



**NATIONAL PEACE
COUNCIL**



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMMES TOWARDS PEACEFUL 7 DECEMBER, 2020 ELECTIONS IN GHANA

RESULTS, REFLECTIONS AND LEARNING



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AUTHORSHIP

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL

The NPC is an independent national peace institution established by the Eight Hundred and Eighteenth (818) Act of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana, named the National Peace Council Act, 2011. The NPC is mandated to develop and facilitate mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, resolution and to build sustainable peace in Ghana, as enshrined in the National Peace Council Act, 2011 (Act 818).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUEOM	Africa Union Election Observer Mission
BVR	Biometric voter Registration
CDD-GHANA	Ghana Centre for Democratic Development
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CI	Constitutional Instrument
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
CPP	Conventions Peoples Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish Embassy
DISECs	Districts Security Councils
EC	Electoral Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMAM	Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation
EMBs	Electoral Management Bodies
ESRs	Election Situation Rooms
EU	European Union
EU-EOM	European Union Elections Observer Missions
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response
EWsS	Early Warning Signs
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
GFD	Ghana Federation of Disability Organisation
GIBA	Ghana Independent Broadcasting Association
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GJA	Ghana Journalists Association
GOG	Government of Ghana
GPI	Global Peace Index
GPRTU	Ghana Private Road Transport Union
GPS	Ghana Police Service
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
IEA	Institute for Economic Affairs
IEC	Information Education Communication
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IPAC	Inter-Party Advisory Committee
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
MMDAs	Ministry Department and Agencies
MUSECs	Municipal Security Councils
NACSA	National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons
NCC	National Cadet Corps
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NERGs	National and Regional Election Response Groups
NEST	National Election Security Taskforce
NESTF	National Election Security Task Force
NHCs	National House of Chiefs
NIB	National Intelligence Bureau
NMC	National Media Commission

NORSAAC	Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre Organisation
NPC	National Peace Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
ONHI	Office of The National Chief Imam
PEPP	Presidential Election Peace Pact
PMCs	Peace Mediation Committees
PRINPAG	Private Newspaper and Online Publishers Association
REEWARGs	Regional Election Early Warning and Response Groups
RERGs	Regional Election Response Groups
RPCs	Regional Peace Councils
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TECON	Tertiary Education and Students Confederacy
TEIN	Tertiary Institution Network
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOWAS	United Nation Office for West Africa and Sahel
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
UTAG	University Teachers Association of Ghana
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of its mandate to prevent, manage, resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in Ghana, the National Peace Council implemented a number of programmes and projects at the national and sub-national levels which contributed largely to peaceful election on 7 December, 2020. The implementation of the programmes was supported by the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Interior and other development partners, notably, the UNDP, UNOWAS, DANIDA, and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Again, the NPC entered into partnership with organisations such as WANEP, CDD-Ghana, IDEG, ONCI, NHCs to implement strategic programmes and initiatives. In addition, the NPC collaborated with the NMC, GJA, NORSAAC/STAR-Ghana Foundation, NCCE, EC, Ghana Police Service, and National Cadet Corp to carry out advocacies on peaceful conduct of the 2020 election.

Among key election-related programmes implemented by the NPC and its partners were:

- a) Community advocacy on the Vigilantism and Related Offence Act, 2019 (Act 999), the Roadmap, and the Code of Conduct aimed at eradicating political vigilantism. The programme was supported by the Government of Ghana, and Danida
- b) Monitoring the implementation of the Code of Conduct to eradicate political vigilantism. The activity was carried out with the support of NORSAAC and STAR-Ghana Foundation:
- c) Sensitised the youth as Peace Ambassadors for conflict prevention in collaboration with the Ashesi University. The programme was funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat;
- d) Organised two national stakeholders' dialogues aimed at election security and peaceful conduct of the 2020 election. The project was funded by the UNOWAS and the UNDP.
- e) In collaboration with the ONCI, the NHCs and the IDEG organised the 3rd High-Level Presidential Election Peace Pact (PEPP) which was signed by the presidential candidates of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP).
- f) Established the Peace Mediation Committees in hotspot constituencies in collaboration with the CDD-Ghana.
- g) Developed a draft framework that would proscribe intemperate language in Ghana in collaboration with the NMC with the support of Danida.
- h) In partnership with WANEP established the National Election Response Groups (NERGs), Regional Election Response Groups (RERGs), and Election Situation Rooms (ESRs) as early warning mechanisms for analysing, mitigating and managing election-related violence, and
- i) commemorated the International Day of Peace in collaboration with the GJA and the UNDP.

Primarily these advocacies focused on capacity building for conflict prevention, and use of nonviolence mechanisms to resolve and manage election violence. It also equipped citizens to identify early warning threats to peaceful election. Again, it contributed to improving the awareness and knowledge of the citizens, particularly the youth and political parties on the need for peaceful co-existence through a culture of tolerance during 7 December 2020 election.

The NPC recognised the risks for peace that potentially, could have emerged from the compounded negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and duly followed all laid down protocols to implement the programmes. Other state and non-state actors implemented peace-related campaigns which corroborated NPC's interventions at the national and local levels.

The NPC appealed to the citizens to jealously guard the democratic gains Ghana has accrued over the years. The NPC encouraged citizens and institutions to remain committed to Ghana's quest to sustain its well-earned credentials of holding successful, inclusive, credible and peaceful elections. Overall, the interventions sought to creating a peaceful environment for the conduct of the election, and building community resilience for conflict management and non-violence.

Along the lines of project execution, the NPC and its partners came across lots of experiences and knowledge that required documentation to inform future election-related programmes. The NPC organised a post-election reflection workshop on 21 January, 2021 at Coconut Regency Hotel, Accra to review the implementation of the programmes. The reflection meeting offered introspective opportunity to the NPC and its partners to assess the outcome of the 2020 general election.

The NPC's advocacies and community sensitisation contributed largely to douse potential threats to 2020 election. It also contributed to build citizens confidence in the electoral management bodies (EMBs) in delivering credible election. Again, the NPC's interventions contributed to reduce the incidents of political vigilantism in the well-known hotspots during the 7 December 2020, except isolated cases of violent clashes recorded at some polling stations and collation centres. The clashes occurred in constituencies that hitherto were not noted for political vigilantism. There was no record of any visible vigilante groups barred by Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) having associated with the isolated violent clashes which occurred in places including Techiman South, Kasoa among others.

This gives credence to the disbandment processes and the subsequent peace campaigns carried out by the NPC and its partners. Overall, the NPC interventions safely contributed to peaceful outcome of the 2020 election

This report offers an account of the experiences, results, lessons, challenges and recommendations to aid the NPC create a database on election-related knowledge that will come in handy, as it seeks to perfect interventions towards peaceful conduct of elections in Ghana. The report also aims at encouraging peacebuilding mechanisms in the communities. The report is presented along three key programmatic areas of the NPC which are informed by Ghana's electoral cycle. These are pre-election, during and post-election programmes and activities.





SECTION ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The conduct of democratic elections in Ghana, since 1992, has not been without challenges; yet elections have largely been successfully and led to three peaceful transfers of political power from a ruling government to opposition party. In 2012 and 2020 elections, the final verdict was adjudicated at the Supreme Court of Ghana due to disputes. The opposition party was dissatisfied with the results of the election.

In 2020, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) through Global Peace Index (GPI) ranked Ghana as the most peaceful country in West Africa, 3rd in Africa and 43rd in the world; with Botswana as the 1st and Mauritius as the 2nd. A record it held in 2019 in West Africa, however 4th in Africa and 44th in the world with Iceland as the most peaceful country globally since 2008. Almost all the elections conducted in Ghana were characterized by sporadic violence. For example, in 2020 election, the National Election Security Taskforce (NEST) reported 61 election-related violence that occurred between 7th and 9th December ¹. However, Ghana scaled the challenged with uninterrupted peace and governance.

Several elections observers' mission such as the European Union Elections Observer Missions (EU-EOM), Africa Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM), as well as Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) have described elections in Ghana as free, fair and transparent. However, they consistently outlined several challenges such as sporadic violence at some polling stations, unequal access to the media, unaccountable financing during campaign, and abuse of state resources, among others as factors that undermine the conduct of elections in Ghana. Another challenge to Ghana's electoral process with far reaching consequence on the democratic maturity is political vigilantes who riot and cause mayhem before, during and after elections. The seemingly surge and use of political vigilantes in election is a phenomenon that threatens Ghana's democracy, peace and stability.

