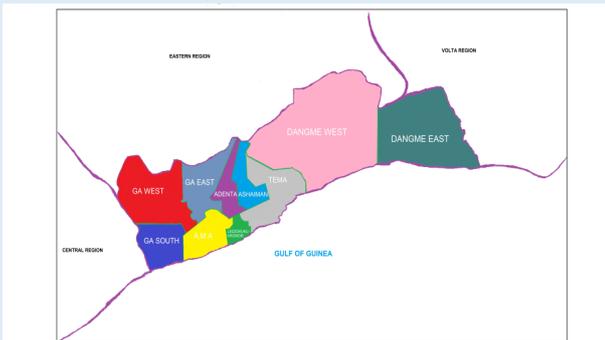


## Situation Updates of the Ayawaso West Wuogon By-Election Violence. 31st January, 2019

### BACKGROUND/ DEMORGRAPHY

Map of Ayawasi West Municipal Assembly



Source : Google maps

- ✓ Ayawaso Wuogon Constituency is located in Ayawaso West Municipal Assembly of the Greater Accra Region
- ✓ The municipality was carved out of the Ga West Municipal Assembly
- ✓ The municipality is a newly created one and is part of the thirty-eight (38) municipalities of the region
- ✓ The municipality is made of up various ethnic groups who have migrated to the capital.

### INCIDENT PROFILE

The Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana organised by-election for the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency due to the seat being vacant following the death of the Member of Parliament (MP), Emmanuel Kyeremanteng Agyarko, on November 21, 2018. The by-election was slated for 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2019.

An hour after commencement of voting, a chaotic scene was witnessed at the La Bawalashie Presbyterian School Polling Station following an impasse which ensued over the polls. Some armed men clothed in National Security apparel stormed the polling station and attacked some polling agents believed to be the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC). Eighteen people suffered gunshot wounds and injuries in the ensued attack. Reports indicated that the armed men also stormed the residence of the NDC candidate, Delali Kwasi Brempong. Mr. Sam George, the NDC Member of Parliament for Ningo Prampram, was also assaulted by unidentified men. Media sources further indicated that the injured persons have been admitted and are undergoing treatment at the University of Ghana Hospital, Legon and the 37 Military Hospital in Accra.

Subsequently, at a press conference, the Chairman of the opposition NDC, Mr. Samuel Ofose Ampofo, has indicated that the party has withdrawn from the by-election, citing security concerns. According to the party, despite the attacks against their members, the security forces have not been able to protect them.

The Coalition for Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) has condemned the heavy presence of security forces as well as masked officers at polling centres. According to the Coalition, this has created a frightened atmosphere where people are scared to come out to exercise their franchise. Also, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) has condemned reports of attacks and shootings at the by-election. The commission has described increasing party thuggery in elections as a threat to Ghana's democracy, peace and security.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr David Asante Apeatu, has directed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to speed up investigations into the shooting incident at the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency by-election.



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## **RISK ANALYSIS**

The ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) has occupied the Ayawaso West Wuogon parliamentary seat since 2000 until the death of its Member of Parliament. In the 2016 Parliamentary Election, for example, the NPP parliamentary candidate, Emmanuel Kyeremanteng Agyarko, won 32,591 votes representing 57.32% of the total votes cast. The main opposition party, National Democratic Congress (NDC) candidate, Delali Kwasi Brempong, won 22,534, representing 39% of the total votes cast. William Dowokpor of the Progressive People's Party (PPP) also won 1,099, which constituted 1.93% of the total votes cast. The Convention People's Party (CPP) parliamentary candidate, Kwaku Quansah, won 638, representing 1.12% of the total votes cast in the Parliamentary Election. About 90,000 voters are expected to cast their ballot in the by-election at the Constituency. Given a deficit of 10,057 votes for the NDC, the NPP is likely to retain the parliamentary seat.

Prior to the by-election, the NDC contested the copy of voter register issued to them by the EC as bloated with 1,165 voters and accused the commission for using two different registers to favour the NPP. However, in a press release signed by Dr. Bossman Asare, the Deputy Chairman of the Electoral Commission, described the allegation by the NDC as unfounded. The EC's statement further gave assurance to the general public that the register to be used for the conduct of the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election is clean and has not been tampered with. In spite of this assurance, the seeming disagreement between the NDC and the EC points to mistrust, especially on the part of the opposition ahead of the 2020 elections. This is a potential source of tension that could increase insecurity in the country's elections.

Security wise, the risk of retaliatory attacks by the NDC supporters is also likely. Inadequate information from the Police Service, regarding the measures it seeks to contain the chaotic situation is fuelling fear and panic, especially on the part of the constituents. Though the IGP has called for investigations into the matter, frequent interaction and update on the shooting incident with the public is critical in assuaging tensions in effected areas. Equally, such interactions are important in winning public confidence in the Police, which appears to be waning. More importantly, the violent attacks perpetuated by alleged party vigilante groups at the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election, is an indication that the menace of political vigilantism is increasingly becoming entrenched in the electoral politics of Ghana. This is a foretaste of the risk of violence ahead of the 2020 general elections, which would continue to undermine Ghana's democracy, peace and security if drastic measures are not initiated to address the menace.

## **COPING MECHANISMS :**

- Security personnel – the Police and Military- have been dispatched to the constituency to beef up security. In addition, the IGP has called for immediate investigations into the shooting incident at the constituency by-election.



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- The victims who sustained gunshot wounds and injuries have been admitted and are undergoing medical treatment at the 37 Military Hospital and the University of Ghana Hospital, Legon.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The Inspector General of Police, through his Public Relations Officer should provide the general public updates on the current security situation in order to calm down tensions at the constituency. There is also the need for the Police to intensify effort, leading to arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators;
- The Government, National Peace Council, National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Police, Armed Forces, EC, CSO and the Media should intensify national dialogue with political parties to address the menace of political vigilantism in the country ahead of election 2020;
- The EC should intensify its engagement with political parties through the Inter-Party Agreement Committee (IPAC) to enhance parties' confidence in the electoral process ahead of the election 2020. The EC should also intensify its engagement with the general public to educate them on the electoral process ahead of the 2020 elections
- CSOs, the media, youth and women groups, traditional leaders, faith-based organisations and relevant stakeholders should intensify engagement with the citizenry through voter and peace education.

## **References :**

1. WANEP-Ghana National Early Warning System (NEWS)
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