



Ghana – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 10 August 2011.

Any reports on the conflict in the Kusase Bakwe area between the Kusasi and Mamprusi tribes over chieftaincy and land in 2010/2011

A report by the *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)* states:

“Abidjan (ICRC) – With support from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Ghana Red Cross Society today began distributing food to some 2,000 families – more than 10,000 people in all – affected by armed violence that erupted in Bawku, in the north of the country, in March.

Each family will receive 120 kilograms of maize, 40 kilograms of beans, two kilograms of salt and 40 litres of palm oil.

"Household economies are based on growing crops and on petty trade, but poor security conditions have prevented local people from working their fields," said Christian Bosson, an ICRC economic-security specialist. "The food that we are distributing will enable these families to cope with the situation and to have something to eat for the next few months."

People in the northern part of the country are caught in the tensions between members of the Kusasis and Mamprusis tribes, which regularly flare up into violence. The latest clashes, in March and early April, resulted in a sharp drop in economic and agricultural activity. Those who were already poorest not only saw their incomes slump but also have to cope with a shortage of food." (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (25 August 2010) *Ghana: Red Cross brings aid to 10,000 victims of violence in north of country*)

A report by the *United States Department of State* under the heading 'Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life' states:

“Throughout the year an ongoing chieftaincy and ethnic dispute in Bawku, Upper East Region, resulted in an estimated five deaths; a polling station chairman of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) was among the dead. Military and police personnel were deployed to the region, and the municipality remained under a curfew that was imposed several years ago. The violence occurred despite the establishment in February of a military barracks in the Binduri constituency of Bawku to assist with peacekeeping efforts.” (United States Department of State (8 April 2011) *2010 Human Rights Report: Ghana*)

In a section titled 'Children' it states:

“Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that children participated in the ongoing ethnic and chieftaincy conflict in Bawku. In 2009 there were media reports that children participated in the ongoing ethnic and chieftaincy conflict in Bawku in the Upper West Region. Children were reported to have burned houses, and a group

of Mamprusi children were alleged to have ambushed a Kusasi woman near Bawku hospital.” (ibid)

A report by *Amnesty International* under the heading ‘Background’ states:

“In February, March and April, intra-communal violence in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District of the Northern Region left at least five dead and over 300 houses burned down. Thousands of people fled their homes, some crossing into Togo. At least five people were killed and several houses burned down in May in renewed inter-communal violence in Bawku in the Upper East Region. The ongoing violence prevented local residents from carrying out normal farming and trading activities, resulting in food shortages and leaving approximately 2,000 families in need of food aid.” (Amnesty International (13 May 2011) *Amnesty International Annual Report 2011 –Ghana*)

A report by the *United Kingdom Home Office* under the heading ‘Inter-ethnic clashes, tribal disputes and Chieftain disputes’ states:

“*Treatment.* There are numerous small-scale conflicts within ethnic groups, most of which are related to chieftaincy and land use issues. Efforts by NGOs to encourage reconciliation continue. There were several violent clashes between Kusasi and Mamprusi tribesmen in northern Ghana in 2008. According to a Freedom House Report disputes over land use and chieftaincy sometimes lead to ethnically tinged violence. The Chieftaincy Act gives village and other traditional chiefs the power to mediate local matters and enforce customary tribal laws dealing with such matters as divorce, child custody, and property disputes. There were numerous small-scale conflicts within ethnic groups during the year, most of which related to chieftaincy and land use issues. Efforts by NGOs to encourage reconciliation continue.” (United Kingdom Home Office (March 2011) *Operational Guidance Note – Ghana – par. 3.6.2*)

A report by the *Accra Daily Mail* states:

“Reports from the volatile town of Bawku in the Upper East Region indicate there has been a sustained gun battle between dissidents and security agencies throughout Wednesday morning.

FM's Regional Correspondent, Joseph Osei reports that the shooters managed to beat security checks and got close to a delegation led by the regional minister which was about to hold a meeting to discuss the increasing insecurity in the area.

They daringly opened fire at a crowd near the meeting grounds scuttling not only the meeting but also dispersing other residents minding their own business.

The people ran helter-skelter to save their lives as the security agencies engaged the shooter” (Accra Daily Mail (7 April 2010) *Ghana: Sustained Shooting in Bawku Scuppers Security Meeting*)

The report also states:

“An exasperated Mark Woyongo, the Upper East Regional Minister told Joy FM Tuesday the security situation in Bawku had become scary as people resorted to guerrilla tactics to wreck havoc on their opponents.

A man believed to be a Mamprusi was Monday attacked, killed and burnt under very harrowing circumstances.

That incident was preceded by other dastardly ones in which a woman was killed and dumped in a well and another man lynched.