Citizens' rights are integral part of the decision-making process in any democratic practice. In Ghana, the right to vote in choosing leaders is enshrined in Article 42 of the 1992 Constitution. The Article states that "every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years of age or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda." Again, Article 42 imposes obligations which requires good citizenship.

In the process of performing what the Constitution has imposed on the citizenry in Article 42, the exercise of voting rights in election often leads to pockets of violence across the electoral space. Addressing these challenges require democracy education including engagement with the electorate, political parties, and other stakeholders on the use of nonviolent mechanisms to prevent and manage conflicts, particularly in the hotspot constituencies as necessary conditions to achieving peaceful election in Ghana.

¹ Report from the National Election Security Task Force, 2021; Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, 2021

It is in this regard, that the NPC as part of its mandate to harmonise, prevent, manage, resolve and to build sustainable peace in Ghana, collaborated with key partners to implement a number of strategic national and sub-national programmes before, during and after 7th December 2020 election. The interventions aimed at ensuring peace, national cohesion and consolidating democratic gains. The programmes targeted institutions, community groups and citizens through deployment of stakeholders' fora, workshops, peace pact, consultations, dialogues, radio, television and online discussions as well as high-level engagements and shuttle diplomacy. The report is presented along three key programmatic areas of the Ghana's electoral cycle. That is, pre-election, during and post-election programmes.

1.1 BRIEF POLITICAL AND LEGAL CONTEXT OF THE 7 DECEMBER 2020 ELECTION

Between June and July 2020, a new Voters Register was compiled by the EC for the 7th December 2020 elections. The compilation of the Voters Register was met with resistance by some political parties and civil society organisations. This was an issue of grave national concern. The need for a new register, timing of the new Voters Register, procurement of software and hardware applications, budget, and the COVID-19 pandemic among other concerns within which the national exercise was to be conducted became sources of controversies.

It is therefore invigorating that the EC and its partners were able to scale the challenge. The EC conducted the exercise within the legal framework of the Constitutional Instrument of Public Elections (Registration of Voters) Regulations, 2016 Constitutional Instrument (CI) 91 as amended in 2020 by (CI 126). The EC registered 17,029,971 voters. The NPC deployed its staff to observe the new Voters Registration exercise. Additionally, the election was regulated by the CI Public Elections Regulations 2020 (CI 127) which replaced CI 94 (2016). Other laws that regulate the conduct of elections in Ghana are the Political Parties Act 2000 (Act 574), the Presidential Transitions Act 2012 (Act 845), and Act (451) 1993 which set out the regulatory functions of the EC.

Like the 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections, the 7th December 2020 election was disputed at the Supreme Court. The main opposition party, the NDC rejected the election results. The party alleged that the winner, Nana Addo-Dankwa Akuffo Addo of NPP did not obtain more than 50% of the valid votes cast to be declared as the president as stipulated in the 1992 Constitution. Again, the NDC alleged that votes from 32 constituencies were padded. On 30 December, 2020, the presidential candidate of the NDC, John Dramani Mahama filed a petition at the Supreme Court to challenge the election result. The filing was done within the mandatory 21 day as stipulated in Article 64 of the 1992 Constitution.

The Supreme Court had 42 calendar days to pronounce the verdict, that is, on 10th February, 2021. However, on 4 March, 2021, the Supreme Court declared Nana Addo-Dankwa Akuffo Addo of NPP as the winner of the 7 December, 2020 election. He obtained 6,730,581 votes representing 51.3% and John Dramani Mahama obtained 6,213,182 representing 47.4%. The voter turnout at the election was approximately 80%.

A total of 17 nominees filed to contest for the 7 December presidential election. The EC registered 12 presidential candidates made up of nine males and three females, having disqualified five out of the 17 on the grounds of alleged forgery of signatures and other technical irregularities. Likewise, 914 parliamentary candidates made up of 788 and 126 females contested for 275 parliamentary constituencies.

For the first time in Ghana's democratic practice, both the NPP and the NDC obtained parity in the number of seats won in the parliamentary election, that is, 137 each, and one seat won by an independent candidate. However, some of the parliamentary results were disputed by both the NPP and the NDC. Eleven petitions were filed by both the NDC and the NPP as of 12 January, 2021. The new trend of democratic practice in Ghana requires adoption of the principles of inclusive governance.

Ahead of the declaration of the Supreme Court Ruling, the NPC issued a press statement calling on Ghanaians to remain calm, and entreated the supporters of the winning candidate and party to be moderate in celebrating victory in order to consolidate the peace in the country. Both the conduct of the 7 December election and the declaration of the Supreme Court Ruling were generally peaceful, amidst isolated cases of election irregularities, violence, protest and demonstration some leading to clashes between civilians and the security agencies resulting into injuries and fatalities. Again, the election was characterized by hate speech and confrontation between supporters of political parties, especially the NPP and the NDC. Table 1 and 2 give a snap shot of the 2020 election results.

Table 1: The 2020 Presidential Election Results without Techiman South Constituency

ORDER ON BALLOT	POLITICAL PARTIES	NAME OF CANDIDATE	VOTES OBTAINED	VOTES IN PERCENTAGES
1	NPP	Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo	6,730,587	51.302%
2	NDC	John Dramani Mahama	6,213,182	47.359%
3	GUM	Christian Kwabena Andrews	105,548	0.805%
4	CPP	Ivor Kobina Greenstreet	12,200	0.093%
5	GFP	Akua Donkor	5,574	0.042%
6	GCPP	Henry Herbert Lartey	3,564	0.027%
7	APC	Hassan Ayariga	7,138	0.054%
8	LPG	Percival Kofi Akpaloo	7,683	0.059%
9	PNC	David Asibi Ayindenaba Apasera	10,882	0.083%
10	PPP	Brigitte Akosua Dzogbenuku	6,849	0.052%
11	NDP	Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlins	6,549	0.050%
12	IND.	Alfred Kwame Asiedu Walker	9,704	0.074%

Source: Electoral Commission, 2020.

Table 2: The The Number of Parliamentary Seats won by the Political Parties

S/N	REGION	NPP	NDC	OTHERS	NUMBER OF CONSTITUENCIES
	Western	9	8	-	17
	Central	10	13	-	23
	Greater Accra	14	20	-	34
	Volta	1	17	-	18
	Oti	0	8	-	8
	Eastern	25	8	-	33
	Ashanti	42	4	Independent	47
	Western North	3	6	-	9
	Ahafo	4	2	-	6
	Bono	6	6	-	12
	Bono East	3	8	-	11
	Savana	3	4	-	7
	Northern	9	9	-	18
	North East	4	2	-	6
	Upper East	1	14	-	15
	Upper West	3	8	-	11
	Total	137	137	1	275

Source: Electoral Commission, 2020.

2.0 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 2020 ELECTION-RELATED PROGRAMMES

The following programmes and projects were implemented by the NPC:

i. **Community Advocacy on the Vigilantism and Related Offence Act, 2019 (Act 999), the Roadmap to Eradicate Political Vigilantism, and the Code of Conduct**

The NPC carried out community advocacy on the Vigilantism and Related Offence Act, 2019 (Act 999), the Roadmap and the Code of Conduct aimed at eradicating political vigilantism in Ghana. The programme was implemented with the support of the Government of Ghana (GoG) and the Danish Embassy (DANIDA).

Political vigilantism became full blown menace on 31st January, 2019 at the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency where violence broke out at a by-election, leading to gunshots and injuries. After the by-election violence, the NDC and the NPP invited the NPC to lead a dialogue aimed at eliminating political vigilantism in Ghana. A strategic plan titled “The Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana” and Code of Conduct which would ensure compliance by the political parties were developed as part of the deliverables of the dialogue. Again, Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) was passed by the Parliament of Ghana. The Act deals with the legalities of the menace and raise the legal penalties or punishment against political vigilantism from misdemeanors to felonies.

From April to November 2019, the NPC held five different dialogues with the NPP and the NDC on the Roadmap to Eradicate Political Vigilantism in Ghana. At these meetings, the NDC and NPP pledged to: (1) disband vigilante groups operating for political purposes; (2) prohibit the ownership, hiring, or utilisation of such groups by the political parties or members thereof; and (3) cooperate with state agencies and stakeholders in the total eradication of such groups or incidents of vigilantism in Ghana. On 4th February 2020, the NPC signed the document on the Roadmap and Code of Conduct with the NPP, and did so on 19 June 2020 with the NDC.

