



WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING (WANEP)

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR PEACE

Ghana: Current Peace and Security Dynamics in Perspective

(June 2019)



1.0. Introduction

Ghana has made tremendous progress in democratic governance over the last two decades. Manifestations of democratic dividend in the political landscape of Ghana is reflected in the conduct of periodic elections, peaceful power alternations between the two main political parties – the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), respect for human rights, free media and a modicum of rule of law. In addition to this, inclusive participation in governance has been a hallmark of Ghana’ democracy. As part of the effort for decentralization of governance and development, six new regions – Bono East, Ahafo, Savannah, Oti, North East and Western North Regions - were also created through a referendum held in December 2018. While these have contributed to relative political stability and economic development, existing and emerging security challenges threaten national peace and human security. Notable existing threats include chieftaincy and ethnic clashes, farmer-herder conflicts, violent demonstrations, armed robberies, proliferation of arms, drug trafficking as well as sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, recent occurrences related to threats of terrorist and violent extremist attacks, agitation for secession, increased political tension, activities of vigilante groups, kidnappings and violent communication through social media, among others have heightened security concerns in the country. Moreover, there are also threats to environmental security which include illegal fishing, logging, illegal mining, and pollution of water bodies. These existing and emerging threats undermine human security and stability in the country.



The above-mentioned threats are further compounded by the surging terrorist and violent extremist attacks in neighbouring Burkina Faso and its possible consequences on coastal West Africa, especially Ghana, Togo and Benin. Given the porous borders across the sub region, there are growing fears of the spread of extremist groups across West Africa including Ghana. Already, the country is challenged by the influx of migrants fleeing extremist insurgences in Burkina Faso into border communities in northern Ghana, which has reinforced security concerns and strains

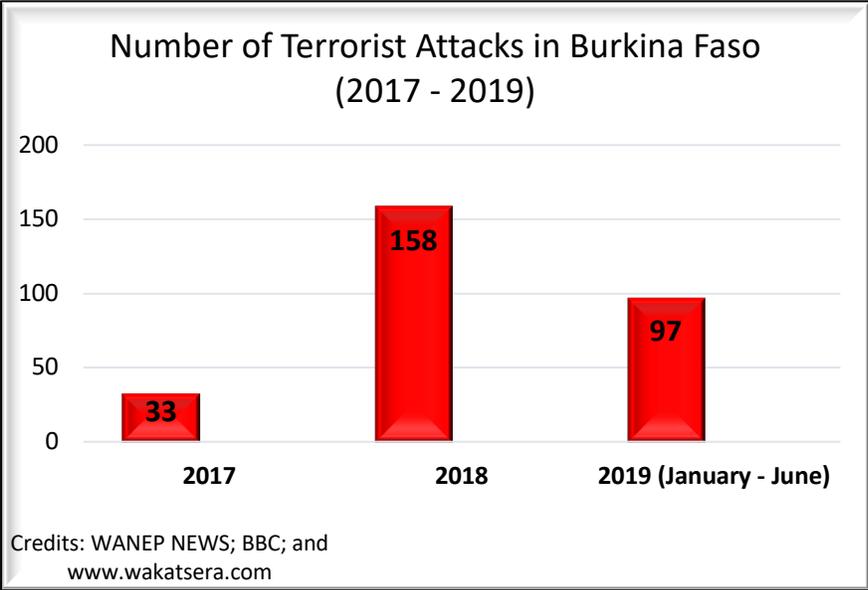
on limited resources such as farm lands, water and food¹. Given Ghana’s strategic importance to stability and economic development in West Africa, threats to its stability portend significant ramifications for regional peace and security. Ghana is not only a regional hub for economic activities but also a beacon of stable democratic governance. For this reason, rising insecurity in the country is of much concern to regional and international community.

This report therefore examines the current security threats and its impact on the stability of Ghana. It further highlights key resilient factors and offer recommendations for response and mitigation.

2.0. Emerging Threats and Implications for Security

Ghana faces varied peace and security challenges which require a holistic and coordinated preventive mechanism to mitigate threats to the stability of the country. As the country prepares for another round of election in December 2020, it is imperative to highlight critical emerging threats to security as a necessary measure to initiate efforts for response and mitigation.

