

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

- 1. Please provide up to date information on the status of the ethnic/religious clashes in northern Ghana.**
- 2. Please provide an up-date on the political situation in Ghana.**
- 3. Please provide information on the status of police protection in Ghana.**
- 4. Provide any information on an MP from the NDC named Dr Mustafa Ahmed.**
- 5. Is there any time-frame after a death for an “adua” to be held according to Muslim tradition?**

RESPONSE

- 1. Please provide up to date information on the status of the ethnic/religious clashes in northern Ghana?**

An RRT Research Response completed in April 2009 provides general information on tribal groups in Ghana and the prevalence of ethnic and religious conflict. Whilst there are recurrent outbreaks of violent conflict, these are not recently associated with the two tribal groups identified (RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response GHA34725 (Q1-2)*, 16 April – Attachment 1).

The US State Department in its most recent report on religious freedom noted that there was no significant relationship between ethnicity and religion. Most of the Muslim population reside in northern areas;

however, geography is often associated with religious identity. The majority of the Muslim population resides in northern areas as well as in the urban centers of Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, and Wa, while the majority of the followers of indigenous religious beliefs reside in rural areas. Christians live throughout the country (US Department

of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2009 – Ghana*, October – Attachment 2).

2. Please provide an up-date on the political situation in Ghana.

An RRT Research Response from July 2009 provides information on the 2008 elections, in which the National Patriotic Party (NPP) convincingly won both the Presidential and parliamentary elections, defeating the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and its President John Kufuor (RRT Research & Information 2009, *RRT Research Response GHA35085*, 30 July (Question 3) – Attachment 3).

President Mills has been the target of criticism by former President Jerry John Rawlings for his slowness in investigating corruption associated with the opposition New Patriotic Party and for appointing mediocre ministers. Following the announcement of new metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives, some NDC members expressed opposition and a party office was burnt. According to a report in *Africa Confidential* in April,

The intra-party conflicts have been greatest in heavily populated, ethnically mixed urban areas, where there has been an eruption of ethnic intolerance, stoked up for political reasons, since the NDC took power. South-eastern Ga-Dangme youths led protests against Kufuor's use of a state-owned property as his office, claiming that the house was on Ga land. Kufuor was later ejected from the building on the orders of Gbevlo-Lartey. The Ga-Dangme claim may be legitimate, although laws whose roots lie in the British colonial era allow the authorities to acquire some land by force and in perpetuity, subject to compensation. Some Ahanta and Nzema people have made similar claims to a special share of the oil revenue anticipated from the deepwater offshore Jubilee Field, where 1.8 billion barrels (so far) of crude reserves were discovered in 2007. Critics respond that Ghana, as a unitary rather than, like Nigeria, a federal state, makes no provision for the special treatment of particular tribes ('The Mills grind slowly' 2009, *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 50. No. 8, 17 April, <http://www.africa-confidential.com/index.aspx?pageid=7&articleid=3056> – Accessed 16 November 2009 – Attachment 4).

By October 2009, three ministers had resigned during 2009, the two most recent for having been found to have been associated with the acceptance of bribes paid by Mabey & Johnson to win bridge-construction projects during the Rawlings government ('Corruption claims and rows tarnish Accra's record' 2009, *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 50., No. 21, 23 October, <http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/3290/Corruption-claims-and-rows-tarnish-Accra's-record> – Accessed 16 November 2009 – Attachment 5). Following allegations of corruption made against the youth and sports minister, Alhaji Mohammed Muntaka Mubarak, which he denied were true, he was forced to resign in June.

US President Obama visited Ghana in the middle of 2009, and addressed the Ghanaian Parliament on 11th July, suggesting it could be a model for other African countries ('Obama's rallying call in Africa' 2009, *The Times*, 11 July, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article6688819.ece> – Accessed 16 November 2009 – Attachment 6).

In September 2009 a new political party, Nkrumah Never Dies Party (NNDP), was in the process of registration. According to a spokesman, Mr Amusu Kwaggrey, the party would honour the Ghanaian leader who had led the country to independence from Britain;

Further expatiating on the objectives of the party, Mr Amusu said there were so many people out there who believed in the ideals of Dr Nkrumah but did not belong to any political party.

“It is such people and the masses the NNDP is going to mobilize to build a strong and vibrant party”.

According to Mr Amusu, it would take a new political force to stem the tide of the somersault, which began in 1996, stressing that the NNDP has been formed to raise the general level of consciousness of the citizens and draw new programmes for national rebirth and reconstruction.

“NNDP is out to mobilize the people of Ghana to revitalize the Ghanaian dream. This revitalization programme, shall take the form of political reforms, social reconstruction and economic independence,” he said, adding this will enable “us to rebuild Ghana and resume anew the struggle for our total development” (‘GHANA: New political party formed in Ghana 2009, *Ghanaian Times*, 22 September – Attachment 7).