From August to November, 2020, the NPC carried out community sensitisation in 124 Constituencies/Districts to educate citizens on the Vigilantism Act 999, the Roadmap, and the Code of Conduct. The community advocacy drew participants from the political parties, Ghana Police Service, Ghana Immigration Service, National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) and other security agencies. Other participants were drawn from the Metropolitan Municipality and District Assemblies, “known leaders of political vigilante groups”, NCCE, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), traditional authorities, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, youth groups, women groups, media, among other actors.

The community sensitisation focused on the norms and principles adopted to guide the eradication of political vigilantism and related electoral violence. Again, it dealt with the key clauses, prohibition, punitive and enforcement mechanisms as stipulated in the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act, 999). Further, the advocacy focused on the Roadmap and the Code of Conduct, commitments and compliance by the political parties towards eradication of political vigilantism, and the role of the government and non-state actors including the private sector.

Participants were also sensitised on Early Warning Signs (EWSs) of election violence. The participants were tutored on strategies for identifying signs of potential election violence and conflicts, and how to prevent them from occurring and/or escalating in their communities. These mechanisms included monitoring, analysing, communicating, and alerting relevant stakeholder(s) to prevent any possible violent incidence. Participants were encouraged to lookout for any event that could disturb the peace of the country and avert it by reporting to the responsible authorities. Further, the participants discussed peace and political tolerance before, during and after the 7th December election.

Approximately, 30 news items were reported on the community advocacy and other related programmes. Likewise, seven communiques were released at the end of workshops. These communiques demonstrated participants commitment to extend the programme beyond planned communities and targeted beneficiaries. Participants pledged to contribute to the process of eradicating political vigilantism through collaboration with the NPC, and Regional and District Security Committees to carry out extensive sensitisation and awareness raising. Approximately, 13,588 participants made up of 8069 males, and 5519 females directly benefited from the programme. Conservatively, three million people were indirectly reached through traditional and new media (i.e., radio, television, print and social media handles of the NPC).

The NPC safely attributes the reduction in the incidence of political vigilantism in the well-known hotspots during the 7th December 2020, in part, to its community advocacy, except isolated cases of violent clashes at some polling stations and collation centres, that occurred in constituencies that hitherto were not noted for political vigilantism. There was no visible record of vigilante groups barred by Act 999 having associated with the isolated violent clashes which occurred in places including Techiman South and Kasoa. This gives credence to the disbandment processes and the subsequent peace campaigns carried out by NPC and its partners.

ii. The Establishment of Monitoring Committee to Enforce the Code of Conduct to Eradicate Political Vigilantism

The Code of Conduct was designed by the NPC with significant contributions from Nana Dr Susubribi Krobea Asante, an Eminent Member of the Governing Board and representative of the National House of Chiefs. The document represented a consensus reached between the NDC and the NPP to eradicate political vigilantism which is inimical to Ghana's democratic growth. The Code of Conduct contains ten main provisions to be implemented by political parties. Broadly, the document enjoins the political parties to be responsible for the enforcement of the Code. Further, violations of the Code shall first be reported to the proposed committees for redress. And the police shall have the ultimate responsibility in dealing with all criminal offences. At the national level, the NPC in collaboration with civil society receives and address complaints of breaches of the Code of Conduct. At the Regional and District levels, the NCCE's structure—the Inter-Party Dialogue Committees collaborate with the NPC to receive and address complaints of the breaches of the Code.

On 3rd August, 2020, the NPC with the support of STAR-Ghana through NORSAAC, a civil-society organisation based in Tamale in the Northern Region of Ghana, inaugurated a National Monitoring Committee to monitor the implementation of the Code of Conduct. The overall mandate of the Monitoring Committee was to ensure compliance of the Code of Conduct by the political parties. The committee addressed a number of election-related threats including issuing communiques to condemn incidents of violence and enjoined appropriate institutions to ensure election security.

For example, the Monitoring Committee strongly condemned the clashes that occurred on Sunday 25th October, 2020 at Jamestown in the Odododiodio Constituency of Greater Accra, between the supporters of the NPP and the NDC which resulted from a "Health Walk." The incident led to rioting, violence and shooting with 15 persons allegedly sustained various degrees of injuries with some hospitalised. The Monitoring Committee called on the Inspector General of Police and the Ghana Police Service to rise up to the occasion to speedily investigate and prosecute all culprits involved in the clashes. This was meant to serve as deterrent to others whose actions and inactions could derail the peace of Ghana during the 2020 election.

Again, the Monitoring Committee charged the leadership of the NDC and the NPP in the Odododiodio Constituency to call their followers to order and restraint their actions. It admonished the NDC and the NPP parliamentary candidates in the Odododiodio Constituency to show leadership and avail themselves to dialogue to address their political differences. Further, the Committee called on Ghanaians, especially political party supporters, to refrain from resorting to violence and use dialogue and legal processes to resolve political differences.

iii. National-level Engagement with the Political Parties

The NPC undertook national level engagements with the political parties. This took the form of shuttle diplomacy, consultations, high-level dialogues, meetings and workshops. These engagements dealt with the concerns of political parties. The NPC subsequently engaged key stakeholders, particularly the EC and Ghana Police Service to address those concerns. Again, the consultations with the political parties sought to reinforce the capacity of the parties to manage and resolve inter- and intra-party conflicts using dialogue. The various engagements are discussed below:

- **Engagement between the NPC and the NDC**

The meeting between the NPC and the NDC took place on 20 November 2020 at the NDC headquarters, Adabraka, in Accra. The NPC team was led by Rev. Dr. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi, the Chairman of the Governing Board. The following issues concerning the credibility of 7th December 2020 election were discussed:



a) Vigilante Menace

The NDC assured the NPC that the party did not have any vigilante groups and would not entertain such groups after signing the Roadmap and Code of Conduct. In a related issue, the NDC requested the NPC to organise a Peace Pact where the presidential candidates would commit to peace before, during and after 2020 election.

b) Election Security

The NDC made reference to the 2019 Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency by-election violence and requested that the security personnel deployed for the 7th December 2020 should be properly accredited by the EC and/or the Election Security Taskforce/Ghana Police Service. The personnel should have their name tags for proper identification. The party expressed its disappointment that Hon. Bryan Acheampong who was identified by Justice Emile Short Commission of enquiry to have deployed thugs during Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election has not been prosecuted.

Again, the NDC indicated that the police announcement of over 6,000 hotspots in the country was alarming. According to the party, the Ghana Police Service released the figures to the public as a caveat to militarise the country during the election. The party raised concerns about the experience of armed security personnel and gunshots during new Voters Registration in places such as Banda and Kasoa, however, the culprits were not prosecuted or investigation inconclusive.

c) *Biometric Verification Machine (BVR)*

The NDC officials raised concerns about the manual verification. The manual verification ascertains whether the person who is voting is the same person as the one whose name is captured in the voter register. Secondly, to ensure that the person's vote has been successfully scanned, the biodata comes onto the system. Once these two stages are successful, the person can be allowed to vote. However, the NDC expressed dissatisfaction with the new BVR arguing that scanning of the bar code has been removed making ballot accounting difficult.

d) *Ballot Accounting*

The NDC expressed concern about the need to know the people who have been verified. The party alleged that the new devices have challenges with the verification. For example, voters cannot know the total number of people who have been verified. As a result, the person operating the BVR can easily manipulate the system compared with the old system, where officers were able to tell the number of ballot papers in the ballot box before it was opened. Per the new device, such function is at the mercy of the person operating the device. The NPC assured the NDC to engage the EC and key stakeholders to discuss their concerns. In a related issue, the NDC expressed concerns about the 30,000 names quarantined by the Electoral Commission in the new Voters Registers and implications on disfranchising affected voters.

e) *Transition*

The NDC bemoaned the vacant position at the Administrator General's office. According to the party, the head retired in 2019; his deputy who was acting was due to retirement in November 2020. One month to election, nobody was appointed to head the office. Again, Ministries Department and Agencies (MDAs) were yet to submit their handing over notes. One month to the election, there should have been an inspection and inventory of all government bungalows and assets, but that had not been carried out. The NDC was of the view that the government was not ready for political transition and therefore not ready to hand over to another party if NPP loses the election.

