

## NATIONAL HUMAN SECURITY EARLY WARNING BRIEF OF GHANAWARN

-April to June 2013-

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### INTRODUCTION

There is still anxiety in the country over the presidential election petition. The general citizenry is anxious and uncertain about the stability of the country when the Supreme Court announces its judgment regarding the presidential election petition led by party leaders of the New Patriotic Party. Conflict and Political Analysts are of the opinion there might emerge pockets of violence some of which may be between factions of the many unresolved conflicts in the country. These opinions have been enhanced by increased fire outbreaks that occurred especially between April and June 2013. The outbreaks occurred in similar fashions, times and places that many were forced to ponder and conclude that they were deliberate acts of sabotage. It is a further indicator that some nationally minded processes or events such as the election petition or Court pronouncement over the petition might be used as an opportunity to create other forms of insecurity in the country.

WANEP-Ghana notes with concern the peace and security implications of commentaries and statements about the Supreme Court's proceedings in the media and the reactions of the Supreme Court as well as the recurrence of land and chieftaincy communal violence. These are fuelling anxiety in society and point to the fact that the structural issues of conflicts in the country are yet to be concretely addressed by all stakeholders.

Through WANEP-Ghana's **National Early Warning System** known as **GHANAWARN**, a number of human security

threats have been identified from April to June 2013. These are

- **Increasing Violent Attacks** which include shooting, stabbing, clubbing and butchering. Some of the attacks especially in the Ashanti Region were suggestive of *targeted attacks* and require closer attention; the impunity with which the incidents took place might be negative lessons for like-minded groups if the root causes of the acts are not confronted.
- **Disaster Related Incidents** dominated by *fire outbreaks*, as well as motor accidents, disease outbreaks and mining related issues were also identified. The *fire outbreaks* show symptoms they are acts of arson.
- **Armed Robbery cases** continue to surface despite community-security collaborative efforts. In the Ashanti region the manner the incidents occurred and the delay to release investigation reports are giving room for speculation and hooliganism.
- **Political/Governance Related Issues** also became prominent within the period. While Ghana is noted to be fast maturing in addressing its democratic challenges, the time and contexts of these incidents call for vigilance and preparedness to protect the present stability of the country in order to eschew the negative experiences of other countries.

The threats have been identified based on quantitative figures recorded unto GHANAWARN and analysed to show broader security implications for communities, groups and the entire country.

**Figure 1: Table presenting incidents captured per regions during the quarter**

| Name of Region  | Accident | Armed Attack | Arrest /Detention | Disasters | Threats  | Sexual Offence | Human Trafficking | Disease Outbreak | Civil Unrest | Physical Assault | Property Crime | Other    | Total     |
|-----------------|----------|--------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| Ashanti Region  | 1        | 8            | 2                 | 4         |          |                |                   | 2                | 1            | 1                |                | 2        | 21        |
| Brong-Amado     |          | 1            | 1                 |           |          |                |                   |                  |              |                  |                |          | 2         |
| Central Region  | 1        | 1            | 1                 | 1         |          |                |                   |                  |              |                  |                |          | 4         |
| Eastern Region  |          |              | 1                 |           |          |                |                   |                  |              |                  |                |          | 1         |
| Greater Accra   | 4        | 3            | 5                 | 7         | 2        |                |                   |                  | 1            |                  |                | 4        | 26        |
| Northern Region | 1        | 2            | 2                 |           |          |                |                   |                  |              |                  |                |          | 5         |
| Upper West      |          |              |                   |           |          |                | 1                 |                  |              |                  |                | 1        | 2         |
| Upper East      |          | 1            | 1                 | 1         | 1        |                |                   |                  |              | 1                |                |          | 5         |
| Volta Region    | 1        | 1            | 1                 |           |          |                |                   |                  |              |                  |                |          | 3         |
| Western Region  |          |              | 2                 |           |          |                | 1                 |                  |              |                  |                | 1        | 4         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>8</b> | <b>17</b>    | <b>16</b>         | <b>13</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>0</b>       | <b>2</b>          | <b>2</b>         | <b>2</b>     | <b>2</b>         | <b>0</b>       | <b>8</b> | <b>73</b> |

Overall, a total of 73 incidents were captured by the system. Of the 73, 26 were recorded for the Greater Accra Region which had the highest score. The Ashanti Region was the second highest with a total of 21 and followed by the Upper East and Northern Regions with a much lower figure of 5 each.

Nationwide, the thematic area which had the highest score was Armed Attack with a score of 17 which may be attributable to the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Ghanaian society. It is also followed by Arrests and Detentions with a score of 16 and Disasters with a score of 13.