3. Please provide information on the status of police protection in Ghana.

A Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board Research Response of October 2006 reported comments from two academic commentators who believed that the targetting of political opponents which had occurred during the presidency of Jerry John Rawlings (1982-2000) had generally ended. The Director of the Centre of African Studies at the University of Edinburgh commented that

By and large, the treatment of political dissidents or members of opposition and their families in Ghana today has improved noticeably. This is a departure from the past when political dissidents in Ghana were badly treated. It is increasingly becoming difficult, if not impossible, to mobilize violence to brutalize sections of society who peacefully oppose the regime and its policies. Citizens are not only enfranchised, but are free to demonstrate, without police permit, against state and government policies. And the last year has witnessed many such public demonstrations by members of the opposition, which were free and without government reprisal....

These positive developments notwithstanding, there have been certain disquieting developments, which seem to suggest that, Ghana, whilst not yet a “failed state”, is incapable of providing protection for some of her citizens. For instance, before the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections, the Northern Regional Chairman of the Convention Peoples’ Party, Mr. Mobilla, died inexplicably in police custody. Before that incident, the Ya-Na, the prominent Dagon King and forty of his elders were murdered in factional fighting in Yendi, Northern Ghana.... The week before last [in August 2006], Rojo Mettle Nunoo, the campaign manager for opposition candidate Professor Mills, in the 2004 presidential elections claimed that some unidentified callers had threatened to “kill” him after he had openly criticized the current Ghanaian president, describing him as “unintelligent and irresponsible” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2006, *GHA101615.E* -

Ghana: Treatment of political dissidents or members of the opposition and their family members (2004 – 2006), 23 October – Attachment 8).

The US Department of State provided a general overview of the state of policing in Ghana in its most recent report on human rights practices:

The police, under the jurisdiction of a 10-member Police Council, are responsible for maintaining law and order. The military continued to participate in law enforcement activities

during the year. The Ghana Police Service is within the Ministry of Interior. A separate entity, the Bureau of National Investigations, handled cases considered critical to state security and answered directly to the Ministry of National Security. The police maintained specialized units in Accra for homicide, forensics, domestic violence, visa fraud, narcotics, and cyber-crimes. However, there were significant barriers to extending such services nationwide, including a lack of office accommodation, police vehicles, and equipment outside of Accra.

The police service received repeated criticism due to incidents of police brutality, corruption, and negligence. Impunity remained a problem. Delays in prosecuting suspects, rumors of police collaboration with criminals, and the widespread perception of police ineptitude contributed to an increase in vigilante violence during the year. There were also credible reports that police extorted money by acting as private debt collectors, by setting up illegal checkpoints, and by arresting citizens in exchange for bribes from detainees' disgruntled business associates.

The constitution and law provide for protection against arbitrary arrest and detention; however, the government did not always observe these prohibitions.

Government officials stated that the policy of zero tolerance for corruption applied to police and other security officials; however, low salaries, which were sometimes not paid on time, contributed to the tendency of individual law enforcement officials to demand bribes (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Ghana*, February, Section 1d- Attachment 9).

An *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)* article reported in June 2008 on 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;

The Head of Public Relations at the police headquarters, assistant commissioner of police Kwesi Ofori acknowledged the police force has credibility problems. "We have challenges but we are working on it," he said, pointing to short staffing as one of the main constraints.

Ofori said revamping the police force is only half the battle. The court system also needs to be streamlined. "It creates a bad image for us [police] when we arrest people and process them for court and it takes forever to reach a conviction," he said.

There are no exact figures but Ghana's judicial service say several thousands of unheard cases across the country are pending before the courts. Some of these cases [have been pending for as long as five years](#).

Reforms

The government of Ghana recently signed a US\$12.5 million financing agreement with the European Commission to invest in the police and Ofori said the service will be embarking on a massive recruitment drive to improve the number of cops on the beat.

Ghana's judicial service has also rolled out ambitious judicial reforms including court automation, building more law courts, appointing more judges and compulsory weekend courts to speed up the pace of justice ('Ghana: Vigilante groups fill security vacuum' 2008, *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)*, 23 June – Attachment 10).

A previous research response of September 2009 discussed issues relating to conflict in the Bawku and North East Region (RRT Research & Information 2009, Research Response GHA35336, 10 September (Questions 2 and 6) – Attachment 11).

