



Ghana Security Report 2021



Ghana has established a long standing reputation for peace and stability in West Africa. Following the country's return to democratic rule, there has been 8 peaceful elections with 3 successful transitions of government between different political parties. Ghana is often celebrated for its peace and political stability, in a region characterized by political turbulence. Its international image and reputation as a fledging democracy is anchored on the wheels of stability and peaceful transition of power. However, those wheels are beginning to come off.

The high incidence of violent crimes, murders, contract killings, outbreak of fires and other high profile crimes such as kidnappings and abductions that are unfamiliar to Ghana's security mix create vulnerabilities for extremist exploitation and recruitment. The existence of over 352 prolonged and unresolved chieftaincy conflicts and the vulnerabilities for violent extremism deepens the anxiety over country's security.

Current statistics indicate that murder cases are on the increase. The first quarter of the year 2021 recorded 144 cases of murder against 123 cases during the same period in 2020. Whilst 27 cases of kidnapping were recorded in first quarter of 2021, 26 cases of kidnapping were registered in the first quarter of 2020. There is increase in the number of violent attacks in broad daylight.

As insecurity continues to ravage the region, Ghana is increasingly exposed to threats of insecurity from internal and external sources.

Robbery and Murder Cases

The data below is published in the Africa Institute for Crime, Policy and Governance Research. It contains data on the numbers of robbery and murder from 2012 to 2018.

In the last 8 years, murder numbers ranged between 500 to 609 murders . Whilst there is no significant observed pattern of movement, these numbers remain high in the thousands.

The data shows a general rise in the cases of armed robbery in the country. Whilst there are declines in the cases by 1.41% in 2013 and by 0.14% in 2016, the trend indicates robbery cases continue to increase in the country.

Global Terrorism Statistics:

Deadliest terror attack in history: **9/11 Attacks on Twin Towers, New York.**

9/11 Casualties: **2, 998**

Total global economic impact of terrorism: **\$52bn**

Deadliest year since 9/11: **2014**

Total fatalities in 2014: **32,763**

ISIS fatalities in 2014: **6,064**

Boko Haram Fatalities in 2014: **6,642**

Terrorist Threat in West Africa:

No of countries affected in West Africa: **15**

Total number of casualties in West Africa 2019:

Over **4,000**

Total number of casualties in West Africa in

2014: **7,200**

Boko Haram deaths in 2014: **6,642**

No of fatalities in Burkina Faso:

US\$9 billion worth of damage in Nigeria

Ghana:

Total estimated number of Ghanaians who have joined extremist groups: **80-120.**

Prof. Awunor Williams, Ghana's preeminent professor was killed by Al-Shabab attackers on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013.

Ghana's first publicly known ISIS recruit: **Nazir Alema Nortey.**

Nazir Alema Nortey travelled to join ISIS in August 2015.

Nazir Nortey was killed in Syria in April 2016.

Source: Global Terrorism Index, Statista & WACCE Database

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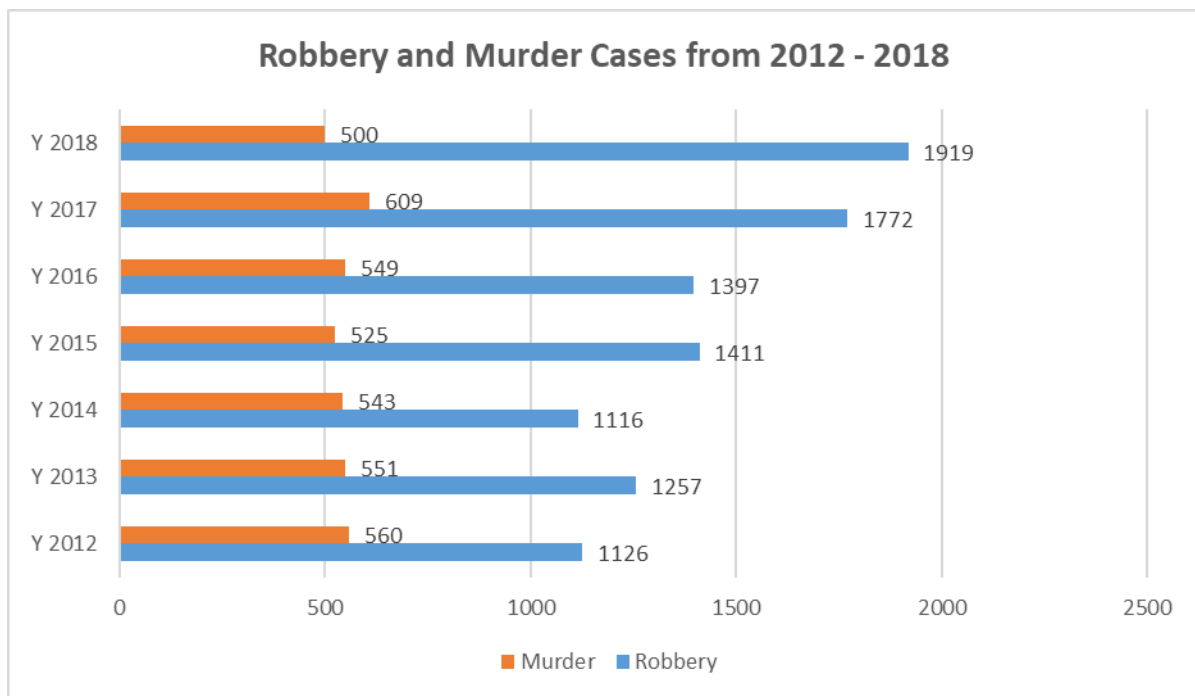
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Year	Y 2012	Y 2013	Y 2014	Y 2015	Y 2016	Y 2017	Y 2018
Robbery	1126	1257	1116	1411	1397	1772	1919
Murder	560	551	543	525	549	609	500