The threat of terrorist and violent extremist attacks in Ghana has heightened discourse across the security circles in Ghana. Given the southward spread of extremist groups in Burkina Faso and the porosity of the borders, there are concerns over cross border incursion into Ghana².



Between 2017 to June 2019, Burkina Faso has recorded 288 violent incidents of terrorist attacks. This has led to a surge in the flow of migrants fleeing to neighbouring countries for security reasons. Available statistics indicates the influx of about 2000 migrants from Burkina Faso to Northern Ghana

¹WANEP NEWS Weekly Highlights. Accessed on 22/05/2019. Available at: www.wanepnews.org
²WANEP. West Africa Early Warning Outlook 2019: Potential Flashpoints and Simmering Conflicts in the Region. (2019). Accessed 31/05/2019. Available at: www.wanep.org



*A section of the asylum seekers from Burkina Faso in the Bawku West District, Ghana
Credit: www.ghanaweb.com*

fleeing extremist attacks between January and June 2019³. Data generated from WANEP NEWS indicates that migrants, mainly women and children have settled in communities such as Tumu-Navrongo, Wuru, Kwapun, Banu, Pido, Kunchorkor and Basian communities in the Upper West Region⁴. The influx of migrants into these communities is escalating tension between residents and migrants over

competition for limited resources including farm lands, water and food⁵.

Despite the ongoing efforts by the Ghana Immigration Service to record the movement of migrants, a number of them are not having proper documents to ensure regulation and effective monitoring of their activities. More importantly, a trend analysis also suggests that this gap could be exploited as an avenue for extremist groups to establish presence and launch possible attacks in the Country. This is justified by recent events which points to growing incidences of violence connected to Burkinabe immigrants in Ghana. These include the recent Police arrest of an alleged Burkinabe with a foreign pistol loaded with two rounds of ammunition at a crowded Catholic Church in Hamile, Upper West Region on June 2, 2019⁶. Another Burkinabe was also arrested with a locally manufactured pistol and several rounds of ammunitions in Hamile when he made unlawful entry into Ghana through the border on June 5, 2019⁷. Prior to this, four Burkinabe Custom Officers and a Spanish priest were killed in militant attack in Nohao near the Ghana border and three vehicles were destroyed at a security checkpoint in February 2019⁸. These cases have raised increasing perception of a coordinated action by extremist groups to exploit security

³Ibid.

⁴See WANEP NEWS (Weekly Highlights from Ghana, 13-19, May 2019)

⁵Ibid.

⁶See Available at: <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2019/June-3rd/upper-west-region-burkinabe-caught-with-loaded-gun-at-crowded-catholic-church.php> . Accessed on 07/06/2019.

⁷See Joy News Report. "Another Burkinabe Arrested Over Terror Fears". Available at: <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2019/June-6th/another-burkinabe-arrested-over-terror-fears.php> . Accessed on 07/06/2019

⁸Ibid.

vulnerabilities in the country, establish presence and escalate violence. In view of these emerging threats, the country is on high alert over possible terrorist attacks⁹.

Another emerging threat in the country is the recent surge in kidnapping, abduction and drug abuse. Between January and May 2019, there have been 13 reported cases of kidnapping and abduction of women and girls in Ho, Tamale, Takoradi, Kumasi and Accra¹⁰. Additionally, three Ghanaian girls kidnapped in Takoradi, Western Region in August 2018, are yet to be rescued. Two Canadians were also kidnapped in Kumasi in June 2019¹¹. These incidents have increased widespread anxiety and expressed public fear for life and security in the country. It further suggests that such vulnerable groups are increasingly targeted by organised crime networks in the country and even beyond.



