CAGI

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Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues | March 16 – 22, 2025

Policy & Administration • Transparency & Accountability • Anti-corruption

Peace, Security & Stability • Human Rights & Justice • International Relations

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IMANI Center for Policy & Education | Center for Economic, Governance and Political Affairs

What is the Criticality Analysis?

The output of good governance is socioeconomic development that has greater impact on the citizens. Government takes the wheels of affairs of the state on the back of the many promises made to the electorates. Yet, it is no easy task when it comes to the processes and mechanisms required for true public services delivery. It must follow policy guidelines religiously, maintain the social contract, avoid excesses and wastages, and be an accountable steward of that which it has been entrusted.

IMANI Centre for Policy and Education in a bid to monitor the processes and mechanisms for public services delivery has devised the Criticality Analysis to evaluate the key actions of the government in this pursuit. The Criticality Analysis follows the major news reports on the key governance issues categorised under the following six (6) themes:

1. Policy and administration.
2. Transparency and accountability.
3. Anti-corruption.
4. Peace, security and stability.
5. Human rights and justice.
6. International relations and development.

The Criticality Analysis assesses the key governance issues by employing rigorous narrative analysis. First, we collect the key governance issues from reliable and credible news sources. A preliminary screening is conducted to filter out low-impact and non-governance-related issues. The issues are then categorised under the 6 main themes.

The criticality analysis is not a performance assessment of government actions.

During the assessment, critical attention is paid to the factual accuracy of the reports, relevance and timeliness, and impact and significance. In view of this, the reports are corroborated by analysing same from multiple sources and monitoring the trends and development. In addition, expert opinions on the key issues are analysed to inform the final output of the Criticality Analysis which includes our recommendations for policy and practice to enhance public service delivery and accountable stewardship.

Key governance issues this week

The key governance issues this week ending March 22, 2025, selected for the Criticality Analysis include:

1. Bawku violence leaves one soldier killed; President Mahama calls for calm in "Thank you Tour".
2. President Mahama strengthens bilateral relations with West African counterparts in talks on trade and development.
3. Ex Bank of Ghana Governor, Dr. Ernest Addison's private residence raided by National Security.
4. Treason charge against Oliver Barker Vormawor (Osagyefo) dropped by the Attorney General.
5. L.I 2462 Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulation, 2022 amendment bill laid before Parliament.
6. Ahmed Hussein-Suale's murder; suspect remanded, and Anas awarded $18 million in defamation by US court

Categorisation of governance issues

Policy & Administration	L.I 2462 Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulation, 2022 amendment bill laid before Parliament.
Anti-corruption	Ex bank of Ghana Governor, Dr Ernest Addisson's private residence raided by National Security.
Peace, Security & Stability	Bawku violence leaves one soldier killed; President Mahama calls for calm in "Thank you tour".
Human Rights & Justice	Treason charge against Oliver Barker Vormawor dropped by Attorney General. Ahmed Hussein-Suale's murder; suspect remanded in custody, and Anas awarded $18 in a defamation trial by a US court.
International Relations & Development	President Mahama strengthens bilateral relations with West African counterparts in talks on trade and development.

