Ghana

Country Overview

Politics

Ghana is a presidential republic in West Africa. Following the most recent election, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo became president on January 7, 2017 after defeating the incumbent candidate, then-president John Dramani Mahama in what was judged to be a peaceful election. The country’s political atmosphere has been relatively stable and peaceful since the early 1990s, when the new constitution re-established a multi-party political system.

Economy

Ghana is classified by the World Bank as a lower middle-income economy. Ghana’s GDP was USD 37.54 billion in 2015. The GDP is expected to reach a growth rate of approximately 7.5 percent by 2018. The country’s main primary commodity exports include gold, cocoa and oil. Cocoa has been central to the Ghanaian economy. The U.S. Department of State reports that it is one of the better locations within sub-Saharan Africa for investment due to its current good governance, political stability and political reforms. Of the labor force of approximately 11.99 million in 2016, an estimated 19.5 percent work in agriculture, 24 percent work in industry and 56.4 percent work in the service industry.

At present, the Ghanaian economy is heavily dependent on its primary commodity exports, thus making it sensitive to fluctuations in commodity market prices. To combat this vulnerability, the government of Ghana is actively promoting the export of additional non-traditional products in an attempt to diversify its export base. These non-traditional exports include products such as cocoa butter and oil, wood manufactures, apparel and fresh vegetables, among others. Ghana is eligible for trade under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and is a Feed the Future, Power Africa, Trade Africa, and Partnership for Growth country.

Social/Human Development

The vast majority of the nearly 27 million people currently living in Ghana identify with eight ethnic groups: Akan (47.5 percent), Mole-Dagbon (16.6 percent), Ewe (13.9 percent), Ga-Dangme (7.4 percent), Gurma (5.7 percent), Guan (3.7 percent), Grusi (2.5 percent), and Mande (1.1 percent). The remaining 1.4 percent identify as ‘other.’ Since independence in the 1950s, Ghana has been a destination for regional migrants, although emigration has peaked periodically during economic slowdowns. The
country has a large number of internal migrants who travel to urban regions. A 2013 estimate indicates that approximately 24.2 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.\(^9\) Ghana’s Human Development Index score for 2015 was 0.579, ranking the country 139 out of 188 countries.\(^10\)


**U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2 Watch List**

According to the *Trafficking in Persons Report*, trafficking risk may be found among Ghanaian children in export supply chains including fishing, artisanal gold mining, quarrying, herding, and agriculture. Women and girls are vulnerable to sex trafficking associated with the oil sector.

Read the full TIP Report at: [https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271194.htm](https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271194.htm)

**Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations**

Ghana has negative net migration\(^11\) and only 1.4 percent of the country’s population are migrants.\(^12\) The largest source countries for migrants are Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia and Benin.\(^13\) An estimated 17,406 refugees out of a total of 19,265 persons of concern lived in Ghana in 2015.\(^14\) The refugee population is primarily from Côte d’Ivoire, Togo, Liberia, Sudan and Central African Republic, with many having lived in the country for at least five years.\(^15\)
The most popular destination for Ghanaians is Nigeria, followed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Togo, Italy, Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Germany, Canada and Mali.
Migrants from Ghana

- Nigeria: 222,377
- United States of America: 134,338
- United Kingdom: 102,837
- Togo: 46,794
- Italy: 46,548

Legend:
- Green: Nigeria
- Red: United States of America
- Yellow: United Kingdom
- Blue: Togo
- Purple: Italy
Exports and Trade

Ghana’s top exports in 2016 were gold, cocoa, mineral fuels, wood, and fruits and nuts.¹⁷

The top importers of all goods from Ghana are Switzerland, India, China, the Netherlands and the United States of America.¹⁸
Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers’ Rights

Freedom of Association

The law provides workers, with the exception of military, police, Ghanaian Prison System and security and intelligence personnel, with the rights to form and organize unions. However, only those unions that have the membership of at least half of the workforce can receive a collective bargaining certificate, which is required for a union to engage in collective bargaining with management. Additionally, workers who perform services that are deemed to be ‘essential’ by the Ghanaian government may not participate in strikes. The Ghanaian government’s definition of essential services includes services that are outside of the ILO’s definition of essential services, such as utility workers and medical center employees. The U.S. Department of State reports that the Ghanaian government generally respects eligible workers’ rights to freedom of association. In 2016, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) gave Ghana a rating of 2, on its 1 – 5+ scale, with lower scores meaning the country offers better protections of workers’ rights.