Eight suspected kidnapers of the two Canadians arrested by the security agencies in Kumasi
Credit: www.graphic.com.gh

The trend of kidnapping of foreign nationals also impedes on the perception of the country as a destination for tourism with the potentials of slowing down revenue from the industry in 2019 and beyond. Already, foreign diplomatic missions in Accra, particularly the High Commissions of Canada and the United Kingdom have issued travel advisories and terror alert in Ghana to their citizens both in the country and outside. Issuing of such alerts has heightened tension and fear among citizens and foreign nationals in the country. Though the two kidnapped Canadians have been rescued by the security agencies, the arrest of eight suspects – five Ghanaians and three Nigerians – reveals dimensions of collaboration and alliances between and among criminal networks in the region. Furthermore, this has the potential to blight Ghana’s longstanding ethos in the international community as a bastion of stability and democratic governance on the African continent. Similarly, it has the likelihood of scaring away foreign investors and visitors to the country. Here, it is important to note that Ghana has a thriving tourism and hospitality industry

⁹Op. cit. citinewroom.com/2019

¹⁰WANEP NEWS. www.wanep.org (January – June 2019)

¹¹Ibid.

that continues to attract foreign and local tourists. In fact, the Hospitality and Tourism sector of the economy is the third foreign exchange earner for Ghana and contributes 3.7 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)¹². In term of direct revenue, the tourism sector generates about GH 4.457 billion cedis which is expected to increase to GH 7.449 billion cedis by 2026¹³. Closely related to the aforementioned threat is human trafficking. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police rescued 285 victims of human trafficking with nearly half being children between the ages of 5 and 16 years in 2018¹⁴.

Additionally, increased cases of drug abuse such as tramadol, codeine, opium and marijuana by the youths also constitutes another dimension of hazard in the country. Data from the Narcotic Control Board (NACOB) indicates that out of 50,000 drug users in the country, 35,000 are students while 15,000 are adults with 9,000 males and 6,000 females¹⁵. The use of these drugs is prevalent among junior high, secondary and tertiary students between ages 12 and 35¹⁶. Low self-esteem, peer pressure, depression, enhanced experience and performance are among the drivers of increased cases of drug abuse among the youth. Furthermore, 70 per cent of the reported incidents of substance abuse results in mental health illness and majority of these cases involves the youth¹⁷. The increased patronage of these drugs among students and drivers indicates a growing demand which encourages illegal drug trade and cultivation of marijuana. Abuse of drugs, besides its health implications on the youth, is also increases the risk of the youth population in violence. It is one of the sources of crimes and violence in schools and communities.

The demand for secession of Western Togoland by the Homeland Study Group Foundation (HSGF) in Ho, Volta Region is also a cause for concern. The HSGF has been agitating for an independent state of Trans-Volta Togoland¹⁸. The group's claim is hinged on political history when the Gold Coast (now Ghana) voted to be a unitary state on July 12, 1956, while the Western Togoland voted to be in a union with Ghana on July 9, 1956 and that the union had not been established¹⁹. The group has cited underdevelopment as part of its reason for demanding

¹²Emmanuel Dodzi Havi and Patrick Enu. "The Impact of Tourism on Economic Performance in Ghana". *European Scientific Journal*. December 2013. Edition Vol. 9, No. 34, ISSN: 1857-7881. Accessed on 13/06/2019. Available at: <https://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/viewFile/2173/2058>

¹³See <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2017/April-24th/travel-tourism-contributed-gh45b-to-2015-gdp.php>

¹⁴*The Ghanaian Times*. Friday June 7, 2019, No. 18.628. Page 3. Available at: www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶See <http://www.peacefonline.com/pages/local/social/201411/222894.php> Accessed on 06/06/2019.

¹⁷See <https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2018/03/18/drug-use-among-adolescents-is-rising-centre/> Accessed 06/06/2019.

¹⁸ See <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2019/May-6th/volta-group-planned-to-declare-independence-on-may-9-police-explain-arrests.php>

¹⁹Ibid.

secession. Recent police report has revealed that the group is engaged in recruiting and training young people in a militia-style as part of their plan to form a militia arm in support of their movement²⁰. While socio-cultural ties among the ethnic groups along the borders of Ghana and Togo is a resilient factor, it could also be exploited by the secessionists to rally support and facilitate movement of arms to pursue their course. The political instability in neighbouring Togo and porosity of its borders with Ghana along the Volta Region further increase the vulnerabilities for cross-border crimes including proliferation and smuggling of arms, drugs and mercenaries that could aid the activities of the secession agitation. Importantly, trends in similar secession activities across West Africa such as Nigeria, Senegal and Mali reveal the use of armed struggle and violence which usually result in a confluence of security threats including public disorder, human loss, displacements, and depletion of state resources. These experiences offer some lessons for Ghana as it seeks preventive mechanisms to confront political and national security challenges.