Major trends on governance issues

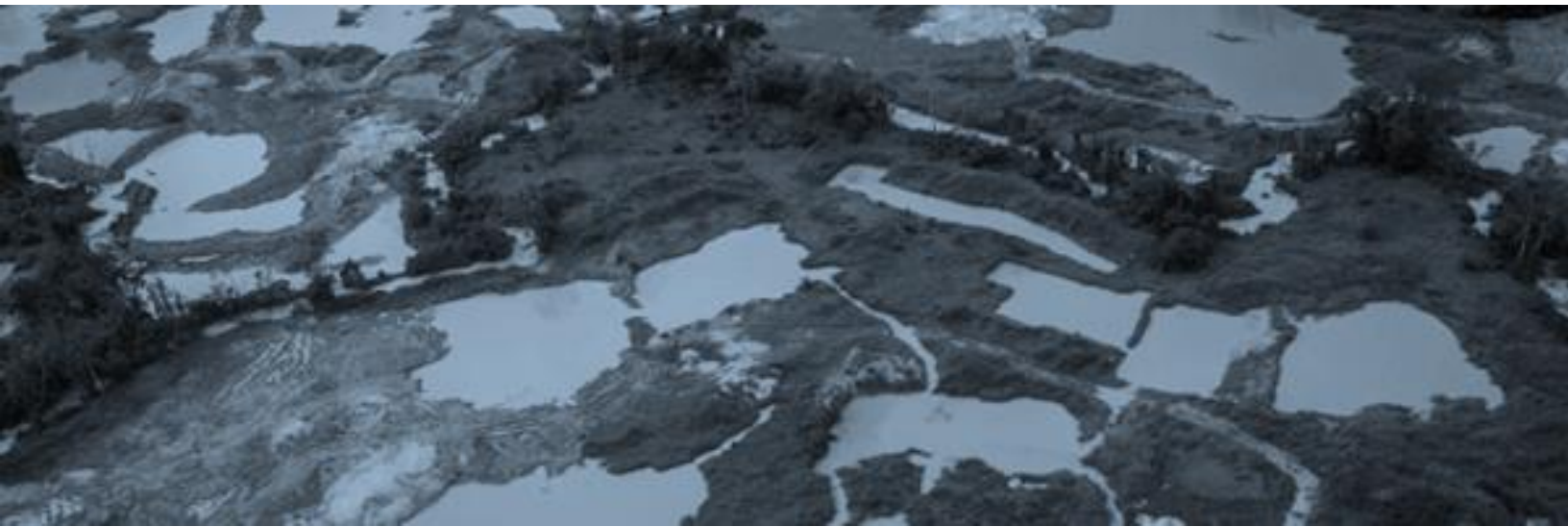
A. L.I 2462 Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulation, 2022 amendment bill laid before Parliament.

i. LI 2462 repeal process underway, to be laid soon – Environment Minister assures - MyJoyOnline
ii. Forest mining: L.I 2462 to remove presidential power in granting licenses laid in Parliament - MyJoyOnline
iii. Parliament stalls passage of L.I. 2462 amid heated debate | Ghana News Agency

B. Ex Bank of Ghana Governor, Dr Ernest Addisson's private residence raided by National Security.

i. Armed operatives storm former BoG Governor's home at dawn, demand 'vaults' and seize vehicles - MyJoyOnline
ii. Richard Jakpa leads raid on former BoG governor's home - YawaNews
iii. Minority condemns raid on former BOG Governor's home by national security operatives | Ghana News Agency
iv. It was a search, not a raid - Mahama Ayariga defends National Security operations at ex-BoG Governor's house
v. Martin Kpebu questions legality of raid on former BoG Governor's residence - Graphic Online
vi. Gov't sanctioned raid on former BoG Governor's home – Srem Sai confirms
vii. Deputy attorney general defends raid on former BoG governor's residence - Asaase Radio
viii. He was spying on the BoG - Col. Aboagye (rtd) reveals why National Security 'raided' home of ex-BoG Governor
ix. Interior Minister to brief Parliament on raid at Former BoG Governor's residence - MyJoyOnline

C. **Bawku violence leaves one soldier killed; President Mahama calls for calm in "Thank you tour".**
    i. Bawku Conflict: Death toll rises to 41 after two more killed
    ii. Soldier shot dead in Bawku, two others in Binduri by unknown shooters - Ghana Business News
    iii. Soldier shot dead in Bawku - Graphic Online
    iv. Bawku: Mahama condemns killing of soldier, urges military to desist from retaliation - MyJoyOnline
    v. President Mahama mourns slain soldier, urges lasting peace in Bawku - Asaase Radio
D. **Treason charge against Oliver Barker Vormawor dropped by Attorney General.**
    i. Attorney General drops treason felony charges against Barker-Vormawor
    ii. Oliver Barker-Vormawor freed over treason charge | Ghana News Agency
    iii. Treason felony trial: Oliver Barker-Vormawor officially acquitted and discharged - MyJoyOnline
E. **Ahmed Hussein-Suale's murder; suspect remanded in custody, and Anas awarded $18 million in a defamation trial by a US court.**
    i. Ahmed Suale killing: Police finally make arrest after 6 years
    ii. Ahmed Suale's family welcomes arrest of murder suspect - MyJoyOnline
    iii. IFJ and GJA welcome progress in Ahmed Suale murder case after arrest of suspect - MyJoyOnline
    iv. Ahmed Suale's murder suspect has never been on the run – Lawyer Kofi Essel
    v. Ahmed Suale Murder: GJA gives authorities March 2025 ultimatum for update - Graphic Online
    vi. Ahmed Suale murder suspect remanded | Ghana News Agency
    vii. US court awards Ghana journalist $18m after suing ex-MP | Business Insider Africa
F. **President Mahama strengthens bilateral relations with West Africa counterparts in talks on trade and development.**
    i. President Mahama visits The Gambia and Senegal to strengthen regional ties - Graphic Online
    ii. President Mahama begins visit to Alliance of Sahel States - Makes first stop in Mali - Graphic Online
    iii. GHANA: Mahama Completes Visits to Three AES Countries - WADR