Working Conditions

The law sets a daily minimum wage of 8.8 cedis (USD 2) and a maximum workweek of 40 hours. The law also stipulates that workers must receive at least 48 hours of consecutive rest every seven days. Workers are also entitled to at least 15 days of paid annual leave. However, the minimum wage, working hours and paid leave policies do not apply to domestic workers or those who work in the informal sector, which accounted for approximately 88 percent of the Ghanaian workforce in 2014. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State reports that the Ghanaian government has been ineffective in enforcing its minimum wage, hours and other health and safety legislation.

Discrimination

Although the law prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation based on gender, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, political opinion, social or economic status, or disability, it does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on age, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, HIV-positive status, or other communicable diseases. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State reports that the government does not effectively enforce its anti-discrimination legislation.
Forced Labor

The law prohibits forced labor, but the U.S. Department of State reports that resources, inspections, remediation and penalties are inadequate.24

Child Labor

The minimum age for general employment in Ghana is 15 years old. Thirteen is the minimum age for work that can be described as light work that is unlikely to cause harm to the child or interfere in his or her school attendance. Children under 18 are prohibited from performing hazardous labor. However, the U.S. Department of State reports that the Ghanaian government’s enforcement of its child labor laws has been both ineffective and inconsistent. Additionally, while the Ghanaian constitution provides all children with a free, compulsory basic education from kindergarten to junior high school, not all children complete their education. Children in the norther regions of the country, especially girls, are less likely to attend school, leading to an education disparity.25

Civil Society Organizations

The U.S. Department of State reports that human rights groups “generally operated without government restriction” and that “government officials often were cooperative and responsive to their views.”26

Immigration Policies Limiting the Employment Options or Movements of Migrants

Foreigners and refugees can apply for work permits for employment in the formal sector, although the U.S. Department of State reports that most non-Ghanaians are employed in the informal sector.27 Refugees in Ghana have the right of freedom of movement, the right to work, and opportunities for naturalization.28
Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 29 Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 100 Equal Remuneration</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 111 Discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 138 Minimum Age</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 97 Migration for Employment</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
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Use of Export Processing Zones

There are several free trade zones in Ghana, which were established after the Free Zones Act was passed in 1995. Within these zones “free zone developers and enterprises shall be free to negotiate and establish contracts of employment with employees that include wage scales, minimum working hours, employee suspension and dismissal, settlement of disputes arising between employers and employees, and other such terms of employment as shall be consistent with I.L.O. Conventions on workers’ rights and conditions of service.” Additionally, companies within free trade zones are not required to pay corporate taxes for the first 10 years after they are established. For any subsequent years, the zones are subject to a corporate tax of up to eight percent.³⁰

Promotion of Emigration/Remittance Economy

In 2015, remittances accounted for only .2 percent of Ghana’s GDP.³¹ In 2015, approximately 800,000 Ghanaians emigrated from the country, primarily to Nigeria, the U.S. and the U.K.³² The U.S. Central
Intelligence Agency reports that the increase of emigration to the U.S. and U.K. since the 1990s has “drained the country of its health care and education professionals.”

Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

Ghana scores a 71.2 in the 2016 Fragile States Index, placing it in the “Warning” Category. The recent presidential elections were judged to be free and fair and there was a peaceful transition of power.

Level of Crime and Violence

The World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report ranked Ghana at 95 out of 140 and 98 out of 144 for business costs of violence and crime and organized crime respectively. The U.S. Department of State describes a level of crime and violence that is comparable to regional neighbors and specifically points to Ghana’s emergence as “a significant trans-shipment point for illegal drugs, particularly cocaine from South America and heroin from Afghanistan.”

State Persecution

In 2015, there were approximately 19,000 “persons of concern,” fewer than other nearby countries, including Côte d’Ivoire, which had over one million persons of concern. Throughout Ghana, people who are disabled, LGBTI, or HIV-positive face the highest amounts of discrimination and/or, persecution. There have been a number of police brutality complaints, which have reportedly been largely unaddressed.

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores Ghana as a 43 out of 100, where a 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and 100 signals “Very Clean”. Ghana is ranked 70 out of 176 on that index. According to the U.S. Department of State, there is a high level of corruption in all branches of the government, including the judiciary, the police force and the executive offices. The World Bank scores Ghana as a 53 out of 100 on its Control of Corruption ratings, with a 100 being a perfect score. Compared to its regional neighbors, Ghana’s rank is relatively low.
Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation ranks Ghana as number 11 out of the 54 countries in Africa in terms of human development, with a score of 64.2 out of 100. In the UN Human Development Index, Ghana is scored in the medium human development category, with a rank of 139 out of 188 countries worldwide and a score of 0.579. However, neighboring countries surrounding Ghana rank lower in the UN rankings, including Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin.