Moreover, the activities of vigilante groups associated with political parties and land guards also pose significant threats to Ghana's democratic stability. On one hand, vigilante groups have often been used by political parties to provide personal security, protect ballot boxes and perpetrate violence against political opponents. On the other, land guards serve as a source of recruitment for vigilantism as well as protection of private properties. While these phenomena are not new in the political space of Ghana, recent surge and proliferation of these groups with arms and security training portend significant threats to the security of the country. Currently, there are over 24-armed vigilante groups affiliated with political parties operating in the country²¹. Key among them are the *Azorka Boys* and *Hawks* associated with the NDC and *Delta and Invisible Forces* associated with the NPP. The recent violence at the Ayawaso West-Wuogon Constituency Parliamentary Bye-election in January 2019 linked to vigilante groups, suggests the gravity of the threats it poses to Ghana's democracy. The ability of these vigilante groups to cease public assets and interfere in court proceedings to free their colleagues from prosecution are also manifestations of the threat they pose. It indicates an attempt by the groups to entrench themselves as a semi-autonomous institution that threatens the legitimacy of the State. As the country prepares for the general elections of 2020, this political violence poses the likelihood of discrediting the democratic process and spiraling into widespread insecurity. It is an indication that these groups are capitalizing on their influence to exploit the political weaknesses in the country. While politicians rely on vigilantes to advance their electoral fortunes, the latter also

²⁰Ibid.

²¹See Ghanaweb. Available at: <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Security-analyst-names-24-violent-groups-in-Ghana-727985> . Accessed on 08/06/2029.

depends on their patronage for economic survival. Ghana's longstanding reputation in the comity of nations is as a result of its relative stability and democratic ethos. As such, threats to its democratic stability has wider implications on its political and economic development.

Related to the above, is the challenge of the exigencies of power contestation and its associated threats to Ghana's 2020 elections. While electoral contests remain a source of tensions and violence in hotspots constituencies in the country, the dynamics of the 2020 elections are likely to intensify these threats. A critical dynamic is that for the first time in the political history of Ghana, an incumbent President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of the NPP may likely be contesting against a former President, John Dramani Mahamah of the NDC, who lost the 2016 election. The tensions ahead of the elections are already evident in the current inter-party rancor, mutual accusations, use of hostile language and physical violence, as manifested in the Ayawaso West-Wuogon Constituency Parliamentary Bye-election in January 2019. In addition, the opposition NDC mistrust and suspicion of the Electoral Commission (EC) are also manifesting in the use of political polemics and accusations. This is a potential driver of conflict that could heighten tension and violence in the lead up to the 2020 elections.

Seeming deterioration of State-citizens relations is also a cause for concern. State-citizens' relation is hinged on social contract, where the State is responsible for the provision of basic social services including water, electricity, housing, roads, healthcare delivery, education, transparent and accountable governance among others. Despite efforts by successive governments to improve provision of these services to the people, there are challenges of inadequacies in social service delivery and perception of corruption. Ghana is ranked 78 out of 180 countries by Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2018²². Perception of corruption among public officials is giving rise to mistrust between the State and the citizenry. Inadequate social service and unemployment is also facilitating rural-urban migration, community agitations and poor attitudes towards environmental safety. It also manifests in the occurrences of public and local community demonstrations mainly against inadequate social amenities and difficult economic conditions in areas including the Central, Greater Accra, Ashanti, Eastern, Brong and Ahafo regions. In the first six months of 2019, there have been 18 recorded incidents of demonstrations across the country²³. Eight of these demonstrations turned violent, leading to two deaths and injuries to eight people²⁴. Perceived heavy handedness of the Police

²²Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, 2018. Available at: www.transparency.org . Accessed on 18/06/2019.

²³WANEP NEWS 2019. Available at: www.wanepnews.org . Accessed on 18/06/2019.

²⁴ Ibid.

on citizens were reported during those public demonstrations in an effort to enforce law and order. The Police have also been subjected to physical attacks by citizens in the execution of their lawful duties. These instances which suggest dwindling trust between civilian populations and the law enforcement agencies, is counterproductive to security and stability in the country.