Critical Analysis

L.I 2462 Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulation, 2022 amendment bill laid before Parliament



Ghana's battle with illegal mining, commonly known as galamsey, represents one of the most pressing environmental and socio-economic challenges facing the nation today. For years, this unregulated activity has wreaked havoc on the environment, decimated local ecosystems, and jeopardized water resources.

Illegal mining activities exacerbated with encroachment into forest reserves. In a bid to curb the menace, the government in June 2022 passed L.I 2462 which in Section 3(2) and in accordance with Article 268 of the Constitution unilaterally gave the President the power to unilaterally "approve, in writing, to a mining company to undertake mining activity in a globally significant biodiversity area in the national interest." Of course, this undertaking presupposes the acquisition of the necessary permits from approval authorities like the EPA in the First Schedule.

With all the elaborate bureaucracy, a stark 2,037 mining licences were issued under the Former President Akufo Addo between 2017 and 2025 out of the total 2127 issued between 1995 and 2025—the highest ever in the 4th Republic—according to JoyNews' research desk. More shockingly, between January 1-6, 2025, five days before President Akufo Addo's exit, a total of 102 licenses were issued.

Forest reserves, once a haven of biodiversity, have been decimated to make way for makeshift mining sites.

Recent development on LI 2462 was the advocacy for repeal of L.I. 2462, which the current government promised. However, in a twist of events, only an amendment clause to remove the President's power from granting mining licences (Section 3(2)) was laid before Parliament, with the environment minister commenting on JoyNews NewsFile on March 22, 2025, that a full repeal would have stripped EPA of its role. While L.I 2462 mentions the EPA and provides for its roles such as ensuring acceptable end-use of reclaimed works by mineral right holders, the EPA Act (Act 1124), 2025 is scanty about the role of the authority in mining activities, especially mining in forest reserves. Hence, the minister's justification, which included saving some ¢4 billion of investment of already licensed companies.

Beyond this legislative changes, the government has undertaken various initiatives, such as the seizure of equipment used in illegal mining and the rehabilitation of degraded lands through afforestation projects like 'Tree for Life Restoration' and the 'Blue Water Initiative' and the commission of 400 hundred 'Water Guards.' However, these efforts face significant challenges, including resistance from entrenched interests and logistical hurdles. Recent viral videos showed armed men standing guards at entries into illegal mining sites in forest reserves preventing officers of the Forestry Commission from gaining entry.

The amendment of L.I. 2462 is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it represents a crucial step in strengthening environmental governance and removing ambiguities that could enable illegal mining. By curbing the President's ability to grant mining licenses in forest reserves, the amendment sends a strong message about the government's commitment to conservation. On the other hand, the effectiveness of this measure hinges on its implementation. More critically, it does not ban mining in forest reserves which hitherto had been the demand of advocates.

Without robust enforcement mechanisms and community engagement, the amendment could remain a symbolic gesture. Moreover, addressing galamsey requires more than legal reforms; underlying issues such as poverty, access to education, and unemployment must be tackled to provide viable alternatives for individuals drawn to illegal mining.

Ex Bank of Ghana Governor, Dr Ernest Addisson's private residence raided by National Security.



In recent months, Ghana has witnessed a series of high-profile home operations carried out by national security operatives. Among these, the most widely reported are the dawn raid on the former Bank of Ghana (BoG) Governor's residence led by Richard Jakpa and the preceding search operation on the home of former Finance Minister Ken Hon. Ofori-Atta. Ostensibly launched as part of a robust anti-corruption framework, these operations have ignited fierce debates regarding state accountability, due process, and the balance between fighting corruption and safeguarding individual rights.