- **Engagement between the NPC and the Convention People's Party (CPP)**

On 20 November 2020, the Governing Board of the NPC and the Monitoring Committee held a meeting with the Convention Peoples Party (CPP). Maulvi Mohammed Bin Salih, an Eminent Member of the Governing Board spoke on behalf of the Chairman the Board. The interface meeting aimed at ensuring peaceful and credible election on the 7th December, 2020. The following issues were discussed.

a) *Election Violence*

The leadership of CPP remarked that any nation that experiences violence cannot develop, and appealed to the NDC and the NPP whose supporters were the apparent “trouble makers” during election to desist from it. The CPP cautioned its supporters to be focused and preach the ideologies of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and the party’s policies to Ghanaians, and not to engage in election violence.

b) *Eradicating political vigilantism*

The CPP was emphatic that the party does not have any vigilante groups, neither does it patronise such services. The CPP charged the NPC to remind the NDC and the NPP of the documents which was discussed at the platform of the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA). According to the party, if the outcome of the IEA meeting were adhered to, political tension in the country would reduce and/or eliminated. The CPP pledged its support to the NPC to ensure peaceful election in December 2020, however charged the NPC to engage with the EC and the Ghana Police Service to ensure that the processes were free, fair and transparent. They also appealed to the NPC’s Monitoring Committee to engage the Churches, Mosques, and media as channels to reach out to the communities to promote peace.

c) *Corruption*

The party expressed worry about the level of corruption in Ghana. According to the party, corruption has persisted under both the NDC and the NPP regimes. The CPP attributed corruption to weak legal regime to financing political parties and electioneering. The party alleged that politicians holding public offices were under pressure to divert state money to finance party campaign, and reward party financiers. Also, the CPP bemoaned flamboyant campaigns run by the NPP and the NDC which were drivers of abuse of state resource.

● Engagement between the NPC and the NPP

The engagement between the NPC and the NPP took place at the NPP headquarters, Asylum Down, Accra on 25th November, 2020. The meeting was led by Rev. Dr. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi, the Chairman of the Governing Board of NPC. He remarked that their visit was part of the NPC’s programme of introducing members of the new Governing Board to key stakeholders who play a critical role in Ghana’s peace architecture and elections. Again, the engagement was an interface to dialogue with the political parties on their



preparedness towards a peaceful 7th December 2020 election. The leadership of the NPP congratulated the new Governing Board. The following issues were discussed at the meeting:

a) *Building a Culture of Peace*

Both parties discussed the political vigilantism menace and how the NPP was working to prevent reoccurrence of their activities on 7th December 2020 election. The issue of the youth bulge, unemployment and the linkages to the political vigilantism and election violence were also discussed. The NPP reiterated that it disassociates itself from any political vigilantes and assured the NPC not to condone their activities if they existed. Further, the NPC raised the issue of building a political culture of peace, where party loyalists would be psyched to understand that their loyalty and vigilance at polling stations should not lead to violence.

b) *Deepening Intra-and Inter-Party Dialogue*

In the run-up to an election, tension is usually unavoidable. However, young people who become zealous for their parties have little experience in their party's ability to resort to legal and peaceful means of resolving their differences. The NPC recounted how the NPP had been moderate both in defeat and in victory during elections. Particularly the party's resort to the law court after the 7th December 2012 election disputes. The NPC encouraged the party to build on that culture by orienting its supporters to resort to peaceful means of resolving disagreements.

c) *NPC should Intensify Advocacy for Peaceful Election*

The NPP intimated that COVID-19 has impacted on the election which has affected the work of the EC. Largely, most of the challenges confronting the EC have been resolved. However, the NPP raised the following expectations regarding the conduct of a peaceful election in 2020:

- the NPC should be more proactive in naming and shaming people who say or do things that endanger the peace of Ghana;
- the NPC should carry out intensive advocacy on the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999);
- the NPC should engage with traditional leaders and encourage them to advise the citizens, especially the youth to desist from communal violence;
- the NPC should strengthen its Public Relations to peace campaign messages in order to consolidate the peacefulness of Ghana;
- the NPC should engage state agencies particularly EC and the Ghana Police Service to ensure credible election and security of the country without fear or favour;
- the NPC should engage the GJA, Private Newspaper and Online Publishers Association (PRINPAG), Ghana Independent Broadcasting Association (GIBA), and Community Radio Network to use their channel to promote non-violence, peaceful co-existence, and set agenda that would inure to the benefit of peaceful election.

In a related issue, the NPC called on the flagbearers of the political parties to participate in the signing Peace Accord ahead of the election as a measure of sustaining peace in Ghana. Again, the NPC visited the campaign team of the NPP at their national campaign office at Kokomlemle, in Accra. The campaign team assured to collaborate with the NPC in ensuring peaceful election in December 2020.

iv. Dialogue with Youth Peace Ambassadors for Conflict Prevention Before, During and After the 7 December, 2020 Election

The Commonwealth Secretariat sponsored the programme dubbed “Youth Peace Ambassadors for Conflict Prevention Before, During and After the 7th December, 2020 Election.” The NPC implemented the programme in collaboration with the Ashesi University, Accra. The programme was implemented across 20 hotspot constituencies of Ghana. It was facilitated by two consultants—Dr Enyonam Canice Kudonoo, a Senior Lecturer at the Ashesi University, and Mr. Frank Okyere, Head of Programmes, Peace Support Operations at KAIPTC, Accra.

The programme was based on continuous assessment of the political terrain by the NPC and identification of potential hotspots across the country which demanded intensification of peace campaign and advocacies ahead of the 2020 election. The campaign sought to:

- a) increase understanding of the Youth Ambassadors for non-violent election for sustainable development,
- b) improve awareness for peaceful co-existence through the creation of a culture of tolerance, and appreciation of the advantages of unity in diversity.
- c) draw conclusions based on critical analysis of situations, weighing the pros and cons before responding rather than just reacting to issues on impulse,
- d) create awareness on the Vigilantism Act, Roadmap and Code of Conduct which would place them in a better position to act as ambassadors of peace in their communities, and
- e) sensitise the youth on the principles of dialogue and other non-violent mechanisms for conflict prevention, and consensus-building that would lead to consolidating the peace of Ghana.

Ten advocacy programmes were held for 327 youth presenting 218 males (67%) and 109 females (33%). The two-day programme in each constituency mobilised a cross-section of the youth from various organisations and associations. The programme contributed to building skills and knowledge of the youth and creation of a network of Peace Activists and Ambassadors who continued to engage key stakeholders to promote peace in the communities. Again, the programme contributed to peaceful election on 7th December, 2020.

The feedback from participants after the programme indicated a change in their perceptions about political and other forms of violence. The participants encouraged the NPC and its partners to design follow-up interventions to monitor and evaluate how participants were utilising the knowledge and skills acquired. Likewise, the participants reiterated that the programme of this nature needs to be organised at regular intervals and not necessarily prior to elections.

v. Development of a Framework on Intemperate Language

Democratic governments all over the world at various stages of their emergence and consolidation yielded to some kind of vulnerabilities, including hate speech with its undesirable consequences. In Ghana, hate speech fuels political polarisation, political intolerance, and incite electoral violence. Against this background, the NPC in collaboration with the National Media Commission produced draft guidelines that will facilitate the production of legal framework on hate speech and guide journalistic standard and political behaviour. The project was sponsored by the DANIDA.

The production of the guidelines is timely and offers opportunities and constraints to electoral politics in Ghana. The lack of policy framework on hate speech in Ghana provides an opportunity to the NPC to develop an outline which will guide legislation from short to medium term. The guidelines when completed will serve as a checklist that will assist the media and regulatory bodies such as NMC and professional association such as the GJA, PRINPAG, and GIBA to identify and condemn intemperate language in order to maintain a highly journalistic standard.

The NPC organised validation workshop on 21st October 2020 at the Coconut Groove Hotel, Accra which offered a multi-stakeholder platform to review the draft guidelines on intemperate language. Twenty-three participants attended the validation workshop. This was made up of 15 males and eight females. The institutional representation were the Governing Board and Technical staff of NPC and the NMC, the GJA, the CIBA, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) lawyers, political scientists, gender activists and other professionals. The validation workshop brought to the fore significant inputs and concerns which would aid in fine-tuning the draft document by proposed Expert Team.

vi. The 3rd High-Level Presidential Election Peace Pact (PEPP)

On 4th December 2020, the NPC in collaboration with the National Chief Imam, the National House of Chiefs, and the Institute of Democratic Governance facilitated the signing of the 3rd Presidential Election Peace Pact with the flagbearers of the NPP and the NDC. The concept of PEPP originated from the NPC under the Chairmanship of the Most Rev. Professor Emmanuel Asante, and under the patronage of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, King of Ashanti Kingdom in 2012, with IDEG, engaged as a technical adviser to the implementation of the project.