Protracted chieftaincy disputes and ethnic clashes also remain prevalent in the north of Ghana. Recent cases of ethnic clashes between the Chokosi and Konkombas in Chereponi in the North-East Region since 2017 have resulted in deaths of nearly 20 people and over 15,000 forced to flee their homes²⁵. Similarly, protracted chieftaincy dispute in Bole Bamboi in the Savanna Region resulted in three people sustaining gunshot wounds during the Eid-ul Fitr celebration on June 5, 2019²⁶. The proximity of the affected regions to Burkina Faso's border with Ghana also portends security challenges in the face of heightened terrorist and extremist threats as well as the influx and use of arms in these conflicts. Terrorists and extremists could also exploit such local conflicts to reinforce their presence and mobilize for conflicting communities for the establishment and spread of violent extremism in northern Ghana.

The use and exploitation of the social media as a mobilization and propaganda tool for violent communication has also been flagged as a security threat to the country ahead of 2020 presidential elections. It has become a conduit for the spread of hate speeches, intemperate and inflammatory political statements and an avenue for inciting physical violence and mobilizing groups to public disorder. In this regard, the security implications of social media discourse are critical to social cohesion before, during and beyond the 2020 elections.

Ghana has also witnessed cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) especially against women and girls. Between January and May 2019, the country recorded 18 suspected rape cases in the Volta, Ashanti, Central, Brong, Ahafo, Greater Accra and Upper West regions²⁷. The trend emerging in rape cases suggests increasing vulnerability of women and girls to SGBV. This has implications on health, economic empowerment, education and other social consequences which undermine development of women and children.

Threats to maritime security and their consequences on human security present another considerable challenge to Ghana. Increased pirates' attacks on vessels have been recorded in the Gulf of Guinea. The rate of piracy increased from 16 in 2017 to 46 in 2018 with Ghana recording

²⁵WANEP *Quick Update* (Report from the field). Available at: www.wanep.org

²⁶*The Ghanaian Times*. Thursday June 6, 2019, No. 18.627. Page 3. Available at: www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh

²⁷WANEP NEWS. Available at: www.wanep.org

five incidents²⁸. In the first quarter of 2019, the Gulf of Guinea recorded 22 incidents related to piracy²⁹. Also, 21 crew members of various vessels were kidnapped across five separate incidents in coastal countries of Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia³⁰. The activities of pirates in the territorial waters of Ghana is a potential conduit for channeling arms and drugs.

Environmental security is also a critical challenge to biodiversity and human livelihoods.



Plastic bottles washed off-shore in Ghana
Credit: www.graphic.com (March 2019)

Dumping of toxic waste by foreign vessels at high sea and disposal of plastic waste in the country are worrying trends. Recently, ten 40-footer containers loaded with toxic waste shipped into the country were discovered at the Tema Harbour³¹. Internally,

Ghana produced 5,700 tonnes of polyethylene terephthalate (about 70,000 plastic bottles) every month³². Only 2 percent of this is recycled while the remaining 98 percent finds its way in the hands of waste management companies, streets, drain pipes and water bodies³³. The effect of this is evident in pollution of urban areas and clogging drainage systems which also contribute to the phenomenon of flooding in the country. It further has negative implications to the 'blue economy'³⁴. There are also growing concerns among local fish farmers about depletion of sea resources due to the activities of illegal fishing vessels and climate variabilities. Data available indicates that fishermen harvest less 20,000 tonnes of fish a year while the historical maximum

²⁸See www.graphic.com.gh August 15, 2018.

²⁹See www.worldmaritimeneews.com April, 2019.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ghanaweb, "High Tech Toxic Killing the Poor in Ghana". Accessed on 18/06/2019. Available at: <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/High-tech-toxic-waste-killing-the-poor-in-Ghana-425347>

³²Graphic Online. "The Plastic Waste Menace: 70,000 PET Bottles Produced Monthly". Available at: <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/ghananews-the-plastic-menace-ghana-faces-catastrophe-70-000-pet-bottles-produced-monthly.html>

³³Myjoyonline.com. "Ghana's Plastic Waste Management Problems – A Global Issue that Needs Local Awareness". Available at: <https://www.myjoyonline.com/opinion/2016/july-26th/ghanas-plastic-waste-management-problems-a-global-issue-that-needs-local-awareness.php> Accessed on 18/06/2019.