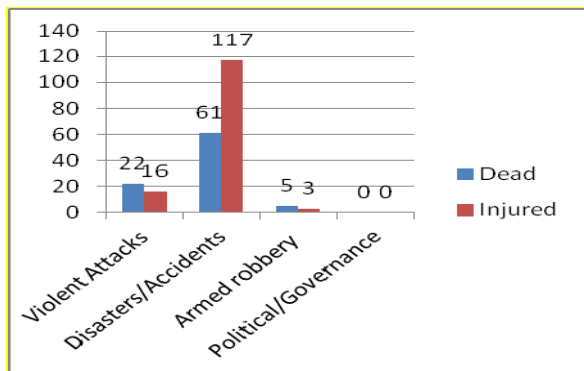
Geographically, the Ashanti Region recorded the highest thematic score of 8 under Armed or Violent Attacks, most of which took the form

of **targeted attacks** with likely links to politics. This trend seems to have reared its head after the elections in December, 2012. The Greater Accra took the second position with a score of 7 under Disaster, most of which were **fire outbreaks** at markets and shops. Generally, the monthly monitoring since January 2013 shows the Greater Accra and Ashanti Regions are becoming increasingly insecure per GHANAWARN's human security indicators and might require critical monitoring and response with the appropriate strategies.

In terms of casualties, there were 88 deaths and 136 injuries recorded. The related number of casualties for disasters was the highest with 61 deaths and 117 injuries. Out of the 61 deaths for disaster, 22 deaths resulted from motor accidents and 80 injuries. Violent attacks also

accounted for the loss of 22 lives and there were 16 people injured.

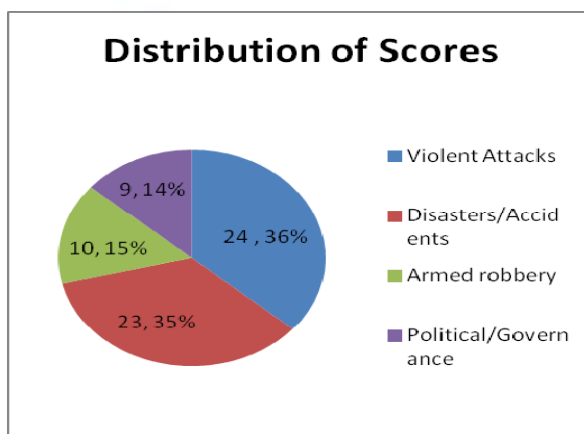
**Figure 2: Chart presenting casualty figures recorded for the four highlighted threats**



Under Arrests, 16 of them were effected over the period and related to chieftaincy (1) politics (3), land (2), armed robbery (4), mining (2), drug trafficking (2) and human trafficking (2).

#### **Risk 1: INCREASING VIOLENT ATTACKS**

**Figure 3: Chart indicating scores of four highlighted Incident Types from April to June 2013**



Out of the overall figure of 73 records, the four highlighted threats (Violent Attacks, Disasters, Armed Robbery and Politics/Governance) collectively had a tally of 66 representing 90% of the incident categories. Of the 66 and as shown in Figure 3, the total number of incidents captured under violent attacks which

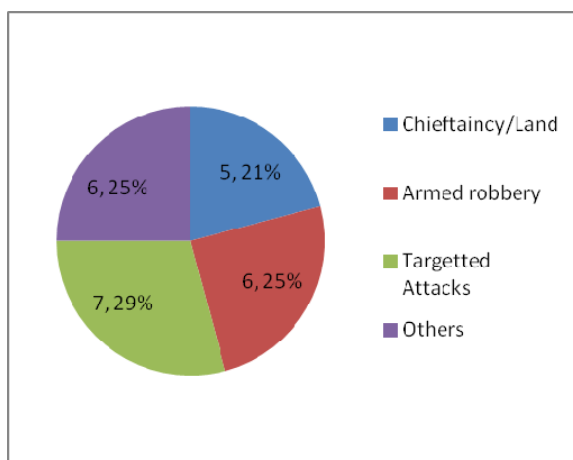
category includes shooting, stabbing and butchering was 24, representing 36 % of the highlighted threats. Majority of these incidents are suggestive of **targeted attacks** under the guise of armed robbery. Such acts resulted in seven (7) deaths in the Ashanti Region alone.