Reports from multiple news outlets describe an operation at the residence of former BoG Governor Dr. Ernest Addison that began at dawn. Armed operatives, numbering around 15–20 and donning balaclavas and military gear, forcibly entered Dr. Addison's Roman Ridge home in Accra. They disabled the CCTV system, demanded access to alleged "vaults," and even temporarily removed vehicles before abandoning the search when no significant cash or documents were found. Official voices—such as those from the Deputy Attorney General and certain government officials—have defended the operation as a search conducted in line with existing anti-corruption mandates and legal warrants. Yet, dissenting voices including members of the Minority and security experts question both the legitimacy and the conduct of these operations, citing an array of irregularities that suggest an overreach of executive power and a potential breach of due process.

Not long before Dr. Addison's case, similar tactics were deployed in the raid on former Finance Minister Hon. Ken Ofori-Atta's residence in Cantonments, Accra. According to multiple reports, riotous scenes unfolded as heavily armed personnel stormed the property while Hon. Ofori-Atta was reportedly out of the country on medical treatment. Earlier in February, the Majority Leader, Hon. Mahama Ayariga had apologised to Hon. Ofori-Atta following the raid on his private residence.

In an ensuing legal action, Ofori-Atta has alleged that the raid constituted an illegal

and intrusive trespass that violated his right to privacy and the sanctity of his property. Crucially, neither a warrant nor a satisfactory explanation was provided at the time the search commenced, prompting serious concerns about the state's adherence to established legal procedures even in the name of anti-corruption.

At the heart of these operations lies a stated commitment by the government to combat corruption and recover misappropriated state assets. Proponents of the raids argue that swift, decisive action—even when it involves intrusive searches—is necessary to root out corruption, especially when former high-ranking officials are implicated. The Deputy Attorney General has stated that the searches were "conducted in accordance with legal procedures" and were part of broader measures to ensure accountability. Nonetheless, the aggressive nature of these operations, including the disabling of security systems and the appropriation—and later abandonment—of property, point to a potentially disproportionate response that undermines the inviolable rights of individuals against unwarranted state intrusion.

From a human rights perspective, such operations raise profound questions about the state's methods. International human rights norms, as well as local constitutional guarantees, enshrine the right to privacy and the protection of property as fundamental. Legal scholars have long cautioned against the unchecked use of executive power, underscoring that aggressive enforcement measures—even those with anti-corruption objectives—must be balanced against obligations to uphold civil liberties. The indiscriminate disabling of surveillance systems and the forcible entry into private realms without adequate judicial oversight risk setting a dangerous precedent where the pursuit of alleged criminality curtails essential freedoms.

Politically, critics assert that these operations appear selectively targeted, potentially aiming to undermine the reputations of individuals associated with a previous political regime. Such practices, if perceived as politically motivated, can erode public trust in state institutions.

The home raid operations, by forcibly entering personal residences, disrupting private life, and seizing private property (such as vehicles and electronic equipment), present a stark confrontation between state security measures and individual rights. There are disturbing reports of thievery of valuable items such as jewellery and cash by search operatives.

Legal frameworks emphasize that any interference with the right to privacy or property must be proportionate, justified by clear evidence, and subject to judicial review. In both the raids on the homes of ex-BoG Governor and Ken Ofori-Atta, the absence of transparent procedures—such as the disabling of surveillance systems before a search—raises serious legal and ethical questions. Such actions risk undermining the very democratic principles they purport to protect.

Bawku violence leaves one soldier killed; President Mahama calls for calm in "Thank you tour".



With reports indicating that the death toll from the renewed Bawku conflict rises above 40, alongside targeted shootings of security personnel in Bawku and nearby Binduri, the situation signals a dangerous intensification of longstanding disputes.

The Bawku conflict is not new. Its roots can be traced to enduring chieftaincy disputes, compounded by ethnic divisions and competing claims over traditional authority. Recent flashpoints include the return of controversial local figures—events that have historically ignited communal violence. The latest series of incidents, which include the killing of soldiers by unidentified gunmen as well as attacks on civilian infrastructure, have reignited old animosities and drawn an aggressive response from both security forces and local communal groups. The fact that the perpetrators remain unidentified intensifies public anxiety and calls into question the effectiveness of existing security protocols.