³⁴The World Bank defines the 'blue economy' as sustainable use of water and sea resources for economic growth and improved livelihoods and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem.

has been between 120,000 to 130,000 tonnes per year³⁵. In a situation where the yield in a particular period is less than 10 percent of the historical maximum, it suggests depletion of resources and its associated consequences³⁶. In view of the current trend in the depletion of sea resources in the country, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aqua Aquaculture has temporarily imposed a ban on fishing from May to July 2019 to safeguard the fishing industry which would contribute to replenish fish stocks. However, the ban is having effect on socio-economic livelihoods of fish farmers, especially women, household consumption, and the value chain of the fishing trade. The imposition of ban on fishing without alternative livelihood support for fish farmers has impact human livelihoods and a potential source of social vices in fishing communities.

In addition to environmental security, farmer-herder conflict and illegal mining continue to threaten human security in the country. In 2018, the country recorded nine incidents of violent farmer-herder conflicts in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Northern and Eastern Regions leading to the 10 fatalities including two security personnel, 27 cattle, destruction of many crops and properties³⁷. In a similar vein, between January – June 2019, seven incidents recorded have also resulted in the deaths of four people, killing of hundreds of cattle and destruction of food crops and properties mostly in the Ashanti and Eastern Regions³⁸. Access and utilization of small arms and light weapons in these conflicts is contributing to their proliferation in the country. Given the current security threats, farmer-herder conflicts have the potential to exacerbate the risks of violence and criminalities in the country. Besides, the experiences of farmer-herder conflicts in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso have shown exploitation of these conflicts by terrorists and organized criminal groups to unleash violence in communities. As such, farmer-herder conflict in Ghana is a critical flash point that requires attention in the face of growing security concerns. Another source of security concern is the activities of illegal mining in the country. the activities of illegal mining – *galamsey* – do not only affect the environment but also limit the country's ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (6, 11 and 13) focusing on clean water and sanitation, sustainable cities and communities and climate actions respectively. Even though the Government has made relative progress in its ban on the activities of *galamsey*³⁹, the absence of a comprehensive alternative livelihood support for majority of the youths who were engaged in

³⁵Available at: <https://www.pulse.com.gh/ece-frontpage/fishing-in-ghana-fish-stocks-are-severely-depleted-ngo-warns/0gh49hf> . Accessed on 13/06/2019

³⁶ibid.

³⁷WANEP Thematic Report on Farmer-Herder Conflicts. Available at: www.wanep.org

³⁸WANEP NEWS (January – June 2019). Available at: www.wanep.org

³⁹*Galamsey* is a local reference to illegal small-scale mining in the Ghanaian in the society which has caused significant damage to the environment in terms of pollution of rivers and other water bodies, degradation of lands and soil fertility, deaths of people and destruction of crops and biodiversity.

the sector is also a cause for security concern. Some of the youths who have lost their economic livelihoods are now turning to criminalities and other lawless acts for survival.

3.0. Resilient Factorss

Though the emerging security threats are imminent and have varied implications on Ghana's stability, there are existing mechanisms that could be strengthened for mitigation. These mechanisms include:

- Ghana's chieftaincy institution continues to play a role in conflict prevention, resolution and management at the community, regional and national levels. For example, the intervention of the Eminent Chiefs headed by the Asantehene in the protracted Dagbon chieftaincy crisis is a manifestation of the capacity of traditional institutions to respond to security threats. It is a further attestation of the relevance of state partnership with traditional institutions in conflict prevention. Additionally, the National House of Chiefs could be utilized in responding to threats to peace and security in the country. As custodians of lands, traditions and customs of people, chiefs and queen mothers are in a position to serve as the nerve centre of social cohesion and community resilience;
- The National Peace Council (NPC) remains a good example of peace infrastructure not only in Ghana but in West Africa. Since its establishment, it has been decentralized to support community and regional peacebuilding efforts. At the national level, it contributed to the mitigation of election violence, inter and intra-party disputes before, during and after the 2012 and 2016 elections. Currently, the NPC is engaging both the NPP and NDC in resolving the phenomenon of political vigilantism;
- The Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) was set up by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) as a platform to engage political parties, civil society and the media in deliberation and sharing of ideas and advice on electoral matters. This mechanism helps in facilitating dialogue and participation in electoral processes as well as mitigating disagreements among stakeholders of elections in Ghana;
- The setting up of the Emile Short Commission of Inquiry to investigate the recent electoral violence caused by political vigilante groups at the Ayawaso West-Wuogon Constituency Parliamentary bye-election held in January 2019 is a demonstration of effort by the State to provide appropriate response to emerging trend of political violence and vigilantism. In addition, the vigilantism and Related Offences Bill of 2019, currently before Parliament for consideration and passage into law, could play a role in disbanding and criminalizing the use of vigilantes and land guards to commit violence;