Source: Africa Institute for Crime, Policy and Governance Research



Source: Africa Institute for Crime, Policy and Governance Research

Threat of Violent Extremism and Terrorism

In 2015, Mohammad Nazir Nortei Alema, a graduate from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (NKUST), fled Ghana to enlist as an ISIS combatant in Syria (Foreign Policy, 2015). Later in December 2015, seven people were arrested in the Northern Region in a village Janton near Salaga for possessing AK 47 assault rifles and terrorist videos. It was believed that they had training sessions with the videos in a nearby bush. In 2016, Bawa Abdul Rahman, a Ghanaian military officer with alleged ties to ISIS, escaped from a convoy directing him to a meeting with his superiors (Pulse, 2016).

In 2018, 3 individuals were apprehended in possession of grenades, one with alleged ties to ISIS in Libya. (Ghana Web, 2018). Between 2014 and 2018, the West Africa Centre for Counter-Extremism (WACCE) has successfully dissuaded 22 radicalized individuals from fleeing to enlist as combatants for extremist cells. WACCE worked to stop a radicalized youth from travelling to join ISIS in 2016 just a day he was scheduled to depart to Syria.

2021

There is significant concern that Ghana, particularly along its northern border, which abuts Burkina Faso, will be the next target of extremist activity and radicalization to violent extremism. A combination of porous borders¹, weak border security infrastructure, social and economic grievances, religious and cultural tensions, governance and developmental deficits, and well established cross-border smuggling networks leave northern Ghana particularly vulnerable to radicalization narratives and terrorist attack.² In 2018, over a 170 suspected terrorists were arrested along the northern Togo-

¹ This includes easy movement of individuals, goods and services under the Economic Community of West Africa State's (ECOWAS) Protocol.

² Assanvo, William, Baba Dakono, Lori-Anne Théroux-Bénoni, and Ibrahim Maïga "Violent Extremism, organized crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma". Institute for Security Studies. 2019.

Ghana border and during the March 2019 counter-terrorism operation Otapuana¹ in southern Burkina Faso, Burkinabe officials alerted Ghana to violent extremist hiding in the north.³ The security concern is that it is only a matter of time before extremist violence extends into Ghana.



Source: WACCE

Political Violence and Contract Killings

Political violence using vigilante groups, and contract killings is a concern. More than 116 people, including eleven traditional rulers, four national security personnel and a Member of Parliament (MP) have been premeditatedly murdered between 2012 and 2017, with suspected motives pertaining to political struggles or contention over land and chieftaincy (Today, 2017)⁴.

One individual confessed in an Accra Magisterial Court to having completed 17 contract killings for political patrons (Yen, 2016)⁵. Perhaps the most revealing case is that of the assassination of a Member of Parliament Joseph Boakye Danquah in 2016. Daniel Asiedu, the suspected hitman, confessed to having been contracted by politicians (My Joy News, 2018)⁶. Three years later the killing of an investigative journalist, Ahmed Suale, in broad day light will heighten public fear and question the peace of Ghana. Many journalists continue to work under cover and fear for their lives.

In Asunafo-South, an estimated 4 casualties and 80 injuries have resulted from partisan clashes amongst civilians (GBC Ghana, 2018)⁷. The home of an MP in Asunafo-South was vandalized by armed group on Christmas Day, 2017 (Starr FM, 2017)⁸. An MP in the Volta region survived an open-fire attack by gunmen in January 2018, and alleges that partisan paramilitary groups are receiving training (Ghana Web, 2018)⁹. Earlier in 2017, an NDC MP was robbed at gunpoint (Pulse,

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://www.todaygh.com/contract-killings-soar-accra-ga-chiefs-kingmakers-appeal-igp/>

⁵ <https://yen.com.gh/50709-self-acclaimed-killer-claims-killed-17-people.html#50709>

⁶ <https://www.myjoyonline.com/politics/2018/June-20th/persons-within-npp-contracted-me-to-kill-jb-danquah-suspect.php>