Furthermore, the imposition of curfews and other emergency measures—while necessary to contain violence—often exacerbate the situation by restricting mobility and disrupting day-to-day life. The state's use of militarized responses, coupled with instances of reported excessive force, has begun to erode public confidence in the security apparatus. President Mahama, in his 'thank you tour' of the Upper East region publicly condemned both the killings and the subsequent violent reprisals by military forces, emphasizing that peacekeepers should not be caught in the crossfire of disputes to which they are not direct parties.

With markets shuttered and schools closed, long-term economic activities are threatened, and the livelihoods of hundreds of residents are at risk. The destruction of property and infrastructure not only has immediate economic repercussions but also deters future investment in the region.

Moreover, the uncertain security environment fuels a cycle of displacement and economic stagnation. Families are forced to flee their homes, markets remain deserted, and public spaces that once thrived now echo with uncertainty. Such destabilization makes it difficult for local governments to implement long-term development projects, thereby contributing to a persistent poverty trap that further alienates communities and deepens social divisions.

At the heart of Ghana's democratic aspirations lies the commitment to rule of law, transparency, and the protection of civil liberties. The developments in Bawku, however, pose significant challenges to these principles. There are additional risk of extremist groups exploiting the destabilisation of the border town as an entry point for the influx of insurgents into the country.

Notwithstanding, the reliance on heavy-handed security measures in response to local grievances risks undermining the accountability of state institutions. When military and police responses appear disproportionate, citizens may lose faith in the democratic process, viewing state action as more antagonistic than protective.

Moreover, the politicisation of local conflicts—a factor that seems to be creeping

into the narrative—threatens to further divide communities along partisan lines. Political rhetoric, when combined with the tangible display of state power, can stoke tensions rather than defuse them.

The call from President Mahama, for restraint and for peaceful mediation underscore the need for a transparent and judicially supervised processes.

Treason charges against Oliver Barker Vormawor dropped by Attorney General



The withdrawal of treason felony charges against Oliver Barker-Vormawor, a social activist and legal practitioner, marks the conclusion of a two-year legal ordeal that began with his arrest in 2022. The charges stemmed from a social media post in which he allegedly threatened a coup if the controversial E-Levy was passed into law. While the Attorney General's decision to file a *nolle prosequi* has brought relief to Barker-Vormawor, the case raises broader questions about the state of free speech in Ghana and its implications for democracy.

The legal proceedings had profound personal and professional consequences for Barker-Vormawor. His arrest and subsequent detention sparked widespread public debate, with many questioning the proportionality of the state's response to his social media post. During the trial, he faced the possibility of life imprisonment or even the death penalty, a prospect that undoubtedly took a psychological toll. Additionally, he reportedly lost a prestigious Cambridge scholarship, a significant setback in his career trajectory.

The prolonged legal battle also highlighted the precarious position of activists and dissenting voices in Ghana. While his eventual acquittal and discharge represent a victory for him personally, the ordeal underscores the risks faced by individuals who challenge the status quo, particularly through provocative or controversial statements.

Ghana's 1992 Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression, a cornerstone of any democratic society. However, the Barker-Vormawor case reveals the fragility of these protections in practice. His arrest for a social media post—interpreted as a threat to national security—raises concerns about the state's commitment to upholding free speech.

Critics argue that the case exemplifies the misuse of laws to stifle dissent. The invocation of treason charges, a severe and rarely applied legal provision, appears disproportionate to the alleged offense. This heavy-handed approach risks creating a chilling effect, discouraging citizens from expressing dissenting opinions for fear of legal repercussions.

The withdrawal of the charges against Barker Vormawor, while on the one hand demonstrates the capacity of the legal system to correct potential overreach, it on the other hand suggests that the fate of accused individuals is subjected to regime change.

Ahmed Hussein-Suale's murder; suspect remanded in custody, and Anas awarded $18 million in a defamation trial by a US court.



Ahmed Hussein-Suale was killed in January 2019 after his identity was exposed following an investigative expose on corruption in Ghanaian football. For over six years, his murder remained unresolved, creating a climate of impunity and fear among journalists in Ghana. Finally, recent updates indicate that the Ghana Police Service has arrested a key suspect, Daniel Owusu Koranteng—also known as Amakye—and remanded him in custody for a provisional murder charge. Prominent media groups, including the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), have hailed this development as a significant breakthrough in the long search for justice for Suale. The arrest, which follows an extensive investigation involving forensic evidence, phone records, and testimonies linking the accused to communications around the time of the murder, marks a turning point in a case that has long symbolized the vulnerability of investigative journalists in Ghana.