Level and Extent of Poverty

According to the UN, approximately 32.4 percent of Ghanaians live in multidimensional poverty, with another 20.5 percent living near multidimensional poverty.

Although poverty levels have been decreasing, economic growth within the country is uneven, with a large degree of inequality. Increasing prosperity is focused in the more metropolitan areas of the country, while the north remains underdeveloped. When adjusted for inequality, the Human Development Index score falls to 0.391, a loss of over 32 percent. This demonstrates a higher degree of inequality within the country.

Degree of Gender Inequality

The United Nations Human Development Programs 2016 Gender Inequality Index rating for Ghana is 0.547, slightly better than the average of 0.572 for all of Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the average gender inequality rating for the countries that the UN has deemed to be “medium development countries,” including Ghana, is 0.491, meaning that the level of gender inequality in Ghana is higher than that of other countries of similar development levels. The UN reports that approximately 52 percent of women have a secondary education level, compared to approximately 68.5 percent of men. The rate of female participation in the labor market is 75.5 percent, compared to 78.5 percent for men. In 2015, women held less than 11 percent of the seats in parliament.

Gender-based discrimination is prohibited by law and although women in Accra and other urban areas face little overt discrimination in the workplace, there is still societal discrimination against women trying to enter less mainstream occupations. Additionally, although women have legal rights to own land, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reports that “the percentage of female landholders ranges from 2 percent in the north to 50 percent in the Ashanti region, where property is distributed according to a matrilineal system.”
Landlessness and Dispossession

The majority of land in Ghana (over 75 percent) is governed by customary law, which includes practices shown to discriminate against female inheritance of land. This also reportedly enables “corrupt local leaders to benefit from rising land values at the expense of their community members.”

Land grabs in Ghana have occurred, primarily for corporate agricultural production.

Environmental Factors

Ghana is susceptible to both floods and droughts, both of which can cause disturbances in citizens’ work and home lives. The country is currently experiencing a drought that is causing disruptions to the agricultural practices in the north.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Cocoa

Cocoa Overview

Cocoa contributed 8.2 percent of Ghana’s GDP and accounts for approximately 30 percent of the country’s total export earnings. Total cocoa production in the country grew from 450,000 tons in the year 2000, to 900,000 tons in the year 2010. The vast majority of cocoa is grown on small-holder farms. It is estimated that the livelihoods of six million people, between 25 and 30 percent of the population, are dependent on the cocoa industry. The market in Ghana is uniquely regulated. COCOBOD, the government board, purchases beans from farmers via authorized traders who are required to pay a minimum price. These traders then sell to the government-run Cocoa Marketing Company, which manages exports.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Cocoa

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, cocoa is produced with child labor in Ghana. A 2015 report published by Tulane University compared the 2008 – 2009 cocoa harvest cycle to the 2013 – 2014 harvest cycle in terms of active child labor in both Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana. The report found that child labor in Ghana decreased by 6 percent between the two harvest cycles, lowering from 0.93 million children in 2008/29 to 0.88 million children in 2013 - 2014.
Gold

Gold Overview

Gold accounts for over 96 percent of mined minerals in Ghana, and the minerals sector is responsible for roughly 37 percent of the county’s GDP. The gold mining sector in Ghana employs over 17,000 people, and over 98 percent of them are native to the country.\textsuperscript{56} Over a third of production occurs in small-scale mining operations and illegal mining remains a key issue in the country.\textsuperscript{57} It is estimated that USD $2.3 billion worth of gold was mined illegally in 2016 alone, with most of the illegal gold being exported to India and China.\textsuperscript{58}

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Gold

According to the U.S. Department of State, children are subjected to forced labor in artisanal gold mining.\textsuperscript{59} Girls who are as young as ten are reportedly trafficked to mining camps.\textsuperscript{60} Hazardous child labor has been well documented, most notably by a 2015 report from Human Rights Watch. According to the report, thousands of children are involved in hazardous gold mining in artisanal gold mines in Ghana. These children may work with their families or independently. They are involved in a range of tasks including excavation in shafts, carrying ore, crushing ore as well as washing ore with mercury. Children involved in gold mining – in Ghana and elsewhere – experience significant health consequences including bone and joint damage, respiratory disease and mercury poisoning. Children have also died in mine collapses.\textsuperscript{61}

Oil and Gas

Oil and Gas Overview

Oil and gas production in Ghana began in 2010, and is currently overseen by Tullow, Kosmos, and Anadarko. These companies work in partnership with the state-owned Ghana National Petroleum Company (GNPC). The country is only currently producing from one field, Jubilee (60 km offshore), but there are 16 more allocated blocks that are in various levels of pre-production. Total production currently rests at approximately 100,000 barrels of oil a day,\textsuperscript{62} and accounts for 1.7 percent of the country’s GDP.\textsuperscript{63}