For instance, an incident confirmed by the Police through the media indicated two persons died as a result of violent attacks on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at Ashtown, a suburb of Kumasi. The incident had the semblance of revenge attacks of one that took place prior to the 2012 general elections. According to the media, another man believed to be in his late 20s was also shot dead at the Amakom traffic intersection in Kumasi on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2013 by unknown assailants.

The most frightening is the attack by some robbers numbering about 15 on anybody on site at Sawaba in the Ashanti Region. The robbers paraded the streets, robbed and terrorized residents of the area without fear of being counteracted by the security persons. This level of impunity implies disregard for the capacity and ability of the security to arrest and prosecute persons who offend the law. It is also indicative the robbers, who are also community members, are confident of their capacity to respond to the police when confronted. In the unfolding situation, some members of the Kumasi Metropolis expressed lack of confidence in the security to apprehend the perpetrators of murders and other criminal acts in some noted communities such as Sawaba.

For instance, some media reports indicate that some youth of Botansu at Atwima Boko in the Ashanti Region trailed and lynched some suspected armed robbers. They explained their action was as a result of low attention by the Police to respond to cases of murders and criminality taking place in the community. They cited an instance where an orange seller was raped and she later died of serious knife wounds she sustained in the hands of the rapist and that school children now report to schools late in order to avoid attacks by the criminal suspects.

**Figure 4: Chart presenting distribution of specific indicators captured under violent attacks**



#### **Risk 1.1: Increasing Targeted Attacks**

In Figure 4 as above, *targeted attacks*, a sub category of violent attacks was 7 representing 29%. Spousal murders under this category continue to surface as two people were killed in two separate incidents.

**Risk 1.2: Chieftaincy/land** related attacks were few with a figure of 5 (21%) but were the most sporadic involving larger groups. These occurred at Kpemale in the Northern, Alavanyo-Nkonya in the Volta and Teshie in the Greater Accra Regions. The chieftaincy incidents claimed 3 lives while the land dispute claimed 4 including a four-month-old baby. Chieftaincy and land conflicts have the tendency to destabilize communities greatly because they are ingrained in relationships, identity and power especially in ethnicity and politics. Much effort therefore needs to be made by government and civil society to respond to such violent tendencies before they erupt into full scale violence.

#### **Risk 2. DISASTER RELATED INCIDENTS**

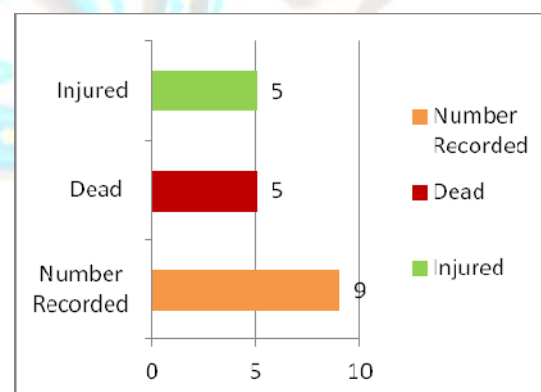
The second highest threat was the disaster category which included fire outbreaks, the most devastating within the period. It also included motor accidents, mine collapse, and disease outbreaks.

In all, there were 23 (35%) disaster related incidents captured out of the 66 incidents recorded for the highlighted threats. Of the 23 disasters, 9 of them were fire outbreaks, which is 39% of the disaster category. There were also 8 accidents out of which 4 were motor accident cases, 2 mine disasters, 2 disease outbreaks and 2 other related incidents including a stampede at a church which claimed 4 lives and several other people injured.

#### **Risk 2.1: Increasing Fire Outbreaks**

Per the GHANAWARN records, the total number of fire incidents captured was 9 as indicated in Figure 5. Some of these were captured in multiples of twos or threes as they were reported. The figure represents 35% of the 66 under the disaster category

**Figure 5: Chart indicating human casualties of the Fire Outbreaks**



In all over 112 market shops containing personal wears, cosmetics, household appliances and hardware, jewelries, medicines, as well as offices including the Antrak Air and the Social Security and National Insurance Trust offices both in Kumasi and the Letap Company in Accra were burnt. A total of 4 people lost their lives and 5 people were injured. According to some media reports three (3) people died on Sunday, 9th June 2013, when fire which started at about 1:00am engulfed a six-bedroom apartment at Agric Nzema, a suburb of Kumasi. Three more people were injured in that incident. Again on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2013, a two-year-old boy died at



Nungua while his parents sustained severe injuries in fire outbreak.