4. Provide any information on an MP from the NDC named Dr Mustafa Ahmed.

The Hon. Ahmed Mustapha is currently a member of the Ghanaian Parliament and represents the seat of East Ayawaso, for the NDC, to which he was first elected in 2000. He is a qualified dental surgeon, educated at the University of Ghana and College of Medicine, University of Lagos. He served as a dental officer in the Ghana Armed Forces for approximately 3 years 1987-2000. He was born in Bakwa, is Muslim and is married with four children (Parliament of Ghana website (undated), 'Hon Ahmed Mustapha (Maj), (Dr), (ALH), (RETD)', http://www.parliament.gh/honahmed_mustapha_majdr_alhrettd.html – Accessed 12 November 2009 – Attachment 12). He has progressively increased the NDC vote in his electorate, from his narrow victory by a few hundred votes in 2000 over the NPP candidate Kofi Wayo, to over 89% of the vote in December 2008 (Parliamentary Election Results Trend Ayawaso East (undated), Think Ghana website, <http://www.thinkghana.com/elections/trend/greateraccra/118/index.php> – Accessed 12 November 2009 – Attachment 13).

According to an article in the Accra *Daily Mail* in 2000, he was involved in the formation of the June 4 Movement during the time he was a student ('Ghana: Farouk's supporters say "no"' 2000, All Africa [source: Accra *Daily Mail*], 21 September, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200009210068.html> – Accessed 11 November 2009 – Attachment 14).

He has made numerous public statements in his capacity as an MP, including support for greater educational opportunities for young people at the launch of the East Ayawaso Education Endowment Fund (Accra *Daily Mail*, 17 December 2001), the return of Ghanaian prisoners held in brutal conditions in Thai jails (*Modern Ghana News*, 22 December 2004), encouraging students from the Muslim community to take advantage of education and for parents of that community to invest in education instead of elaborate funeral and marriage ceremonies (Accra *Daily Mail*, 13 August 2006); the need for the police, community and the media to work co-operatively to create a suitable environment for development (*Ghanaian Chronicle*, 20 October 2006); supported the idea of the Neighbourhood Watch Committee (*Public Agenda*, 6 October 2008); on public health issues including labeling of cigarette packets and the commitment of the government to improving sanitation. He was recently scheduled to appear as a panelist at a maternal and child health conference in Accra on November 10-11 (ASADI Fifth Annual Meeting (undated), African Science Academy Development Initiative website, http://www.nationalacademies.org/asadi/2009_Conference/ASADI5-GhanaReg.html – Accessed 17 November 2009 – Attachment 15).

In August 2009, the Ayawaso Council of Zongo Muslim Chiefs made formal acknowledgement of the work of Dr Mustapha and two other community leaders in the socio-economic development of the Nima Community ('Ayawaso Council honours three eminent citizens' 2009, *Ghana Broadcasting Corporation*, 16 August – <http://gbcghana.com/news/27493detail.html> – Accessed 11 November 2009 – Attachment 16).

In an incident in early 2006, Dr Ahmed's land cruiser vehicle was reportedly vandalized and cash and personal belongings stolen from it. The former president Jerry Rawlings was reported to have called him shortly after the accident and said to have commented that it was

fortunate that his car was ‘only broken into and that the car could have been burnt’. The article, published on the Ghana Web news site suggested that pro-Rawlings supporters were responsible for the burglary (‘Police to quiz Rawlings’ 2006, Ghanaweb, 20 January, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=97923> – Accessed 11 November 2009 – Attachment 17).

5. Is there any time-frame after a death for an “adua” to be held according to Muslim tradition?

Information on the sequence of events associated with funeral observances as described in a study by Esther Goody of the Gonja of West Africa indicates that prayers for the dead (adua) may be held at the time of death, 7 days later and at 40 days;

1. The day of death:
 - Sounding the death – by drums and wailing
 - Seclusion of surviving spouse, eldest son and eldest daughter
 - Bathing of the corpse
 - Divining the cause of death
 - Burial
 - Prayers for the dead (*adua*)

Throughout the day mourners arrive to ‘greet the funeral’, bringing contributions of kola, drink and money towards the wake-keeping of the next days. Thus begins a week of intensive mourning during which more parties of mourners arrive from other villages to ‘greet the funeral’. The arrival of each group is heralded by wailing as they come within sight of the village, and this is taken up by those in the funeral house (*kali bu*). No kinsman or friend of the deceased ought to go to the farm or to each a full cooked meal of soup and porridge until after the three-day funeral.

2. The three-day funeral (*ntchensa*) (four day funeral for a woman) also called *bu kapulia* (the opening of the pot):
 - Following the death of important or very elderly men and women, *awoba* dirges are sung throughout the night before the three-day funeral
 - Killing of sheep (or cow) and distribution of meat
 - First funeral *kude* prepared and distributed
 - Prayers for the dead

A widower is bathed and shaved at dawn after the four-day funeral of his wife, then dressed in new clothes. The eldest son and daughter may be bathed at this time or after the seven-day funeral.