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Oil and Gas

According to the U.S. Department of State, “Sex trafficking...is growing in the oil-producing Western Region.”\textsuperscript{64}
Environmental risks have also been noted. For example, gas flaring has been used to boost oil production, while gas infrastructure was being built to harness the gas.\textsuperscript{65} Gas flaring can contribute to air pollution and climate change.\textsuperscript{66}

Seismic testing and other exploration related activities has drastically decreased the fish catch.\textsuperscript{67}

Wage discrimination between local workers and expatriates is reportedly an issue.\textsuperscript{68,69} There are anecdotal reports of high fees charged by recruitment agencies placing workers on some oil rigs.\textsuperscript{70}

### Case Study: Trafficking Risk Tied to the Oil and Gas Sectors in Ghana

The oil and gas sector represents a source of employment with an estimated 3,000 related jobs in Ghana. According to experts interviewed, average pay rates are relatively high, leading jobs in the sector to be perceived as desirable, but it appears it may contribute to vulnerabilities of workers and local communities in several ways.

First, the booming sector and high number of migrant (both transnational and domestic) workers may contribute to sex trafficking. The U.S. Department of State 2016 \textit{Trafficking in Persons Report} noted the presence of sex trafficking “in the oil-producing western region.” The scope of sex trafficking in these regions is unknown, but several experts interviewed for this case study, as well as a media scan, confirmed the phenomenon. Some local media reports have noted both Ghanaian victims and victims trafficked from China.

Trafficking has not been authoritatively documented directly among workers in the sector. However, there is a high-level of casualization of workers; it is common practice for workers, particularly workers in “lower-skilled” positions to be hired via a recruiter or other type of employment agent. Field researchers noted that these workers are often from poorer regions in neighboring countries or within Ghana and are unlikely to express any grievances. Workers may be motivated to seek employment through agents because, although jobs in the sector, are seen as generally desirable, the sector overall does not have high employment rates, leaving multiple potential workers for any opening. Further, field researchers found widespread reports that workers recruited via agents are required to pay registration fees, including increased fees to preferential placements. These fees are reportedly paid unofficially or “off-the-books,” potentially leaving workers in debt and unlikely to make any reports of fees paid. While these arrangements do not in themselves represent trafficking, they do flag a vulnerable population of workers, particularly when they are living in isolated and remote regions. Further, these casual employment positions secured through agents may never be legalized, meaning that workers do not receive benefits such as social security. Experts interviewed suggested that transnational migrants recruited through informal mechanisms may be particularly vulnerable. These arrangements were also noted in the construction industries that support the oil and gas sector.
The development of the sector has also displaced local populations, increasing their overall vulnerability. Most oil platforms are off-shore; it has been noted that these platforms are disruptive to local fishing activities. Local fishers are banned from operating near rigs, while, at the same time, the bright lights used on the platform draw fish, leading to lower catch and decreased livelihoods. The sector has also been associated with land acquisition. Case study research found that oil and gas companies typically seek clearance from local community leadership – predominantly chiefs. While the state is required to compensate local people for land acquisition, total amounts paid have reportedly been inadequate, particularly in cases where farmers were not compensated sufficiently for loss of productive land. Local residents are further impacted by environmental degradation such as water, air and light pollution.

Fishing

Fishing Overview

The Ghanaian fishing industry employs roughly ten percent of the population, and accounts for 3 percent of the country’s GDP. Marine fisheries account for 80 percent of the fish consumed in Ghana, and freshwater production has been ramping up in recent years. Total production in 2013 was around 298,000 tons. Fish production in Ghana has been on the decline since 1999, with the peak export year coming in 2003 (valued USD 120 million). Fish farming has been on the rise, from 1,200 tons in 2005 to 38,500 tons in 2014. The high price of tilapia and a high level of federal support for fish farming programs have led to the increase in production.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Fishing

According to the U.S. Department of State, children are involved in forced labor in fishing. The most well documented case study is that of the Lake Volta region in Ghana. The typical trafficking mechanism is a contractual agreement between the children's parents and a recruiter, often for a multiple year period, with the parents given an advance payment or promised payment at the end of the contract. In many cases, both the parents and children lack awareness of the actual conditions, which are often abusive.
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**Endnotes**

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WBTEXT/42005/64978/E95GHA01.htm
50 Focus on Land in Africa. Customary Leaders and Conflicts of Interest over Land in Ghana.


