: People and Culture’ 2010, The African Guide website <http://www.africaguide.com/country/ghana/culture.htm> – Accessed 8 April 2010 – Attachment 17

¹⁹ US Department of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2009 – Ghana*, October 26, Section 1a – Attachment 18

²⁰ UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note: Ghana*, 9 January – Attachment 9

2. 'Bawku violence: Fighting erupts, despite Military presence' 2008, *My Joy Online*, 2 January <http://news.myjoyonline.com/news/200801/11978.asp> - Accessed 14 September 2010.
3. 'Graphic Front Page Stories' 2008, *Daily Graphic*, June http://tettehamoako.blogspot.com/2008_06_01_archive.html - Accessed 14 September 2010.
4. Deleted.
5. 'Ministry renews curfew on Bawku, Gushegu' 2010, GhanaWeb website, 6 September <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/regional/artikel.php?ID=189834> - Accessed 14 September 2010.
6. 'Bawku violence: John Mahama to broker peace, police nab 27' 2009, *Joy FM*, 3 March. (CISNET – Ghana: CX222654)
7. '3 shot dead, 7 injured at Bawku' 2009, *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 6 November. (CISNET – Ghana: CX236007)
8. 'Ghanaian government renews curfew in strife-torn northern region' 2010, *Ghana Broadcasting Corporation*, 12 April. (CISNET – Ghana: CX242113)
9. UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note: Ghana*, 9 January.
10. DIMA Country Information Service 2001, *Country Information Report No.261/01 – Ghana: AVAILABILITY OF STATE PROTECTION IN GHANA*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 23 September 2001), 26 September. (CISNET – Ghana: CX57771)
11. US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009 – Ghana*, March, Section 1a-1e.
12. 'Ghana: Vigilante groups fill security vacuum' 2008, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Refworld Website, 23 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/486261232.html> - Accessed 8 April 2010.
13. Kyei-Mensah-Osei, K. 2010 'Sacrificing Ghana's tribal unity on the alter of Political Expediency', *My Joy Online* website, 24 March <http://news.myjoyonline.com/features/201003/43789.asp> - Accessed 8 April 2010.
14. DIMA Country Information Service 2009, *Country Information Report No. 09/97 – Ghana: CIS Request No. GHA 9814; Mamprusi in Ghana*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 11 December 2009), 11 December. (CISNET – Ghana: CX237860)
15. 'Staging a comeback to power in 2012 – NPP should act now or never!' 2010, *My Joy Online* website, 27 July <http://news.myjoyonline.com/features/201007/49728.asp> - Accessed 14 September 2010.
16. Attenkah, R. 2009 'Ghana: Self-Styled Chief Jailed for Contempt', *All Africa*, 20 November <http://allafrica.com/stories/200911201024.html> - Accessed 8 April 2010.
17. 'Ghana: People and Culture' 2010, *The African Guide* website <http://www.africaguide.com/country/ghana/culture.htm> – Accessed 8 April 2010.

18. US Department of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2009 – Ghana*, October 26, Section 1a.