The second PEPP was signed in 2016. On 4th December 2020, the 3rd PEPP was signed at the Movenpick Hotel in Accra under the theme: Strengthening Ghana's Democratic Stability, Peace and National Unity." The 2020 PEPP was signed by the Flagbearers of the NDC, H.E. John Dramani Mahama and the Flagbearer of NPP, H.E. Nana Addo-Dankwa Akufo Addo who was the incumbent President, and supervised by the Chief Justice of Ghana, Justice Kwasi Anin-Yeboah. The flagbearer of the NDC who was defeated in this election conceded defeat and congratulated the winner, the candidate of the NPP. This was in line with his commitment under the PEPP.

The PEPP was witnessed by key sponsors and august personalities with Nana Dr Susubribi Krobea Asante of Mampong, and an Eminent Member of the Governing Board of NPC participated significantly in the drafting of the text of the 2012 and 2020 Declarations. The PEPP commit political parties' leaders to take a stand against violence and foster peaceful conduct of party followers before, during and after elections. Further, it commits the leaders to adopt judicial adjudication should there be dispute over the official presidential results.

The ceremony was witnessed by the former President of Liberia, Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Further, there were representations by the African Union Elections Observer Mission, ECOWAS Election Observer Mission and the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel represented by H. E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas. Other high profile office holders from Parliament, Ghana Police Service, National House of Chiefs, Religious Bodies, political parties, and other state and non-state institutions participated in the signing ceremony.

Speaking at the post-election reflection organised by the NPC on 21st January 2021 in Accra, Mr. Kwesi Jonah, a Senior Research Fellow and Head of Advocacy and Institutional Relations at IDEG, noted that the emergence of the NDC and the NPP as the dominant political parties in Ghana and the acrimony, tensions and occasional violence which characterise the electoral contests between the two parties necessitated the signing of peace pacts. Subsequently, it became important to embody a set of principles into a formal pact for presidential candidates to sign on to them. These principles included presidential candidates' commitment to the peaceful conduct of their followers, upholding rule of law, conceding defeat or resolving disputed elections through the court system. The necessity for signing a presidential peace pact became irresistible and the subsequent formation of political vigilante groups strengthened the need for a pact.



The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features large, overlapping organic shapes in shades of green, teal, and light blue. Interspersed among these are various geometric elements: thin, parallel lines in blue and purple, clusters of small white dots, and a prominent yellow triangle with vertical white lines. A central dark blue hexagonal shape serves as a focal point, containing the text.

SECTION TWO



IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMMES WITH PARTNERS

i. National Stakeholders' Dialogue for Peaceful 2020 Election

The NPC in collaboration with the UNOWAS and the UNDP organised two separate stakeholders' dialogue, aimed at dousing the lingering tension and threats that could undermine peaceful conduct of the 7th December 2020 election. The first stakeholders' dialogue was held on 26th December, 2020 at Kumasi for the Southern cluster which comprising (Ashanti, Bono, Bono East, Ahafo, Western, Western North, Central, Eastern, and Greater Accra Regions) and the second stakeholders' dialogue was held on 1st December, 2020 at Tamale for the Northern Cluster comprising (Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Savannah, North East and Oti Regions).

The forum mobilised a cross-section of stakeholders to dialogue and build consensus for peaceful and credible 2020 election. Institutional representatives for the dialogues were drawn from the EC, the Ghana Police Service, NCCE, CHRAJ, the Judicial Service, Governing Board, Council Members, Regional Executives and Management and staff of the NPC, Political Parties, Traditional and Religious Leaders, CSOs, GJA, Media, Women and Youth Groups, Academia, Trade Union Congress (TUC), Ghana Federation of Disability Organisation (GFD), Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU), Tertiary Education and Students' Confederacy (TECON), Tertiary Institution Network (TEIN), and the Diplomatic Corps.

Both Tamale and Kumasi national dialogues were attended by high profile personalities including His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWAS; Mr. Charles Abani, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ghana; Ms. Silke Hollander, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP, Ghana; and Ambassador Baaba Gana Wakil, Resident Representative of ECOWAS in Ghana. Other dignitaries were Hon. Simon Osei Mensah, Ashanti Regional Minister; Hon. Salifu Saeed, Northern Regional Minister; Nana Effah Apen- teng II, the Paramount Chief of Bompata and Ghana's former Diplomat to the United Nations; Most Rev. Prof Emmanuel Asante, former Board Chairman of NPC; Rev Dr Ernest Ady-Gyamfi, current Board Chairman of the NPC; Zangbalun Yakubu II, Chief of Zangbalun Traditional Area; and Very Rev. Fr. Matthew Yitierreh, VICAR General, Tamale Archdiocese. The deliberation at each zone is detailed below:

At the Tamale National Stakeholders' Dialogue:

- a) participants were generally impressed with NPC's role in promoting peace in Ghana. Some of them supported the call by the Northern Regional Minister, Hon. Salifu Saed to support the NPC with resources to enable the institution deliver its mandate.
- b) a High Court Judge of Tamale in the Northern Region assured the participants that the courts are poised to deliver justice in any

electoral dispute that will be brought before it. He urged the electorate to respect each other's views and help to foster a stronger democratic culture in Ghana.

- c) a Traditional priest and chief of Nyankpala Zongo, Osofo Patrick Adentegna Appullah, appealed to Judges to interpret the law without fear or favour. He said the performance of the Judiciary leaves much to be desired and urged them to sit up and support the growth of a democratic culture in the country.
- d) a participant, Mr. Abdul Karim raised concern over alleged political meddling by some members of the NPC. Such members often appear political in the media and show their biases. He called on the NPC to identify and purge itself of such members since it has the tendency to corrode public confidence in the institution. Mr. Karim expressed disquiet over the activities of some National Security personnel. He explained that some of them are biased politically and use their positions to torment political opponents. He suggested that the stakeholders take a second look at the recruitment procedure into the National Security Service to minimise such tendencies.
- e) a staff of the NCCE in Tolon, Hawawu Abdul Rahman remarked that the Police Service is often biased towards the political party in power and urged the Service to be professional.
- f) the President of University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) for Northern Region commended the NPC for organising the dialogue. However, he appealed to the NPC to intensify its sensitisation drive in order to win the confidence of Ghanaians to accept the outcome of the December election. Again, he enjoined the NPC to lead the recommendations in addressing the issues raised in the Justice Emile Short Commission on Ayawaso Wougou by-election violence, which would help bring closure to the matter.

At the Kumasi Dialogue:

- a) stakeholders such as the EC, GPS, NPC, NCCE, among others were encouraged to collaborate effectively to intensify public education to ensure peaceful election.
- b) the media was encouraged to continue being an integral part of such national dialogues, especially the conceptualisations stages, so that they can own the processes and deliver.
- c) traditional authorities and the religious leaders were enjoined to be deeply involved in Ghana's peace campaign because they represent the fundamentals of the Ghanaian society and the people listen to their chiefs and religious leaders as spiritual advisors.
- d) the youth were unfortunately used by the politicians to foment trouble and election violence which all stakeholders must pay attention to in finding solutions such as tackling youth unemployment



- through a robust policy.
- e) Participants recognised the need for each and every one to propagate peace within their neighborhoods, because maintaining peace was not the responsibility of the National Peace Council and its partners alone, and
- f) The stakeholders recounted the importance of avoiding intemperate language during electioneering in order to preserve the culture of respect and peace in Ghana.

ii. The Formation of National and Regional Election Response Groups

The NPC in partnership with WANEP established and coordinated the National Election Response Group (NERG) and three satellite Regional Election Response Groups (RERGs) in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region, Tamale in the Northern Region and Ho in the Volta Region. The activities of the NERGs were coordinated in Accra in the Greater Accra Region co-chaired by the NPC and the NCCE. Again, the NPC in partnership with WANEP established and coordinated a national Election Situation Room (ESRs) in Accra at three regional clusters in Kumasi, Tamale and Ho for election monitoring and observation. The members of the NERG and RERG received capacity building training in shuttle diplomacy which was facilitated by former Ambassador D. K. Osei and Mr. Emmanuel Bombade. The NERG and the RERG engaged in shuttle diplomacy, consultation and engagement with key stakeholders notably the political parties, EC, Ghana Police Service, and the media on election security. For example, the NREG facilitated an interface meeting involving senior journalists and the EC to discuss pertinent issues relating to the new Voters Register and credibility of the 2020 election.