The fires also burnt the Makola No.1 and 2 markets, the Agboghloshie market, Kaneshie market, Suame Magazine, Kantamanto market, Madina market, Kumasi Central Market, Trasaco Valley building, shops at Adabraka and several rooms at Sodom and Gomorrah. The incidents occurred in similar fashion mostly in the night and at dawn when traders and shop owners were away from the facilities. Most of the incidents were sometimes spontaneously concurrent particularly in Accra and Kumasi. The nature of the occurrences increased the suspicion of stakeholders who earlier on perceived inferior and obsolete wiring materials, dry weather conditions (Hamattan), the use of naked fires by traders, un-switched off electrical equipment, and power fluctuations were the cause of the fires to believing the acts are being orchestrated. Indeed, Parliament in one of its sessions disclosed the over 1,336 fires that occurred between January and May 2013 resulting in the loss of 173 lives and over GH¢7 million properties destroyed, pose economic and social insecurity to the populations.

Generally there is great worry over the security implications of the fires under the context of the election petition currently at the Supreme Court. The fire incidents have the capacity to over stretch the national budget, thereby leading to a high number of disgruntled citizens in the system with the resultant tendency to conflagrate at the least ignition. Individuals and opportunistic groups might therefore exploit the existing situation.

### **Risk 3: ARMED ROBBERY**

The third threat identified within the quarter is armed robbery, some of which bore the semblance of **target attacks**. A total of 10 out of 66 (15%) was recorded. There were 4 arrests associated with armed robbery and there were 5 deaths and 3 injured.

Per GHANAWARN's monitoring, targeted attacks are being made to look as if they are armed robbery cases. There is therefore the

need for the security agencies and community members to increase collaboration and work towards reducing the menace.

### **Risk 4. POLITICAL/GOVERNANCE RELATED ISSUES**

Within the period a total of 9 political/governance related incidents representing 14% occurred and is the least of the highlighted threats. The issues under this category included 2 threats of violence, 2 demonstrations some of which were violent, 2 violent attacks and 3 arrests/detentions.

Two of the incidents that occurred as per the system were particularly worrying because they can influence mass protests and violence if the issues are not handled appropriately. For instance, the continuous use of intemperate language on the airwaves and inciting statements by specific political leaders who advise the youth to take up arms instead of resorting to dialogue are a threat to national security. The mass demonstration at Shaman in the Greater Accra region on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2013 by commercial drivers also resonates with GHANAWARN's emerging indicator of increasing discontent against leaderships' growing non accountability over the years. The trend needs to be observed closely by all stakeholders of the country.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Under the prevailing circumstance, WANEP-Ghana wishes,

- To appeal to the Ghana National Fire Service and security agencies to speed up investigations into the devastating fire outbreaks, conduct monitoring and surveillance over the country's markets and important installations in order to prevent further occurrences or arrest and prosecute suspected arsonists to serve as deterrent.
- To call on the National Disaster Management Organisation, the government and financial institutions to help reduce the

economic and social burdens of the victims of the recent fires and their families.

- To support the call by the participants at the maiden Daily Graphic Chief Executive Officers and Stakeholders' Breakfast Forum for strict enforcement of regulations to curb the rampant fires in the country.
- To once again commend both the election petitioners and respondents in the Supreme Court for choosing the Court process to resolve the election grievance and appeal to them to refrain from statements that will incite their supporters to violence when the Court pronounces judgment.
- To encourage the parties, the judiciary associations, the security agencies, traditional leaders, religious bodies, the media and other civil society members to increase efforts at educating party supporters and the general public to eschew violence after the Court pronouncement.
- To indicate that the reactions of the Supreme Court to news commentaries and publications about the proceedings over the election petition has brought some quiet in the media and somehow reduced the use of intemperate language in the airwaves. This is however likely to resurface and probably in a worse form once the ruling is pronounced. We therefore appeal to the National Media Commission to increase its task of monitoring the media for misconduct.
- To particularly appeal to the law enforcement bodies such as the Judiciary and the Police to be firm and fair in dealing with individuals and groups who might want to destabilize the present relative peace of the country.
- Call for increased security patrols and strict enforcement of the law especially in the Kumasi metropolis so as to prevent further incidents of homicide/armed robbery.
- Lastly, WANEP-Ghana will ask for the vigilance of all stakeholders and the public to report appropriately to agencies to contribute to prevention of violence in the country.

By this publication, we encourage the general public to report all incidents of human security concern to the appropriate bodies and through the following options:-

**By Phone Call - (Toll free: 080010029 or Hotline: 0201131885).**

**By SMS (to Short Code 1443).**

**How to send SMS:- type GNP (leave space) followed with the message and then send to 1443.**

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