⁷ <http://www.gbcghana.com/1.12045684>

⁸ <https://starrfmonline.com/2017/12/25/gunmen-attack-asunafo-south-mp-christmas-day/>

⁹ <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Adaklu-MP-survives-gun-attack-621803>

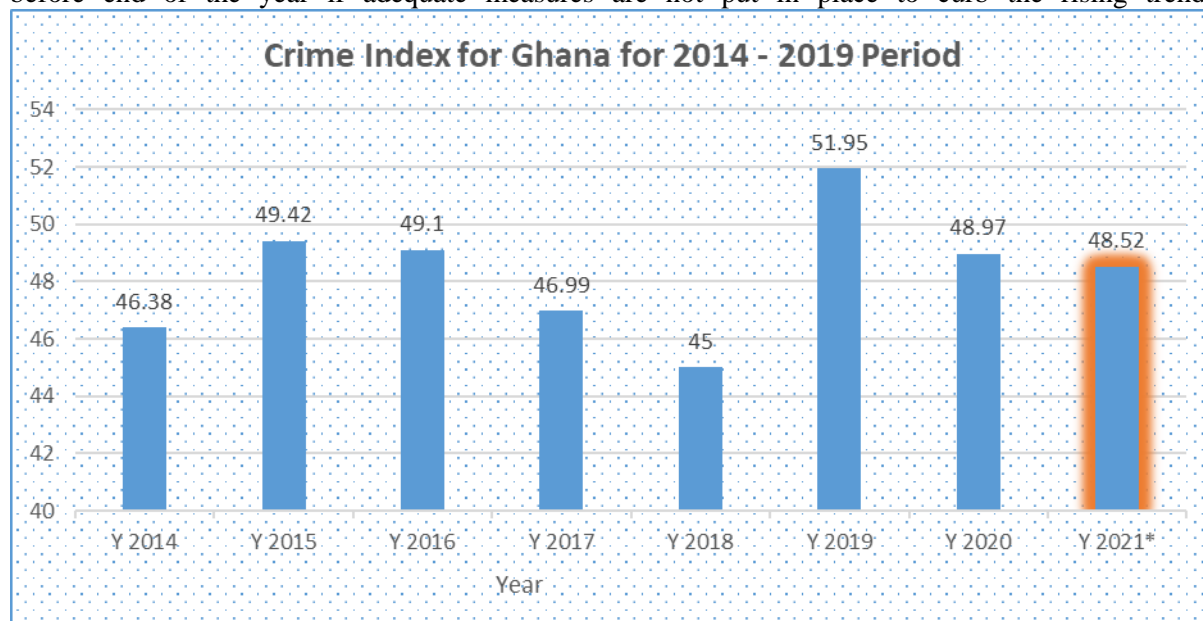
2017)¹⁰. In 2014, Peter Kojo Kenyenso, a district chief executive (DCE) of the Volta Region was fatally shot (Modern Ghana, 2014)¹¹.

Kidnappings and Abductions

Kidnappings and abductions, hitherto unknown to Ghana, have become a pervasive phenomenon. The first quarter of the year 2021 recorded 26 cases of kidnapping. In 2018 a total of 66 cases of kidnappings were reported. These kidnappings did not involve local victims. It included foreign nationals and diplomats such as Mr. Nabil Makram Basbous, a 61-year old Lebanese Consular General and Head of Mission of Estonia to Ghana who was kidnapped on April 19 in Labone, Accra by Nigerians who live and operate in Accra.

Crime Index

Various indices on security all show that crime is on the increase in Ghana. The Crime Index by Statista for Ghana measures the levels of crime for the various years from 2014 to 2021. As at May 2021, Ghana registered a crime index of 48.52, just before middle of the ¹²year. It shows a significant deterioration in crime. It is projected that the index is likely to rise above the 2019 index of 51.95 before end of the year if adequate measures are not put in place to curb the rising trend.



The data shows that the highest incidence of insecurity occurred in 2019 in the last 8 years. Crime rose from 46.38 in 2014 to 49.42 in 2015 before it declined marginally to 49.01 in 2016. It further declined to 46.99 in 2017 and recorded its lowest index of 45 in 2018. However in 2019, when the level of crime in the country peaked to 51.95, it only decreased by approximately 2.98 percent in 2020.

New Developments

Ghana's security profile is changing significantly. The typology of crime has widened to include crimes that previously were unknown in the Ghanaian security mix. There are pervasive incidents of kidnapping and abductions, many of them involving foreign nationals as victims and as perpetrators. Violent Rambo-style armed robberies eventuating in fatalities, and in broad day light have become more prevalent.

ⁱ [S 2019 636.pdf \(securitycouncilreport.org\)](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.pulse.com.gh/news/ashanti-region-ndc-mp-robbed-by-gunmen-id7156409.html>

¹¹ <https://www.modernghana.com/news/579353/0/murdered-dce-got-death-threats-chief.html>

¹² • [Ghana: crime index 2014-2021 | Statista](#)