Again, on Monday 23rd November, 2020, members of the NERG and the Governing Board of NPC engaged the EC on the 30,000 names quarantined plus other issues regarding the credibility of the new Voter Register which were tabled by the political parties during NPC's consultations with the parties. The team also sought explanation from the EC on the "Multiple Lists" which according to the EC contained the names of all persons who engaged in multiple registration.

The NERG and the NPC enjoined the EC to step down its public education on the 30,000 quarantined names and the Multiple List. Additionally, the engagement offered the platform to discuss the preparedness of the EC towards the 7th December 2020 election. The following recommendations were made:

- the EC should publish the names of the affected persons in the respective constituencies in order to offer opportunity to the electorate to verify their names.
- the publication of the names will enable the affected persons have the opportunity to adduce evidence to go to court as prescribe in the CI90.
- the EC must educate the citizens on the processes involved in writing to the court to seek permission to expunge the 30,000 names after proof of wrongdoing has been established.
- the EC should intensify its public education on the "Special Voting" in order to enhance public trust and confidence in the electoral process, and
- the EC was encouraged to intensify its public education on the new Voters Register, Regional Collation Centres, and other process of the 7th December 2020 election.

iii. The Establishment of Peace Mediation Committees (PMCs) in Hotspot Constituencies

The NPC in collaboration with the CDD-Ghana established Peace Mediation Committees (PMCs) in 16 districts of Ghana to swiftly respond to violence and other sources of threat to election security. The PMCs were formed under the project "Community Capacity for Conflict Management at District Level." The Districts were selected based on a number of criteria—1) previous CDD-Ghana research on hotspots and data gathered on elections, 2) recorded cases of violence/conflicts in previous elections; 3) close margin of votes among candidates in the elections;

4) lingering internal party wrangling/violence, especially those that resulted in aggrieved parties contesting elections as independent candidates; 5) recorded incidence of political vigilantism; and 6) ongoing traditional disputes/conflicts such as chieftaincy, religious, land-related etc. Refer to Table 3 for the list of the districts.

The PMCs were established to augment the responsibility of the NPC to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in the communities. The PMCs operated in the districts that the NPC did not have physical presence. A two-day residential capacity training was organised for the PMCs in two clusters at Tamale from 22nd to 24th September, 2020 and Kumasi from 30th September to 2 October, 2020. The training focused on mediation, conflict prevention and management, early warning and electoral violence. Cumulatively, the PMCs reached out to 26,695 citizens in all 16 districts made up of 14,670 males representing 55% and 12,025 females representing 45%. The PMCs undertook a total of 255 community outreach programmes and 98 radio and television programmes.

Key responsibility of the PMCs

The PMCs were empowered to carry out the following activities in the communities:

- i. identify potential threats to election peace and provide early responses by working closely with the Municipal Security Committees (MUSECs), the District Security Committees (DISECs) and the Regional Peace Councils (RPCs);
- ii. collaborated with the Regional Election Early Warning and Response Groups (REEWARGs) to enhance conflict management and mitigation efforts in the communities,
- iii. identify and monitor nascent activities of political vigilantism, and where identified, engage security agencies to help address the situation;
- iv. enjoin communities to embrace peace and non-violence mechanisms for resolving conflicts;
- v. encourage citizens to be responsible and moderate in post-election jubilation; so that the peace in the community could not be disturbed, and
- vi. carry out targeted peace education programmes at churches, mosques and radio programmes

Table 3: The List of the Selected Constituencies for the PMC

s/n	Region	District/Constituency
1	Ahafo	Asutifi
2	Ashanti	Bekwai
3	Bono East	Techiman Attebubu Amanhin
4	Bono	Wenchi
5	Eastern	Suhum
6	Greater Accra	Ningo Prampram
7	North East	Chereponi
8	Northern	Nanumba North (Bimbilla) Nanumba South (wulensi)
9	Oti	Nkwanta South
10	Savanna	West Gonja
11	Upper East	Navrongo Central Bawku
12	Volta	Ketu South
13	Western North	Bibiani-Ahwianso-Bekwai

iv. The Establishment of Election Situation Rooms

On the 6th December 2020, the WANEP, the NPC and other partners officially opened the Election Situation Room (ESR) in Accra and Satellite ESRs in Kumasi, Tamale and Ho simultaneously. The coordinated ESRs was operational for three (3) days i.e., from 6th to 8th December 2020. The ERSs served as a vehicle for monitoring, reporting, analysing and responding to violent threats during the 7th December, 2020 election.



The WANEP deployed 350 observers accredited by the EC in prioritised 168 hospots across the 16 regions of Ghana. The observers were complemented by the staff of the NPC and the NCCE. Together, the observers gathered data from over 3,000 polling stations in 275 constituencies. Again, the observers monitored and reported incidents of violence and irregularities that could affect the integrity of the election.

The operational structure and strategy of the ESRs was informed by the number of identified hotspots through WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS). The workstations for the ERSs consisted of four technical rooms, that is, Data Gatheing, Analysis, Communication, and Decision Room.

The “Data Gathering Room” was responsible for direct communication with 350 observers in the field who transmitted information to the “Arc 123 Survey GIS Platform.” “The Communication Room” was made up of communication specialists and seasoned media practitioners. They tracked social media feed including potential threats at polling locations. The “Analysis Room” comprised experts responsible for analysing and interpreting the data to inform responses. The “Decision Room” comprised eminent persons of the NERG, the Governing Board of the NPC and other “good offices” who influenced responses to identified threats. The eminent persons engaged in preventive actions with relevant stakeholders and their interventions partly contributed to preventing and mitigating potential threats to the elections.

Additionally, the ESR in Accra received reports from the Satellite ESRs located at Kumasi, Tamale and Ho and determined appropriate actions to address specific threats at the regional level. Again, the ERS received visits from international observer missions, which included the ECOWAS, the Africa Union (AU), the Commonwealth the European Union (EU), among others.

v. Election Security and the role of the Ghana Police Service

The security of the 7th December 2020 election was coordinated by the National Election Security Task Force (NESTF) led by the Ghana Police Service. The NESTF had a four-tier personnel deployment strategy viz. deployment to polling station, mobile patrol, rapid response, and deployment to vital state installations.

The election security strategy was further structured into three phases: security before election, security during election, and security after election. Largely, the first two phases were successful across board, except isolated cases of violence, which included clashes between civilians and some security personnel. The NESTF recorded 61 gun-related violent incidents between 7th and 9th December, 2020. However, the violent gunshot incidents resulted in the following deaths and injuries:

- two persons were injured from gunshots on 7th December 2020 in Awutu Senya East Constituency in the Central Region.
- two persons were shot dead and six others injured in Odododiodio Constituency in Accra.
- four persons were injured in Ablekuma Central Constituency in Accra on 8th December.
- two persons were shot dead and four others injured in Techiman South Constituency in Bono East Region on 8th December 2020,
- one person was shot dead and three others injured in constituency in the Northern Region on 8th December 2020.

According to the Ghana Police Service, all the cases were being investigated. The post-election security phase was characterized by agitations and series of demonstrations mainly by some supporters of the NDC. Counter measures by the Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Armed Forces and in some situations the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) were instituted to maintain law and order which sustained the peace and security of Ghana.

vi. NPC collaboration with the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA)

The NPC and the GJA partnered to implement a number of projects. These included—the International Day of Peace, and “Say No to Political Vigilantism.” The Ghanaian media deriving its mandates from the Chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution participated effectively and reported on the election. The 2020 annual report of the National Communication Authority indicated that 446 radio stations and 102 TV stations operated in Ghana as of 2020, plus 49 newspapers and several online media sites.