Nevertheless, the evidence at hand appears largely circumstantial. While prosecutors point to call records that place Koranteng in the vicinity of Suale's home at the time of the murder and allege his involvement in facilitating the dissemination of damaging photographs (which were later used by a prominent politician as a rallying point for further vendetta), the suspect's defense contends that such evidence is insufficient. Lawyer Kofi Essel, representing the accused, has described the charge as "shambolic," arguing that the mere existence of photos and the suspect's presence in the area do not conclusively prove his direct involvement in the assassination. With the court having adjourned proceedings until April 2025, the prosecution is under significant pressure to build a more robust case that goes beyond circumstantial links and demonstrates clear intent or participation in the murder.

In a related development that has resonated within Ghana's media and legal circles, investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas secured an $18-million defamation award in a U.S. court against former MP Kennedy Agyepong. The defamation suit stemmed from inflammatory comments made by Agyepong—including unsubstantiated claims that linked Anas to the murder of Ahmed Hussein-Suale and other criminal activities. The jury, in a unanimous decision, found that such statements had caused severe reputational harm to Anas and endangered his safety

This ruling not only vindicates Anas but also serves as a stark rebuke of attempts to smear and intimidate investigative journalists. It exposes a troubling intersection where politically charged rhetoric is used to discredit legitimate journalistic inquiry—a practice that undermines freedom of expression and the accountability mechanisms essential to a vibrant democracy. The significant damages awarded highlight the strength of judicial recourse when defamation tactics are employed as a tool against truth-tellers in the public sphere.

The dual narrative emerging from these developments—the progressive breakthrough in the murder case and the resounding victory in the defamation suit—raises an important question: Is the evidence against the suspect strong enough to hold up in court, or do the arguments of his defense carry more weight?

On one hand, the arrest of Koranteng appears to be based on several converging indicators:

1. **Circumstantial Evidence:** Phone records show his presence near the crime scene, and his alleged connection to the circulation of incriminating photographs implicates him in a network of actions that may have contributed to the conditions surrounding Suale's murder.
2. **Investigative Assertions:** Suale's own legal representatives reportedly identified him as involved, while authorities point to patterns of behaviour that link the suspect to the chain of events around that fateful night.

On the other hand, his lawyers argue that:

1. **Insufficient Direct Evidence:** The evidence assembling a timeline or concrete proof of his active participation in the killing is, as of now, largely circumstantial. Possessing or handling photographs—even if intertwined with politically motivated actions—does not inherently equate to committing murder.
2. **Procedural and Contextual Gaps:** The defense emphasizes that the suspect, who has not been shown to be on the run or overtly evasive, might have been caught up in a web of associations without engaging in the violent act itself.

President Mahama strengthens bilateral relations with West Africa counterparts in talks on trade and development.



President John Mahama's second term has been marked by a proactive approach to strengthening Ghana's bilateral and multilateral relations within West Africa and beyond. His visits to countries like The Gambia, Senegal, and members of the Alliance of Sahelian States (AES) underscore Ghana's commitment to fostering regional cooperation, trade, and development. These efforts are particularly significant given Ghana's historical role as a beacon of Pan-Africanism and its contemporary position as a stable democracy in a region often marred by political instability.

Ghana has long been a trailblazer in African unity and development. Under Kwame Nkrumah, the country championed Pan-Africanism, hosting the first All-African Peoples' Conference in 1958 and playing a pivotal role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU). This legacy continues to shape Ghana's foreign policy, which emphasizes regional integration, peacekeeping, and economic cooperation.

In contemporary times, Ghana's democratic stability and adherence to constitutional governance have set it apart in a region where coups and political unrest are

not uncommon. This stability has allowed Ghana to act as a mediator and advocate for democratic principles within ECOWAS and the AU. President Mahama's recent engagements with AES countries, despite their junta-led governments, reflect a nuanced approach to diplomacy—balancing Ghana's democratic ideals with the pragmatic need for regional cooperation. However, this engagement also raises questions about Ghana's stance on democratic governance, given the AES's departure from ECOWAS and their junta-led administrations.