3. The seven-day funeral (Ntchensunu):
 - Awoba dirges sung as for three-day funeral
 - Killing of sheep (or cow) and distribution of meat
 - Preparation and distribution of second funeral *kude*
 - Prayers for the dead
 - Visit to the ‘farm’ and testing of the widows
 - Reckoning of debts
 - Sweeping the room and throwing away of the *akalibi* shrine

The widow ‘leaves the room’ at dawn of the day following the seven-day funeral, when she is bathed, shaved and dressed in white.

4. The forty-day funeral (*ntchendena*):

Performed publicly only for very senior men and women. Prefaced by *awoba* dirges, it consists mainly of the killing of a cow, distribution of the meat, and the preparation and distribution of a funeral *kude*. During the sacrifice and preparation of the food, dirges and praises are sung, and certain dances may be performed. Prayers are said in the evening.

5. The commemoration of the first anniversary of death (*kafe*):

The observances on this occasion are the same as for the forty-day funeral, and, like it, the commemoration of the first year is not often celebrated. It may be this occasion which is chosen for the final allocation of the property of the deceased among his heirs.

The public prayers (*adua*) are offered by Muslim priests, usually all those in the community gathering for the occasion (Goody, Esther, 1973, *Contexts of kinship; an essay in the family sociology of the Gonja of Northern Ghana*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 144-45 – http://books.google.com.au/books?id=1ETqa2eNNh4C&pg=PA145&lpg=PA145&dq=Muslim+prayer+for+the+deceased+ghana&source=bl&ots=P8tSEKU7K8&sig=XcRmiksKbjIKiveGc1wI0GmAftY&hl=en&ei=HtnnSezwJ8-IkQX7wqSoBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9#v=onepage&q=&f=false – Attachment 18).

Another source indicates that *adua* could also be said at 40 days;

The death is announced of the demise of Auntie Amina Laryea, mother of Awudu Nelson, former goalkeeper of Accra Great Olympics and the senior national team, the Black Stars and Osumanu Nelson alias 'Dunia' of Kumasi King Faisal Football club.

Auntie Amina Laryea died on October 28 and has since been buried according to Muslim custom. A statement issued by Awudu Nelson said the 40th Day Muslim prayer, (*Adua*) for Auntie Laryea will take place on Saturday, December 10 at house No. B 742/4, Winneba Road, opposite the Kaneshie Market in Accra at 10 am.

Mr Nelson has on behalf of the family accordingly inviting all soccer loving fans, well wishers and sympathisers to join the family in the special prayers for the funeral rites ('Former Black Stars player loses mum' 2005, Ghana Today website, <http://www.ghanatoday.com/index.php?option=news&task=viewarticle&sid=14176> – Accessed 17 November 2009 – Attachment 19).

List of Sources Consulted

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Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/>

UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

International News & Politics

BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

The Economist <http://www.economist.co.uk>

Non-Government Organisations

UNHCR Refworld <http://www.refworld.org>

European Country of Origin Information <http://www.ecoi.net>

Region Specific Links

All Africa <http://allafrica.com>

Africa Confidential <http://www.africa-confidential.com/home>

Ghana Web <http://www.ghanaweb.com/>

Search Engines

Webcrawler <http://www.webcrawler.com>

Google Scholar <http://www.google.com>

All the Web <http://www.alltheweb.com>

Hakia <http://www.hakia.com>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

MRT-RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response GHA34725*, 16 April..
2. US Department of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2009 – Ghana*, October.
3. RRT Research & Information 2009, *RRT Research Response GHA 35085*, 30 July.
4. ‘The Mills grind slowly’ 2009, *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 50. No. 8, 17 April, <http://www.africa-confidential.com/index.aspx?pageid=7&articleid=3056> – Accessed 16 November 2009.
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16. 'Ayawaso Council honours three eminent citizens' 2009, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, 16 August – <http://gbcghana.com/news/27493detail.html> – Accessed 11 November 2009.
17. 'Police to quiz Rawlings' 2006, Ghanaweb, 20 January, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=97923> – Accessed 11 November 2009.
18. Goody, Esther, 1973, *Contexts of kinship; an essay in the family sociology of the Gonja of Northern Ghana*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 144-45 – http://books.google.com.au/books?id=1ETqa2eNNh4C&pg=PA145&lpg=PA145&dq=Muslim+prayer+for+the+deceased+ghana&source=bl&ots=P8tSEKU7K8&sig=XcRmiksKbjIKiveGc1wI0GmAftY&hl=en&ei=HtnnSezwJ8-IkQX7wqSoBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9#v=onepage&q=&f=false – Accessed 17 November 2009.
19. 'Former Black Stars player loses mum' 2005, Ghana Today website, <http://www.ghanatoday.com/index.php?option=news&task=viewarticle&sid=14176> – Accessed 17 November 2009.