Speaking at the NPC post-election reflection meeting on 21st January 2021, the president of the GJA, Mr. Affail Monney, eulogized the professional conduct of some journalists and media houses during the December 2020 election. On the other hand, the unprofessional conduct of some journalists and media houses, usually affiliated to political parties and politicians, were used to fuel intemperate language with the potential of inciting violence during the election. Regrettably some journalists were part of the victims of the isolated incidents of violence which occurred during the election. The GJA and the NPC recognise that the standards in the media are not uniform—the standard is appreciably high in some media houses, and abysmally low in other media houses.

Mr. Braimah Sulemana, the Executive Director of MFWA presenting at the NPC post-election reflection meeting, reiterated that elections are the most latent period that generate potential violence and violent behaviour through intemperate language. Behaviours such as provocation and divisiveness are portrayed through actions such as intimidation of opponents, use of abusive language, and assault of political opponents.

Between April and December 2020, MFWA monitored over 14,565 programmes across 60 radio stations in Ghana. Approximately 562 incidents of intemperate/abusive campaign language were recorded. Refer to Table 4 for incident of intemperate language.

Table 4 : Incident of Intemperate Language during in December 2020 Election in Ghana

Incident	Total Count
Insulting and offensive comments	304
Unsubstantiated allegations	193
Comments inciting violence	27
Provocative remarks	16
Threats	14
Expressions promoting divisiveness	5
Gender-specific insults	3
Ethics prejudice and bigotry	2

Source: MFWA, 2020



vii. Observation of the new Voters Registration Exercise

The NPC monitored the registration of voters across the country. The EC began the 38 days national Voters Registration on 30 June 2020. Generally, the conduct of the Voters' Registration Exercise was peaceful. Majority of the Registration Centres monitored by the NPC conducted themselves in civility and in accordance with laid down procedures as provided by the EC. Additionally, the NPC recognised the responsiveness of the EC which ensured availability of materials and logistics required for the registration. The NPC lauded the platform, "Let the Citizens Know" initiated by the EC to update Ghanaians on the registration exercise. This largely contributed to enhance citizen access to information, and transparency about the registration. Again, the NPC applauded the media, civil society organisations, political parties and citizens whose watch-dog responsibilities contributed to enhance citizens access to information and knowledge about the Voters' Registration Exercise.

However, the NPC noted some bottlenecks which confronted a few of the Registration Centres. The NPC was concerned about the incidences of violence in some Registration Centres in the following areas, namely, Ejura- Sekyere-Odumase and Asawase Constituencies in the Ashanti Region, Kasoa and Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam Constituencies in the Central Region, Asutifi South and Tano South Constituencies in the Ahafo Region, Dormaa West and Banda Constituencies in the Bono Region, Ho West in the Volta Region, and Fadama and New Town in the Greater Accra Region. The NPC reports confirmed that clashes between the supporters of the NPP and the NDC unfortunately, led to shootings and machete wounds on some identified party activists resulting in some arrest of persons who allegedly committed these crimes.

In a press statement released by the NPC, it strongly condemned all incidents of confusion, violence, and shooting which characterized the Voters Registration at these centres. The NPC called on the EC and the Ghana Police Service to arrest any persons whose actions and inactions had the potency to derail the peace of the country before, during and after 2020 general election.

viii. Observing the International Day of Peace

On 21st September 2020, the NPC in collaboration with the UNDP, the GJA, and Auntie is Merkezi Organisation observed the International Day of Peace, held at the Ghana International Press Centre, Accra. The 2020 event was themed “Shaping Peace Together— “The Role of the Youth in Peace Building.” Maulvi Bin Salih, an Eminent Member of the Governing Board of the NPC, delivered the address. Maulvi Bin Salih reiterated the importance of the day and its relevance to peaceful 7th December 2020 election in Ghana. The celebration of International Days are occasions to educate the public on issues of concern, mobilise political will and resources to address both local and global problems, and to reinforce achievements of humanity. The International Day of Peace was instituted in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly. In 2001, the General Assembly unanimously voted to the Day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire.

Annually, the NPC responds to the call by the United Nations to honour a cessation of hostilities during the Day, and commemorate the Day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace. The International Day of Peace falls within the mandate of the NPC, hence the responsibility to hold the event. In recognition and acknowledgment of effort of the NPC to domestic and global peacebuilding, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, appointed Most Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Asante as a committee member of the Sixth United Nations Advisory Peacebuilding Fund; which is the organisation’s financial instrument to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict.

Maulvi Bin Salih recounted the efforts by the NPC in uprooting the political vigilantism. He noted, “we have come a long way, and at this stage, the emphasis is not

on the history or diagnosis of the problem, but the implementation of the Code of Conduct, particularly, in the light of the reported incidence of violence during the national Voter Registration exercise. The NPC was aware that the political parties needed the support of all of us, especially, institutions who have been assigned the responsibilities in the Roadmap to ensure the total eradication of the vigilantism in Ghana.”

The NPC encouraged the youth for the role they play in peacebuilding. It also urged the media to be circumspect in their reportage of actual or potential conflict situations because information plays a vital role in conflict management and peacebuilding. The NPC used the occasion to emphasise the need for peace in Ghana, when elections were fiercely contested. Other issues that pose threat to election security are youth agitations over limited opportunities, political vigilantism, kidnapping, killings of prominent persons, violent extremism and the threat of terrorism in the West African sub-region and the Sahel particularly Burkina Faso and Mali. For, it is only in an environment of peace that Ghana can continue to consolidate the economic gains it has achieved in recent years and improve on the lives of the people.

ix. Youth Peace Durbar for December 2020 Election

The NPC and National Cadet Corps (NCC) recognised and applauded many interventions made by past and present governments, civil society organisations including religious organisations, the media, the traditional authorities, private organisations, individuals and development partners towards resolving youth hooliganism and election violence. In view of this, the NPC and the NCC organised a nation-wide youth sensitisation programme through community durbars in partnership with key stakeholders such as youth groups, political parties, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and media to engage and enlighten the youth to be responsible and resist any temptation or attempt by politicians to engage them to foment violence during December 2020 election.

The collaboration focused on sensitising the youth on their civil responsibilities, the need to promote inter-party dialogue and tolerance, in-depth education on vigilantism and related offenses laws. They were also encouraged to serves as peace campaigners and carry out conflict sensitive messaging to their constituents to understand the importance of peace as a pre-requisite for sustainable development in Ghana. The programme was implemented from October to November 2020.



SECTION THREE



POST-ELECTION PROGRAMMES

The following programmes were implemented after the poll on 7th December, 2020:

i. Post-Election Shuttle Diplomacy

The NPC carried out shuttle diplomacy and mediation to maintain peace and security after the 7th December, 2020 election. Some of the institution engaged at high levels meetings were the EC, political parties, especially executives of the NDC and the NPP, Ghana Police Service, the Ministry of National Security, parliamentary leaders of the NPP and the NDC, eminent personalities including traditional and religious authorities, and other “good offices” from domestic and international circles, and diplomatic corps. These engagements contributed significantly to sustain the peace in Ghana.

ii. Post-7th December 2020 Election Reflection Session

On Thursday 21st January 2020, the NPC held post-7th December reflection conference with its partners to review the implementation of its election-related programmes. The reflection session contributed to document key success stories, lessons, challenging stories and recommendations for future programme design and implementation. Dr. Serebour Quaicoe, Director of Electoral Services acknowledged the collaboration and cooperation between the EC and stakeholders in ensuring free and fair election on 7th December 2020. The EC appreciated the critical role played by the NPC in mediating disagreements between and among the political parties to restore peace after 7th December 2020 election.



The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features large, overlapping organic shapes in shades of green, teal, and light blue. Interspersed among these are various geometric elements: thin, parallel lines in blue and purple, clusters of small white dots, and a prominent yellow triangle with vertical white lines inside it. A dark blue, rounded hexagonal shape serves as a central focal point, containing the section title in white text.