Mamprusis and Kusasis have engaged in violent ethnic conflict that has not only claimed lives and property but has remained a noose in the necks of successive governments.” (ibid)

A report by *IRIN News* states:

“ACCRA, 28 May 2010 (IRIN) - The Ghanaian government will set up shelters for 1,000 returning refugees who fled to neighbouring Togo to escape violence in Bawku in Upper East region following land disputes that have been mounting since late April.

The Togolese authorities had set up temporary camps in Tandjouare, in the north near the Ghanaian border.

“It’s an emergency situation and the sooner a coordinated response can be taken, the better,” UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) spokesperson in Ghana, Awurabena Hutchful, told IRIN.

Bawku has frequently experienced clashes between residents and migrants who came to the area decades ago to trade and put down roots. The violence often falls along ethnic lines, with the Kusasi and Mamprusi pitted against one another.” (IRIN News (28 May 2010) *Ghana-Togo: Government prepares for refugees’ return*)

A report by the *Ghanaian Chronicle* states:

“THE RECENT disturbances in Bawku last Wednesday, following the release of Abdul Sulemana Rahaman Folli after he was arrested and put before court for circulating a document challenging the legitimacy of the Overlord of the Bawku Traditional Area, Naba Asigri Abugrago Azoka II, should not discourage the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) from continuing with its good work.

Established in May 2009, with the understanding that it was the people of Bawku who can solve their own problem, the peace committee has gradually gained the confidence of both feuding factions - the Kusasi and Mamprusi.” (Ghanaian Chronicle (18 December 2010) *Ghana: Don't Give Up - Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee*)

The report also states:

“Though the BIEPC suffered a setback when the Mamprusi faction withdrew from it in September 2009, it was re-invigorated when they returned to it in June 2010.

The committee, with the close collaboration and appreciable cooperation from the Regional Security Council (REGSEC), support from the Peace Advisory Council, as well as the people of Bawku, has succeeded in bringing the two antagonists together.

Until the last Wednesday’s disturbances, the current peace that was being enjoyed in Bawku and its environs has been largely attributed to the work of the peace committee, with relative cooperation from the inhabitants, because it had brought,

and still brings, people in the area, the government, the security agencies, the media, the regional peace council, individuals, and group of individuals, together to find a lasting solution to the conflict.

It is worth noting that over the past seven months; if not for the recent disturbances, no significant incident had occurred to derail the peace in the area." (ibid)

Another report by the *Ghanaian Chronicle* states:

"The National Kussasi Union yesterday issued a statement in Accra, where they expressed concern over the Bawku conflict. According to them, innocent women and children have had to bear the brunt of unlawful acts of a few anarchists, who have vowed not to let peace prevail in Bawku.

"Our hearts continue to bleed as we see and hear our brothers killing each other, innocent women and children slaughtered like animals, people deserting our communities, and our once commercially vibrant town of Bawku, gradually becoming a ghost Municipality.

We, the members of the Kussasi Union, made up of Kussasis resident across the country, want to put it on record that the situation in Bawku has deteriorated to the current extent, because our leaders have failed to confront the issues," they noted in the statement." (Ghanaian Chronicle (19 April 2010) *Ghana: MPs, Opinion Leaders, Have Failed Bawku*)

References:

Accra Daily Mail (7 April 2010) *Ghana: Sustained Shooting in Bawku Scuppers Security Meeting*

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/201004121191.html>

(Accessed 10 August 2010)

This is a subscription database

Amnesty International (13 May 2011) *Amnesty International Annual Report 2011 – Ghana*

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=printdoc&docid=4dce15693>

(Accessed 10 August 2010)

Ghanaian Chronicle (18 December 2010) *Ghana: Don't Give Up - Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee*

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/201012210994.html>

(Accessed 10 August 2010)

This is a subscription database

Ghanaian Chronicle (19 April 2010) *Ghana: MPs, Opinion Leaders, Have Failed Bawku*

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/201004191673.html>

(Accessed 10 August 2010)

This is a subscription database

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (25 August 2010) *Ghana: Red Cross brings aid to 10,000 victims of violence in north of country*
<http://www.ein.org.uk/print/members/country-report/ghana-red-cross-brings-aid-10000-victims-violence-north-country>
(Accessed 9 August 2010)

IRIN News (28 May 2010) *Ghana-Togo: Government prepares for refugees' return*
<http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=89286>
(Accessed 10 August 2010)

United Kingdom Home Office (March 2011) *Operational Guidance Note – Ghana*
<http://ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/countryspecificasylumpolicyogns/>
(Accessed 10 August 2010)

United States Department of State (8 April 2011) *2010 Human Rights Report: Ghana*
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154349.htm>
(Accessed 10 August 2010)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International
All Africa
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Human Rights Watch
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
Lexis Nexis
UNHCR Refworld
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State