Ghana's strategic location and economic potential make it a key player in West Africa. As a founding member of ECOWAS, Ghana has consistently contributed to the bloc's peacekeeping missions and economic initiatives. The country's ports and infrastructure serve as vital transit points for landlocked neighbours like Burkina Faso and Mali, reinforcing its role as a regional trade hub.

When observed from a different angle, the massive attendance of President Maham's second inauguration by his African and especially West African counterparts including leaders of the AES signifies mutual trust and respect, offering solid foundations for further diplomatic engagements.

Relations hitherto were estranged with possible threats of invasions into the junta-led West African states—especially, Niger in 2023—which resulted in the creation of the AES, a strategic defence and security alliance.

The renewed relations offer a unique opportunity for the return to and strengthening of ECOWAS as Francophone West Africa gradually seeks to limit France's influence in their domestic affairs, which has been one of ECOWAS' major challenge with full and sovereign cooperation of UEMOA states.

President Mahama's outreach to AES countries, especially his visit to Burkina Faso has resulted in the removal of grain exports ban from Burkina Faso to Ghana. This marks a significant milestone in economic diplomacy with the potential of Ghana's leading role in brokering and offering leadership experience in the democratic transition in Burkina Faso and the rest of the AES.

Recommendations

1. The fight against illegal mining and galamsey is at a critical juncture. While the one clause amendment of L.I. 2462 and other governmental measures represent progress, they are not a panacea. The success over illegal mining and galamsey will depend on comprehensive strategies that integrate preventive legislations, enforcement, community engagement, and socio-economic development. The fight is not just an environmental battle; it is a fight for sustainable development, social equity, and the preservation of the natural heritage. It is only through collective action and sustained commitment that the nation can overcome this complex challenge and chart a path toward sustainable mining.

2. While the drive to recover state assets and ensure accountability is commendable in principle, the execution of such operations must be carried out in a such a way that they do not erode the core freedoms enshrined in Ghana's constitutional and international legal commitments. The government's anti-corruption campaign should be waged while having respect for the rights to privacy and protection of property. Most importantly, politically exposed persons should not be charged to lead operational functions of sensitive agencies like the National Security and the National Intelligence Bureau. This is to prevent such persons from carrying out vendettas against political opponents. Additionally, as Ghana continues to navigate these challenges, fostering an environment where state power is exercised transparently and judiciously is paramount for sustainable democratic governance.

3. A dual approach is required to resolving the Bawku conflict. First, robust and accountable security measures must be implemented to ensure that violence is contained and that perpetrators are brought to justice. Second, a genuine dialogue and mediation—facilitated by community leaders and independent bodies—are essential to address the underlying grievances driving the conflict. Only by balancing the imperatives of security with respect for democratic rights can Ghana hope to restore stability, rebuild community trust, and chart a course toward lasting peace and prosperity.

4. The withdrawal of treason charges against Oliver Barker-Vormawor is a relief for him personally but raises broader concerns about the state of free speech in Ghana. While the legal system ultimately acted to discontinue the case, the initial prosecution highlights the risks faced by activists and the potential misuse of laws to suppress dissent. For Ghana to strengthen its democratic credentials, it must ensure that the right to free speech is not only enshrined in law but also protected in practice. This requires a commitment to proportionality in legal responses, robust oversight of state actions, and a culture that values and protects dissenting voices. On the other side, activist should be responsible in their approach. Particularly, violent confrontations with law enforcements and government officials, fearmongering, and utterances that stir up strife and division among the populace should be eschewed.

5. The intertwined legal battles stand as a testament to the high stakes involved when media freedom and accountability intersect with political power. This is a dynamic that demands continuous scrutiny and institutional reform for the sake of media freedom, justice, and the prevention of political hamstring and bullying.

6. The pursuit of Pan-African solidarity does not necessitate overlooking undemocratic regime changes or constitutional tampering. Ghana's engagement with AES countries should be guided by a dual approach: maintaining diplomatic relations to address immediate economic and security concerns while advocating for democratic governance as a long-term goal. This balanced strategy ensures that Ghana remains true to its democratic ideals while fostering regional cooperation.

IMANI
Center for Policy & Education

Policy & Education Think Tank

IMANI Center for Policy & Education is a Think Tank of considerable local and international repute based in Ghana. Founded on the 9th of March 2004, IMANI has carved a niche in Ghana's policy environment for putting out objective, independent analysis and critique on many issues, using tried and tested techniques that apply across different disciplines

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