SECTION FOUR



5. RESULTS, LESSONS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The section below outlines results, lessons, challenges and recommendations.

a. Programme Results

The stakeholders acknowledged the role of NPC and its partners which contributed largely to peaceful 7th December 2020 election. The following results are harvested:

- i. *coalition and consensus building among stakeholders consolidated the peace in Ghana:* the partnership mobilised a cross-section of stakeholders to dialogue and build consensus to consolidate the peace in Ghana before and after the 7th December 2020 election.
- ii. *timely declaration of election results consolidated the peace in Ghana:* except Techiman South constituency, the EC declared the 2020 presidential and parliamentary election results on 9th December. The declaration was within the three days electoral calendar. This contributed to consolidate the peace in Ghana.
- iii. *reduced incidents of political vigilantism:* the incident of political vigilantism reduced in 2020 election. Compare to previous elections, the advocacy and sensitisation on political vigilantism by the NPC and its partners contributed to douse political vigilantism. However, isolated cases of election violence were recorded in Techiman South and other constituencies.
- iv. *Non-violence and community resilience:* largely, political parties resorted to the use of non-violence to resolve electoral irregularities at the polls and after the election. The losing political party resorted to legal redress to challenge the election.

b. Implementation Challenges

- i. High public expectation of the NPC to condemn violence by one political party or the other inevitably places the NPC in a discriminatory position to ensure fair treatment, even if this was regarded as a legitimate exercise of NPC's mandate to peacebuilding.
- ii. The recurring post-election violence, protest and demonstrations, especially in the Accra, in the Greater Accra Region, and Techiman South in Bono East Region contributed to increase tension, threatened the

peace and security after the 7th December 2020 election. Some of the demonstration resulted into violent clashes between the protesters and the police and military, following the rejection of the election results by the NDC after polls.

- iii. There was deliberate circulation of fake news to undermine the integrity of the election. For example, old videos of security agencies' simulation exercises were deliberately circulated on social media as incidents related to the 2020 election.
- iv. Availability of fund and logistics are paramount to the success of election monitoring, peace campaigns, advocacy and operations. Although, the NPC received support from the government and development partners, increased funding and logistics including vehicles would have extended the reach and millage of programmes across the country.
- v. Project design did not make provision for follow ups. There was no budgetary allocation to support follow-up actions on the advocacy campaign.

c. Implementation Lessons

- i. Apparent low level of awareness on the Vigilantism Act and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999), the Roadmap and Code of Conduct among political party executives at the regional and constituency levels appear worrying.
- ii. The role played by the citizens in election security cannot but underestimated. The wave of democracy in many developing countries including Ghana has accounted for a new relationship between the citizens and the government in which the former are not docile abiders of laws and policies passed by the latter, but are active participants in shaping the process of governance.
- iii. Citizens' engagements with the political class and public institutions have moved from narrowly registering and voting in elections to more substantive accountability actions such as participating in community meetings, dialogue and rule of law.
- iv. Securing peaceful and free elections is a civic duty and collective responsibility. Therefore, partnerships among state and non-state actors are key to credible election. The benefits of partnership must be harnessed and sustained.

- v. Inter and intra-sectoral partnerships help to reduce cost, increase programme millage, intensify public education, avoid a duplication of efforts and increase efficiency and effectiveness to the collective goal of election security and credibility. The partnership among NPC, WANEP, NCCE, EC, Ghana Police Service, IDEG, ONCI, NHCs, GJA, NMC, NCC, MFWA, political parties and the media yielded great benefits to ensuring peaceful elections in 2020.
- vi. Timely and effective response communication by the EC, the Ghana Police Service and the NPC is essential to dispel rumours and ensure election security.

d. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to ensure election security and credibility.

- i. *Recognise the legal boundaries of the NPC Act, 2011 (Act 818):* Section 2 and 3 of the NPC Act deal with the functions of the NPC as facilitating and developing mechanisms to prevent, manage, resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in Ghana. The criticism of the NPC by section of the media and the public for failing to address some potential sources of conflicts proactively, particularly, issues pertaining to pronouncing verdict or condemning political parties' behaviour ought to be examined within the broader context of the legal boundary of the NPC.
- ii. *Resolve political polarisation:* political polarisation is intensified by the adoption of extreme form of "winner-takes-all" politics which drive tension, animosity, acrimony, hate speech and election violence. As part of facilitating mechanism for peacebuilding, the NPC should develop modalities to address political polarisation.
- iii. *Intensify nationwide public education on the apparent low level of awareness of the Vigilantism Act, Roadmap and Code of Conduct:* while interventions in the communities by the NPC were largely successful in sensitising the youth on non-violence and peaceful co-existence, the low level of awareness of the Vigilantism Act, Roadmap and Code of Conduct among political party executives at the regional and constituency levels is a concern to interested publics. The NPC should continue to remind the political parties to comply with the enforcement of the Code of Conduct and commit their members to do same.

- iv. *Address the remnants of political vigilantes in the governance space:* after the passage of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act 2019, (Act 999), some political vigilantes metamorphosed into entities such as civil society groups making their services somewhat available to institutions including the security agencies, which on the other hand poses threat to peacebuilding. The NPC is encouraged to speak up to the issue of seemingly legitimisation of such groupings, for example, alleged recruitment into national security agencies.
- v. *Scale up peacebuilding interventions:* the NPC should design follow up projects to scale up its public advocacy and harvest significant success stories. The implementation of peace advocacy campaign ought to be all year-round programme, and not limited to only election years or few months to the election.
- vi. *Operationalise Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) for 2024 elections and beyond:* design and implement NPC's own EWER mechanism for monitoring, analysing and mitigating threats to election security as well as observation in 2024 election.
- vii. *Institute compliant protocols:* the NPC should formulate and activate compliant protocols to aid the public to report early warning signs and lodge complaints for redress.
- viii. *Develop election monitoring database:* the NPC should design and operationalise a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to monitor election security, peacefulness, and assessment.
- ix. *Evaluate the implementation of activities by the NPC and WANEP:* the NPC and the WANEP should organise evaluation workshop to assess their intervention and glean lessons in designing future election interventions.
- x. *Build on the gains of Peace Mediation Committees:* the NPC and CDD-Ghana should sustain the PMCs and support their activities to contribute to the maintenance of peace in the communities. The integration of the PMCs could be fashioned around the Metropolitan Municipality and District Assembly structures such as the sub-committee on Social Services to aid in resolving community issues that are not criminal or violent in nature.

- xi. *Create a platform for aggrieved persons to ask questions about the electoral processes* : with the view that the Electoral Management Body will hear from the political parties and the public. The platform will create transparency and enhance public access to information.

3.0 Conclusion

The NPC appreciate the inimitable support of the government, political parties, partners, civil society and media which aided to execute the 2020 election programmes and activities. Particularly, the support and generosity from development partners such as UNDP, UNOWAS, DANIDA, and Commonwealth Secretariat increased the mileage of NPC programmes to several stakeholders. The NPC continues to extend hands to other development partners to help concrete its mandate of preventing, managing, resolving and building sustainable peace in Ghana.

Again, the NPC appreciates the cooperation from the public towards consolidating peaceful election and democratic practice in Ghana. It calls on all stakeholders, especially, those with public education mandate such as the NCCE, GJA, media, religious organisations and traditional authorities to assist in intensifying public education on the Vigilante and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act. 999).

While NPC acknowledges that 7th December 2020 election was largely peaceful, it decries the isolated cases of violent clashes at some polling stations and collation centres some of which resulted in fatalities. No known vigilante groups have been identified as perpetrators of these isolated incidents. This somewhat speaks to the positive outcomes of NPC sensitisation and advocacy on political vigilantism and cascading effects on Ghana's efforts towards achieving Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Even though the conduct of elections in Ghana have not been perfect due to incidents of reported violence, disputes, allegation of rigging, incumbency abuse of state resources and other causes; eight elections have been conducted which have led to three successful and peaceful transfer of power from an incumbent party to the government-in-waiting. Election 2020 was no different—the election was challenged by the major opposing political party, the NDC which ended in the Supreme Court for adjudication. It must be stressed that, the tranquil nature of elections in Ghana has been the result, in part, of the implementation of peacebuilding interventions by the NPC and its partners at the national and sub-national levels which ought to be scaled up and consolidated.

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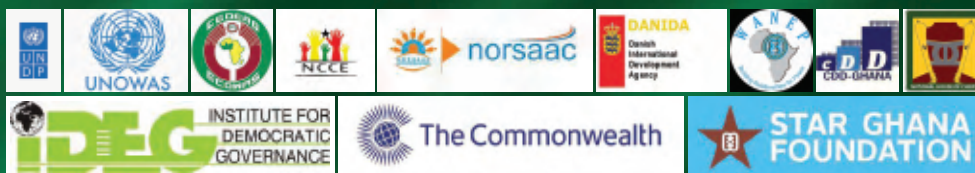
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NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL

THE 2020 ELECTIONS REPORT