- Effort demonstrated by religious bodies in promoting national cohesion and awareness against threats of extremist attacks is important for enhancing resilience. Notably, the recent celebration of the 100th birthday of the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Nuhu Sharubutu at the Christ the King Catholic Church is a symbolic precursor to revitalize national cohesion. His recent call on Muslim communities to desist from violent acts and report suspected security threats to the police also demonstrates the relevance of key religious leaders as gatekeepers and mobilisers for social change, peace and security. The Christian Council of Ghana and the Catholic Bishop Conference have also joined in the ongoing effort to sensitize congregations and communities on emerging threats of extremist attacks in the country. These are relevant steps to support resilience effort to counter violent extremism in Ghana;
- The State is also taking steps towards enhancing prevention mechanisms against violent extremism through multi-stakeholder security discussions organized by the Government of Ghana with neighbouring coastal States – Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire. This seeks to enhance multilateral cooperation in mitigating cross cutting peace and security threats within the region.

4.0. Recommendations

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, the report recommends the following for response and mitigation:

The Government:

- The Government of Ghana should strengthen multi-lateral cooperation and intelligence sharing with Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire to counter and prevent the threats of terrorism and violent extremism in the countries;
- The Government of Ghana should align its counter terrorism strategy with that of ECOWAS to enhance harmonization and synergy in prevention and mitigation of terrorist and violent extremist threats;
- The Government of Ghana should increase support to strengthen the capacity of the security agencies through trainings, provision of equipment, increased presence of security, enhanced community-security relationship, especially in border areas in response to emerging threats to peace and security in country;
- The Government should foster partnership with local communities through restructuring and strengthening community policing structures to enhance resilience against growing threats to security;

- The Government should continue to maintain law and order in the Volta Region while creating a space for dialogue with relevant stakeholders including the secessionist group and map out the way forward;
- The Government of Ghana should strengthen collaboration with countries within the Gulf of Guinea and international partners on intelligence sharing, improve sea patrols, security of sea vessels and counter activities of illegal fishing at high sea;
- The Office of National Security Adviser should institutionalise a Monthly briefing of a multi-stakeholders to include security agents, think tanks, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate security situation (especially emanating from early warning systems) and proffer recommendations.

National Peace Council (NPC) and National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE):

- National Peace Council (NPC), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) should strengthen collaboration with the Ministry of Education, civil society organizations, the media, religious groups and traditional authorities to engage citizens through peace and civic education to enhance social cohesion and community resilience, especially in countering hate speeches, fake news and inciting of violence against individuals, groups and the state;
- The NPC, as part of its engagement with the NPP and NDC in the ongoing dialogue and mediation process on political vigilantisms, should develop a media engagement strategy to ensure a sustainable dialogue and mediation process;
- The NPC should consolidate its mandate of institutionalizing dialogue and mediation to respond to conflicts in Ghana;
- There is the need for national dialogue and sustained conversation on emerging security threats in the country with stakeholders including the Government, political parties, security agencies, religious institutions, traditional leaders, women and youth groups, labour unions, the media, civil society and other interest groups.

Civil Society Organisations and the Media:

- Civil Society Organizations and the media should intensify collaboration with the citizenry and facilitate national dialogue to enhance social cohesion through peace and civic education;
- CSOs should form collaborative fronts ahead of the 2020 election and already start designing activities that will respond to emerging threats.